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HORTICULTURE



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Evidence of Twig Girdlers Can Be Apparent Now

Twig girdlers are gray-brown wood boring beetles with a pair of antennae that are about as long as their 3/4-inch long bodies. They are active from mid-August into October when the female lays her eggs. Twig girdlers can be responsible for hanging or fallen twigs on or around a variety of trees, including hackberry poplar, linden, redbud, dogwood, and various fruit and nut trees. Heavy infestations can disfigure landscape trees.

Damage and Insect Development

The female twig girdler begins by chewing a deep V-shaped groove around a small twig and laying an egg in the twig beyond the cut. The girdled portion of the twig that contains the egg will soon fall to the ground. Twig girdler damage can be recognized by the smooth cut on the outside of the twig near the bark and a ragged center where the twig breaks. The larva will tunnel into the dead twig and feed until winter. Insect development will resume in spring. Ultimately, larva will pupate in the twig and emerge as an adult late in summer.



Figure 1. Twig girdler and handiwork (Photo: James Solomon, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org)

Management

Fallen twigs contain larvae of this insect so they should be collected and destroyed as soon as practical, but before early May of the following year. Hanging twigs should be pruned out and destroyed if practical. An application of Sevin at the first sign of girdling, and repeated twice at 2-week intervals, may reduce damage to infested trees. The insecticide kills the adult females before they can lay eggs but will not penetrate the twigs to kill deposited eggs or live larvae. By Lee Townsend, Extension Entomologist

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Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.

Wreath Making Workshop



Thursday December 8, 2022

9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Washington County Extension Office

245 Corporate Drive, Springfield KY

Call 859-336-7741 To Register

Come make your own wreath with live greenery!

Participants can stop by anytime during the day.

Cost \$15.00 Bow Included



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November To Do's

*When the ground freezes mound soil or mulch over the bud union of your roses to keep them from freezing out. This isn't necessary if you have roses on their own root meaning they weren't grafted.

*Apply 3 inches of mulch to your perennial bed after the ground freezes to prevent them from heaving out of the ground when it freezes and thaws.

*Plant any spring flowering hardy bulbs now.

*Extend harvest of cool season vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, radish, turnip, beet, lettuce, spinach, etc. by covering them with remay fabric or tobacco



canvas.

*Cut back asparagus tops after they have frozen back. Apply a fresh layer of mulch after the ground has frozen.

*It's not too late to plant a cover crop of winter wheat or rye.

*Discard and compost any vegetable plant material. Use the compost on the flower garden if you aren't sure you have a hot compost pile. This way you won't risk introducing insects and disease next year.

Winter Cover Crops Can Improve Soil

No matter how small your garden is, it can play an important role in absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and temporarily locking it in the soil. There are a number of ways you can improve on this natural cycle, but at this time of year, the best way is through a cover crop.

Soil left bare over the winter months is susceptible to weed growth, erosion that can wash away valuable nutrients and a loss of carbon into the atmosphere. Soil nitrogen left over from this year's crop is subject to leaching due to fall and winter precipitation. Planting a fast-growing cover crop can help prevent these problems. The term crop in this context may be misleading. These plants are not meant to be harvested. Instead, they add important nutrients, promote beneficial bacterial growth and stabilize the soil.

Easy and effective cover crops that can be planted at this time of year include annual rye grass, hairy vetch, red clover and winter rye.

Annual rye and winter rye are particularly effective as late-season cover crops. They germinate quickly and are an effective barrier against weeds. Grasses, however, do not capture nitrogen in their root system, so consider pairing rye with a legume, such as red clover or hairy vetch.

Hairy vetch and red clover work well as a cover plant, whether paired with rye or by themselves. Being legumes, they are excellent at fixing nitrogen in the soil. They are also prolific enough to reduce weeds and prevent erosion. In the spring, their blossoms will attract bees to your garden. If you worry about hairy vetch or clover reseeding in your lawn – though they're pretty plants and would add biodiversity and important nutrients – just cut them back before they bloom.

Come spring, you have two options. You can turn over your cover crop into the soil, allowing your vegetables or flowers to benefit from the nutrients it will slowly release. Or you can cut it back and let it die naturally, planting directly into the crop and using it as a mulch to continue to suppress weed growth and supply nutrients to your garden. Depending on which cover you plant, this may be easier said than done, because some, particularly grasses, are difficult to directly sow or plant into.

Fall Lawnmower Maintenance Tips

The last lawn mowing of the season is probably upon (if you haven't stopped already). This means you should do some winterizing maintenance to your mowers, weed eaters, tillers, and blowers.

Following a few maintenance rules now will save you time and frustration next spring when you try to start your lawnmower. There is no bigger frustration in the spring than having an overgrown lawn, time to cut it, and a mower that doesn't work. Maintenance now will help your mower run smoother and increase the overall life of the motor.

The first maintenance procedure is to change the oil. This will prevent sludge that will cause internal engine parts and seals to deteriorate. Fresh oil should be added with the proper viscosity. The owner's manual will list the appropriate oil.

Check the air filter. Late fall is a good time to change or clean the air filter if you didn't do it during the mowing season. A dirty filter will restrict air flow into the engine and cause it to run rich. Also, check the spark plug to make sure it is not fouled and is properly gapped.

Don't leave gasoline in the fuel system at the end of the season. When gasoline sets in an engine during winter residues can form that clog the small fuel jets in the carburetor. There are two approaches to this problem, drain out the fuel from the engine or use a gas stabilizer.

After you drain the fuel, start and run the engine to remove gas from the fuel lines and carburetor; then, let the engine cool, take the spark plug out of the cylinder and put about one tablespoon of oil into the cylinder. With the spark plug wire off, pull the starter cord or use the starter to turn the engine over several times to distribute the oil over the cylinder and piston's internal surfaces.

A gas stabilizer will keep gas fresh up to two years when added to the gas can right after it is purchased. You will not have to drain the fuel from the fuel lines if you use a gas stabilizer. However, you do need to let the engine operate several minutes to be sure the fresh gas gets into the carburetor.

Now is also a good time to sharpen or replace the blade on lawnmowers. A sharp blade is more efficient and uses energy. It also cuts the grass blade rather than tearing and chewing it which makes for less brown cut ends and a better looking lawn.

When performing engine maintenance chores you should keep in mind the rest of the mower. You should lubricate wheel bearings and throttle cables; grease height-adjuster brackets, tighten all nuts and bolts, and check belts, filters, and safety shields. Clean the outside of the engine and deck area because caked grass traps moisture, causing metal mower decks to rust. It also reduces a mowers service life.

Other tools such as shovels and rakes also need yearly maintenance. These tools should be cleaned well and have a thin coat of oil rubbed on the metal surfaces to prevent rust. The handles may need a new coat of polyurethane to keep out any moisture that may get into the wood and to keep the handle smooth. These tools like your lawnmowers and tillers will last longer with a good maintenance program and a dry storage place.

Plant Of The Month: Somerset Maple

Fall Color: Eye catching bright orange and red

Foliage Color: Green with hints of red as fall approaches

Genus & Species: *Acer rubrum* 'Somerset'

Growth Rate: Moderate to fast

Mature Height: 35 to 50 ft.

Mature Spread: 30 to 40 ft.

Soil Type: Needs acidic soil for best color production



Lawn Fertilization

Fertilizing your lawn is a good way to maintain a healthy turf. You should fertilize every year. Fertilizing your lawn helps maintain a uniform, dense, green, turf and reduces weed problems. The good effects of fertilizing can be lost if you fertilize at the wrong time. Low maintenance turf requires one application of fertilization in late October or anytime in November for most grass types.

Don't guess what your lawn needs! Get a soil test done. This can be done through the extension office. The cost is FREE, and we have literature on hand to show you how to take the sample. With a soil sample a good recommendation can be made on how much lime, phosphate, and potash your lawn will need. You should have your soil tested every few years.



Soil tests measure several important elements, however it doesn't measure nitrogen. Turf is highly dependent on nitrogen but applying it at the wrong time of year can severely damage it. As a general rule you should apply 1 pound of actual nitrogen per 1000 square feet of lawn. If you are using ammonium nitrate for your nitrogen source that would be 3 pounds per 1000 square feet or 2 pounds if using urea. Never apply fertilizer when the grass is wet, it will increase the likelihood of burn.

The time of year to fertilize your lawn is dependent on the types of grasses you are growing. Fall and early winter is the best time to apply nitrogen fertilizer to cool season grasses such as fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, and ryegrass. Most lawns in Kentucky are made up of these grasses. By fertilizing cool season grasses in the fall they will develop better root systems, become very dense, and will have better fall and winter color. During mild winters the turf will maintain an even green color all winter.

By eliminating spring fertilization you will prevent a heavy flush of growth in the early spring, reduce the frequency of mowing during spring, develop a better root system, reduce disease, and develop a more heat-tolerant, and weed free turf.

Late spring-early summer is the best time to fertilize warm season grasses such as Bermuda grass and zoysiagrass. These grasses don't grow until it gets warm; therefore fall and winter fertilization would be useless. Warm season grasses have been used on several area athletic fields because they form a dense mat, however they turn brown after the first hard frost and stay that way until May of June.

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November Recipe Of The Month

Twice-Baked Acorn Squash

- **2 medium** acorn squash (1 - 1 1/2 pounds)
- Nonstick cooking spray
- **2 cups** fresh spinach, chopped
- **4 strips** turkey bacon, cooked and crumbled
- **1/2 cup** grated parmesan cheese
- **1** thinly sliced green onion
- **1 tablespoon** olive oil
- **2 teaspoons** garlic powder
- **1/2 teaspoon** salt
- **1/4 teaspoon** black pepper
- **1/4 teaspoon** nutmeg

Wash hands with warm water and soap, **scrubbing** for at least 20 seconds. **Preheat** oven to 350 degrees F. **Cut** squash in half; **discard** seeds. **Place** squash flesh side down on a baking sheet **coated** with nonstick cooking spray. **Bake** for 50 to 55 minutes or until tender. **Carefully scoop out** squash, leaving a 1/4-inch-thick shell. In a large bowl, **combine** the squash pulp with the remaining ingredients. **Spoon into** shells. **Bake** at 350 degrees F for 25 to 30 minutes or until heated through and top is golden brown. **Store** leftovers in the refrigerator within two hours.

Yield: 4 servings.
Serving size: 1/2 of an acorn squash.

Nutrition Analysis: 210 calories, 9g total fat, 3g saturated fat, 25mg cholesterol, 710mg sodium, 27g total carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 1g total sugars, 0g added sugars, 9g protein, 0% DV vitamin D, 15% DV calcium, 15% DV iron, 20% DV potassium.

