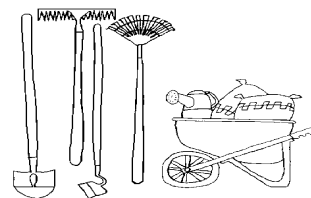


IN THE GARDEN NOW

HELPING GARDENERS PUT KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

JULY / AUGUST 2013



IN THE PLANT CLINIC

KUDZU BUGS IN THE VEGETABLE GARDEN



Kudzu bugs have made their way into home vegetable gardens feeding on beans and peas. Kudzu bugs are new to our area, having only been reported in North Carolina for the first time in 2010. These small bugs are about 1/6 to 1/4 inch in length. Kudzu bugs are fairly square in shape and olive green with brown speckles.

To control kudzu bugs on beans and plants in the bean family, insecticide sprays containing a synthetic pyrethroid as the active ingredient are most effective. These include the chemicals bifenthrin, permethrin, cyfluthrin, and lambda-cyhalothrin. Name brands of some insecticides that contain these chemicals include Ortho Bug B Gone Max Concentrate, Tiger Brand Super 10 Concentrate, Bonide Eight Insect Control Concentrate, and Spectracide Triazicide Insect Killer Concentrate. Always check the active ingredients listed on the front of the pesticide label to make sure you have the correct product. Before spraying, consider the impact these products have on beneficial insects. Synthetic pyrethroids are toxic to bees and beneficial insects that naturally help to keep pest populations in balance. To minimize impact, only spray infested plants. Spray late in the evening when bees are no longer active.

Organic pesticides have little impact on this pest, though products containing pyrethrins, the natural compounds upon which synthetic pyrethroids are based, may be slightly more effective than others. Please note:

Recommendations for the use of insecticides are included in this article as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names does not imply endorsement by North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products not mentioned. When using any pesticide always read and follow all label directions.

Lisa Rayburn
Extension Agent,
Horticulture

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28540

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WET WEATHER TOMATO TROUBLES

Charlotte Glen – Horticulture Agent, NC Cooperative Extension,
Pender County Center

Growing tomatoes in the coastal South is always a gamble. Throughout the summer you play the odds against insects, diseases, heat, or drought ruining your crop. Until a few weeks ago, growing conditions this season had been nearly ideal, resulting in some of the healthiest tomato plants I have seen in years. Recent heavy rains are likely to change this trend, raising the stakes against a bumper crop this season.

Splitting and Cracking

Side splitting and cracking up are terms you want to hear in reference to a joke you just made, not about your tomatoes. Heavy rain, especially when preceded by dry weather, is the leading cause of fruit cracking and splitting in tomatoes. This type of damage is most likely to occur as tomatoes begin to ripen and you are anxiously anticipating harvest, though green fruit can be effected as well.

Cracking and splitting occur when rapid changes in soil moisture levels cause fruits to expand quicker than the tomato skin can grow. There are two different patterns this damage may take. Vertical splits along the sides of fruits are known as radial cracking and are the most serious. This pattern of splitting commonly occurs during hot, humid weather. Cracking that occurs in a circular pattern at the top of tomato fruits, ringing the stem end, is known as concentric cracking. When cracking of either type occurs in green tomatoes, fruits are likely to rot before they fully ripen if left on the vine.



Sudden changes in soil moisture can cause concentric cracks to form around the top of tomato fruits.

*Photo credit: Paul Bachi,
University of Kentucky Research
and Education Center,
Bugwood.org.*

With both radial and concentric cracking, your best option is to harvest fruits immediately, before they begin to rot. These fruits are edible and can be allowed to finish ripening indoors, though any fruit that develops a sour smell or begins to ooze should

go straight to the compost pile. Fruits that ripen off the vine, as well as those that ripen on the vine during cloudy, rainy weather will be less flavorful than those that mature fully on the plant during sunny weather.

Blossom End Rot

In addition to cracking and splitting, fluctuations in soil moisture level are the most common cause of blossom end rot. This disorder occurs when there is not enough calcium available within developing fruit, causing the lower end of the fruit to turn tan or black. Other factors that can cause blossom end rot include extreme heat or cold, over fertilization, and low soil pH (acid soil). If you have tomatoes that have started to develop blossom end rot, remove them from the vine and compost them. They will not develop or ripen normally. Learn more about blossom end rot:

<http://pender.ces.ncsu.edu/2013/05/why-are-my-squash-rotting/>

Leaf Rolling

There are several issues that can cause tomato leaves to curl, including wet weather. Leaf curling as a result of wet conditions is not a serious concern and will not damage plants or reduce yields. Some varieties are more prone to leaf curling than others. When excessive moisture is the cause of leaf curling, leaves curl upward starting from the bottom of the plant first. Leaves that curl as a result of wet soil conditions may take on a leathery appearance, but otherwise remain green and healthy.

Minimizing Problems

The most important thing you can do to minimize fruit cracking, blossom end rot, and leaf curling in tomatoes is to maintain even soil moisture levels by watering during drought. Most vegetables require around one inch of water per week to remain productive. Soaker hose and drip irrigation systems are the best way to provide this water to vegetable and ornamental plants because these systems apply water directly to the soil. This reduces water loss through evaporation and keeps plant leaves dry, which helps limit the spread of leaf diseases. Mulching your vegetable garden will also help keep the soil evenly moist and minimize moisture related problems.

Learn more!

Other tomato problems associated with rainy weather and wet soils include wilt diseases and leaf diseases such as early blight. If you suspect your tomatoes have a disease or insect problem, have the cause correctly diagnosed before taking any action. Contact your local Extension Office for assistance. In Onslow County, call 910.455.5873 or stop by 4024 Richlands Highway, Jacksonville.

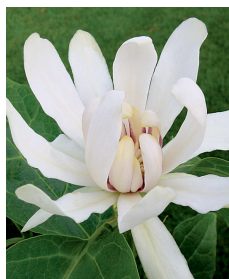
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TIPS AND TASKS

- Remember to water according to plant needs. Vegetables and newly established plants require more frequent watering than established lawns and plants. Sandy soil requires more frequent watering than heavier soils.
 - Mulch plants to conserve moisture, inhibit weeds and reduce disease.
 - Drip irrigation and soaker hoses deliver water to the root zone without wetting leaves. Moisture on leaves can contribute to disease development. If you must use sprinklers, water early in the day so leaves dry quickly.
 - Provide appropriate support for fruit and vegetable plants such as tomatoes. Trellises and staking will reduce disease and make maintenance easier.
 - Harvest fruits and vegetables as they ripen. Remove overripe, damaged or diseased fruits immediately to help control diseases and insects.
 - Watch for insects and diseases. If you find an insect or disease, have it identified by your Extension agent and get recommendations for control.
 - Mow lawns regularly and at the correct height to promote dense turf and reduce weeds. Centipede, bermuda and zoysia should be mowed to 1 inch, while St. Augustine should be mowed at 3 inches.
 - Deadheading promotes new blossoms for many annuals and perennials.
 - Remove weeds before they set seed.
-

NC SHOWSTOPPER PLANT ‘Venus’

Sweetshrub



Calycanthus ‘Venus’

Plant breeders at N.C. State University have been busy re-inventing our native sweetshrub. Thanks to Dr. Tom Ranney, a new white flowered hybrid — called ‘Venus’ Sweetshrub — is available for Carolina gardeners to enjoy.

Like our native deciduous sweetshrub, this plant will grow in sun or partial shade. Due to its hybrid vigor, ‘Venus’ needs room to grow and in moist soil it will reach a height and spread of 5 feet. It produces dozens of ivory-colored flower buds that open almost pure white.

Although sweetshrubs are not generally considered mainstream landscape plants, new hybrids like ‘Venus’ should become increasingly popular with gardeners. Use as a shrub border or as a plant in natural areas. Once you see it in flower you’ll understand why it is a showstopper!

Hardiness Zones: 6 to 8

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DEADHEADING

By: Bob Filbrun

Deadheading is the practice of removing spent flowers or seed heads from flowering plants. While some plants are self-cleaning and shed old flowers quickly, many plants benefit from this maintenance chore. Deadheading can be beneficial in the following ways:

- Encourages the production of additional flowers
- Gives plants a neater appearance
- Eliminates an environment suitable for disease and insect pests
- Reduces the energy expended for seed production
- Conserves energy for new flower production or the subsequent season’s growth

Although this technique is most frequently identified with annual and perennial flowers, it can be used on bulbs and flowering shrubs as well. To deadhead a plant, remove the old blossom by

cutting back to the base of the flowerscape on bulbs, or prune back to a healthy leaf or side branch below the blossom of other plants.

Plants that respond well to deadheading include roses, salvias, cosmos, geraniums, purple coneflowers, black-eyed Susans, marigolds, and gaura. Remember to avoid deadheading if you wish to collect seed from a particular plant or if you want a plant to freely self-sow. For plants such as cleome that self-seed prolifically around the garden, deadheading can help reduce unwanted seedlings.

UPCOMING CLASSES AND EVENTS

Building a Beautiful Container Garden

July 20, 2-3 pm – Main Base Library,
Camp Lejeune

Rain Barrels for Sale

July 18 until gone – Extension Office,
4024 Richlands Highway

Saving Your Own Seed

July 26, 10-12 – Terrawa Terrace
Community Garden, Terrawa Terrace

Fall Vegetable Gardening

July 27, 10-12 – Extension Office,
4024 Richlands Highway

Saving Your Own Seed

August 17, 10-12 – Jacksonville
Public Library

RABBITEYE BLUEBERRIES

July is a great time to pick our native rabbiteye blueberries. To pick-your-own berries, call ahead for picking hours and ask if you need to bring your own containers. Onslow County has two pick-your-own farms:

Justice Blueberry Farms, 1325 Gould Rd.
Jacksonville, NC 28540 - 910.346.6783

Southwest Blueberry Farms -2053 Pony Farm Rd.
Jacksonville, NC - 910.347.0026

RECIPE CORNER

CAPRESE CORN SALAD

5 to 6 ears of sweet corn (still in husks,
do not shuck)

1/4 cup olive oil

3 Tbsp sherry vinegar or white wine vinegar

Freshly ground black pepper

1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt

1/2 teaspoon sugar (optional)

3 cups roughly chopped, seeded tomatoes,
or halved cherry tomatoes

1/2 cup sliced scallions, including light green parts

8 ounces fresh mozzarella, cut into 1/4-inch cubes

1/2 cup to 1 cup of fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced

Prepare your grill for high, direct heat. Place the corn cobs still in their husks directly on the grill. Cook for 15 minutes or so, turning every few minutes, so that the husks get completely charred. The corn will steam in the husks. There is no need to soak the corn in water first if the corn is fresh. If you want some char on the corn itself, remove a few of the outer husks first, so there is less of a protective layer around the corn. Once the husks are completely charred, remove from the grill and let cool for a few minutes. Then remove the husks and silk. To remove the corn from the cob, stand the shucked cob upright in shallow baking pan or rimmed dish. Hold the cob steady in one hand, and with the other hand use a sharp knife to make downward strokes on the cob, separating the kernels from the cob.

In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, salt, and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Adding sugar will depend on how sweet your corn or tomatoes are, so you may want to withhold sugar until the end and add to taste.

In a large bowl, toss together the corn, tomatoes, scallions, Mozzarella, and the dressing. Adjust seasonings to taste. Let sit for 10 minutes.

Right before serving, stir in the freshly sliced basil.

Yield: Serves 6 to 8.

Recommendations for the use of chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact an agent of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension in your county.

The use of brand names in this publication does not imply endorsement of the products or services named or criticism of similar ones not mentioned

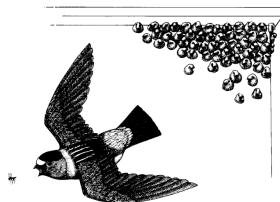
CONTACT US

If you have questions about lawn, landscape or garden problems, contact your local Cooperative Extension office. In Onslow County call 455.5873, Mon – Fri, 8 am and 5 pm, or visit us online anytime at <http://onslow.ces.ncsu.edu>. While you are there, you can post your questions to be answered by email using the ‘Ask an Expert’ widget (in the upper left hand corner).



A Bit about Birds

Spring has sprung and many birds have returned to the region. With them comes much singing, nesting, feeding, and raising young. As with anything, some folks love them and want to attract more to their yard by providing nesting options and feeders. Other folks are less happy, usually due to property damage or nests in inappropriate locations. Airports, for transportation safety reasons, are particularly concerned about not attracting too many birds to their location.



If you have property damage or nests that need to be removed, check to see if the birds are a protected species. Many are, including woodpeckers and

swallows. It is illegal to take, possess, transport, sell, or purchase protected bird species or their parts (feathers, nests, or eggs) without a permit. A list of species is available on the Migratory Bird Treaty Act website:

<http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/RegulationsPolicies/mbta/mbtintro.html>

It is understood that birds can inflict significant property damage or be a hazard in other ways. For this reason, an environmental assessment, *Reducing Bird Damage Through an Integrated Wildlife Damage Management Program in the State of North Carolina*, was conducted in 2010. The report is available online:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/pdfs/nepa/NC_Bird_EA_draft_website.pdf

Damage was described as agricultural, natural resources, property, and human health. Great blue heron were listed for both being a hazard near airports and also for predation on aquaculture farms. Vultures were also among the birds mentioned. Other sites provide information about individual types of birds. For example, the NCSU Wildlife Damage Control website contains information about several birds, including pigeons, starlings, swallows, and woodpeckers:

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/wild/wildlife/wdc/index.html>

If you need assistance or have questions, you can contact a NC Wildlife Damage Control Agent in your county. Damage control information and county agent listings are available:

<http://www.ncwildlife.org/Trapping/WildlifeDamageControlAgent.aspx>

For additional information, you can also try your local NC Cooperative Extension office:

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/local-county-center/>. We are always willing to provide what information we can. In Onslow, call (910) 455-5873 and request Diana Rashash, or email her at diana_rashash@ncsu.edu.

NORTH CAROLINACOOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
ONslow COUNTY CENTER
4024 RICHLANDS HIGHWAY
JACKSONVILLE, NC 28540

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