



Webster County Acreage Living

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Asian Soybean Rust – A Disease of More Than Just Soybean

Information provided by Christine Engelbrecht, ISUE Plant Pathologist

Across Iowa, soybean farmers are preparing for the possible arrival of Asian soybean rust this growing season. However, home gardeners should be aware of this plant disease too. Besides soybeans, Asian soybean rust can also affect more than 30 other species, including green, kidney, lima and butter beans, although its severity on these crops is uncertain.

Asian soybean rust is a fungal plant disease that affects soybean and several other crops and weeds in the bean family. On soybeans, it can cause up to 80% yield loss under extreme conditions, and proper management is critical. There is little information available regarding how serious the disease may be on garden beans.

Several factors must come together in order for Asian soybean rust to cause problems in Iowa this growing season. First, spores must be blown from the south where the fungus can survive the winter. It is thought that if the fungus overwinters in Texas, Florida or Mexico, the disease may travel north at a rate of 20-30 miles a day during the growing season, arriving in Iowa as early as July.

Secondly, environmental conditions must be favorable for infection. The fungus cannot infect a plant unless it has sufficient moisture and the temperature is high enough. Having the spores alone is not enough to cause disease.

Soybean farmers are gearing up to spray fungicides at the first sign of rust, as this is the only management option available to them. Gardeners also have few options for management, although it is uncertain how severe the disease may be on garden beans. Resistant varieties of beans or not available and cultural practices will probably have little effect on the disease. Fungicides that are labeled for common bean rust or other foliar diseases will likely be effective against Asian soybean rust on garden beans. It is important to apply the fungicides as soon as symptoms are noticed, and to follow label directions regarding application rates and length of time that must elapse before harvest.

As the growing season begins, both farmers and gardeners will anxiously await the possible arrival of Asian soybean rust.



Morel Mushrooms

Information provided by the ISU Families Extension Answerline, 800-262-3804

Morel Mushrooms are the wild mushrooms that people pick in April and May. The season usually lasts 3-4 weeks. The size of the Morel depends upon spring rains and warm temperatures. The safe Morels are those that have the hollow stem. The tops of a Morel look like a sponge.

Once picked (not washed) you can store them in the refrigerator safely for 1-2 days – 3 days at the most.

Do not soak in water. They are best if you use a mushroom brush (brush them before cooking). If you feel you must put water on them, do a quick rinse.

Early spring Morels don't have bugs. After late May, some mushrooms may need to be soaked because of insects.

When cooking Morels, most people cut in half or slice, rinse, dip them in beaten egg, then dip in flour or cracker crumbs, and fry them in a small amount of margarine or butter. They are usually crisp and brown in 3-4 minutes.

You may freeze Morels and even blanch them, however **WILD MUSHROOMS CAN NOT BE CANNED SAFELY.**

Common Myths Surrounding Credit & the “Facts” Surrounding Each Myth

Information provided by the ISU Financial Council Clinic, <http://www.fcs.iastate.edu/financial>

Myth: After a debt is paid off, it will disappear from my credit report.

FACT: A credit report shows your credit history. All debts (even paid off debts) are included. Negative information will remain on your report for 7 years (bankruptcy can stay for up to 10 years).

Myth: When I get divorced, my “X” will owe half the debt or more if the divorce decree states so.

FACT: Not if you have joint accounts – in that case, the card agreement will override the divorce decree. If your ex decides not to pay (even though the divorce decree said they owe 100% of the debt), the creditor will come after you! If your ex files bankruptcy, you will be liable for the debt.

Myth: I don’t want to look at my credit report because that will lower my credit score.

FACT: The only inquires that affect your credit score are ones done by companies that can grant credit – obviously not the case with a personal inquiry. You should review your credit regularly – at least once/year.

Myth: Poor credit will not impact my employability.

FACT: It is estimated that many as 70% of employers will check the credit report of potential candidates prior to hire. Poor credit is viewed by many as “baggage.” Good credit is actually one way to “separate you from other applicants.”



Planting Trees on an Acreage

Information provided by Paul Wray, ISU Extension Forester, 515-294-1168

For years, the major rural home sites were associated with farms, but the trend to small acreages continues to grow and expand. These home sites will often benefit from the addition of woody vegetation.

Trees for acreages include ornamental and shade trees close to the home site, windbreaks and screens for both visual and environmental protection, plantings for wildlife habitat improvement, plantings to help conserve the soil and water resources, and other conservation plantings.

Woody plant landscaping is often the first item of concern for an acreage owner. Because of the desire to plant larger plant material, special selections or cultivars, most landowners use their local landscape nurseries for the plant material.

The major advantage of these types of plant materials is the establishment of larger stock, less transplant shock and greater control of the specific plant characteristics desired by the homeowner. Most of these plant materials also can be planted from spring through fall. Landscape plants should be watered during their first year of establishment.

For the other tree planting objectives, smaller plant material can often be used for establishment. Seedlings are the least expensive, and simply are plants grown in the nursery for a year or longer, dug from the nursery and supplied to the homeowner.

Transplant plant materials are seedlings that are replanted at a nursery, grown for another period of time and again dug and marketed as bare-root plants. The major advantage of a transplant is a significantly larger root system. A third type of plant material commonly in the market, especially with some of the conifers, is the “plug+” plant types. Most of these consist of plant material that is first produced as small container plants from seed. These plants then are field planted for a period of time and then dug and marketed as bare-root plug+ plants.

Bare-root plant material is designed for spring planting. Spring planting provides the entire growing season for the plant to develop new roots and occupy its growing site. Planting too late in the spring or early summer does not allow sufficient time for root growth and expansion before hot and dry weather. Conifers are never good candidates for bare-root fall planting. For more information on planting bare-root plant material, visit the following sites: www.iowadnr.com/forestry/catalog.html or: www.ag.iastate.edu/departments/forestry/ext/plnts_eedl.html.

Landscape plant materials are available from many sources in Iowa, as well as from mail order nurseries. Iowa sources of bare-root stock are somewhat limited, with a smaller number of nurseries providing the stock as well as the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Nursery.



Mid-Iowa Youth Farm Safety Day Camp

Information provided by Linda Cline, Webster Co. Youth Coordinator, lcline@iastate.edu

The Farm Safety Day-Camp is an exciting Youth Development Program specially designed for youth entering 4th through 7th grades from Hamilton, Humboldt, Webster and Wright counties.

During the workshop youth will learn:

- To recognize the dangers of augers and power take-offs and how to stay safe around these machines.
- To understand the causes of tractor rollover and how to prevent it.
- To recognize the dangers of electricity on farm settings.
- To Understand how to use lawn mowers and ATV's safely.

- To be aware of the dangers associated with farm animals and how to safely handle livestock.
- To be aware of the tremendous force of flowing grain and to learn about grain bin and grain wagon safety.

The Mid-Iowa Youth Farm Safety Day Camp will be held on Wednesday, June 8, 2005 at the Land O'Lakes Answer Farm (1025 – 190th, Webster City, IA) with registration at 8:30 a.m. and the program 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Please pre-register by May 27th by calling Linda Cline at 515-576-2119 or by e-mail: lcline@iastate.edu. The cost of the camp is \$15.

The workshop will be activity-packed with safety tips to keep youth safe at home, farm and/or the acreage.



Spring is Here...It Is Time to Put Away Winter Woolens

Information provided by the ISU Families Extension Answerline, 800-262-3804

As springtime nears, most people can't wait to get out of their winter woolens and into something light and cottony. Don't let you haste prevent you from storing winter clothes away properly. An ounce of prevention now could save you a pound of cherished sweaters next fall. Incidentally, these same principles apply to storage of clothing of any season!

1. Clean garments prior to storage. Many insects, especially moths, thrive on greasy food stains. Also, clothes that have not been cleaned may have "invisible" stains. If these stains contain sugar, they will oxidize over the summer months, causing a yellow or brownish stain.

2. Don't use starch. It can serve as food for some insects.
3. Hang coats and heavy suits on padded or wood hangers and avoid plastic dry cleaner bags. They can trap moisture which causes mildew.
4. Fold knits and sweaters flat, with layers of acid-free tissue paper between the folds to prevent crease lines or discoloration.
5. Store items in a cool, well-ventilated area, away from artificial or natural light. The area should be temperature and humidity controlled.



Pheasants Forever Grass Seed Available

Information provided by Matt Cosgrove, Webster County Conservation, 515-576-4258

The Webster County chapter of Pheasants Forever has a number of native grass and forb mixes. These are great for prairie plantings or CRP requirements.

Please contact Matt Cosgrove at the Webster County Conservation (515-576-4258) to place an order.



Dandelions – Not Just Another Weed

Information provided by The Cook's Garden® February 2005 Newsletter

It is no coincidence that the first dandelion of the season blooms on Mother's day. Though they may trigger an impulse to get out the lawnmower, first consider the lowly dandelion and its contribution to your health. Dandelions are a source of nourishment that is a tonic rich in vitamins and minerals.

Most gardeners and a few cooks have gone out on hands and knees to harvest the wild variety from our lawns. When the leaves are small and tender, they make a fine salad. But once the yellow blossoms appear, the leaves become bitter and are best sautéed with a bit of bacon or ham.

Two distinct plants named dandelion are represented in markets throughout the world. Wild Dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*) are a native of Europe and Asia and has been used for food and the root as a medicine since ancient times. Dandelion Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*) is a significant ingredient in Mediterranean cuisine and found in Italian markets featured as chicory, highly prized for its bitter and very leaves.



Rabies

Information provided by the UHL Hygienic Laboratory

Rabies is an acute encephalitis (infection of the brain) caused by a virus believed to be infectious for most mammals. Transmission of the virus is usually through a bite. It also can occur by exposure of a scratch, abrasion, open wound or mucous membrane to saliva or brain material of a rapid animal.

Once the virus is established in the brain the disease is seldom reversible and usually fatal. The average incubation period varies from 20-90 days after exposure and depends on the following circumstances:

- Severity of bite or laceration.
- Location of bite (incubation periods may be shorter after bites on head, neck, and fingertips, than bites on the trunk or lower extremities due to extensive nerve endings in the former areas).
- Age of the victim (children have faster onset).

Rabies is endemic in several wildlife populations throughout specific geographical areas. These animals act as the reservoir for the rabies virus and for its continued spread. The raccoon appears to be the natural reservoir in the south and southeast U.S., the fox and bat throughout the U.S., and the skunk in the Mississippi River basin and plains area.

Preference for bitter greens seems largely a European phenomenon, yet once Americans recognize that it is code word for healthy, it may catch on in this country. The dandelion proves that it is an excellent source of vitamin C, vitamin A and Calcium. The bitter compounds in the leaves and roots of most of the chicory family help to stimulate digestion, increase bile production in the gall bladder and bile flow from the liver, which may help improve fat and cholesterol metabolism in the body.

Cooked Dandelion Greens: Sautéing dandelion (and other leafy chicory) in a pan with slab bacon, country ham, or Prosciutto is a good way to serve a mess of greens that appeals to a wider audience. Slow cook until completely tender, serve alongside a mixture of rice or grains for complementary pairing. Or consider adding dandelion to soup or pasta dishes, making sure to first blanch the leaves in boiling water and then sauté in olive oil. Greens cooked in this way will easily fold into a cheese or cream sauce. It is the mildest way to serve bitter greens.

There are two primary forms of rabies: urban rabies, spread by nonimmunized domestic dogs and cats and rural rabies spread by the skunk, fox, raccoon, bat, and occasionally livestock. The skunk is the most common source of exposure followed by cows in the state of Iowa.

Even though the numbers of positive rabies cases are fewer in domestic animals than in wild animals; dogs, cats, and farm animals continue to present a substantial risk to humans. Their close contact with humans introduces the risk when rabies immunizations are not kept current. This is especially true in the rural settings where it is not economically feasible or justified to vaccinate livestock. Owners of valuable animals and breeding stock should consider vaccination especially in areas of high wildlife rabies. Making pets of wildlife or exotic animals should be discouraged since many could be infected with the rabies virus. For information about rabies and for submission of specimens contact the following: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (877-554-4625); Iowa Dept. of Public Health (800-362-2736); State Public Health Veterinarian (515-281-4933); Ames Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (515-294-1950); & Hygienic Laboratory (319-335-4500).



Shopping for Beef – What You Should Be Paying Attention To

Information provided by 2005 Cattlemen's Beef Board

- Select beef last when shopping to ensure that beef stays cold as long as possible until you get home.
- Choose beef with a bright cherry-red color, without any grayish or brown blotches. A darker purplish-red color is typical of vacuum-packaged beef. Once exposed to oxygen, beef will turn from a darker red to bright red.
- Fresh ground beef does go through a number of color changes during its shelf life. These color changes are normal, and the ground beef remains perfectly wholesome and safe to eat if purchased by the “sell by” date on the package label.
- Choose steaks, roasts and pot roasts that are firm to the touch, not soft.
- A package of ground beef may appear bright red on the surface, where it is exposed to oxygen through the permeable plastic wrapping, while the interior, where oxygen is absent, remains purplish-red. With extended exposure to oxygen, beef's cherry-red color will take on a brown color.
- Choose packages that are cold, tightly wrapped and have no tears or punctures. Be sure the packages do not contain excessive liquid, an indication of temperature abuse or excessive storage. For vacuumed-packaged beef, be sure that the seal has not been broken and that the package is not leaking.
- Purchase before or on the “sell by” date printed on the package label.



Well Water

Information provided by the UHL Hygienic Laboratory

Regularly scheduled water testing is important to keep your drinking water clean and your well operating at peak performance. Unlike public drinking water systems, private well owners do not have experts regularly checking their water's source and its quality before it is sent through pipes for consumption.

Because there are so many potential water contaminants, it would be very costly – and in most cases unnecessary – to test for them all. Private well owners can often rely on tests for total coliform bacteria and nitrate as general indicators of the safety of their drinking water.

It is recommended that every private well be tested for total coliform bacteria and nitrate at least once each year. However, other tests may be required, depending on where you live and what is located near your drinking water supply.

Testing more than once a year may be warranted in special situations, examples: someone in your house is pregnant or nursing, unexplained illnesses in the family change in water taste, color or clarity, or you replace or repair any part of the well system. In addition, some contaminants may be present during only part of the year. To assess the safety of your drinking water, you must collect the sample when contaminants are most likely to be present.

Some questions to consider when thinking of getting your well tested:

- What distance is my well from septic systems?
- How far is it from animal feedlots or manure spreading?
- Is my well dug deep enough to avoid seasonal changes in groundwater supply?
- What activities in my area (farming, mining, industry) affect my well?
- What is the age of my well, its pump, and other parts?
- Is my water distribution system protected from cross connections and backflow problems?
- Are water treatment devices installed and maintained properly?

The Webster County Extension Office has water test kits for sale (\$12/each). The cost covers the total coliform and nitrate test. The kits are provided by the University Hygienic Laboratory. You should always take a sample at the beginning of the week, so the sample will not set in a post office over the weekend.



Common Diseases for Conifers

Information provided by Krystal Tentinger, ISUE Plant Health & Protection Student

When looking out at your conifer windbreak or observing the stately Scots pine in your yard, you may notice something alarming. Yellow and brown needles on conifers—also known as evergreens—are a common sight during the spring in Iowa. This discoloration can be due to several factors, including winter injury, *Rhizosphaera* needle cast, bark beetle damage and pine wilt.

Winter injury is common when winters are dry and mild. During the winter, water can be lost from conifer needles when air temperatures rise above freezing.

Another common problem for conifers, especially Colorado blue spruce, is *Rhizosphaera* needle cast. This disease causes second-year needles to turn purplish brown and infected needles eventually fall from the branches. The symptoms tend to first occur at the bottom of the tree and progress upward. The fungus produces very small, black spots on the needles. You can manage *Rhizosphaera* needle cast with timely fungicide applications in the spring and tree pruning to improve air circulation among the branches. Call the Webster Co. Extension office for this information.

A third common problem on pines is damage from bark beetle feeding. You can check for networks of tunnels, called galleries, in the wood immediately beneath the bark of damaged trees.

“Pine wilt” is a phrase pine owners do not want to hear. Older, more established pines, such as Scots and Austrian pines, can quickly succumb to this deadly disease. When a tree is diagnosed with pine wilt, there is no hope for recovery. The needles of infected trees quickly turn grayish green and then change to brown. The damage can be scattered in several spots throughout the tree to begin with, and then spread.

Avoid Scots and Austrian pine when choosing trees for your windbreak or landscape. These exotic pines are very susceptible to pine wilt and other diseases. Spruces, firs, white pine and arborvitae can be good alternatives for these pines.

Conifers can be a beautiful addition to your landscape. Good management practices, such as watering and mulching, are necessary to maintain healthy trees and minimize the harmful effects of diseases and environmental stresses.

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