

Horticulture 2011 Newsletter No. 15 April 12, 2011

Video of the week: [Planting A Tree](#)

TURFGRASS

Seeding Cool-Season Lawns in the Spring



There are several reasons Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue lawns are better seeded in the fall than in the spring.

- Some of the most serious lawn weeds such as crabgrass and foxtail emerge in the spring. Since they are warm-season weeds, they will outcompete and often crowd out young, tender cool-season grasses during the heat of summer.

- The most stressful time of year for cool-season grasses is summer, not winter. Poorly established lawns may die out during the summer because of heat and drought stress.

- A lawn often gets more use during the summer, leading to increased compaction and traffic stress.

If an area needs to be established in the spring, sodding is much more likely to be successful than seeding. Sodding provides stronger, more mature plants that are better able to withstand stress and prevent weed invasion. (WU)

Keep Mower Blades Sharp

Lawn-mowing season is here. Remember that dull blades give the lawn a whitish cast. A dull blade does not cut cleanly but rather shreds the ends of the leaf blades. The shredded ends dry out, giving the lawn that whitish look. A sharp mower blade is even more important when the turf starts putting up seed heads in a month or so. The seed head stems are much tougher than the grass blades and more



likely to shred. Under normal use, mower blades should be sharpened about every 10 hours of use. (WU)

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. 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 Hi-Yield Grass Killer and Monterey Grass Getter. (WU)

Remove Blossoms on Newly Planted Strawberries



Spring-bearing strawberry plants that were set out this spring should have blossoms pinched off. New plants have a limited amount of energy. If blossoms remain on the plants, energy that should go to runner development is used to mature fruit instead. For an adequate strawberry plant population and a good crop next year, early runner development is necessary. Early runners will produce the most strawberries next spring. Newly planted everbearing plants also should have fruits removed for the first 4 to 6 weeks after planting so

they develop a strong root system. (WU)

ORNAMENTALS

Cedar-Apple Rust Active

Many people have noticed the large, bright orange, jelly-like, tendril covered balls on cedar trees since the rains started last week. These cedar-apple rust galls release millions of spores that can infect apples and crabapples with the rust disease. There is a related disease named cedar-quince rust that infects hawthorn trees.



Unprotected, susceptible apples, crabapples, and hawthorns are likely to become infected. Though not yet visible, it is impossible to cure what is already there. But many of the newer crabapples are naturally resistant. Though they may show some signs of the disease, they won't defoliate like susceptible varieties. Even susceptible varieties that defoliate will develop a new set of leaves if they were healthy before infection. Significant damage to crabapples is rare. But fruiting apples, which pour a great deal of energy into the fruit, may be stressed more severely. It will be important to pamper them this summer by keeping them watered. It is also recommended to prevent further infections by applying fungicides through Memorial Day. Several fungicides, including Banner, Systhane, Rubigan, Funginex and Bayleton, applied on a 14- to 21- day interval are effective in controlling rust. However, most of these products are only available to commercial applicators. Homeowners may use triadimefon (Green Light Fung Away), propiconazole (Fertilome Liquid Systemic Fungicide) or myclobutanil sold as Immunox (same active ingredient as Systhane). Chlorothalonil is also labeled for rust, but it is not as effective as the other products listed and cannot be used on apples. Only myclobutanil can be used on fruiting apples. Fungicide applications to the leaves of hawthorn, apple, and crabapple must continue as long as the cedar galls remain active (jelly-like). If you don't want to mess with fungicide applications, use flowering crabapple or apple varieties that are resistant and avoid the use of any hawthorns in areas where cedar-quince rust has been a problem. (WU)

Borers on Pines?



If you see a row of holes on pine trees, the problem is not borers. Borer holes will be randomly spaced over the trunk. Holes that are in a horizontal (most common) or vertical row are caused by the feeding of the yellow-bellied sapsucker. This woodpecker makes shallow holes and then feeds on the sap released from the wounds or on insects attracted to the site. Holes may vary in size as illustrated by the two photos above.

Other trees this bird often attacks include apples, maples, and Bradford pear, but about any tree species is a potential target. Surprisingly, certain trees may become favorites to the exclusion of nearby trees of the same species. Damage to mature, established trees is usually slight and temporary though small trees may be girdled and killed.

These birds are migratory and are usually present from October to April. Therefore, they should not cause any more damage until next fall. If you feel that damage is severe enough to warrant control, you may want to try one of the following remedies next October.

- Wrap the trunk with fine wire mesh in the area of damage. This may discourage them if left in place for several months. The mesh **MUST** be adjusted every six months or removed when no longer needed. If the mesh is left in place, the tree will likely be girdled. The mesh may potentially be more deadly than the sapsucker.

- Use Tanglefoot on the area of damage. This is a sticky material that is applied to tree trunks to capture insects that crawl up the trunk. Yellow-bellied sapsuckers do not like to put their feet in the sticky material. This material may lose stickiness due to dust or other materials and require additional applications. (WU)

Ash/Lilac Borer

If you have had problems with canes or stems of lilac and privet suddenly wilting, or ash trees that show borer holes in the trunk and larger branches, the ash/lilac borer may be to blame. This insect causes the base of infested lilac stems to swell and the bark to separate from the wood. A fine sawdust-like material is present around holes in the canes. Ash and mountain ash also are affected. The borer attacks the trunk, which may cause bark to swell and crack if there are repeated infestations.

Ash/lilac borers overwinter as larvae in infested trees and shrubs. Moths generally begin to emerge in mid to late April. Emergence peaks in May, dwindles by mid to late June and ends by the first week of July. The moth has clear wings and resembles a wasp. There is one generation per year.

Public and commercially managed properties often use pheromone traps to determine the presence of adults. Spray treatments are started seven to 10 days after capture of the first moths. Sprays also can be timed using phenology, the practice of timing one event by another.

The first spray for ash/lilac borer should be applied when the Vanhoutte spirea is in full to late bloom, probably by about May 1 this year. Apply a second spray four weeks after the first. Thoroughly treat the trunk and larger limbs of ash or the lower portion of the stems of lilac or privet. Heavily infested ash should be cut and burned during the fall and winter.

Infested stems of lilac or privet should be removed as well. Bifenthrin or permethrin (Hi-Yield Garden, Pet, and Livestock Insect Control and 38 Plus Turf, Termite and Ornamental Insect Control) are labeled for control. Though there are a number of homeowner products that contain one or the other of these two active ingredients, the permethrin products listed above are the only ones I've found that specifically lists the ash/lilac borer on the label with directions for control. (WU)

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