JUNE 2025

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UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

June 2	**Grow Appalachia Meeting - EXT. Office 5:00PM**
June 3	**Floyd County Beekeepers Association Meeting Extension Office 6:00pm**
June 10	**Grow Appalachia Meeting - EXT. Office 5:00PM & ANR Development Council (Phase 1) Meeting @ EXT. Office– 6PM**
June 12	**CEC & District Board Meeting - EXT. Office 5:30PM**
June 13	**Farmers Market ARH Highlands-9AM-2PM**
June 19	**Grow Appalachia Meeting - EXT. Office 5:00PM**
June 24	**Farmers Market ARH Highlands-9AM-2PM**
June 27	**Independence Day Holiday Observed EXTENSION OFFICE CLOSED**
July 4	

Other programs will be announced at a later time.

Kentucky Attorney General's Office

9:00am-1:00pm

361 N Lake Drive, Prestonsburg, KY

Every Saturday beginning June 1st

Other locations include:

Highlands ARH Hospital

8:00am-2:00pm

5000 KY Route 321, Prestonsburg, KY

Every other Friday

Chad Allen
County Extension Agent for
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Harvesting Blueberries and Blackberries for Full Flavor

Summer months are the harvest season for blueberries and blackberries, both of which have the potential to grow very well in Kentucky. Blueberries, which are native to North America, are harvested from early June through early August. Blackberries are harvested from mid-June to early October. These delicious fruits offer newly recognized health benefits, but best of all, they capture the essence of summer in their sweetness.

Blueberries can be excellent choices for both home and commercial growing. They have the advantage of being as long-lived as fruit trees, with few pests or diseases. They also have a late blossom time, so frost rarely causes damage on well-chosen sites. Blackberries also have a long fruit-bearing life and will produce for a decade or longer in Kentucky.

Blueberries require an acidic soil, which means that most soils in Kentucky will need to be amended to properly suit their needs. They also require a high organic material content, so peat moss (do not substitute other materials) should be mixed with the soil at the time of planting. Irrigation is necessary during the summer because blueberries have a shallow, limited root system. Insufficient irrigation can compromise both this years and next year's crop.

Blackberries need to be pruned, fertilized, and irrigated. Pruning varies, depending on the type of bramble; for specific information on the proper pruning for your blackberry canes, see the UK's publication "Growing Blackberries and Raspberries in Kentucky."

Blueberries in a cluster do not ripen at the same time, and only fully ripe berries should be picked. Fruit needs at least one to two days after turning blue to develop full flavor and can be left on the bush for up to 10 days without a loss in size. Flavor does not improve once the fruit is picked; consequently, blueberries should be left on the bush for as long as possible to develop sweetness and flavor.

For best results at harvest, pick carefully, rolling blueberries from the cluster with the thumb into the palm of the hand. Handle as little as possible to avoid rubbing off the bloom (the light waxy finish on the skin) and reduce bruising. Harvest only when berries are dry. Refrigerate promptly to slow ripening and decay.

Blackberries picked for commercial sale are picked "firm ripe," but home growers have the luxury of picking soft, fully ripe, and juicy fruit. Pick fruit twice a week, and during hot rainy weeks, every other day. Harvest after the morning dew has dried. Pick carefully to avoid bruising the fruit, and, as with blueberries, refrigerate quickly to limit fruit rot. The sweetest, best tasting fruit is produced during dry sunny weather when nights are cooler.

The source of this article was John Strang, UK Extension Fruit and Vegetable Specialist. For more information, see UK's publications on growing blueberries and blackberries available online at http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/ho/ho60/HO60.PDF and http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/ho/ho15/

Controlling Flies on the Farm

Flies can be a problem on farms during the summertime especially around livestock. Some warm weather and breeding sites are all they need to reproduce in large numbers but there are ways to reduce fly problems.

For fly control on cattle in pastures, ear tags containing insecticides should provide season-long protection as the tags move with the animals from field to field. This is a good alternative if cattle are being moved often. These work especially well for horn fly control and can reduce irritation from face flies. Cattle and pasture can be sprayed down using a fly-control mineral spray. Some sprays can also help with nuisance tick problems as we will see serious effects of ticks this season.

If you are using back-rubbers, either oilers or dust bags, for control in more permanent pastures, it is important to check them regularly. The dusts can cake up especially after rains, so it is important to make sure dust is loose in the bag and dusting the animals as they move under it. Oilers typically need to be checked as well because they can dry out. Checking them regularly will ensure they are providing a high level of control for your cattle.

Another area where fly control can be a problem is around barns and feedlots. It takes very little dropped feed mixed with some hay or manure to make excellent breeding sites for house and stable flies.

Houseflies are a nuisance, and they can also carry a number of diseases of humans and animals as they move from site to site. The stable fly is a little bit larger than a house fly and is a blood feeder. They tend to feed on the lower legs of animals. If you see cattle stomping their feet and you look at their legs, you will likely see stable flies feeding. The painful bites they produce reduce the efficiency of your animals.

Fly control really is based on manure management and removal of breeding sites. Warm weather and frequent rains that keep even small amounts of manure and feed wet, it is important to remove these breeding sites as quickly as possible to reduce fly numbers as quickly as possible. Residual fly sprays or fly baits can be used to knock down fly problems but are only a temporary solution. There is a new rotational fly control program that is now available, for more information on this feel free to reach out to me.

For more information on controlling flies on the farm, contact me at the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service Floyd County Office. The source of this article was Dr. Lee Townsend, UK Extension Entomologist.

Good Care of Hanging Baskets

If that hanging basket plant you got for Mother's Day has the doldrums, a regular diet of plant food and water will rejuvenate it in no time. Inadequate fertility is a common problem in hanging baskets because plants eventually use all fertilizer in the soil. Most hanging baskets need to be fertilized every one or two weeks during the peak growing season. Use a houseplant fertilizer according to the manufacturer's recommended level.

Hanging baskets also need to be frequently watered. How often depends on how much shade and rainfall they receive. Some baskets need water every day or every other day, while others might need water only every three to four days. Check soil moisture to a depth of several inches with your finger. Regardless of how often you water a hanging basket, be sure to do it thoroughly so you see water dripping from drainage holes.

You can rejuvenate hanging baskets by cutting back leggy plants. Pruning one-third to one-half the stem length will force new growth, causing plants to branch out more and flower again. Adequate fertility is critical in this situation because removing stems eliminates nutrients stored in plant tissues.

The source of this article was Dr. Rick Durham, UK Horticulture Specialist. To learn more about home and garden topics, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Blossom End Rot Can Ruin Tomato Harvest

Nothing can ruin a mouth-watering tomato more than reaching for one on the vine only to find an ugly, flattened spot on it. If the ugly spot is located on the fruit opposite the stem end, it is likely blossom end rot, a disease caused by a lack of calcium that commonly occurs in tomatoes but can also affect eggplant, peppers, and many cucurbits.

Blossom end rot spots develop into dark brown, leathery decays that may affect half of the tomato. Calcium is an essential part of the chemical "glue" that binds cells together within the fruit. When fruits are enlarging rapidly, sufficient amounts of calcium do not reach the end of the fruit. This causes cells to come apart, resulting in a rot or decay in that area. Calcium does not move easily from other plant parts, so any disruption in the plant's uptake can result in a deficiency.

Soils in Kentucky are rarely deficient in calcium, but water plays a critical role in the plant's uptake and distribution of calcium. So, maintaining an even supply of moisture is important in controlling blossom end rot. However, to be sure that a soil is not calcium-deficient, soil tests should be taken, and if needed, it can be applied as lime prior to planting.

Irrigate plants as needed and use mulch to conserve soil moisture. Irrigate on a consistent basis. Do not allow plants to become stressed from too much or too little water. Avoid wetting foliage as much as possible as this could encourage fungal and bacterial diseases to develop on the plant.

Trickle or drip irrigation is an excellent way of getting water to plants without the risk of wetting the foliage or splashing soil onto the foliage which can also lead to disease problems.

In addition, excessive amounts of ammonium tend to depress a plant's calcium uptake. Avoid using urea or fertilizers high in ammonium. Instead, choose fertilizers high in nitrate. Calcium nitrate is an excellent nitrogen fertilizer, although it is more expensive than other nitrogen sources.

For more information on how to keep diseases from dampening your gardening enthusiasm, contact me at the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office. The sources of this article were Kenny Seebold and John Hartman, UK Extension Plant Pathologists.

Controlling Mosquitos Where You Live

Controlling mosquitoes is challenging to say the least. You may even think you are fighting a never-ending battle. With mosquito-borne diseases like the Zika virus becoming more prevalent, it is even more important to know how to take control of these pests around your home environment. Learning to do a few simple things could help protect you from more than the itchiness of a mosquito bite.

All mosquitos need standing water to develop through their larval stages and that does not necessarily mean a lake or pond. It also includes bird baths, kiddie pools and even discarded soda pop cans. The key to controlling them around your home is to stop them from breeding in the first place.

Some things you can do include:

- Drain and remove trash, bottles and any debris that holds water.
- Recycle any unused containers that could collect water, especially old tires.
- Change water weekly in bird baths, wading pools, watering troughs and animal bowls.

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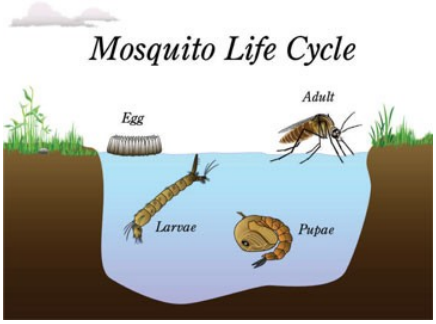

- Fill in holes, depressions, and puddles in your yard.
- Make sure your culverts and ditches are draining properly.
- Check and clean out clogged gutters to ensure drainage.
- Keep ornamental ponds stocked with fish.
- Fix leaky hoses and faucets.
- Drain water from flowerpots and garden containers.
- Turn over wheelbarrows, buckets and other items that collect water.
- Adjust tarps covering woodpiles, boats, and grills to remove standing water.
- Encourage natural enemies of mosquitoes, such as warblers, swallows, martins, and other insect feeding birds.

It is a good idea to start these practices early in the season. Just because the mosquitoes are not biting yet, does not mean that they are not developing.

The source of this article was Lee Townsend, UK Entomologist. For more information about mosquito control, visit http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Entomology/entdept/faculty/Brown/index_files/Page601.htm or contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

You Can Control Corn Earworm in Sweet Corn

One of the most potentially damaging problems facing sweet corn producers is controlling insects that feed on the ear. During the summer months, if you grow sweet corn, you need to watch for corn earworm.

Earworms are moderately hairy larvae that vary in color from yellow to green to red to brownish black, but they all have a brown head without markings and numerous microscopic spines covering their body. You may find them feeding in the ear tips following silking. The larvae are cannibalistic, rarely is there more than one per ear or whorl.

Corn earworm is potentially the greatest threat to sweet corn production in our state. Because it feeds directly on the ear, is difficult to control and is common in high numbers at the end of the season, most insecticides used on sweet corn target this pest. Once earworm becomes established within the ear, controlling it is impossible. Earworms spend a relatively short period of their life feeding in a site that can receive an adequate insecticide application. An effective program, especially for corn planted later in the season, is necessary to ensure a minimal amount of damaged ears.

Currently, the primary insecticides used for corn earworm control in sweet corn belong to the pyrethroid class. There is concern that corn earworm in some regions of the Midwest has developed resistance to this class of insecticides. Some field failures have been reported.

You can start a preventive program against corn earworms when 10 percent of the ears are silked. Repeat sprays at three-to-five-day intervals until 90 percent of the silks have wilted. This strategy should give a high percentage of worm-free ears during early and midseason. Control is more difficult late in the season. Even shortening spray intervals may produce only 90 percent clean ears.

The source of this article was Ric Bessin, UK Entomologist. For more information on sweet corn pest control, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Cattle in Ponds

Throughout my life I always wondered when it was hot outside why the cattle would stay in the pond? You're probably thinking that is a crazy question and the answer is as simply as because its hot. Well, I used to believe the same thing, but the answer is actually not that simple. If you are like me then most of our grass in our pastures is Kentucky 31 tall fescue. I mean why not. It's cheap and it will just about grow on a rock. That is all true except for the downside. The downside is Kentucky 31 has endophyte in it. This raises their internal body temperature. So not only is the animal dealing with the outside heat but also the internal body temperature as well. Kentucky 31 tall fescue is an invasive and aggressive grass. If you are reseeding pastures, I would recommend Kentucky 32 because it is also a tall fescue but does not contain endophyte and isn't as invasive as the Kentucky 31.

Prevent Disease in Your Roses

Spectacular blooms and diverse types and varieties make roses a favorite of many Kentucky gardeners. However, warm, humid growing conditions create an ideal environment for serious problems each year with black spot and powdery mildew. Gardeners can nip these fungal diseases in the bud by planting resistant or tolerant varieties and creating an unfavorable environment for disease development. It may be necessary to use fungicides throughout the summer, especially on susceptible varieties. The Floyd County Cooperative Extension Service has materials on resistant and tolerant varieties. Nursery catalogues also publish this information.

To reduce foliar diseases, try to avoid conditions where rose leaves remain wet for an extended period of time. Do not wet foliage when watering plants and allow sufficient time for leaves to dry before nighttime. Prune shading vegetation from overhanging trees and provide space between rose bushes to improve ventilation and sunlight penetration.

Sanitation also is important for managing rose diseases. If you have not already removed and destroyed old leaves, winter-damaged canes, and debris, do it as soon as possible. These items are a source of disease-causing organisms.

Many fungicides are labeled to control rose diseases. Always check the label to be sure the product controls black spot and powdery mildew and read and follow application instructions. To maintain disease suppression, repeat fungicide applications at 10- to 14-day intervals throughout the growing season.

Black spot produces dark, circular spots with fringed borders on the top or bottom of leaves. Infected leaves often turn yellow and drop, reducing flower numbers and quality. White, powdery fungal growth is a sign of powdery mildew. It is easy to locate on such plant surfaces as leaves, stems, and buds. Infected leaves may be small and deformed.

Two other important, but less common, foliar diseases of roses are downy mildew and rust. Downy mildew produces lesions that are an off-color, later turning purplish brown. It leads to defoliation. Rust-colored spots on leaves and stems indicate, rust. Severely infected leaves may shrivel and turn brown.

Another summertime disease is rose rosette, which affects roses throughout Kentucky. It is not a fungal disease. This disease is spread by a microscopic mite. The primary host is multiflora rose, a thorny plant native to Asia and introduced into the United States as a conservation plant and “living fence.” The disease also affects cultivated roses.

Early symptoms are increased growth of shoots, which appear more succulent than normal and develop excessive thorns, and distorted, dwarfed leaves. The affected shoots are not winter hardy and produce few blooms. Rose plants eventually die. Early disease detection is essential to keep rose rosette from spreading. Remove and destroy any infected roses to keep the disease from healthy plants nearby. Carefully remove diseased plants to avoid scattering disease-carrying mites to other plants. Since multiflora roses might be a disease reservoir, remove and destroy any located within one-eighth of a mile from the rose bed.

The source of this article was Nicole Ward Gauthier, UK Plant Pathology Extension Associate Professor. For more information on growing roses, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Help Livestock Beat the Heat

Humans are not the only ones that suffer from the heat of summer. Farm animals are feeling the heat, too. There are ways to know when your livestock may be in danger from the heat and what to do to reduce their plight. The University of Kentucky Agricultural Weather Center provides warnings of the potential danger to livestock. Livestock become uncomfortable when the heat index reaches about 90 degrees. The heat index is a combination of air temperature and humidity and is used to describe how it feels outside.

The Agricultural Weather Center regularly monitors heat indices across the state and provides an index of its own – the Livestock Heat Stress Index – to help producers know when heat stress could create a problem for their animals. The county-by-county index indicates three levels of heat stress: no stress, danger stress and emergency stress.

Periods of heat stress call for livestock producers to be vigilant in making sure their animals are adequately prepared. One of the most important things producers can do is provide cool, clean drinking water. Providing an adequate source of drinking water helps to keep animals' internal body temperatures within normal limits. Above-ground water lines need to be shaded so they do not can act as solar water heaters and make the water too hot to drink.

It is also important for animals to have shade and for buildings to be as open as possible for adequate ventilation. Sprinkler systems that periodically spray a cool mist on the animals can also be beneficial. It is best to avoid working animals during periods of heat stress. Producers should also avoid transporting livestock during high levels of heat stress. When livestock must be transported, haul fewer animals per load. Planning trips so the animals can be loaded immediately before leaving and unloaded quickly upon arrival can likewise help minimize the risk.

Producers who want to keep up-to-date with the livestock heat stress index can access the Agricultural Weather Center's Web site http://wwwagwx.ca.uky.edu or go to the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office's Web site https://floyd.ca.uky.edu and click on the weather link. The sources of this article were Tom Priddy and Robert Fehr, UK Extension.

Provide the Right Amount of Water to Summer Veggies

You might think vegetables will be the best quality only if they get adequate water throughout the growing season. It is important that you water vegetables well while they are being established and during flowering, but sometimes the best quality garden produce results when water is somewhat limited. All vegetables need a good supply of soil moisture before and during flowering and during fruit development. For crops such as cabbage and broccoli, this period is during establishment and head development.

One to two inches of water per week, in the form of natural rainfall or supplemental irrigation is enough for most vegetables during this time. For vegetables you continually harvest, such as eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, summer squash and green beans, it is important to keep an adequate supply of water to the plant. This ensures even soil moisture throughout the growing season, and it will keep plants productive longer. Consistent soil moisture on tomatoes will also help prevent blossom end rot and cracking of fruit.

You should withhold water from potatoes once the vines have begun to die. The tubers under the soil are entering dormancy at that time and excess water or fertilizer may cause regrowth or cracking of the potatoes, which makes them less suitable for storage.

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Cucumbers will become bitter without a good supply of moisture throughout the entire growing season. On the other hand, melons will produce a sweeter fruit when they are kept drier once the fruit has reached about half of its expected final size. For melons, do not cut off water completely. Continue to provide one-half to one inch of water per week. Heavy rain or irrigation when the melons are nearly mature will dilute the fruits' sugar. Watermelons will reconcentrate the sugar if left on the vine a little longer. Muskmelons, however, are less apt to do this.

Okra tends to produce more leaves than pods when it is over watered, so try to keep these drought-tolerant plants on the dry side. A layer of mulch in the vegetable row will help conserve moisture, reduce weed growth, and keep produce cleaner. Using black plastic film as a mulch has become standard in commercial vegetable production, but most backyard growers still prefer organic mulches such as straw, wood chips, composted leaves, or grass clippings.

The source of this article was Richard Durham, UK Extension Horticulture Specialist. For more information about home gardening, refer to the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment publication Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky at http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/id/id128/id128.pdf, or contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Manage Pastures for Optimum Production

Good pasture management practices are essential to increasing quality livestock forages by reducing undesirable weeds and plants. The goal is to encourage growth of a vigorous, dense stand of desirable forage grasses, yet limit weed germination and growth. Unwanted plants can germinate in thin pasture stands and are more likely to become established within these areas.

Some weedy plants have nutritional value, especially those used in the early vegetative growth stages such as chicory and crabgrass. On the other hand, plants, such as poison hemlock, are potentially toxic to grazing animals. Then there are invasive weeds, such as musk thistle and tall ironweed, that crowd out desirable grasses and legumes.

Good pasture management starts with good grazing practices and timely mowing. Well-timed mowing helps prevent the production and spread of new weed seeds. Where perennial weeds dominate, frequent mowing can curtail weeds' growth by depleting their root reserves but is often not feasible or economical. A primary practice to avoid is overgrazing that reduces the competitive capabilities of desirable forage species.

Maintaining optimum soil fertility levels is another practice to promote growth of desirable forages. Take routine soil tests to ensure the optimum soil pH and nutrient levels for pasture growth and quality. Also, keep fence rows and adjacent fields free of troublesome weeds, such as musk thistle and poison hemlock, which produce abundant seed.

In some cases, herbicides may be the most practical weed-control method. For best results, determine the types of weeds to be controlled, their life cycles and the best time of year to apply them. Two generally preferred times of year to apply herbicides in grass pastures are in the fall to early winter months or in the early spring when plants begin active growth. Avoid applying herbicides in mid-summer, because many common products for pastures have the potential to injure nearby, sensitive broadleaf crops like tobacco, vegetables, and ornamentals, especially under unusually high air temperatures and humidity.

The source of this article was J.D. Green, UK Extension Weed Scientist. For more information about good pasture management practices contact me at your UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

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