

Horticulture Tips

June 2004

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Oklahoma State University

GARDEN TIPS FOR JUNE!

David Hillock

General Landscape

- Find someone to water plants in the house and garden while on vacation. Harvesting vegetables and mowing the lawn are a must and imply that someone is home.
- Mulch ornamentals, vegetables, and annuals to reduce soil crusting and to regulate temperatures and moisture during hot summer months. Mulching will reduce about 70 percent of the summer yard maintenance.
- Remain alert for insect damage. Add spider mite to the list. Foliage of most plants becomes pale and speckled; juniper foliage turns a pale yellowish color. Shake a branch over white paper and watch for tiny specks that crawl. Watch for 1st generation fall webworm. (F-7306)

Turfgrass

- Fertilize warm-season grasses at 1 lb. N per 1,000 square feet. Don't fertilize fescue and other cool-season grasses during the summer.
- Dollar spot disease of lawns can first become visible in mid-May. Make certain fertilizer applications have been adequate before applying a fungicide. (F-7658)
- Seeding of warm-season grasses should be completed by the end of June to reduce winterkill losses. (F-6419)
- Brown patch disease of cool-season grasses can be a problem. (F-6420)
- White grubs will soon be emerging as adult June Beetles. Watch for high populations that can indicate potential damage from later life cycle stages as grubs in the summer.

Fruit and Nut

- Renovate overgrown strawberry beds after the last harvest. Start by setting your lawnmower on its highest setting and mow off the foliage. Next thin crowns 12 to 24 inches apart. Apply recommended fertilizer, preemergence herbicide if needed and keep watered.

Trees and Shrubs

- Vigorous, unwanted limbs should be removed or shortened on new trees. Watch for forks in the main trunk and remove the least desirable trunk as soon as it is noticed. (F-6415)
- Pine needle disease treatments are needed again in mid-June. (7618)
- Remove tree wraps during the summer to avoid potential disease and insect buildup.
- Softwood cuttings from new growth of many shrubs will root if propagated in a moist shady spot.
- Protect trees from lawnmowers and weed eaters by mulching or using protective aerated covers.

Flowers

- Pinch back leggy annuals to encourage new growth. Fertilize and water appropriately.
- Feed established mums and other perennials.
- When picking fresh roses or removing faded ones, cut back to a leaflet facing the outside of the bush to encourage open growth and air circulation.
- Stake tall perennials before toppling winds arise.

Sudden Oak Death

Mike Schnelle

Sudden Oak Death (SOD) is a disease from the causal agent *Phytophthora ramorum*, a type of fungus. Besides this disease causing problems in European nurseries, in the United States both our forests and nurseries (particularly on the West Coast) are being affected. Although oak is mentioned in the disease's common name, many other ornamental plants are affected. To date, at least 59 ornamentals are known to be susceptible with the list constantly being updated and expanded as scientists better understand this malady. In Oklahoma nurseries, Pieris, Honeysuckle, Rhododendron, Viburnum, Oak, Camellia and others need to be monitored. Just recently a major West Coast nursery, that routinely sells plant materials to Oklahoma, found that some of its stock is infected by the SOD organism. Unfortunately, some of that stock was shipped to eastern points that could have included Oklahoma. Fortunately, while other species of *Phytophthora* were found, *P. ramorum* tests have consistently been negative to date. Plant pathologists from OSU, Stillwater are now underway with their 2004 SOD Survey of Oklahoma nurseries.

Faculty from the Departments of Entomology and Plant Pathology as well as Horticulture and Landscape Architecture have been working on the eventuality of SOD since 2001. Industry should know that symptoms range from entire plants wilting to more subtle symptoms such as leaf and twig dieback. Furthermore, some plants can harbor the disease without manifesting noticeable symptoms. Should any nursery or garden center professional detect a potentially infected plant, they may contact Brian Olson, Plant Disease Diagnostician, at the Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory in Stillwater. Brian may be reached at 405-744-9961 or olsonb@okstate.edu. **It is important to note that OSU's Digital Diagnostic Services will not work for this disease.** It can only be diagnosed by laboratory tests. More on SOD will be discussed at the October 2004 Greenhouse and Nursery Trade Show and Convention in Oklahoma City. In the meantime, growers may periodically check the following website to stay apprised of SOD updates. See <http://entopl.okstate.edu/users/svb/sod>.

eLearning Pecan Management Course

Becky Carroll

Want to learn more about pecan management but can't spare the time to enroll in OSU's pecan management course? Now anyone, near or far (with an internet connection), can take advantage of the new eLearning pecan class – Fundamentals of Pecan Management. The website has been recently released and can be viewed at <http://pecan.okstate.edu>.

This self study course is available for a \$75 fee. This fee provides the user with a password good for one year. The student can work at a comfortable pace reviewing information as needed. The online version of the pecan management course can be helpful to new or veteran pecan growers. The course is designed for commercial growers but can be useful to backyard tree owners as well.

The course is divided into seven parts: Introduction materials; native pecan management; improved variety management; pest management; storage, food safety, and sanitation; economics and marketing; and equipment. A quiz is included after each main topic to test the student's knowledge of each subject.

Instructions for registration and software requirements are listed on the web site.

Plant Profile – Hypericum – St. Johnswort

David Hillock

One of my favorite garden plants is *Hypericum* spp. (St. Johnswort). There are several species and forms of *Hypericum* including perennial and annual herbs, shrubs and trees. The more popular plants for the home garden are shrubs that are often semi-evergreen to evergreen with bluish-green foliage. Some of the shrubs are stoloniferous (spread by aboveground shoots) and work well as a soil stabilizer. In general, most will grow well in dry, rocky soils and full sun or shade. However, they would probably do best with protection from the late, hot afternoon sun here in Oklahoma. The bright yellow flowers are quite attractive and can brighten the garden beginning in early summer.

Hypericum calycinum, Aaronsbeard St. Johnswort, is fairly popular, grows to about 12 to 18 inches high and spreads 18 to 24 inches producing flowers 3 inches across from June through September. This species is stoloniferous and can spread vigorously under proper cultural conditions. *Hypericum frondosum*, Golden St. Johnswort, is a native to the southeast. It grows to about 3 to 4 feet high and just as wide. Flowers are also bright yellow, 1 to 2 inch diameter, with the stamens forming a dense, central mass 3/4 inches across, June through July. Sunburst is apparently a lower growing cultivar that has performed well in midwestern tests. *Hypericum* is not extremely common in the trade so you may have to search a little to find one. However, I think they are well worth the search.

Don't Bag It!

David Hillock

Now that the grass is growing like gangbusters, especially if you have been generous with the fertilizer and water, there is plenty of mowing to do. One way to save time and effort is don't catch the clippings. Turfgrass clippings contain valuable nutrients, much of which you just applied, and will help the turf if recycled back into the soil. In fact, it may even reduce the amount of total fertilizer needed for the season. Using a mulching mower or one with a

mulching blade works best as they are designed to chop the grass clippings up into small pieces that easily decompose and return to the soil. However, you do not need a mulching mower or blade. A standard mower will work just as well as long as you cut the turf frequently enough. If you choose to catch your grass clippings, at least toss them into the compost pile or use them as mulch in the landscape. Avoid bagging them up and placing them at the curb to be hauled away as this puts an unnecessary strain on the local dumps and could cost you more money in the long run by increased waste handling fees.

Master Gardener Program

David Hillock

The Oklahoma Master Gardener program is a volunteer program to help meet the horticultural needs of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service offices across the state. Those who sign up for the program receive a minimum of 40 hours of basic horticultural training in areas like turf management, vegetables, fruits, ornamental landscape plants, soil and fertility, plant disease and insects, etc.

After the initial training and passing an exam, participants go to work providing at least 40 hours of volunteer service to the county office. Volunteer activities include organizing and conducting educational programs, community beautification programs, helping with 4-H activities, Home and Garden events, plant clinics and many more.

It is after the initial 40 hours of training and 40 hours of volunteer service the first year that participants are then designated as Certified Master Gardeners. Many continue to be active in the program for years because the work and experiences are so rewarding. Training in counties participating in the program usually occurs sometime between September and April. To learn more about the Master Gardener program and find a group nearest you, go to <http://home.okstate.edu/Okstate/dasnr/hort/hortlahome.nsf/toc/Mastergardener> or contact your County Cooperative Extension Office.

Upcoming Horticulture Events

Onion Production and Marketing Field Day

June 10, 2004

Calvin

A field meeting will be held Thursday, June 10 at Calvin, Oklahoma to view and discuss progress with commercial fresh-market onion production. Topics to be addressed will include varieties, transplant sources, insect and disease management and harvest procedures. It will be a late afternoon/early evening event. For more information contact Jim Shrefler, Area Extension Horticulture Specialist at 580-889-7343 or by email at jshrefl@okstate.edu.

Oklahoma Pecan Growers Association Annual Meeting

June 11-13, 2004
Idabel

The 74th annual meeting of the Oklahoma Pecan Growers' Association will be held in Idabel on June 11- 13. Friday, the group will begin the festivities at the Comfort Suites with a BBQ social and then a special business meeting concerning the Oklahoma Pecan Assessment Initiative. The participants will be meeting at the Kiamichi Technology Center in Idabel for the educational program on Saturday. Commercial exhibitors, pecan food show and the state pecan show will be on display Saturday. The orchard tour, educational program and equipment demonstration will be held on Sunday at the Josefy Orchard owned by Basil Savage.

Registration and agenda are available at the OPGA website under the 2004 annual meeting link located at <http://www.hortla.okstate.edu/pecan/opga/index.html> or call 405-744-5414 for more information.

Oklahoma Gardening Summer Gardenfest

June 12, 2004
OSU Botanical Gardens, Stillwater

The keynote speaker will be Landscape Architect Tim Thoelecke from Garden Concepts, Inc. in Glenview, Illinois. His presentation will be on "Garden Makeovers." Other activities include a children's gardening activity booth, a cooking demonstration, gardening for wildlife, growing Oklahoma wildflowers, Oklahoma proven plant selections and turfgrasses for Oklahoma lawns.

Greenhouse Production Shortcourse

June 15-17, 2004
OSU-Oklahoma City Campus

Lane Ag Center Field Day

June 19, 2004
Lane Ag Center

The Annual Lane Ag Center Field Day is scheduled for Saturday, June 19. The Center is located 10 miles east of Atoka on Highway 3 in southeast Oklahoma. Operated cooperatively by Oklahoma State University and the Agriculture Research Service branch of the United States Department of Agriculture, the Center is the site of extensive research and demonstration activities in areas including vegetables, forages and turfgrass. Vegetable research includes work on watermelon, squash, cucumber, sweet corn, peppers, tomato, dry beans, greens and onions. Turf activities include a St. Augustine cultivar trial and demonstration plots of various turf species. A new area of activity at the Center is the development of vegetable production technology that meets the standards for Certified Organic Production under the recently established National Organic Program.

The field day will feature tours of research and demonstration projects, opportunity to visit with scientists to discuss current projects, live entertainment, complimentary refreshments (including

cold watermelon) and antique tractor displays and competitions. For more details call 580-889-7343 or check the Lane Ag Center web site at www.lane-ag.org.

Wine Grape Production Field Day

July 24, 2004

Oklahoma Fruit Research Station, Perkins

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture, OSU Department of Horticulture, & the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service will be sponsoring a Wine Grape Field Day on July 24, 2004. The field day participants will be registering at the Oklahoma Fruit Research Station at 9 a.m. before touring the grape plots. The afternoon session and lunch will be provided at Woodland Park Vineyard in Stillwater.

The morning session will cover crop estimates, variety performance and training systems as well as insect and disease management. The afternoon session will discuss the variety/rootstock trial and training systems in place at the Woodland Park Vineyard.

Those wishing to attend the field day should call either the Kerr Center at 918-647-9123 or the OSU Horticulture Department at 405-744-5404 to help with planning the noon meal sponsored by the Kerr Center. There is no charge for the field day or lunch.

Directions to the Oklahoma Fruit Research Station are one-half mile north of the intersection of Hwy 177 and Hwy 33 north of Perkins, OK. For reference there is a Sonic Drive-In at the intersection. The Woodland Park Vineyard is located at 3023 North Jardot Street in Stillwater. From the intersection of Hwy 177 and Hwy 51 in Stillwater, travel east one mile to Jardot Street. Turn north on Jardot and travel 2 1/2 miles. Woodland Park Vineyard is located on the east side of Jardot Street about 1/2 mile north of Lakeview Street.

Horticultural Therapy Conference

September 1, 2004

Holiday Inn, Stillwater

Multi-State Plant Materials Conference

September 22-23, 2004

Holiday Inn, Stillwater

Nursery/Greenhouse Trade Show and Convention

October 8-9, 2004

Cox Convention Center, Oklahoma City

Tree Care Issues Conference

November 3, 2004

OSU Botanical Gardens Educational Building, Stillwater

For more information about upcoming events, please contact Stephanie Larimer at 405-744-5404 or steph@okstate.edu.