



Schuyler Horticulture Newsletter

Junior Master Gardener Program

Youth Grades

3rd—5th are invited
to become Junior

Master Gardeners. The sessions will be at the U of I Extension Office, 710 Maple Avenue, Rushville, 9:00—11:00 am on Wednesdays, June 24—July 29. An exciting adventure is just waiting for young gardeners in the JMG program. Activities will include plant people, gallon greenhouses, mud pies, compost bin, butterfly garden, fruit & veggie lab, square foot garden.



Dates to Remember

June 19 – 4-H Livestock & Small Animal Show

June 20—4-H General Show, Ext. Building

June 23—Community Garden Work Day, 8-9 am

June 23 — 10:00 am / Master Gardener Meeting

June 24—July 29, Wednesdays, 9:00-11:00 am
Junior Master Gardener Program

June 30 — Community Garden Work Day, 8-9 am

June 30 at 1:00 pm or

July 2 at 7:00 pm / Don't Blame the Plant

July 9 —12:00-1:00 pm

Lunch & Learn / Nature Photography

July 11—Community Garden Work, 8:00-9:00 am

July 14 at 1:00 pm or

July 16 at 7:00 pm / Landscaping on the Wildside

July 29—12:00-1:00 pm / Lunch & Learn / Herbs

Please call the Extension Office **in advance to register** for any program. 217-322-3381

University of Illinois Extension

Cass-Schuyler Unit

710 Maple Avenue, Rushville, IL 62681

Phone: 217-322-3381 / Fax: 217-322-3382

E-mail: schuyler_co@extension.uiuc.edu

Joan Sullivan, Horticulture Coordinator

Email: jsullivan@illinois.edu

<http://www.extension.uiuc.edu/schuyler>

Four Seasons Gardening

Spring Teleconference Series

Don't Blame the Plant

June 30 at 1 p.m. or

July 2 at 7 p.m.

Lighting, wind, flooding, improper planting, animal damage... So many things impact our landscape plants. Rather than focus solely on "pests," learn how things beyond the plant's control influence survivability.

Landscaping on the Wild Side

July 14 at 1 p.m. or

July 16 at 7 p.m.

Attracting wildlife to the home landscape involves more than a couple of bird feeders. It is about creating a healthy, complete landscape with all the layers of plants and animals. If done correctly, the results is not a garden-gone-wild, but a well-maintained, attractive wildlife haven.

Registration Details

Advance registration is needed two days before the program you attend. Call the Extension Office at 217-322-3381 or you can email us at:

schuyler_co@extension.uiuc.edu

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Reducing Disease in the Garden

Source: David Robson, U of I Extension Educator, Horticulture

This year's abundant spring rainfall coupled with high humidity provides ideal conditions for many fungal leaf diseases.

On a regular basis, remove leaves that become spotted or plants that die prematurely. Toss these potential sources of infection in the trash. Leaving them around will only allow the disease spores to further infect the plants. Selecting resistant varieties plus sanitation are two of the most important steps to reduce disease in the garden.

Water early in the day, or during rising temperatures, so that foliage dries quickly. Most leaf diseases require a film of moisture to be present on the foliage for several hours before infection can take place. Better yet, avoid getting leaves wet by using soaker hoses. Water is required for most leaf diseases, and it also acts as a vector to transport fungus spores around the garden.

Keep weeds under control and avoid planting too close. Allow plenty of air circulation to promote quick drying of plants.

Periodic dry spells followed by a deluge of rain can result in misshapen vegetables. Try to provide garden plants with an even supply of moisture. Placing organic mulch such as straw or grass clippings around plants will help maintain even soil moisture. Mulch also keeps fruit cleaner by avoiding contact with soil, which in turn, reduces fruit rot problems. Mulch is also a great way to control weeds. Mulching your garden will result in a healthier garden and save you valuable time.

Do not be surprised to find blossoms dropping from peppers and tomatoes. Daytime temperatures above 90 degrees F, evening temperatures above 75 degrees and hot, drying winds can reduce pollination that will result in blossom drop. Variation does occur among varieties.

Plants will benefit from a mid-season application of fertilizer. Apply 1/2 pound of 10-10-10 fertilizer as a side-dressing, 8 to 12 inches along a 100-foot row. Ammonium nitrate could be applied at 1/3 pound per 100-foot row.

Understanding Fertilizer

Source: Ed Billingsley, Williamson County Extension Director

Before purchasing fertilizer for the garden, read the label. Commercial fertilizers are labeled in percentages with the three major nutrients always in this order (N) nitrogen, (P) phosphorous and (K) potassium.

A bag of 6-24-24 does contain 6% (N) nitrogen which is for leaf development. The other two major nutrients are equal in this example with 24% (P) phosphorous and 24% (K) potassium. To keep it simple a 100 lb bag of 6-24-24 has 6 lbs of nitrogen, 24 lbs. of phosphorus and 24 lbs. of potassium fertilizer in it.

The phosphorous is for root development. This major nutrient needs to be high at planting time for transplanting plants. So a soluble 10-50-10 would be high in phosphorous and should be used at planting time. Potassium (K) is the nutrient which aids in the retention of water, overall vigor and helps disease resistance. The three major nutrients are present in a complete fertilizer such as 10-10-10.

There are occasions when an incomplete fertilizer could be used like 34-0-0. This fertilizer has 34% (N) nitrogen and is sold as ammonia nitrate. The product has no (P) phosphorus or (K) potassium in it. This would be used on your sweet corn to increase yield or green foliage plants to improve plant vigor.

There are several options for more natural products such as bone meal or green sand. Bone meal is used often to supply phosphorus. This product is usually around 4% nitrogen and 30% phosphorus. Green sand does contain about 3% potassium. Wood ashes would also supply approximately 3% phosphorus and 9% potassium. So for those gardeners who burn wood use those ashes on the garden.

Plants need nutrients to grow properly so use them to help plants flower, yield vegetables or to grow green foliage for enjoyment.

When purchasing fertilizers in local garden stores, nutrients are expressed in percentages. Purchase the product that will do what you expect it to do and apply them wisely.

Considerations for Edging Flower Beds

Source: Anthony Bratsch, Extension Educator, Hort.

One of the challenges in taking care of perennial and annual flower beds is maintaining an attractive edge that transitions well with surrounding turf areas. Planting beds typically have loose, fertile soils and exposed, bare edges in which spreading turfgrasses as well as weeds can colonize.

The frequency of edging required to maintain beds is related to the type of grass in the lawn. Tall fescue and perennial ryegrass are bunch grasses that do not spread rapidly and are easy to control. Bluegrass spreads with short underground rhizomes that can encroach gradually into beds. It tends to spread most in the cool weather of spring and late fall when it grows the fastest, so two to three edging operations per season may be adequate.

The most difficult edging challenge is with lawns that contain rapidly spreading warm season grasses, zoysia grass and bermuda grass. Both spread by means of rhizomes, and also above-ground stolons that help form the dense turf these grasses are noted for. Zoysia grass is slower spreading, while Bermuda grass can move quite rapidly and will need multiple edging during the summer growing season.

Managing bed edges can involve one or a combination of several approaches. These include mechanical control, physical barriers, and chemical control.

Mechanical control involves using a broad-bladed spade, hoe, edging knife or perhaps a power edger or weed eater to cut out turfgrass and weeds that establish on the edge of the bed. Hand-pulling is also an effective approach. Mechanical edging provides a manicured appearance, and eliminates risk of using chemicals. It may need to be done several times through the season. Mulching beds makes it easier to pull weeds.



If mechanical edging of invading grasses becomes difficult, physical barriers may be a good solution. These may be any one of several landscape materials. Mulch is a barrier to weed germination, though weed seeds blowing in can germinate in degraded mulch. Structural edging can be made from wood, plastic, metal, concrete, or other items. Selection depends on availability, cost, and personal preference.



Continuous edging is best, with few breaks to limit the sites where grass can creep through. Edging set six inches or more deep will be effective in blocking the intrusion of warm season grass rhizomes. More shallow edging is adequate when clump grasses form the lawn. If materials such as brick or stone are used, a footing should be formed beneath, and mortar used to make the edging continuous, stable and deep enough. If the edging is not tall enough, warm season grasses can run over the top with stolon growth.

The third option is chemical edging. This method involves the use of a non-selective herbicide such as glyphosate (ex. Roundup™). Non-selective herbicides are easy to use, but will kill desirable vegetation as well. They must be sprayed carefully along the bed edge. This is best done on a still morning or evening, using a coarse spray setting that limits drift on desirable plants or grass. Chemical control works well in combination with physical barriers to keep installed edging neat and clean. Pre-emergent herbicides such as Preen™ can help prevent weeds from sprouting in perennial and annual beds. However these herbicides will also affect newly seeded annuals as well as weeds, and they will not stop spreading grasses.

Keeping beds tidy through the growing season is one of the many horticultural challenges in the landscape. By using one or a combination of mechanical methods, physical barriers and chemical control, encroaching grasses and weeds can be managed effectively.

Question Corner

The Green Thumb, June 2009

Q. Every year, I have bagworms on the cedar and spruce trees that make up the wind-break for our home. Is there any way to permanently get rid of them?

A. Bagworm—the name is so descriptive. A bag of plant material covers a voracious plant-eating caterpillar. Once you have experienced an infestation of bagworms, you always remember what they look like.

Many people describe them as ‘cone-like’ structures hanging from plants—and they move! Most often, we find bagworms on arborvitae, juniper, spruce, and deciduous trees such as maple and sycamore.

Large sections of the plant are stripped bare of foliage or needles. Then, all that remains are hanging bags of silken threads and plant material that protects the caterpillar. These bags overwinter and are the source of next season’s pests. Each bag holds a mummified female and 500 to 1,000 eggs.

June is when the overwintering eggs hatch. As larvae emerge, they immediately start to feed and form their own protective case.

As the larva grows, the bag enlarges and more severe feeding damage is noticed. Everywhere the worm goes, the bag goes.

When the larva is fully-grown, it pupates into an adult, a process that requires seven to ten days. Mating takes place, and the female lays her eggs and dies. The egg-containing bag overwinters, and the eggs usually hatch sometime in June.

Early management of bagworms is essential for effective control. Merely picking off overwintering bags and destroying them eliminates the problem. But, this needs to be done before the eggs hatch. If spraying is preferred, spray while the worms are small, soon after all the eggs have hatched. The larger, more mature the worms, the harder it is to control them with chemical sprays.

Young bagworms can be controlled with *Bacillus thuringiensis* ‘Kurstaki,’ commonly sold under the names of Dipel or Thuricide. This microbial extract affects only young caterpillars. Spray only the affected plants and avoid blanket-treating an entire area.

Be sure to follow all label instructions.



Landscape Maintenance Calendar

Source: Sandy Mason, Horticulture Educator

June

Flowers

- Deadhead flowers to encourage additional blooming, reduce reseeding and to reduce disease.
- Trim back some perennials such as aster and beebalm to lessen need for staking and delay or stagger bloom times.
- Monitor roses for black spot fungal disease. Remove and destroy infected leaves.

Lawns

- Mow and water as necessary.
- Fertilize in mid-June if making 4 applications per year and only if adequate water will be supplied in summer. Slow-release nitrogen forms are preferred.
- Continue post emergence herbicide treatment for weeds if necessary.
- Establish or renovate lawn with sod only.

Trees/Shrubs

- Trim pine candles if reduction of growth is needed.
- South of interstate I-80, monitor for bagworms feeding on plants especially junipers.
- Mulch with organic mulches to at least the drip line of the tree.

General

- Remove any stagnant water to avoid mosquito problems. Consider flowerpots, gutters and bird-baths.

July

Flowers

- Fertilize container plantings
- Continue deadheading
- Renew organic mulches

Lawns

- Mow and water as necessary. Raise mowing height to 2 1/2-3 inches as temperature exceeds 85° F.
- Decide if lawn will be irrigated adequately to keep it from going dormant. Do not bring cool seasons grasses in and out of dormancy by watering sporadically.
- Treat for grubs depending on product and past pest history.



Solving Tomato Problems

Source: Ron Wolford, Extension Educator, Horticulture

Tomatoes are the most popular vegetable grown in the United States. They are probably one of the easiest vegetables to grow, but no vegetable is problem proof. Here are some of the common tomato problems you may encounter during the growing season.

Fluctuating spring temperatures can be a problem for newly planted tomato transplants. To help get your tomatoes off to a good start, mulch tomato transplants with black plastic. Soil under plastic is around 10 degrees F warmer than uncovered soil. The mulch also conserves moisture and protects the tomatoes from diseases spread by water splashing onto the soil. Try red plastic mulch under tomatoes. Research has shown increased yields when tomatoes are grown with red plastic mulch.

I get calls in late July from gardeners who have just-ripening tomatoes with a large black spot on the blossom end. They are afraid some terrible disease is going to wipe out their tomatoes. The problem is blossom-end rot and it is not a disease. The major cause of this condition is fluctuating levels of soil moisture during dry spells. So watering your plants consistently with one inch of water per week will keep this condition at bay. Using mulches will also help.

Tomato cracking occurs in some varieties when there is a lot of rain after a dry spell. Cracking occurs after the rains because the tomato absorbs so much water, causing the fruit wall to crack. These cracks are avenues for fungus and bacteria that can cause rot. Watering tomatoes consistently with one inch of water per week will alleviate this condition. Tomato varieties resistant to cracking include Burpee's Big Girl, Supersonic, Pink Girl and Sam Marzano.

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.

There is really nothing you can do except to wait for cooler temperatures. Sunburn is common on tomatoes that are exposed to sun on plants that have lost leaves because of disease or insect problems. The sunburned areas become tan to white, making the tomato susceptible to disease organisms. Control insects and disease to prevent leaf loss.

Sometimes the leaves will curl up on the tomato plants. This is not a disease. It is a physiological condition that happens after heavy rains. It occurs on the older leaves. Some tomato varieties are more susceptible to "leaf curl" than others.

"Catfacing" occurs on tomatoes exposed to cool night temperatures during flowering. Fruits are misshapen and have scars and holes on the blossom end. Older and large tomato varieties are more susceptible. The tomatoes are safe to eat.

White spots on the skin of the tomato are caused by the feeding habits of the stink bug. The bugs stick their syringe-like mouthparts into the tomato causing the damage.

Sometimes gardeners cut open a tomato and find hard white areas inside the fruit. Warm temperatures during the ripening period cause this condition to develop. Just cut the affected areas out. Some varieties are more susceptible to this condition than others.

Check tomato plants for signs of leaf spot diseases such as septoria leaf spot or early blight. The yellow or brown spots occur on the lower leaves first. Remove the infected leaves to prevent further spread. For control of tomato diseases, remove old tomato plant debris from the garden before planting, avoid wetting the foliage when watering and buy disease-resistant varieties.

Tomato hornworms are large, two-to three-inch-long, green caterpillars with white stripes on the body. A horn protrudes from the top rear end of the worm.

Tomato hornworms feed on the leaves and fruit and can quickly strip a plant of leaves. Populations can vary from year to year. Some years, when populations are small and blend in well with the tomato foliage, you may not see them.

Last summer, a couple of tomato plants planted in our Smart Home garden at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry were stripped of most of their foliage. We picked 40 hornworms off the plants.

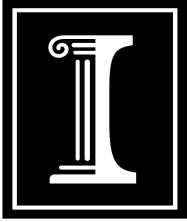
Handpicking is the best and easiest control. If you see hornworms with small, white cocoons protruding, leave them alone. These cocoons are the pupae of parasitic insects that help control the hornworm population, and the worm with the cocoons is doomed.

The highest quality tomatoes develop when temperatures average 75 degrees F. Tomatoes may get mushy and not ripen well when temperatures are above 90 degrees F. During hot weather, pick tomatoes when they have a pink color and let them ripen indoors. This practice will also save the tomatoes from squirrels who like to take a bite out of ripe ones. To ripen tomatoes, place them in a paper bag, stem end up. Punch several holes all around the bag and fold the top over. The bag will help to keep some of the natural ethylene gas in place, which aids in the ripening process. Depending on how underripe they are, tomatoes may take one to five days to ripen. Check them daily. You can also wrap individual tomatoes in newspaper for ripening.

Do not store ripe tomatoes in the refrigerator. Flavor and texture begin to deteriorate when the temperature drops below 54 degrees F. Temperatures above 80 degrees F cause tomatoes to spoil quickly. Store ripe tomatoes at room temperature for two to three days, away from direct sunlight until ready to use.

For more information about vegetable problems, check out the University of Illinois Extension website: Common Problems for Vegetable Crops (<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/vegproblems/>).





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University of Illinois Extension
Schuyler County

Presents:

Lunch & Learn for Gardeners: Nature Photography

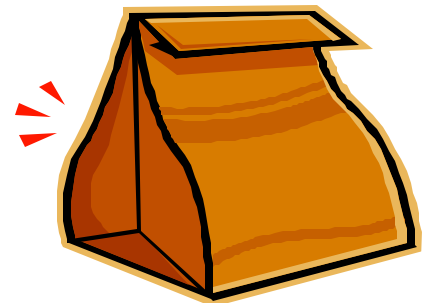


University of Illinois Extension
710 Maple Avenue, Rushville
12:00 Noon - 1:00 pm
Thursday, July 9, 2009

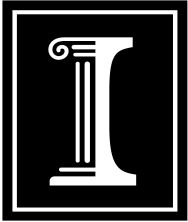
Learn what makes a great photo. David Haney will discuss the basics of photography, using a digital camera and how to best capture your best shots in nature. Bring your camera and a few photos if you choose.

Lunch will be available for \$5.00 (includes toss-your-own salad bar, dessert and drink) or you may bring your own.

Reservations for lunch must be made by July 6, please call the Extension Office (217-322-3381) or email us: schuyler_co@extension.uiuc.edu



If you need special accommodations to participate, please contact the Extension Office.



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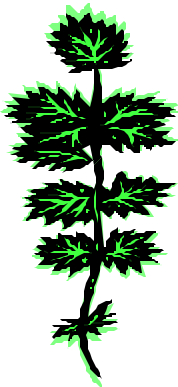
University of Illinois Extension Schuyler County

Presents:

Lunch & Learn for Gardeners: Growing and Using Herbs

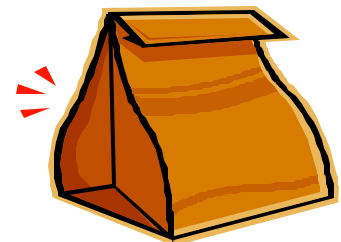
Presenters: Shirley Camp, Extension Educator
& Martha Smith, Extension Educator

University of Illinois Extension
710 Maple Avenue, Rushville
12:00 Noon - 1:00 pm
Wednesday, July 29, 2009



Whether you are an avid gardener or have a few plants on your deck or balcony, you can grow aromatic flavorful herbs that you can use in your cooking! The program will include information on selecting, caring for, and harvesting techniques of popular herbs and ways to use herbs to make low-fat food dishes more flavorful. Buying, storing and using herbs will be included.

Lunch will include rosemary pork chops, minted fruit salad and a tomato-basil rice salad; or you may bring your own. Cost is \$10.00 **To make a reservation, please call the Ext. Office (217-322-3381) by July 20th or email us: schuyler_co@extension.uiuc.edu**



If you need special accommodations to participate, please contact the Extension Office.

Return Service Requested

University of Illinois Extension
Cass-Schuyler Unit
710 Maple Avenue
Rushville, IL 62681

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences



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<http://www.extension.uiuc.edu/schuyler>

WEBSITES TO CHECK OUT!

Selecting Shrubs for Your Home

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/ShrubSelector/>

Need help selecting a shrub? Find the right shrub for your home landscape at Selecting Shrubs for Your Home.

Hort Answers

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/hortanswers/>

Need Help Gardening? Learn more about the plants and their problems in your yard and garden.

Gardening With Perennials

<http://urbanext.illinois.edu/perennials/>

Interested in perennial gardening? Learn all about perennials and their care at this website.

University of Illinois Extension

Cass / Schuyler County Office :

Jodie Tate — County Extension Director
jotate@illinois.edu

Enrique Hidalgo — Rural Health Prgm. Coord.-Cass
ehildago@illinois.edu

Janet L. Detrick – FNP Program Assistant
detrick@illinois.edu-Cass-Schuyler

Carol Montague — Econ. Dev.-Schuyler
cmontagu@illinois.edu

Joan Sullivan — Hort. Coordinator-Schuyler
jsullivn@illinois.edu

Cindy L. Swartz — Community Worker, 4-H
swartzc@illinois.edu

Beth Vandenbergh— Secretary/Cass
bvandenb@illinois.edu

Jeanne A. Snyder – Secretary/Schuyler
jasnyder@illinois.edu