

Horticulture Tips

June 2006

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 first 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 12-24 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. (F-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.

Tomato Blossom Drop or Poor Fruit Set

David Hillock

Poor fruit set or blossom drop occurs on tomatoes for any of several reasons.

1. Extreme temperatures - the blossoms drop off without setting fruit when night temperatures fall below 55°F or day temperatures rise above 90°F for an extended period of time.
2. Dry soil - blossoms dry and fall when the plants don't receive enough water.
3. Shading - few blossoms are produced when the plants receive less than six hours of sunlight a day.
4. Excessive nitrogen - high levels of nitrogen in the soil promote leaf growth at the expense of blossom and fruit formation.

To avoid or correct these problems take these measures.

1. Plant early-, mid-, and late-season varieties at the appropriate time of year.
2. Water tomatoes regularly, never allowing the soil to dry out. Mulch with straw, black plastic or other material to reduce moisture loss.
3. Plant tomatoes in an area that receives at least six hours of sunlight each day. If the yard is too shady, plant the tomatoes in a container and set them on a sunny porch or patio.
4. Reduce nitrogen applications if necessary. Be sure to follow the fertilizer application recommendations.

Foliar Disease Control in Vegetables – Learn More About it this Summer

Jim Shrefler

You've got the vegetables planted, kept the weeds under control, made it past the threats of cutworms and cucumber beetles. Is it now time to sit back and relax? Some years you can get by with just letting the crops do their thing. However, depending on environmental conditions, weather, and the vegetables you grow, if you do not take measures to control foliar diseases the life of your vegetable planting may be short lived. Foliar diseases can affect many vegetables. In Oklahoma, some of the summer vegetables that are commonly affected by foliar diseases, in particular those diseases that cause serious damage include watermelon, cantaloupe, tomato, onion, pepper and squash. There are others as few plants do not have some foliar disease that can be a problem at times. Experienced gardeners learn that each vegetable has its own specific problems. Foliar diseases can be caused by a large number of different microorganisms. Most of

these are either bacteria or fungi. A given disease causing organism does not typically affect a large number of different vegetables. In other words, peppers and watermelons each have their own disease problems. If you are not familiar with the diseases that affect the vegetables you grow, your County Extension Office can provide information regarding what diseases should be expected. The office can also provide information on how to protect plants from these foliar diseases. We use the word protect, rather than control, because the goal should be to not let the disease ever get started. There are several measures that should be taken to protect plants from these diseases. Some of these include using proper plant spacing, resistant varieties and proper irrigation. In addition to measures such as these, fungicide application is also called for in many cases. The exact fungicide to use, and when and how to apply it, depends on the disease and the vegetable. Again, your Extension office is your source of information here.

Would you like to be able to observe a demonstration of foliar disease control? This summer you can do it from the comfort of your own home and computer. Demonstrations are being done at Bixby and Lane, Oklahoma this summer on foliar disease control for tomato. Information will be posted periodically online. You will be able to see treated and untreated plants side by side and have the opportunity to see how the plants respond to protective fungicide treatments. If you want to share in observing these demonstrations, send an email to jshrefler-okstate@lane-ag.org and information will be provided on how to access the online presentation. If you do not use email, call 580-513-5544 and information will be provided.

Scouting a Lawn Problem

David Hillock

As County Educators turf related problems are guaranteed to occur on a regular basis. Like any other plant in the landscape there are a number of situations and issues that will arise.

Determining what the real cause of a problem is can be tricky and will take some investigative work. Outlined below are some steps that should be followed to help diagnose a turfgrass problem. Sending in samples or images of damaged turfgrass without knowing the answers to most of these questions may slow down the diagnosis process. Following these steps will help you be more successful solving your client's turfgrass challenges.

1. What is the desirable turfgrass species present on the site? Are you absolutely certain of its identity?
2. What varieties or cultivars are present; may not be possible or necessary to know this in some situations?
3. Maturity level of lawn, age of lawn, time of establishment, source of propagation material?
4. Describe the symptoms and advance of the symptoms. Turf color, density, random occurrence or organized pattern?
5. Mechanical (human involved) patterns of damage?
6. Are the same symptoms present in surrounding lawns or in other lawns in the community/area?
7. Soil types? Consistent type or variable types?
8. Note shade patterns, slope, aspect, exposure.

9. Maintenance program, recent applications of both pesticides and fertilizers, professionally managed or cared for by the consumer?
10. When did problem first begin to appear? Multi-year problem or strictly this year?
11. What do you as the educator feel the problem is? Do you feel the information from the client is accurate?
12. What diagnostic methods have already been undertaken?
13. Samples to Plant Insect & Disease Diagnostic Lab?
14. Soil testing (basic, secondary or micro?); Differential soil testing of healthy vs. problematic?
15. Digital images shipped to specialist for review? Large scale view, medium scale view, close ups. Make sure they are clear images. If they are fuzzy to you then they will be fuzzy to us.
16. Samples of representative plants sent to specialist for ID and review?
17. Soil penetration differences via soil probe from healthy to problematic?
18. Insect monitoring using disclosing solution (2 tablespoons of lemon scented Dawn per gallon spread over 1 to 2 square foot of area).
19. Flotation test, open ended coffee can inserted as restriction ring, no soap or wetting agent added. Float insects out of turf canopy and identify.
20. Insect scouting for sign (insects or grass)?
21. Lifting turf to determine if root or stem damage has occurred?
22. Other tests performed or comments?

Rotation, Rotation, Rotation

Eric T. Stafne

We have all heard the old saying about real estate – it's all about 'location, location, location'. Well, a slight modification can be the new mantra when it comes to control of brown rot in peaches – 'rotation, rotation, rotation.' Recently, an article in *The Grower* (April 2006) revealed that there is reduced brown rot sensitivity to demethylation inhibitors (DMI) in Georgia. This could just as easily occur in other parts of the country like Oklahoma. In response to this potential problem, one should take preventative steps to head off this loss of fungicide effectiveness.

Brown rot (*Monilinia fructicola*) is the disease that first shows up in the early season as a blossom blight, and then develops into a devastating fruit rot. The blossom blight thrives with high humidity and precipitation. The disease is present in the orchard year-round, but will only proliferate with sufficient moisture which allows spores to germinate. Several DMI fungicides are registered for control of brown rot, including Orbit, Indar, Nova, and Elite. However, since all of these chemicals are active only against one control site within the fungus, resistance to one of the fungicides leads to resistance to all within the same class. Options for rotating with DMIs are the respiratory-inhibitors strobilurins. Strobilurins are also site-specific and prone to resistance, just like DMIs. Extension specialists from the area in Georgia where the problem of resistance to DMIs was greatest, suggested using alternate fungicide classes, as well as, using DMIs and strobilurins for only preharvest applications and not during bloom or cover sprays.

They also stated that it was important to start with the strobilurins for the preharvest sequence of sprays.

Cultural methods can also help control brown rot, and this means reducing the inoculum present in the orchard. This can be done by removing unharvested fruit ('mummies') from the previous crop, cut out twig cankers, and elimination of nearby wild *Prunus* species that may harbor the disease.

The recommendations for control of brown rot in Oklahoma are outlined in the Current Report CR-6240, Commercial Peach-Nectarine Insect and Disease Control 2006:
<http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edeb/Get/Document-1454/CR-6240web.pdf>.

The Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) Wet Nile Virus Page

David Hillock

Even with avian influenza as an ever-popular news topic, we still need to keep in mind the efforts being made to combat West Nile Virus (WNV). As a human health concern, it only takes one bite from an infected mosquito to transfer the disease.

Thanks to Kim Cassel – EDEN POC for South Dakota State University – EDEN now has a completed Issue page on WNV (www.eden.lsu.edu/wnv). This is an informative page that provides an overview of the virus and answers the following questions:

- How many kinds of mosquitoes are in the United States?
- Why do mosquitoes bite?
- What disease-causing microorganisms can mosquitoes transmit?
- What is the most effective way to prevent mosquito bites and control mosquitoes at home?

A number of helpful and informative resources are accessible through this page, including a report by ASTHO titled "Public Health Confronts the Mosquito: Developing Sustainable State and Local Mosquito Control Programs."

As the summer season approaches and mosquitoes, once again, become the seasonal obstacle I would encourage you to make Extension professionals in your state aware of the EDEN West Nile Virus Issue page.

What is the most effective way to prevent mosquito bites and control mosquitoes at home? Insect repellents are recommended as the best way for one to protect themselves from mosquito bites when involved in outdoor activities. Repellents act by making a person "undesirable" for feeding or in other words the repellent masks the gases and scents known to be attractive to mosquitoes.

DEET and Picaridin are recommended to be applied to the skin and permethrin applied on the clothing. DEET and Picaridin repel mosquitoes while permethrin actually kills mosquitoes on contact.

Using DEET or Picaridin alone or permethrin alone will not be as effective as using the two in combination. However, using DEET or Picaridin alone may be sufficient for most outdoor activities such as going to the park, mowing the lawn, gardening, or relaxing in the backyard. Individuals who will be outdoors for an extended period of time, like hunters and campers, are encouraged to use the combination of DEET or Picaridin and permethrin.

There are alternative repellents such as combinations of soybean oil, geranium oil and coconut oil and lemon eucalyptus that have been shown to repel mosquitoes, but only for short periods of time. Before using any repellent read and follow all label directions.

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by getting rid of items that hold water. Repair broken screens and windows on your home.

Support your community mosquito control programs.

Author(s): Kim Cassel (SD)

(Source: Extension Disaster Education Network - www.eden.lsu.edu/wnv)

Stop Plant Abuse!

David Hillock

There is no argument the summers can be hot in Oklahoma; therefore, just as children should not be left in a closed up car in a parking lot, plants shouldn't be either. Stop plant abuse! During this time of year, try to make your plant purchases the last activity of the day so you can take them on home. As little as an hour in a hot car can lead to serious leaf burn and collapse in most plants. If you have a long distance to travel make sure they have been well watered before you leave the nursery. Larger plants that must be hauled in open pickup trucks or trailers should be covered to reduce desiccation.

New Educational Services for County Extension Educators!

David Hillcok

Recently we worked with Ag Communications to provide access to PowerPoint presentations used by our department as well as others. These PowerPoint presentations are now accessible through the Print on Demand System (PODS). You will need to log into PODS using your county username and password to access these presentations. Once in PODS you will notice five different categories including "PowerPoint Presentations." Click on that folder to see the list of departments and choose the one you are looking for. Currently there are only three departments with presentations posted; Horticulture has five available with more to be added in the near future.

Feel free to use these presentations as you please. They are there to help you with your educational programming. You can save them onto your own computer so you can tweak them

as necessary to address individual audiences; otherwise they can be used as is. Each presentation will be managed similar to other publications where they will be reviewed regularly and updated as needed to keep them current.

So try it out and let us know what you think. We will try to keep you posted when new presentations are available but don't hesitate to visit now and then to see what is new. And, if there is a presentation you need that is not posted, please let us know. More than likely we have one already hiding somewhere or we can create a new one.

Upcoming Horticulture Events

Horticulture Therapy Conference

July 11, 2006, OSU, Stillwater Campus

Contact Mike Schnelle at 405-744-7361 or mike.schnelle@okstate.edu.

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