

## Southwind District



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### Up-Coming Events

All Extension events have  
been suspended.

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Dear Gardener,

As wet as we were this spring, things have certainly changed. I recently looked at the drought monitor and the "abnormally dry" area has crept over us now! I think we all probably knew in the back of our minds that when it stopped raining it would probably do just that. I know some areas of the Southwind District have received decent amounts of rain, but others certainly need more.

As we head into the dead of summer, I hope all of your plants are surviving and thriving. If they are not, please give me a call.

Our offices are fully open and staffed. I continue to make house calls as needed, so don't hesitate to contact me if you need assistance.

Sincerely,

Krista Harding  
District Extension Agent

## Japanese Beetles



Japanese beetles have become a yearly pest in our area. They are actually one of the most destructive insects pests on horticulture plants.

Japanese beetle adults are 3/8 to 1/2 inch long, metallic green with coppery-brown wing covers, and darkened green legs. They have tufts of white hair on each side of the abdomen which give the beetles a distinguishing look from other beetle species.

Adults live 30-45 days and feed on plants for four to six weeks. Generally, they are present from June through September. They feed on more than 300 different plants including rose, crabapple, willow and American elm. The beetles feed on the upper leaf surface, creating irregularly shaped holes and sometimes even a lacelike appearance.

The best control option is to physically remove them. When disturbed, the adult beetles will fold their legs and fall easily. Knocking them off into a bucket of soapy water will kill them.

## Blossom End Rot



If you grow tomatoes, then you have probably fought blossom end rot at one time or another. Blossom-end rot is very frustrating because it tends to show up on tomatoes about the time the fruit is half-grown and pretty much ruins it with a leathery like bottom. It is not a disease, but rather a non-parasitic disorder.

Blossom-end rot is the result of a calcium deficiency in the blossom-end of the fruit. Calcium is required in large amounts when the fruit is growing rapidly. If the demand for calcium exceeds the supply, then the deprived tissue breaks down and leaves the leathery patch on the bottom.

Although many gardeners think that their soil is lacking in calcium, that is probably not the case. Calcium is sufficient in almost all of our soils. Instead, it is most likely caused by a sharp change from cool to hot weather, extreme soil moisture fluctuations, drought stress, too much nitrogen fertilizer or even water logged soils.

The recommendations for combating blossom-end rot includes:

1. Have a soil test completed. Maintain soil pH around 6.5. Do not assume that blossom-end rot is sure evidence that the soil lacks calcium. Other conditions that interfere with calcium uptake can cause calcium to be demanded in higher quantities than the plant can physically supply.
2. Use a nitrate nitrogen fertilizer such as calcium nitrate rather than one that releases nitrogen in the ammonium form. Excess ammonium ions reduce calcium uptake.
3. Mulch plants to maintain even soil moisture.
4. Plant in a location with good drainage.

Keep in mind that even the most well cared for plants, blossom-end rot can still occur if weather conditions are favorable! The good news - many times the condition will

correct itself in a couple of weeks.

## K-State Garden Hour

Join K-State Research & Extension Agents and Specialist each Wednesday during the month of June & July for the "Garden Hour." All sessions are FREE! You can register by following this link: [Garden Hour](#)



## K-STATE GARDEN HOUR

### July Calendar

July 1st at 12:00PM: "Weed Management in the Lawn and Garden"

July 8th at 12:00PM: "Nuisance Wildlife Control in Your Garden"

July 15th at 12:00PM: "Hydrangeas for Your Garden"

July 22nd at 12:00PM: "Pesticide Label Safety"

July 29th at 12:00PM: "Choosing the Right Potting Media for Gardening Success"

THERE IS NO COST, BUT WE DO REQUIRE REGISTRATION:



REGISTER HERE:



## Insect & Mite Pests in Garden

Vegetables grown in the garden are susceptible to a lot of insect and mite pests - many of which are just beginning to show up and cause damage.

If you are seeing damage, you need to do is to determine exactly what insect pest you are dealing with. Start by looking at the type of damage being caused to the plant.



Vegetable crops grown in the garden are susceptible to a diverse array of insect and mite pests. Therefore, it is important to properly identify and manage these pests, though the specific pests and type of damage can vary by crop and the time of year. This publication explains how to detect potential problems and how to identify pests in vegetable gardens based on the type of plant damage. A discussion of pest life cycles provides information that can be used to select appropriate plant protection strategies.

**Identification and Plant Damage**  
Insect plants regularly throughout the growing season checking for insect and mite pests and plant damage. Most pests that feed on vegetable plants have either chewing or sucking mouthparts, which produce different types of feeding damage. For example, insect pests with chewing mouthparts feed on plant parts including leaves, stems, flowers, fruits, and roots and physically remove plant tissues while feeding. Insect and mite pests with sucking mouthparts feed on plant fluids causing stunting, wilting, leaf distortion, and leaf yellowing.

Some insect pests leave physical evidence of their feeding and development. For example, caterpillars produce fecal deposits or frass (Figure 1), whereas sucking insects such as aphids and leafhoppers produce a clear, sticky substance called honeydew (Figure 2). In addition, aphids leave behind molting skins (Figure 3) that can be mistaken for whiteflies. Although some insect pests such as beetles and

caterpillars only feed at night, their damage and/or fecal deposits are visible during the day.  
In addition to direct damage caused by insect and mite pests, a number of insect pests such as aphids, leafhoppers, thrips, and certain beetles cause indirect damage by transmitting diseases (e.g., fungi or viruses) when feeding or by creating wounds that allow for infection by disease-causing organisms.

**Insect and Mite Pest Life Cycles**  
Knowing the life cycle of a given insect or mite pest and the life stage that may be present on plants at a particular time helps anticipate when pest problems are likely to occur during the growing season. In addition, it is important to understand the life cycle (egg to adult) and be able to identify the life stages (larva, nymph, and adult) that are most susceptible to plant protection strategies. Furthermore, knowing the time of year (spring and summer) insect and mite pests are feeding on plants and how insect and mite pests survive the winter (overwinter) is helpful in effectively managing pests in vegetable gardens.

Some insect pests feed early in the growing season (striped cucumber beetle), whereas other insect and mite pests feed later in the growing season (caterpillar and mite and spider mite). Insect and mite pests can overwinter as eggs, larvae, nymphs, pupae, or adults depending on the specific insect or mite pest. The overwintering stage determines



Figure 1. Fecal deposits (frass) on leaf associated with caterpillars.



Figure 2 and 3. Honeydew on leaf surface (left) and aphid molting skins (right).

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

Most pests that feed on vegetable plants have either

chewing or sucking mouthparts which each produce different types of feeding damage. For example, insect pests with chewing mouthparts feed on leaves, stems, flowers, fruits and roots and they physically remove plant tissue while feeding. This type of pest often leaves physical evidence of their feeding as well - such as the tomato horn worm.

Insect pests with sucking mouthparts feed on plant fluids causing stunting, wilting, leaf distortion and leaf yellowing. An example of this is aphids. They also leave behind physical evidence in the form of honeydew - a clear, sticky substance on plant surfaces.

So you really need to study the type of damage you are seeing and try to figure out the exact culprit.

K-State has a new publication out titled: Insect and Mite Pests of Vegetable Gardens. It is a great resource with lots of valuable information including color pictures of our most common pests! To see the publication, click [Insect & Mite Pests of Vegetable Gardens](#)

## Squirrel Damage



It's the time of year that we may start seeing some squirrel damage to our trees. Squirrels damage our trees two ways - by clipping the tips of branches or by stripping the bark off of limbs or the trunk.

The clipping of the branches is more of a nuisance. However the stripping of bark can cause permanent damage. If a large enough area is removed, it can basically girdle the branch and cause it to die.

Why squirrels do this is a mystery. Some people think it is a way for them to sharpen their teeth while others believe it might be a way for them to release nervous energy.

If the squirrels in your yard are just snipping the ends off the branches, just ignore if you can. If they are removing excessive bark, you may need to intervene. Try feeding and watering them. If that doesn't work, control may be necessary.

## Twig Die Back on Oak

Twig dieback on oaks will more than likely start showing up in our area in the next month or so.



This is caused by a fungal disease

called Botryosphaeria canker. Affected trees will show wilting or "flagging" of terminal growth on the end of branches. Dieback usually extends 4 to 6 inches down the twig with leaves bending back toward the twig before turning brown. Dead leaves remain attached to the tree. The good news - this disease causes minor damage. However, it is often concerning to homeowners when they see this happening on their oaks.

## Bagworms - Still Time to Treat

This is shaping up to be a really bad year for bagworms. I recently looked at a deciduous tree (Sycamore) that was literally covered in bags - see video. There is still time to treat but the window of opportunity is closing!



**K-State Research and Extension - Southwind Extension District**

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