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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Newsletter

MAY 2025

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Chad Allen
County Extension Agent for
Agriculture & Natural Resources

UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

- May 2 Floyd County Farmer's Market-ARH Highlands-
9am to 2PM
- May 5 Grow Appalachia Gardening Series-Session 4
Extension Office 5:00pm
- May 6 Floyd County Beekeepers Association Meeting
Extension Office 6:00pm
- May 15 Floyd County Farmer's Market Meeting
Extension Office 6:00pm
- May 23 Floyd County ANR/P1 Council Meetings
Extension Office 5:30pm
- May 26 Official Holiday—Memorial Day
EXTENSION OFFICE CLOSED
- May 29 KY Master Loggers Program- Extension Office
8:00am –Register Online
- June 3 Floyd County Beekeepers Association Meeting
Extension Office 6:00pm
- June 12 Floyd County Extension Council & District Board
Meetings—Extension Office 5:30pm

Other programs will be announced at a later time.

If you have a special request for programs or are in need of information on a topic, contact me.

Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

What to Do In May & June

These are a few suggestions that may help you and your plants during this time period. I will divide the suggestion into groups, so you can refer back to them.

Herbaceous plants

- (1) It is now time for many of the summer bulbs to begin blooming; for example, Alliums, Tulips, Brodiaea, and Aurelian hybrids. You should water bulbs during dry periods and fertilize them on a regular basis.
- (2) If you did not start your annual flowers inside earlier this spring, you still have time for some annuals. Hollyhock, Snapdragon, Cockscomb, Carnation, and others can be sowed outside directly in your flowerbeds. Annuals can be used in beds with bulbs to add color during the summer and fall. Also, purchasing plants is still an option; be aware of the quality of the plant before you buy them.
- (3) Many of your annual and perennials flowering plants will need to be transplanted during the spring. Others will need to be seeded into bed.
- (4) For the most part during this period, you should water your plants during dry period, fertilize regularly, and control weeds around your plants.
- (5) Don't forget about your roses. They may require some additional summer pruning to remove spindly shoots, suckers, diseased stems, insect damaged areas and dead wood.



Lawns

- (1) Continue mowing at about 2 - 2 ½ inches high, never allow grass to get higher than 4-5 inches before next mowing.
- (2) Do not mow during hot mid-day hours when turf is under moisture stress.
- (3) Water lawn during summer when soil becomes very dry. Soak 30-60 minutes per setting. Check soil with a knife to determine when irrigation is needed.



Fruits

- (1) Keep the weeds away from small fruits and trees. It helps the plants in many ways.
- (2) Irrigation, especially for small fruits, will increase production of large, high-quality fruits more than any other practice.
- (3) Check the plants regularly for insect and disease problems. Follow the pest control recommendations for that plant.

Indoor plants

- (1) Check all houseplants closely for insect infestations. Quarantine gift plants until you determine they are not harboring pests.
- (2) Water and fertilization of houseplants is important during the growing season.
- (3) Remember, some indoor plants require more sunlight than others, arrange them accordingly.
- (4) Be aware of how temperature and humidity can affect your houseplants.



Other items

- (1) Clean and sterilize your tools, pots, and any other items that you use around your plants.
- (2) Gather information on the plants that you intend on planting. Learn about their care. You will have a healthier and better-looking garden for your efforts.
- (3) After all your work has been done, sit back with a cool drink and look at all you have accomplished. Be proud of your achievements.

For more information on these or other topics, contact me at the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Soil Compaction Is Hard on a Garden

Gardening season is in full force. It is a good time to think about the soil in your garden plots and beds. Soil compaction creates an unfriendly growing environment for plants and is a serious problem for many home gardeners. But do not worry, it is relatively easy to prevent.

Compaction transforms soil into a difficult environment for plant growth by making it harder for roots, water to penetrate the soil. Major causes of compaction are working the soil when it is too wet, foot traffic and excessive rototiller use.

To reduce this problem, avoid working in the garden or walking in it when the soil is too wet. Squeeze a handful of soil and if it forms a muddy ball, rather than crumbling when you open your hand, that is a sign the soil is too wet to work.

Walk between plants and rows in the garden area to reduce compaction in primary plant growth areas. Excessive rototiller use destroys soil structure and promotes compaction. When compaction takes place in a dense soil structure, it also makes root growth more difficult.

A little hand hoeing, rather than a rototiller, may be all you need to do to eliminate a few weeds. It usually causes less soil damage than repeated rototilling and is less harmful to the earthworms that help aerate the soil.

You also can use mulch to control weeds instead of tilling. Layering mulch 2 to 3 inches deep relieves the pressure of walking on the soil, reducing the degree of compaction.

The source of this article was John Strang, UK Extension Horticulture Specialist. Contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office for more gardening information.

Eastern Tent Caterpillars Are Active

The eastern tent caterpillar, *Malacosoma americanum*, is a pest native to North America. Populations fluctuate from year to year, with outbreaks occurring every several years. Defoliation of trees, building of unsightly silken nests in trees, and wandering caterpillars crawling over plants, walkways, and roads cause this insect to be a pest in the late spring and early summer. Eastern tent caterpillar nests are commonly found on wild cherry, apple, and crabapple, but may be found on hawthorn, maple, cherry, peach, pear and plum as well.

While tent caterpillars can nearly defoliate a tree when numerous, the tree will usually recover and put out a new crop of leaves. In the landscape, however, nests can become an eyesore, particularly when exposed by excessive defoliation. The silken nests are built in the crotches of limbs and can become quite large.

Larvae cause considerable concern when they begin to wander to protected places to pupate. They are frequently seen crawling on other types of plants, walkways, and storage buildings. They are a nuisance and can create a mess when they are squashed on driveways, sidewalks, and patios. But keep in mind that no additional feeding or damage is done by the wandering caterpillars.

Prevention and early control are important. Removal and destruction of the egg masses from ornamentals and fruit trees during winter greatly reduces the problem next spring. In the early spring, small tents can be removed and destroyed by hand. Larger tents may be pruned out and destroyed or removed by winding the nest upon the end of a stick. Burning the tents out with a torch is not recommended since this can easily damage the tree.

Young caterpillars can be killed by applying an insecticide containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* var *kurstaki*. Other insecticides include carbaryl, methoxychlor, and malathion. Larvae within the tents are protected beneath the webbing and are more difficult to kill with an insecticide. For more information, contact me at the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service - Floyd County Office.



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 is also 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.

Farm and Home Safety Tips for Stormy Weather

It's that time of year when we get more thunderstorms. Weather patterns are more active, and storms thrive with the moisture and rapidly rising warm air that is very common during the transition to warmer seasons.

Stormy conditions also increase the potential for lightning to strike people at work or play outdoors and, possibly, while they're inside a building. Although thunderstorms are more common during the spring and summer, they can take place all year long and at all hours.

All thunderstorms produce lightning. Sometimes called "nature's fireworks," lightning is produced by the buildup and discharge of electrical energy between negatively and positively charged areas. An average lightning charge can provide enough energy to keep a 100-watt light bulb burning for more than three months. Other dangers associated with thunderstorms are heavy rains that lead to flash floods, strong winds, hail, and tornadoes. These weather conditions can injure or kill people and pets, as well as cause billions of dollars in crop and property damage.

Thunder is the result of a shock wave caused by rapid heating and cooling of air near the lightning channel.

If you want to estimate the miles between yourself and a lightning flash, simply count seconds between lightning and thunder and divide this time by five. Sound travels about a mile every five seconds. So, if you count 30 seconds between lightning and thunder, lightning has flashed within six miles of you. This puts you within lightning striking distance, according to scientific research.

The most important thunderstorm safety precaution is simply to be aware of an approaching thunderstorm and move to a safe shelter before the storm arrives in your area. If you see lightning, hear thunder, observe dark clouds, or your hair stands on end, immediately go inside a sturdy, completely enclosed building, home, or a hard-top vehicle with closed windows. Avoid picnic shelters, sports dugouts, covered patios, carports, and open garages. Small wooden, vinyl or metal sheds provide little to no protection. Since metal conducts lightning, don't touch metal inside or outdoors; drop metal backpacks; release golf clubs, tennis rackets, fishing gear and tools, and get off bicycles and motorcycles.

Lightning can strike water and travel a long distance in it. So, standing in water, even in rubber boots, isn't safe during a thunderstorm. It's also unsafe to go swimming, wading, snorkeling, and scuba diving if lightning is present. If you're in a small boat during a storm, crouch in the middle and stay away from metal items and surfaces.

Crouch down in an open, exposed area and stay away from tall objects, such as trees. Remember to stay away from clotheslines, fences, exposed sheds, and other elevated items that can conduct lightning.

If you're indoors, remember lightning can enter buildings as a direct strike, through pipes and wires extending outside, or through the ground. Telephone use is a leading cause of indoor lightning injuries in America because the charges can travel a long way in telephone and electrical wires, especially in rural areas.

Windows and doors provide a direct path for lightning to enter a building; so, avoid them. During a thunderstorm, stay away from laundry appliances as they are connected to plumbing and electrical systems. Dryer vents offer a direct electrical pathway outdoors.

On the farm, ungrounded wire fences can put livestock at risk when lightning strikes. Surprisingly, lightning can travel almost two miles along an ungrounded fence. According to the National Ag Safety Database, you can ground wooden or steel posts that are set in concrete by driving ½-inch or ¾ inch steel rods or pipes next to fence posts at least 5 feet into the ground, at intervals of no more than 150 feet along the fence. You should securely fasten the grounding rods so that all the fence wires come into contact with them. You can also substitute galvanized steel fence posts for wooden posts at intervals of no more than 150 feet. You should not however, ground electric fences in this manner, because they have a direct path to the ground in their circuitry. More tips for lightning protection on the farm are available on the National Ag Safety Database website, <http://nasdonline.org/1882/d001825/lightning-protection-for-farms.html>.

Also remember pet safety. Lightning can easily strike animals chained to a tree or wire runner. Doghouses generally aren't protected against lightning strikes.

The sources of this article were Matt Dixon, UK Agricultural Meteorologist, National Weather Service, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, and National Ag Safety Database. For more information, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Protect Your Home from Termites

Springtime brings warmer temperatures and more abundant rainfall, and it is typically when many winged termites emerge inside homes and other structures. Termites swarm from their colony to disperse, fall to the ground, find mates, and start new colonies in the soil.

Through May, you might see swarms of winged termites, called swarmers, inside your home, signaling an infestation that can cause extensive and costly damage. Since swarmers are attracted to light, you often see them or their shed wings around windows, doors, and light fixtures.

You may also see winged ants in the springtime. By examining the insect, you can determine whether it is a termite or an ant. Termites have straight antennae; ants have elbowed antennae. Also, termites have uniform waists; ants have constricted waists between body regions. Termites have two pairs of wings of equal size. Ants also have two pairs of wings, but the forewings are longer than the hindwings.

Other signs of a termite infestation are pencil-thin mud “tubes” on inside and outside surfaces such as foundation walls, piers, sills, and floor joists. Termites make these mud tunnels to travel between underground colonies and your home. Another sign of an infestation is damaged wood hollowed out along the grain with dried bits of mud or soil lining the feeding galleries.

Termite feeding, and resulting damage, can remain undetected in exposed wood because the outer surface usually is left intact.

Many infestations result from direct contact between structural wood and the soil, which gives termites access to food, moisture, shelter and provides a hidden entry into your home. Make sure to have at least six inches between the ground level and wood siding, porch steps, latticework, door or window frames, posts, and similar wooden elements. Contrary to popular belief, pressure-treated wood is not immune to infestation, because termites will enter through cut ends or cracks and build tunnels over the surface to susceptible wood above.

Since termites are attracted to moisture, they are more likely to enter a structure when soil next to the foundation consistently is moist. So, divert water away from the foundation with properly functioning gutters, downspouts, and splash blocks. Repair leaking faucets, water pipes and air conditioning units. Adjust the soil grade next to the foundation so that surface water drains away from the building and adjust lawn sprinklers and irrigation systems to minimize water pooling near the foundation.

Reduce humidity in crawl spaces by providing adequate ventilation. Do not allow shrubbery and other vegetation to grow over vents; it will inhibit cross-ventilation. You can reduce crawl space moisture by installing four- to six-milliliter polyethylene sheeting over about 75 percent of the soil surface.

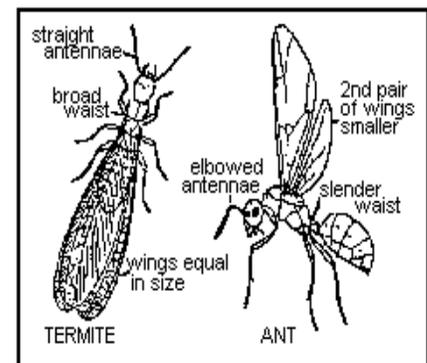
Firewood, lumber, and other wood debris stored against the foundation or in crawl spaces, attract termites and provide a food source. This practice also gives termites a hidden entry into the home and allows them to bypass any existing termiticide soil barrier.

Cellulose-containing materials including mulch and wood chips attract termites. Use these materials sparingly, especially when you have other conditions conducive to termite problems. Never allow mulch to touch wood siding, door frames or window frames. Consider using crushed stone or pea gravel instead. These materials are less attractive to termites and can reduce other pests such as millipedes, pillbugs, earwigs and crickets.

The best way to prevent termite infestations is to have your home treated by a professional pest control firm.

There are two general categories of termite treatment, liquids, and baits. Liquid treatments are intended to provide an effective, long-lasting chemical barrier around and beneath your home that termites cannot breach. Termite baits are installed in plastic stations below the ground in the yard and occasionally indoors. Foraging termites consume the bait and share it with their nest-mates, resulting in a gradual decline in termite numbers.

What should you look for when choosing a pest control firm?



How to tell winged termites from ants

Continued on page 7....

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The firm should be licensed by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. Membership in the Kentucky Pest Control Association and/or National Pest Control Association suggests the company is an established firm with access to the training and technical information necessary to correctly do the job. Consider calling at least two to three companies and asking for references.

Avoid pest control firms that use “specials” or scare tactics to pressure you into immediately signing a contract.

Termiticides are extensively tested for adverse effects. Based on current research, registered termiticides present no significant hazard to humans, pets or the environment when applied according to label directions.

The source of this article was Mike Potter, UK Extension Entomologist. For more information on termites and other pests, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Lawn Mower Safety Reminders

The grass is turning green. Soon it will be time to start mowing if you have not already started. As you rev up your mower’s engine for the first time this spring, here are some reminders to keep you and your family safe.

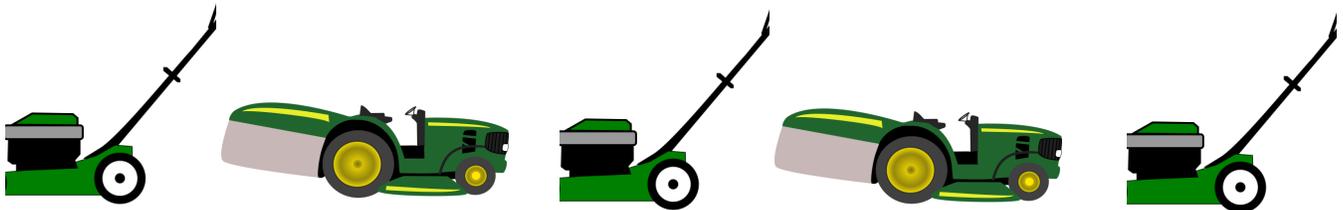
While mowing your grass may seem like a harmless task, it has its own set of hazards. A 2018 study conducted by John Hopkins researchers analyzed emergency room visits due to lawn mower accidents from the past eight years. They found that 6,394 Americans are injured in lawn mower accidents each year. Lacerations are the most common injuries followed by fractures and amputations. People most often injure their hands and wrists compared to their toes and feet.



Never allow extra passengers on a riding lawn mower. It is a good idea to have children and pets in the house while you are mowing. Understand your mower and its safety features. Do not start an unfamiliar mower without first familiarizing yourself with it by reading the owner’s manual or having someone show you how to operate it. Most push mowers have a clutch handle that will quickly shut off the engine and the blade when you take your hands off it. Most riding lawn mowers are equipped with a kill switch located under the seat. This turns off the blade and the mower’s engine when the rider leaves the seat. Riding mowers will not start unless the operator disengages the blade first. Large mowers will have rollover protection structures to prevent rollovers. If your mower has a seat belt, wear it. All of these are important safety features that you should not disable.

Before mowing, make sure your yard is clear of branches or rocks that could become dangerous projectiles if hit by a mower. Wear the proper clothing including closed-toe, non-skid shoes, long-sleeve shirts, and snug pants without strings that could get caught in the mower, eye and ear protection and a hat to protect your head from the sun. If you have long hair, put it in a ponytail. Do not mow in reverse, as you may not be able to see obstacles behind you.

The source of this article was Joshua Jackson, Assistant Extension Professor with UK Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering. For more information contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.



Early Season Vegetable Insect Management

Early in the season it is important to get the seedlings and vegetable transplants off to a good start. There are a few early season insects that need to be managed to ensure healthy stands.



Cole crops (Cabbage, Broccoli, Cauliflower) -- Striped flea beetles, imported cabbageworm and diamondback moth larvae are the pests that attack the spring crop. With flea beetles on seedling plants, less than 4 to 5 true leaves, use a threshold of an average of two beetles per plant when deciding whether or not to spray. A threshold of 15 percent infested plants can be used with worms until either head-fill or crown formation, then the threshold drops to 5 percent infested plants. While the type of mixture of worms is not important when deciding if to spray, the types of worms will determine which insecticides are used.



Sweet Corn -- Corn flea beetles and cutworms are the two primary pests that will attack seedling corn. Use 3 percent cut plants with cutworms actively feeding as the guideline for treating cutworms. Flea beetles can transmit the bacterium that causes Stewart's Wilt, so wilt resistant cultivars may be needed in years following mild winters. Fortunately, we did not have a mild winter, so this threat is reduced. If corn flea beetle is common, use 50 percent of the plants with leaf scars and some leaves turning white as the threshold for spray decisions.

Tomatoes and Peppers -- Tobacco and potato flea beetles will attack both tomato and pepper plants. Usually, the plants will quickly outgrow moderate damage. Occasionally, serious damage can occur to plants less than six inches. Use 4 or more beetles per plant and plants less than 6 inches as the guideline for treatment. Colorado potato beetle can also do serious damage to tomato plants less than 8 inches. Use 10 beetles per 20 plants as the guideline for treatment when the plants are less than 8 inches.

Eggplant and Potato -- As with tomato, flea beetles and Colorado potato beetles are serious early season pests of potato and eggplant. Use the same threshold for tomatoes above. Resistance to insecticides continues to be a serious problem for Colorado potato beetle. Because of this, producers should not use insecticides with the same mode of action for consecutive generations of this insect. Often local populations of this insect may be resistant to one group of insecticides, and in other areas they may be resistant to others. For this reason, what works well in one county may not work at all in another.



Flea beetle and damage on tomato
[Picture by W. Cranshaw]



Squashes, Cucumbers and Melons -- Striped and spotted cucumber beetles can attack cucurbit crops anytime after seedling or transplanting. Cucumber beetles also transmit the bacterium that causes bacterial wilt. For this reason, cucurbit crops must be treated for cucumber beetles as soon as they are planted. With bacterial wilt susceptible crops, cucumber beetles need to be effectively controlled through the start of flowering. Keep in mind that cucurbits are insect pollinated, so measures need to be taken to control the beetles and avoid hurting pollinators. One method to avoid injuring pollinators during bloom is to spray in the early evening after pollinators have quit. The flowers that are open will be closed the next day and new blooms free of insecticide on the inner surface will be open the following day. Squash bug is now known to persistently transmit the agent that causes yellow vine. Therefore, we need to preventively treat for squash bug as we do for cucumber beetles.

For more information, contact me at the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office

Pesticide Safety In And Around Your Home

Our homes are our private sanctuaries, where we can escape and unwind. We want to protect and preserve our homes and our privacy at all costs. When insect pests begin to appear in and around our home, they can breach or invade that privacy. Depending on the severity of the pest problem, some of us may have to use pesticides to regain control of our gardens, landscapes, and homes. It is important that we practice wise, safe pesticide applications to protect ourselves and our families.

Here are some tips to minimize your and your family's risks from improper pesticide use.

- Match the pesticide to the pest. Know what insect pest is causing the damage, health and safety risks or irritation. Only use pesticides labeled to control that insect. If you use the incorrect pesticide, not only will the problem pests not go away, but you have wasted money using the wrong pesticide and put you and your family at unnecessary risk to pesticide exposure. At the extension office, we can help you correctly identify insects and choose the right pesticide to treat your problem.
- Read pesticide labels and follow them. Pesticide labels are law, and you must follow them. The label directions are for your safety. If its intended placement is not on the label, it may not be safe or legal to apply an insecticide in a certain location. Also, some pesticides are not approved to be used in or around homes. By reading and following the pesticide labels, you can have the confidence that the product was safely applied and will effectively manage problem pests.
- Do not mix pesticides and household items. Make sure the containers, spouts, funnels, wands, and other items you plan to use to apply the pesticide are only used for that purpose. Do not reuse these items for other household reasons once you have applied pesticides in them. Only mix the exact amount of pesticide needed to control your problem. Do not pour unused pesticides down sinks or toilets.
- Dress for the job. By wearing the proper attire, you can reduce your pesticide exposure. Some pesticide labels will clearly state the personal protective equipment that you should wear to apply the product, but some won't. At a minimum, you should wear plastic gloves, shoes, socks and long pants and long-sleeved T-shirts when applying a pesticide.
- Remove children and pets from the area before applying pesticides and during application. Many labels will specify when it is safe for people and animals to return to the application area, but if not, at least keep them out of the space until the pesticide has had time to thoroughly dry.
- Clean up. Wash and rinse reusable PPE like gloves and goggles. Wash the clothes you were wearing separately from the rest of your family's clothes. Wash your face and hands, especially before eating, drinking, or using tobacco products.
- Properly store pesticides. Most labels will say how to store the pesticide. At a minimum, make sure it is in a location that is out of reach from children or pets and stored at the correct temperature. Most pesticides should be stored in an area that is above 40 degrees F and out of extreme hot or cold temperatures.

The source of this article was Ric Bessin, UK Extension Entomologist. For more information on managing insect pests and correct pesticide use, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.



10 Backyard Chicken Basics

Having a small chicken flock in the backyard is very popular these days. To have a successful flock producing eggs for your family, you'll want to learn the basics.



1. Make sure you check your local city and county ordinances to ensure you're able to have a backyard flock. Some ordinances require a minimum amount of land, and some subdivisions and homeowners' associations have their own rules.
2. Chickens require daily care. You must feed them, provide clean water, and collect eggs every single day. Managing a small flock is an excellent opportunity to teach children a certain amount of responsibility, but ultimately, you'll oversee the health and well-being of your flock.
3. Birds get sick, and it may be difficult to find a veterinarian to provide care for them.
4. Cleanliness and sanitation are critical elements in caring for a small flock. Everyone must wash their hands before and after handling the birds. Also, no matter how tempting, avoid bringing your chickens into the house and don't use your kitchen sink to wash equipment.
5. Poop happens. Chickens eat a lot and hens use about 60% of the feed they consume and excrete the other 40% as manure. You must have a plan for that manure. One option is adding it as an odor-free fertilizer for your home garden.
6. Keep it down. Chickens make noise. Only roosters crow, however, hens are not always quiet and can make a lot of noise letting everyone know they just laid an egg.
7. The egg season will come to an end. Chickens stop producing eggs at some point in their lives and may live a long time beyond their egg-laying years. Have a plan for what you will do with hens that stop producing. If you keep them as pets, you'll have to keep feeding them and providing other resources for their care.
8. Housing is a big part of keeping a flock. Your birds will need a house that provides shelter from the weather, nest boxes for egg laying and perches for roosting at night. Make sure housing is easy to clean and provides protection from predators. You'll have to manage their bedding well to prevent rodents from making your chickens' house their home.
9. Scratch that. Chickens scratch when they forage. If you let hens run free, you may need to place a fence around your garden if you don't want the birds to destroy it.
10. Know how to get chicks. You will most likely want to raise your hens from chicks. You can buy them online and have them shipped to your home, but some suppliers have minimum quantities for orders. You may have neighbors or friends who also raise chickens willing to join you in an order. Remember you'll need to provide new chicks with a heat source, such as a lamp, for at least six weeks.

This source of this article was Jacquie Jacob, UK Extension Poultry Project Manager. For more information about small flocks, visit <https://afs.ca.uky.edu/poultry/poultry-publications> or contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.



Spring Weather Can Bring Heavy Rain and the Risk of Flooding



By Derrick Snyder – National Weather Service Paducah, KY

As we head deeper into spring, we wanted to talk to you about something that's on our minds this time of year: flash flooding. Now, we know Kentuckians are no strangers to heavy rain and overflowing creeks, but it's important to be prepared for the worst.

So, what can you do to stay safe during a flash flood? Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

1. Keep your eyes and ears open: Listen for weather reports and stay alert for any signs of flooding in your area. If you see water starting to rise, don't wait until it's too late to take action.
2. Have a plan in place: Talk to your family about what you would do in case of a flood. Make sure everyone knows how to get to high ground and where to meet up if you get separated.
3. Don't take any chances: Never try to drive or walk through flooded areas. The water might look shallow, but it could be a lot deeper and faster than you realize. It only takes 12 inches of water to cause your vehicle to lose traction, and only 6 inches of water to sweep you off your feet.
4. Get your homestead ready: If you live in a flood-prone area, make sure you have sandbags or other barriers on hand to protect your home. Keep your gutters clean and your downspouts pointed away from your house.
5. Stay safe during the flood: If a flood does happen, get to higher ground as quickly as possible. And if you have to wade through water, be sure to wear rubber boots and stay away from downed power lines.

3 SIMPLE STEPS FOR FLASH FLOOD SAFETY

During a flood, water levels and the rate at which the water is flowing can quickly change. Remain aware and monitor local radio and television.



[weather.gov/flood](https://www.weather.gov/flood)

1 GET TO HIGHER GROUND
Get out of the areas subject to Flooding

2 DO NOT DRIVE INTO WATER
Do NOT drive or walk into flooded areas. It only takes 6" of water to knock you off your feet.

3 STAY INFORMED
Monitor local radar, television, weather radio, internet or social media for updates.



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