

# Webster County Acreage Living

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## *Milkweed & The Insects That Feed On Them*

Information provided by Donald R. Lewis, ISU Extension Entomologist

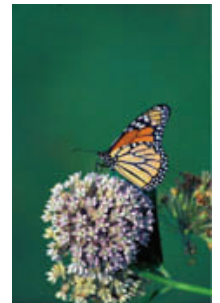
Milkweeds are native, perennial plants named for the white, milky juice that exudes from broken or cut leaves and stems. They are found throughout the United States in open, sunny areas. The common milkweed has broad, leathery leaves oppositely arranged on stalks 3 to 5 feet tall. Brownish-purple flowers form a dome-like cluster at the top of the plant and give way to warty seed-pods in late summer, each containing hundreds of tiny seeds attached to a silky tuft of fuzz. This plant also feeds over 450 insects.

When you examine milkweeds in late summer you may find more than one caterpillar eating the leaves. The monarch butterfly caterpillar and the milkweed tussock moth larvae. The tussock moth caterpillars are orange, black and white, but where the monarch caterpillars are hairless, the tussock moth caterpillars are nothing but hair.

The red milkweed beetle is the most common of many beetles that feed on milkweeds. These attractive insects are slightly more than one-half inch long and red with 11 black spots scattered along the back. The larvae live in milkweed roots from late summer until the following July. Adults aggregate on leaves and flowers and are very common in the second half of the summer.

At the top of the plant is where you are likely to find milkweed aphids. There are at least four common species of aphids on milkweeds. The most frequently observed is the yellow milkweed aphid. Large colonies of mixed sizes of these brilliant yellow insects are common.

Are insects on milkweed a problem? Not unless you are trying to raise milkweeds!



*The monarch butterfly is one of the more than 450 insects that feed on the common milkweed.*

## *Summertime is Perfect for Picnics*

Information provided by Paulelda Gilbert, ISU Extension Nutrition & Health Field Specialist



Follow these tips for packing a safe picnic:

- Use an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40°F. Pack food from the refrigerator right into the cooler.
- If you're planning on take-out foods such as fried chicken, eat them within two hours of pick-up or buy ahead of time and chill before packing the foods into the cooler.
- Don't put the cooler in the trunk; carry it inside the air-conditioned car.
- Keep the cooler in the shade. Keep the lid closed and avoid repeated openings. Use a separate cooler for drinks so the one containing perishable food won't be constantly opened and closed.
- Place salads on the table with a bowl or tray of ice underneath.
- Place leftover foods in the cooler soon after grilling or serving. Any left outside for more than an hour should be discarded.
- When handling raw meat, remove from the cooler only the amount that will fit on the grill. To be sure bacteria are destroyed, cook hamburgers and ribs to 160 degrees F or until the center is no longer pink and the juices are clear. Cook ground poultry to 165°F and poultry parts to 180° F. Reheat precooked meats until steaming hot.
- When taking foods off the grill, put them on a clean plate. Don't put cooked food on a platter that held raw meat.



Over 50% of sparkler related injuries happen to children under the age of 14.

## Sparkler Safety

Information provided The National Council on Fireworks Safety

The Fourth of July and fireworks seem to go hand and hand. The National Council on Fireworks Safety urges everyone to use sparklers in a safe and responsible manner.

Here are some tips offered by the Council:

- Obey the local laws and use common sense.
- Always have an adult present and read instructions.
- Keep burning sparklers away from clothing and flammable objects.
- Only use outdoors, away from buildings and vehicles.
- Light only one sparkler at a time.
- Be responsible. Alcohol, fireworks and sparklers do not mix.
- Do not point or throw your sparklers at another person.
- Children under the age of 12 should not handle sparklers.
- Place used sparklers in a bucket of water.

For more information on the safe use of consumer fireworks and sparklers, state laws and regulations visit the following site: [www.fireworksafety.com](http://www.fireworksafety.com).

## A Fun Place to Be—The 2007 Webster County Fair

So many adventures can be found this year at the Webster County Fair.

### 4-H/FFA Schedule:

- **Wednesday, July 11th:** Dog Show @ 8:00 a.m.; Sheep Show @ 9:00 a.m.; and King/Queen Contest & Style Show @ 7:00 p.m.
- **Thursday, July 12th:** Swine Show @ 9:15 a.m.; Rabbit Show @ 9:00 a.m.; Poultry Show @ 5:30 p.m.; and Beef Project Showmanship Presentation @ 7:00 p.m.
- **Friday, July 13th:** Beef Show @ 9:00 a.m.; Dairy Show @ 3:00 p.m.; and Cat Show @ 6:00 p.m.
- **Saturday, July 14th:** Working Exhibits all day; Horse Show @ Noon; and Fair Auction @ 6:00 p.m.
- **Sunday, July 15th:** Horse Show (game classes) @ 11:30 a.m.; and Pet Show @ 12:30 p.m.
- **Thursday, July 12th:** Fire & Destruction/Car Muncher @ 7:30 p.m.
- **Friday, July 13th:** Hot Rod Garden Tractor Pull @ 7:30 p.m.
- **Saturday, July 14th:** Antique Tractor Pull @ Noon; Kid's Pedal Pull @ 1:00 p.m.; and Moto Cross @ 7:00 p.m.
- **Sunday, July 15th:** Figure 8 Races @ 2:00 p.m.
- **Monday, July 16th:** 4-H Teen Dance @ 8:30 p.m.

### Extra Attractions:

- **Wednesday—Thursday:** Wambold's Menagerie Exotic Animal Entertainment & Educational Show; Monster Truck Rides, Lynn Anderson, Chainsaw Artist; and New Machinery Outside Displays.
- **Thursday:** Pre 4-H Open Foods & Crafts @ 9:30 a.m.
- **Saturday:** Watermelon Feed; Mud Volleyball; Open Class Flower Show & Open Class Garden Show @ 8:30 a.m.; and Sweet Corn Feed @ 5:00—7:00 p.m.



The Webster Co. Fair is July 11th through the 15th.

### Fair Entertainment:

- **Wednesday, July 11th:** The Rumbles @ 7:30 p.m.

## *Endless Summer Color*

*Information provided by Linda Naeve, Reiman Gardens*

The recent hot weather has reminded us that summer will soon be here. Gardeners will be watching their gardens come alive with color, texture and fragrance.

The 'Endless Summer' hydrangea has the ability to bloom on both old and new wood and provides gorgeous color all season. This makes the 'Endless Summer' hydrangea an ideal shrub for borders gardens, a beautiful backdrop for other

plants, and in containers.

It will reach a mature height of three to five feet in one season with blooms from four to eight inches in diameter. The vibrant flower color of the plant varies depending on the soil pH. Alkaline soil will yield clear pink blossoms and acidic soil will have true blue flowers.

This hydrangea grows best in a partly sunny, well-drained location. Regular

watering is important to prevent wilting.

Simple maintenance of the 'Endless Summer' hydrangea plants during the growing season will yield big rewards. If deadheaded regularly, it will bloom from late June through the first frost in Iowa gardens. Cutting the emerging growth back to half before it starts to bloom will significantly increase the number of flower clusters.



*'Endless Summer' hydrangea brings endless summer color.*

## *Pernicious Lawn Weeds and How to Control Them*

*Information provided by Richard Jauron, ISU Extension Horticulture*

Pernicious lawn weeds include quackgrass, nimblewill, ground ivy and wild violets.

Quackgrass is a cool-season perennial grass. It spreads rapidly by underground stems. The leaf blades are bright green, coarse in texture and twice the width of bluegrass leaves. It can be a major problem in flower and vegetable gardens.

Nimblewill is a warm-season perennial grass. It is a thin, wiry grass that is pale green or gray-green. It spreads by aboveground shoots, often forming circular spots in the lawn. It is easy to spot in the lawn because it greens up late in the spring and turns brown in early fall.

Ground ivy, often referred to as "creeping charlie," is a low-growing spreading invasive perennial. It spreads by seed and the vining stems that root at their nodes. The leaves are round or kidney-shaped with scalloped margins. Stems are four-sided, and the flowers are small, funnel-shaped and bluish purple in color. Ground ivy thrives in damp, shady areas, but also grows well in sunny locations. It produces a minty odor when cut or crushed.

The best way to control these undesirable perennial grasses is to spot treat the weed-infested areas with glyphosate (Roundup, Kleenup, etc.). Glyphosate is a systemic, nonselective

herbicide that is absorbed through the foliage and translocated to all parts of the plant. Plants treated with this typically die in 2 to 3 weeks. It is most effective when applied to actively growing plants. A second application will be necessary if the treated areas are not dead in 2 to 3 weeks.

The key to controlling ground ivy is the use of the proper broadleaf herbicide. The most effective broadleaf herbicide products are those that contain dicamba (Trimec and Weed-B-Gon Lawn Weed Killer 2). Mid-September through early November is generally the best time to control ground ivy. Two applications are necessary.



*Ground ivy (Glechoma hederacea), often referred to as "creeping charlie."*

*Midsummer is an excellent time to control undesirable perennial grasses in the lawn and also allows adequate time to kill the weedy grasses and prepare the areas for seeding or sodding in late summer.*

## Questions asked at the Webster County Extension Office During the Summer Months

### How do you freeze asparagus?

Select young, tender asparagus with tightly closed tips. Wash thoroughly. Trim stalks by removing scales. Cut to fit freezer containers. Blanch small spears 1 1/2 minutes, medium spears 2 minutes and large spears 3 minutes. Cool. Drain. Pack into freezer bags then seal, label and freeze.

### How do you get rid of the Asian Lady Beetles?

Sealing exterior gaps and cracks around windows, doors, eaves, roofs, siding and other points of access. However, this is often impractical and usually not 100% effective. For large infestations, spraying pyrethroid insecticides such as permethrin or esfenvalerate to the outside of buildings may help. Homeowner insecticides other than pyrethroids usually do not provide prevention. Long-term relief

may come from planting trees that will grow up to shade the south and west sides of the house. The most practical control for beetles already inside is to vacuum or sweep them up and discard.

### When are you going to test canners?

Friday, June 22nd, 10:00—Noon @ the Webster Co. Extension Office.

### How can I get my well tested?

If you live in Webster Co., we suggest you call the County Sanitarian, Gary Boerner @ 515-574-3801; otherwise we do sell a water test kit for \$14.

### What is wrong with my ash tree? It is losing a lot of leaves and it looks like the leaves are dying.

Sounds like Ash Anthracnose. Anthracnose is one of the most com-

mon foliage diseases of shade trees in Iowa. Symptoms of anthracnose are often referred to as “leaf blights” or “leaf spots.” Damage to tree health is usually minimal because occasional defoliation seldom has a long-lasting impact on tree health. Healthy, established shade trees can survive even severe attacks.

Management of anthracnose:

- Clean up and destroy as many of the fallen leaves as possible in the fall.
- Prune the tree to remove diseased twigs and branches.
- Maintain tree vigor with proper watering, fertilization, and other cultural practices.
- Apply a labeled fungicide when warranted.
- Select the proper tree for the proper site. Select species that are resistant or less susceptible to anthracnose.

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We're on the Web! <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/webster/info/acreage.htm>

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## Iowa State University Extension

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