

Madison County Horticulture Newsletter

Pay Dirt

HORTICULTURE

August 2011



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Extension Service
Madison County**
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Hello Horticulturalists!

Summer has come on with a vengeance. Be sure to stay cool and hydrated. If you are irrigating, it is best to do so during the day so that the plant has a chance to dry. Remember, the longer foliage stays wet, the more likely it is for disease to develop.

Keep it cool,

Amanda Sears

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Madison County Herb Club

Monday, August 8, 6:30 p.m.

The Madison County Herb Club will be making herbal wreaths. Everyone is welcome, bring a friend!

Gardeners of Madison County

Monday, August 15, 7:00 p.m.

David Taylor, a botanist with the Daniel Boone National Forest, will talk about native shrubs and small trees and their uses in the landscape. Everyone is welcome.

Ag Expo: Fun For The Whole Family!

Mark your calendars for Thursday, September 8, 2011, 4:30 to 7 pm!

The Madison County Cooperative Extension Service is holding an Ag Expo at the Madison County Fairgrounds. I will be there along with Master Gardeners to answer any horticulture questions you may have. Feel free to bring in samples for us to see.

Activities Include:

- Q & A Horticulture Booth
- Farmer's Market Vendors and eating local information
- Farming Demonstration for Kids
- Insect collecting and ID
- **FREE FOOD!**
- **Door prizes and contests**
- Quilt Square
- Local Agribusiness Displays
- Hay Wrapper Demonstration
- No-Till Drill Demonstration
- Soil Testing Information
- Hay Testing
- Quilt Square Project
- Madison County Cooperative Extension Homemakers
- 4-H Means Business Vendors



Food and Fun at Ag Expo!

We are still seeking sponsors, so if you are interested, let us know by calling 859-623-4072. More information will be available in next month's newsletter about this event.

So many tomatoes, so little time...

There are by far more calls concerning growing tomatoes than any other vegetable. While it is common to see disease creeping up our plants this time of year, there are several physiological disorders that can take place as well.

Tomatoes Not Ripening

The optimum temperature range for natural ripening for tomatoes is 68 to 77F. If the average temperature strays from this ideal range, the ripening process will take longer. If temperatures are above 85F for extended times then the tomato plant will not produce lycopene and carotene which are the pigments responsible for the ripe color in tomatoes.

Certain varieties are more sensitive to this problem than others.



Cracking on tomato

Tops of Tomatoes Not Maturing

This condition is called “yellow shoulders”, and is linked to high temperatures as well. The chlorophyll in the top portion of the tomato does not break down properly in the maturation process, leaving the tissue corky and discolored. One way to avoid this problem is to make sure that the fruit are not receiving too much sunlight, but instead covered with leaves. Direct sunlight on the fruit has been shown to increase the likelihood of yellow shoulders. A tomato suffering from yellow shoulder is safe to eat, just cut out the discolored parts.

Blossom-end rot

A common problem is blossom end rot, which is a large black spot on the blossom end of the fruit. The major cause of this condition is fluctuating levels of soil moisture during dry spells. Watering your plants consistently with one inch of water per week will keep this condition at bay. Using mulches will also help. Another cause is excessive nitrogen fertilization.



Blossom End Rot

Cracking

Tomato cracking occurs in some varieties when there is a lot of rain after a dry spell. This is because the tomato absorbs so much water that the fruit wall cracks. Watering tomatoes consistently with one inch of water per week will alleviate this condition.

Blossom drop

Tomato blossom drop is very common with high summer temperatures. Tomatoes will drop blossoms when daytime temperatures in the summer are above 90 degrees F. Blossoms will also drop earlier in the growing season when night temperatures drop below 55 degrees F.



Sunburn

Sunburn

Sunburn is common on tomatoes when the fruit is exposed directly to the sun, usually because the plant has lost leaves. The sunburned areas become tan to white, making the tomato susceptible to disease organisms.

Leaf Curl

Leaves may curl after heavy rain falls. This is most commonly seen in older leaves. The exact cause of this problem is not known. Some varieties are more susceptible to this problem than others.

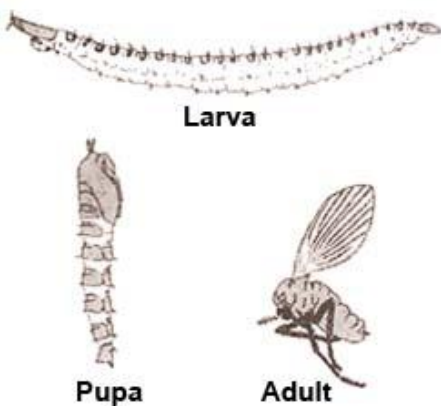
Drain Flies

Drain flies, or moth flies, are small, dark winged, non-biting gnats. These nuisance gnats can be found resting on walls or ceilings; they make short hopping flights if disturbed.

Drain flies can develop in standing water or in the film that builds up in drain traps and pipes. They can appear after a vacation or period of extended travel, or in rooms where drains and plumbing fixtures are not used very often. The few adults resulting from these small, temporary infestations can be killed easily with a swatter or indoor flying insect spray. However, finding many flies over several weeks usually means an established breeding site. Finding and ending a chronic infestation can be challenging.

Groups of eggs are laid on the thin gelatinous surface films that develop in pipes and drains. The elongate, legless larvae feed on this material.

Development from egg to adult takes about 10 days at about 70° F. Actual time varies with temperature; development is slower at lower temperatures but can continue through the year indoors. Drain fly larvae can live most anywhere that water accumulates for two weeks or longer.



Common indoor sites include the thin slime layer that develops on surfaces in infrequently used toilet bowls and tanks, in sink or floor drains, or drain pans under refrigerators. These areas need to be cleaned thoroughly with attention to removing surface films.

It can be hard to recognize breeding sites because the larvae are small and easy to overlook. Emergence of the adults may be detected by the use of simple traps. Clear plastic cups with a very light coating of vegetable oil or petroleum jelly can be inverted over drains for several days to catch emerging adults and to identify breeding sites. If sites are not productive, then expand the search. Drain flies can breed outdoors

during the summer with adults entering homes through open doors or windows. Low, wet areas where air conditioning units drain, or clogged guttering, are excellent places for these insects to develop. These should be checked if adults do not appear to be emerging from within the house.

Control of drain flies should be aimed at eliminating breeding sites. The most effective control method is to clean pipes and traps thoroughly to remove accumulated slime. Regular water movement usually keeps drain flies from breeding. Some commercial cleaning products, such as Vector Bio-5 Drain Cleaner, are labeled to reduce drain fly breeding sites. Do not pour insecticides down drains to kill drain flies.



Drain Fly approximately 1/5 " long

Pumpkin Centerpiece Class

Mike Reed, Agriculture Extension Agent in Powell County, will be teaching a class on how make a centerpiece using live flowers with pumpkins and gourds, similar to the one seen at right.

This class will be held on Thursday, October 13th from 1:30 to 3:00 pm. The cost is \$5.00 . You must pre-register and pay in advance. All materials will be supplied.

To pre-register, call 859-623-4072, and make sure that there is an available seat, then send your registration fee, or come by the Madison County Extension Office to pay your registration fee in person. This class will fill quickly - register soon!



Farmers' Market Celebration!

The Madison County Cooperative Extension will have a booth at the Madison County Farmers' Market on **Saturday, August 6, 2011 from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon.** We will have plenty of information on canning, nutrition, and recipes using ingredients you can buy at the Farmers' Market. We will also be grilling beef (in conjunction with the Madison County Beef Cattle Association) and vegetables and giving free samples (while they last).

I will also be there with Master Gardeners to answer your questions. So feel free to bring in samples or pictures to show us your lawn, garden, tree, or insect problems.

Remember, the Madison County Farmers' Market is located in the parking lot of Lowes, off the Eastern Bypass in Richmond.



Master Gardener: Join Today!



Madison County Cooperative Extension Service will be offering a Master Gardener Certification beginning in September. This is a volunteer training program that lasts fourteen weeks. Participants will meet once a week for

three hours and learn about a different topic in horticulture each week. Once the course work is complete, the participant is expected to complete 30 hours community service in the first year after the class is completed, and ten hours each year thereafter. Most of the volunteer hours will come from activities at the Extension Office.

Classes will begin meeting on Tuesday, September 13, 2011, from 1 to 4 p.m. and will meet every Tuesday after that at the same time. Each class is mandatory, 100% attendance is required, unless worked out with the instructor prior to class.

The cost of the program is \$100 and will cover all required books. If you are interested, contact the Madison County Extension Office at 859-623-4072 and we will send you an application.

This is a great way to meet new people, learn more about horticulture, and help your community!

Caterpillars are on the Crawl

It is that time of year where caterpillars seem to be everywhere. One type that has shown up here at our office is the Walnut caterpillar, seen in the picture below. Another problem caterpillar is fall webworm, which effects the ends of branches of deciduous trees.

If you see caterpillar "nests" in young landscape trees, remove them or prune out the branch. Defoliation on a young tree can lead to other problems. Established, healthy trees are more able to withstand damage over the course of a few seasons.

Remember, use of a broad-spectrum insecticide can cause harm because it also kills the beneficial insects in the area.

If you do use an insecticide, young, small caterpillars are easier to kill than large ones. Most insecticides will work against caterpillars, just be sure to read the label before spraying. If you

have questions about these insects, please call the Madison County Extension Office at 859-623-4072.



"Nest" of walnut caterpillar

Got Questions? We've Got Answers

- Soil Testing
- Insect Identification
- Plant Disease Diagnosis
- Plant Identification

For Horticulture questions, please contact me at 859-623-4072, or e-mail, amanda.sears@uky.edu. You may also stop by and visit me at the Madison County Extension Center.