Video of the Week: Butterfly Gardens

FRUIT

Controlling Weeds in Strawberries

Strawberries are one of the most popular fruits, but gardeners often have problems with weed control. Strawberries form a mat of plants, which makes hoeing difficult. Gardeners must pull weeds by hand or use herbicides. In small plantings, hand weeding is usually sufficient as weeds become less of a problem when the plants canopy over to block sunlight to the soil. In larger plantings, herbicides may prove helpful.

Although there are no weed preventers available for homeowners to use on strawberries, Poast (sethoxydim), a grass-killing herbicide, can be used after weedy grasses have emerged. It can be sprayed directly over strawberries without harm but should not be applied within 7 days of harvest. You can find Poast in Fertilome Over the Top II, Hi-Yield Grass Killer and Monterey Grass Getter. (Ward Upham)

Fruit Tree Sprays and Rain

A spreader-sticker should be used in fruit tree sprays to improve the distribution and retention of fungicides and insecticides on fruit and leaves. However, even with a spreader-sticker, a rain can reduce the length of time the materials are effective. Less than one inch of rain since the last spray will not significantly affect residues. One to two inches of rain will reduce the residue by one half. Reduce the number of days until the next spray by one half. More than two inches of rain since the last spray will remove most of the spray residue. Re-spray as soon as possible. (Ward Upham)

Pest Control on Fruit Trees

It can be a challenge to know how to spray fruit trees for pest control. Spray schedules will vary depending on whether the trees have fruit or not. Following are hints on
what to spray this year for our most common fruit trees.

**Peaches, nectarines and apricots:** Most trees may not have fruit due to cold weather over winter. Fruit buds on peaches and nectarines are most often killed if the temperature reaches -10 degrees in the winter. The tree is fine but there will not be fruit any year with temperatures this low. Some apricots can also lose fruit buds at -10 degrees.

These fruits are also very susceptible to late frosts. As trees go from bud swell to full bloom, they become much more sensitive to frost damage. Temperatures at 28 degrees and lower will harm buds that are in full bloom.

If there will not be any fruit, there isn’t any need for being on a spray schedule. If there is fruit, use a product that contains captan or myclobutanil (Immunox, Fertilome F-Stop Lawn and Garden Spray) from now until about two weeks before harvest. Spray about every 10 days.

If a specific problem develops such as borers, peach leaf curl or gummosis, see our listing of common problems at [http://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/plant-pest-problems.html](http://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/plant-pest-problems.html). Look under “Peach” for possible problems and what to do about them.

**Cherries:** We often have good fruit on cherries without spraying. However, a wet spring can lead to problems with brown rot. Myclobutanil (Immunox, Fertilome F-Stop Lawn and Garden Spray) or Captan will give good protection. Cherry fruit fly may attack the cherries with the maggot causing damage to the fruit. Malathion (check label), Bonide Fruit Tree & Plant Guard or Sevin can be used for control.

**Pears:** Pears are often able to escape damage without spraying. If trouble does arise, use the same recommendations given for apples.

**Apples:** Apples are the crop most in need of a spray schedule. Unless you have disease-resistant trees, cedar-apple rust is a perennial problem. The larvae of the codling moth is the insect most likely to damage fruit. Control can be a challenge due to changing labels and an extended spray season. See our article in our March 27, 2018 newsletter on “Apple Tree Sprays” for details. You can find the newsletter at [http://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/2018/Mar27_2018_12.pdf](http://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/2018/Mar27_2018_12.pdf) (Ward Upham)

**TURFGRASS**

**Controlling Wild Violets in Lawns**

One of the most difficult weeds to control in lawns is the wild violet. Even combination products that contain 2,4-D, MCPP and Dicamba such as Trimec, Weed-Out and most formulations of Weed-B-Gon do not do a good job. Products with triclopyr give much better control though more than one treatment will likely be needed. A couple of products that contain triclopyr on the homeowner side are
Turflon Ester and Weed-B-Gon Chickweed, Clover & Oxalis. (Note: There are several formulations of Weed-B-Gon but only Weed-B-Gon Chickweed, Clover & Oxalis contains triclopyr.)

Both products listed above are labeled for tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. Do not use products containing triclopyr on bermudagrass as severe injury will occur. Weed-B-Gon Chickweed Clover & Oxalis is labeled for buffalograss and zoysia (Turflon Ester is not) but lawns will likely show some temporary browning after application.

Spray only on calm days and when temperatures are below 90 degrees to avoid damage to nearby plants. (Ward Upham)

PESTS

Mole Control

Though moles spend most of their time underground, the damage they cause above ground is all too visible. Meandering paths of upheaved soil are evidence of the small mammals foraging for food. If soil is dry, moles form mounds of soil but do not make the meandering paths. Some tunnels may be abandoned soon after being built while others are travel lanes and used for a longer period of time. Even though moles do not feed on plant matter, they can still cause damage by disturbing roots and uprooting small plants.

Numerous home remedies have been concocted to control moles including chewing gum, noisemakers, broken glass, bleaches, windmills, and human hair. None have been found to provide consistent and reliable control. Poison baits also fail to work because moles feed on earthworms and grubs, not vegetable matter. Even grub control products are ineffective as they do not control earthworms, and earthworms are the primary food source for moles.

The best control method is the use of traps. There are three types of traps (harpoon, choker, and scissor-jawed) and each can be effective but may take some time to master. Try the following suggestions.

Moles use some tunnels more than others. Use a broomstick or something similar to poke holes in a number of runs. Check a day later to see which runs have been ‘repaired.’ These are the active runs and should be used for trap placement.

Place a trap in an active run by excavating soil, placing the trap and then replacing loose soil. Secure the trap so that the recoil will not lift the trap out of the ground. Make sure the triggering mechanism is in the center of the run.

Finally, push down two more holes, one on each side of the trap. Moles should be caught when they try to repair the tunnel. Move traps if no moles are caught within three days.
Butterfly Gardening

Butterfly gardening is becoming more popular with Kansans. Providing for the basic needs of butterflies, such as food, shelter and liquids, will encourage butterflies to visit this summer. There are a number of plants that attract butterflies.

However, different species of butterflies prefer different plants. Using a variety of plant material that vary in blooming times of day and year helps attract a diverse group of visitors. Plant groups of the same plant together; a single plant is difficult for a butterfly to detect. If trying to attract a certain species of butterfly, learn which plant(s) that butterfly prefers, and then emphasize that plant in your planting. Annuals that attract butterflies include ageratum, cosmos, French marigold, petunia, verbena and zinnia.

Perennials and shrubs can be split into those that bloom early, mid-season and late. Good choices for those that bloom early are allium, chives, forget-me-not and lilac. Bee balm, butterfly bush, black-eyed Susan, buttonbush, butterfly weed, daisy, daylily, gaillardia, lavender, lily, mint, phlox, privet, sunflower and veronica are fitting picks for mid-season bloom. Late bloomers include aster, glossy abelia and sedum.

There are other things you can do to encourage butterflies. Butterflies are cold-blooded and like open areas where they can sun themselves on cool days and shade to cool off when the sun is too intense.

Butterflies also need water. A simple way to make a butterfly pool is to take a bucket, fill it with gravel, and bury it to the rim. Now add water, sugar water or sweet drinks so that the butterflies can land on the gravel but still reach the liquid.

Our Johnson County Master Gardeners have put together a fact sheet on creating a butterfly habitat here. (Ward Upham)

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For more information as well as “How-to” videos, see http://www.wildlife.k-state.edu/species/moles/index.html (Ward Upham)
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