



# Webster County Acreage Living

June 2009— July 2009

Volume 7 Issue 6

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## Extension Reorganization

*Provided by Jim Patton, Webster Co. Extension Education Director*

Extension is beginning a state-wide reorganization process that affects every county office and how they operate. The following are highlights:

- Every county will continue to maintain a county office, but may have operation changes.
- 4-H & Youth programs will continue with an increased emphasis on involvement by volunteers and parents for thriving programs.
- There will no longer be a County Extension Education Director in every county. Webster County will be part of Region 7 (Hamilton, Humboldt, Webster & Wright Counties) with a single Regional Extension Education Director.
- Partnership dollars paid by the counties to ISU will be reduced dramatically with the County Extension Council having greater discretion about how those tax dollars are used.
- Locations of the regional offices and the names of the regional directors will be announced before the end of June, 2009.

## Is My Tree Dying?

*Information provided by Jim Patton, Webster Co. Extension Education Director*

There seems to be non-stop leaf traffic coming into Extension offices.

Leaves that have been brought in are showing black blotches from **anthracnose** caused by *Kabatilla apocryptum* (aka *Aureobasidium apocryptum*), a fungus.

Listed below are our responses:

- There is nothing to do this year except rake off and destroy infested leaves when the weather is dry to reduce amount of inoculum.
- The disease will stop spreading once the environmental conditions are no longer conducive to cause more infections.
- The disease will not kill the trees or cause permanent damage.
- Trees that have lost leaves will produce a second flush of leaves.

We really try to discourage fungicide sprays; spraying will not be effective this year since the trees are already infected.



*Anthracnose on Maple leaves.*

## Challenges in Gardening—Weed Control

*Information provided by Richard Jauron, ISUE Horticulturalist*

Weeds compete with our garden plants for water, nutrients, sunlight and growing space. They also may harbor insects and disease. If they get out of control that can reduce yields of fruits and vegetables and can also hinder the beauty of annual and perennial flowers.

The first step of control is identification of the weed or weeds. This will help determine the best method of control. Two main types of weeds are annuals or perennials. Weeds also can be classified as broadleaf weeds or grasses.

There are three general methods of weed control in the home garden:

1. Cultivation and hand pulling effectively control most annual weeds. Perennial weeds are often more difficult. Repeated cultivation is often necessary to destroy perennial weeds. Be careful not to cultivate too deep. You may cut some of your plant roots and it can bring deeply buried weed seeds to the soil surface where they can germinate. To effectively control weeds,

cultivation and hand pulling must be done periodically through the growing season. It's also important to destroy the weeds before they have a chance to go to seed.

2. Mulches control weeds by preventing the germination of both annual and perennial weed seeds. Established weeds should be destroyed before applying mulch. Mulches will also help conserve soil moisture, reduce soil erosion, prevent crusting of the soil surface, keep fruits and vegetables clean and may reduce disease problems.
3. Herbicides can be used to supplement cultivation, hand pulling and mulches. Only a small number of herbicides are available to home gardeners. No one herbicide can be safely used around all garden and landscape plants. If not applied properly, herbicides may cause unintended damage to fruits, vegetables and ornamentals. **Herbicides are pesticides. When using any pesticide, carefully read and follow label directions.**

## Preserve Summer Produce with Help from Iowa State University Extension

*Information provided by Paulelda Gilbert, ISUE Nutrition & Health Field Specialist*

With the current state of the economy, more people are opting to grow their own food and preserve it.

Stop in the Webster County Extension office today and check out the "So Easy to Preserve" DVD series to view how-to-demonstrations of recommended safe food preservation methods. The DVD is available for a period of 3 days (there is a \$5.00 late returning fee).

We also have numerous publications at minimal or no cost:

- "Making Fruit Spreads" PM 1336—no cost

- "Canning Fruits" PM 1043—no cost
- "Canning Vegetables" PM 1044—no cost
- "Freezing Fruits & Vegetables" PM 1045—no cost
- "Canning & Freezing Tomatoes" PM 638—no cost
- "Making Pickles & Pickle Products" PM 1368—no cost
- "Fresh Vegetable Guide" PM 2034—no cost
- "Harvesting & Storing Vegetables" PM 731—\$1.00

A resource list of Food Preservation is at the ISUE food preservation page:

[www.extension.iastate.edu/healthnutrition/food/preservation/resources.htm](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/healthnutrition/food/preservation/resources.htm)

Webster Co. Extension will be doing canner lid testing on Friday, June 26th, 10:00 a.m.-Noon. There will be a \$3.00 charge per lid. You only need to bring the lid of your canner. Weighted gauges do not need to be checked because they will remain accurate. You may bring your lid to the office ahead of the 26th and pick it up at a later date.

## **June Bugs Prepare to Emerge** *Content provided by Laura Jess, ISU Extension Entomology*

Nothing says June in Iowa quite like a big brown beetle smacking into your forehead as you spend a pleasant evening lounging on the front porch. Who are these beetles that seem so transfixed by the lights around our homes? If you are like most of us, you call them June bugs and don't give them much more thought.

June bugs belong to a large group of insects called scarab beetles. There are actually at least two species of "June bug" normally found around lights in Iowa. The larger beetles are called May or June beetles. They are called May or June beetles because the adults emerge and subsequently arrive at our lights in May and June. They are about .5 to 1 inch long and

dark brown. The second species is the northern masked chafer. This beetle is smaller, about .5 inch long, and a lighter tan color. The northern masked chafer will emerge in late June and you will be able to find them circling a light near you.

The adult northern masked chafer and June beetles feed on trees and other plants, but generally do not cause enough damage to be considered pests. The damaging stages of these beetles are their larval stages. Female beetles burrow into the ground several inches to lay their eggs in the soil. The larvae hatch about two to four weeks later and begin feeding on plant roots. The larvae of both beetles are C-shaped white grubs.

Larval May or June beetles are called true white grubs, and take three years to develop from eggs to adults, spending most of their lives as grubs.

Larvae of the northern masked chafer are called the annual white grub and will develop from egg to adults in a single year. They tend to be a more serious pest of turfgrass.

Keeping lights turned off at night, especially during those times when the adult beetles are numerous and active, can help reduce damage. In addition, yellow light bulbs are less attractive to insects than white or mercury vapor bulbs.

## **Fort Dodge Farmer's Market—New Season** *Information provided by Jim Patton, Webster CEED*

The 2009 Fort Dodge Farmer's Market is open for a new season. Each Saturday from 8:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. and each Wednesday from 2:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m., until the end of October, local producers will be at the northwest corner of the Crossroads Mall parking lot.

Seasonal vegetables, herbs, fruits and baked goods are offered by area growers on a regular basis. The produce is field-ripened and picked daily from the surrounding 40 miles. Prices are reasonable and food assistance (SNAP) is available.

For over thirty years, the Fort Dodge Farmer's Market has provided quality fresh home grown produce.

For more information or inquiries on the Fort Dodge Farmer's Market, please contact Dick Brown at 515-955-8433.

## **LIVESTOCK & PET SAFETY INDEX FOR HEAT** *By Shawn Shouse, ISU Extension Field Specialist/Ag Engineering*

Animals suffer when summer temperatures and humidity rise together. The combined effect of high temperature and humidity limits the animal's ability to get rid of excess body heat. Severe heat stress can lead to loss of performance and even death.

The Livestock Safety Index classifies weather conditions into alert, danger, and emergency situa-

tions for livestock. The following table shows minimum relative humidity levels for each index category at different temperatures.

### **Temperature:**

- 80° - 55% Alert, 90% Danger
- 85° - 30% Alert, 60% Danger, 90% Emergency
- 90° - 15% Alert, 35% Danger, 65% Emergency

- 95° - n/a , 20% Danger, 45% Emergency
- 100° - n/a, 10% Danger, 30% Emergency

You can use the Livestock Safety Index, along with watching the behavior of animals, to determine when artificial cooling is necessary to protect animals from heat stress.

## Questions Asked During the Months of June & July

**Q. When is the Webster County Fair?**

- A. The Webster County Fair runs July 8th through July 12th. (4-H Auditorium judging is July 7th)
- July 8th: Swine Show; Dog Show; & King & Queen Contest
  - July 9th: Sheep Show; Rabbit Show; Barn Yard Olympics; Poultry Show; & Hot Rod Garden Tractor Pull
  - July 10th: Beef Show; Dairy Show; Cat Show; Horse Pull; Draft Pony Hitch; Antique Tractor Display; & Out-law Junkies
  - July 11th: Working Exhibits; Horse Show; Mud Volleyball; Sweet Corn Feed; Market Animal Auction; DM River Valley Tractor Pancakes; Open Class Flower Show; Open Class Garden Show; Make & Take by Family Quilt Shop; Curt Bacon Remote Controlled Cars Race; Antique Tractor Pull; Chrome & Polish Semi Truck Show; Watermelon Feed; Kids Tractor Pull; Moto Cross Races; & Home Wine Making Competition
  - July 12th: Horse Show (games); Pet Show; Share the Fun; Open Pet Show; & Figure 8 Races

**Q. There are light green growths on the upper leaf surface of my silver maple. What are they and will they harm my tree?**

- A. The growths are probably a type of gall. Galls are abnormal plant growths caused by insects, mites or other organisms. Heavy infestations of galls may disfigure a tree's foliage and cause premature leaf drop. However, leaf galls normally do not cause serious harm to healthy, well established trees. Nothing can be done once the galls have formed. Preventative applications of insecticides or miticides in future years usually are not practical nor necessary.

**Q. How can I keep raccoons out of my sweet corn?**

- A. The most effective way to prevent damage to the sweet corn crop is to encircle the area with an electric fence. A two-wire fence with one wire 4 to 6 inches above the ground and the other at 12 inches should keep the raccoons out of the sweet corn. To be effective, the electric fence should be installed about two weeks before the sweet corn reaches the milk stage.

**Q. Is it necessary to water an established lawn during hot, dry weather?**

- A. Cool-season grasses, such as Kentucky bluegrass, can survive long periods of dry weather. In dry weather, the shoots of the turfgrass plants stop growing and the plants go dormant. Dormancy is a natural survival mechanism for turfgrass. While the leaves have turned brown and died, the turfgrass roots and crowns remain alive. Generally, Kentucky bluegrass can remain dormant for four to six weeks without suffering significant damage. It's best to water dormant lawns if the dry conditions persist beyond this 4 to 6 week period as the dormant turfgrass plants are in jeopardy of dying. Apply 1 to 1 ½ inches of water in a single application. Water again seven days later. The grass should begin to green up after the second application of water.

**Q. A blackish spot develops on the bottom of my tomato fruit. What is it and what should I do?**

- A. Blossom end rot is probably responsible for the blackish spot on the tomato fruit. Blossom end rot is a common problem on tomatoes. It appears as a brownish black spot on the blossom end of the fruit. Secondary organisms invade the affected area, causing the fruit to rot. It is most common on the earliest maturing fruit. It is a physiological disorder caused by a calcium deficiency in the developing fruit. Wide fluctuations in soil moisture levels impair calcium uptake by the root system. Excessive nitrogen fertilization may also contribute to it. To reduce blossom end rot, water tomato plants on a weekly basis during dry weather to supply a consistent supply of moisture to the plants. Mulch the area around the tomato plants to conserve soil moisture. Avoid over-fertilization. Adding calcium to the soil is ineffective. Pick and discard the fruit affected with blossom end rot. The removal of the affected fruit will allow the tomato plant to channel all of its resources into the growth and development of the remaining fruit. This may also occur on peppers and summer squash.

