



Webster County Acreage Living

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Cicada Killer Wasps a.k.a. Digger Wasps

Information provided by Donald R. Lewis, ISU Extension Entomologist

Here at the Webster County Extension Office we have been receiving many calls about the cicada killer wasps. These wasps are very active in July and August.

Cicada killer wasps may be up to 2-inches long. They are black with yellow markings on the thorax and abdomen and they have rusty-orange colored wings.

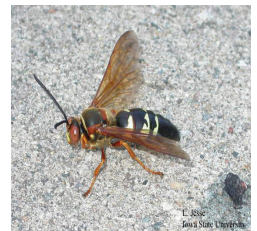
The female wasp digs one or more tunnels in soft soil (flower beds or gardens) usually along an edge such as where the driveway or sidewalk meets. Tunnels are about the size of a quarter and may extend 24-inches or more into the

ground.

The cicada killer wasp, like other solitary wasps, has the capability to sting, but won't unless handled or threatened.

Wasps are generally beneficial and a nest in an out of the way location where it is not likely to be disturbed should be left alone. If the nests is in high-traffic areas you can destroy cicada killers and other digger wasps by applying an insecticide dust (e.g., Sevin or something that contains permethrin) into the burrow entrance during the night. Cover the opening with a shovelful of soil and reapply

in two or three days.



One of the largest insects in Iowa is a "digger wasps" called the cicada

Blossom End Rot

Information provided by ISU Extension Publication "Tomato Diseases and Disorders" PM1266

With all the hot, dry weather we have had this summer there has been an increase in blossom end rot. It is a very common problem on green and ripe tomatoes. This disorder primarily occurs in field-grown rather than greenhouse-grown tomatoes.

It appears as a sunken, brownish black spot 1/2 to 1 inch in diameter on the blossom end of the fruit. These spots can increase in size.

Blossom end rot itself causes only local injury, secondary organisms frequently invade the lesion and cause complete rotting of the fruit. It often occurs in rapidly developing fruit during periods of hot, dry weather and tends to have the greatest impact on the earliest-maturing fruit.

It is caused by a calcium deficiency that is related to wide fluctuations in available moisture. Iowa soils contain plenty of calcium, so the addition of calcium will not solve the problem.

To prevent blossom end rot, maintain a steady rate of plant growth without stress. A consistence and ample supply of moisture can reduce the problem. Mulching also will help by conserving moisture.

Blossom end rot is more serious when an excess of nitrogen fertilizer has been applied. Staking and pruning tomato plants also may increase the incidence of blossom end rot.

If blossom end rot occurs on your tomato plants, remove the affected

fruit so that later-maturing fruit will develop normally.



Examples of blossom end rot.

Watermelon!

Information provided ISU Extension Newsletter "Pick a Better Snack™"



Every part of the watermelon is edible, including the rind and seeds. In many parts of the world, it's popular to bake the seeds and eat them..

Watermelon is one of the most popular summer fruits. It is known for its sweet and refreshingly juicy taste.

This red fruit is rich in lycopene and over 90 percent water making it a great choice for those watching their weight.

When choosing watermelons, look for fruit that's free of blemishes and heavy for its size. A melon that is ripe will have a dull rind, dried stem, and a yellowish under-

side where it touched the ground. You can test for ripeness by thumping the melon gently. The sound should be high pitched, not flat or hollow.

Watermelons should be stored in a cool, dry place.

Before cutting, wash watermelon with cold running water. Wait to refrigerate it until after it has been cut. Watermelon should be used within in 3-5 days after cutting.

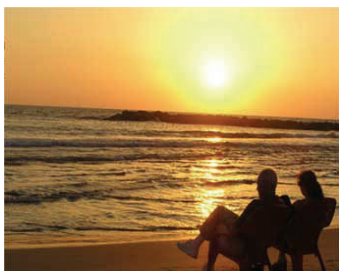
Watermelon Slush

4 cups peeled, seeded, cubed watermelon
 1/2 cup lemonade
 1 Tablespoon lime juice
 1 Tablespoon sugar

Freeze watermelon in a freezer bag for about 6 hours. Combine frozen watermelon and the rest of the ingredients. Process mixture in a blender until it is smooth; stopping once to scrape down sides. Pour into glasses. Yields 4 cups.

Preparing for Retirement

Information provided by Barb Wollan, ISU Extension Families Resource Management Field Specialist



Find out if your retirement savings are on track to meet your needs by using a simple, non-commercial tool. The Ballpark E\$timate of Retirement Savings Needs is an easy-to-use, two-page worksheet that helps you quickly identify approximately how much you need to save to fund a comfortable retirement.

To get a paper copy, in either English or Spanish, go to the website www.choosetosave.org/ballpark/ or stop in the Webster County Extension Office.

The on-line interactive version of the Ballpark E\$timate enables users to fine-tune their projections for their own situations even more closely than the paper worksheet.

Although there are many web-based calculators for retirement savings, most are commercial and may be tied to advertising.

The Ballpark E\$timate was developed by the non-profit American Savings Education Council.

The 'No Riders' Rule

Information provided by ISU Extension Publication "Safe Farm—Extra Riders mean Extra Dangers" PM 1518C

NO RIDERS

In most injuries involving extra riders, victims fall off or are thrown from the tractor during a rough ride or a situation in which the tractor rolls over. They can be run over by either the tractor or an implement being towed, or both.

The only way to prevent extra rider injuries or deaths is to prohibit riders on tractors. You need to make a permanent policy or rule to never allow riders on tractors.

This may be a difficult rule to follow, especially in situations involving visitors or young children.

Here are a few tips to help:

- Discuss with family members and workers why it is important.
- Make sure all guests know your opinion about extra riders.
- Use a truck or car to haul passengers to fields or remote work areas.

Is it a Herb or a Spice?

Information provided by "Horticulture & Home Pest News" 09/23/03

Herbs and spices are both obtained by plants. They are used primarily for adding flavor and aroma to food. Both are best used fresh but can be saved by drying.

Herbs:

- Obtained from the leaves of herbaceous (non-woody) plants.
- Used in cooking.
- Some have medicinal value.

- Used in larger amounts than spices.
- Examples of herbs: thyme, sage, oregano, parsley, marjoram, basil, chives, rosemary and mint.

Spices:

- Obtained from roots, flowers, fruits, seeds or bark.
- They can be woody or herbaceous plants.
- More potent and

stronger flavored.

- Used not only to add taste, but also as a preservative.
- Examples of spices: cinnamon, ginger, cloves, saffron, nutmeg, vanilla and cumin.



Some plants are both herbs and spices.

Dill and cilantro are both a herb and spice. The leaves are the herbs while the seeds are the spice.

Salt is neither a spice or an herb, it is a mineral.



All vegetables, except tomatoes, require processing in a pressure canner with a weighted control or dial gauge.

Canning Vegetable Tips

Information provided by ISU Extension Publication "Preserve it Right—Canning Vegetables" PM 1044

Here are some helpful tips to keep in mind when canning vegetables:

Selection and preparation of the vegetables. Choose only fresh, young, tender vegetables. Wash thoroughly, small amounts at a time, under running water or through several changes of water.

Quantity. The following amounts of fresh vegetables make 1 quart when canned: snap or green beans—1 to 3 lbs; beets without tops—2 to 3 lbs; carrots without tops—2 to 3 lbs; sweet corn in husks—3 to 6 lbs; and pumpkin or winter squash—1 to 3 lbs.

Use standard jars and lids. Use only jars and two-piece lids made especially

for canning. Wash jars in hot, soapy water; rinse well. Prepare lids and bands according to manufacturer's directions.

Fill jars. Vegetables can be packed raw, or preheated and packed hot. Most raw vegetables should be packed closely because of shrinking during processing. Corn, lima beans and peas absorb liquid and expand when processed so should be loosely packed. Vegetables packed hot should be at or near boiling temperature and should be packed loosely. Use the hot cooking liquid and add boiling water if needed to fill the jar and cover the vegetables for both raw and hot packed. If the vegetables at the top of

the jar are not covered they may darken.

Adjust lids. The space between the packed food and liquid and the top of jar is called headspace. Too much or too little headspace will affect jar seals. Use a nonmetallic spatula between food and side of jar to remove any air bubbles and wipe jar rims.

Check altitude. As altitude increases, water boils at a lower temperature.

Process in a pressure canner. Fill canner with 2 to 3 inches of water; then place rack and sealed jars in canner; and then fasten lid. Heat on high and after steam exhausts for 10 minutes, add weighted gauge or close petcock. Allow your

canner to reach designated pressure. Process for the time recommended. When processing is completed, remove from stove and allow it cool at room temperature until it is fully depressurized. This usually takes 30 to 60 minutes. Do not rush the cooling. When pressure is at zero, carefully open the petcock or remove the weighted gauge, wait 2 minutes and then slowly release and remove the canner lid.

Remove and store. Remove jars from canner and put in a place away from drafts. Allow jars to cool undisturbed for 12 to 24 hours and after that check for sealing failures. If lid is down and will not move, jar is sealed. Store jars in a cool, dark place.

Questions typically asked at the Webster County Extension Office During August & September

When is the Iowa State Fair? The 2007 Iowa State Fair “Sounds Like Fun” will be held from August 9th through the 19th. For more information on shows or entertainment, please visit the following website: <http://www.iowastatefair.org>.

How can my child join 4-H? A child must be in the 4th grade to join 4-H in Webster County. You can enroll by reaching Linda Cline, Webster County Youth Coordinator, at 515-576-2119 or by e-mail: lccline@iastate.edu.

How do I contact the Webster County Fairgrounds for information on the Hillbilly Sales, upcoming shows or renting the buildings? You may contact Bill or Bonnie Brian at the Fairgrounds at 515-955-3764 or visit their website: <http://>

www.webstercountyfair.com/index.php.

Do you have any information on cash rental rates? Here at the Webster Co. Extension Office we have available the 2007 Cash Rental Rate Survey (cost \$2) and we also recommend that you talk with Kelvin Leibold, ISU Extension Farm Management Field Specialist. Kelvin specializes in farm leasing and you may contact him by calling 641-648-4850 or you may e-mail Kelvin at kleibold@iastate.edu

How do I freeze sweet corn on the cob? Husk and trim ears; remove silks and wash. Blanch ears 1 1/2 inches in diameter 6 minutes, 2 inches in diameter 8 minutes and larger ears 10 minutes. Cool. Drain. Wrap ears individually in moisture/

vapor-proof film. Pack wrapped ears of corn into plastic freezer bags or vacuum package. Seal, label and freeze.

What are those little black bugs that bite you when you are outside? Minute pirate bugs are present all summer in fields, woodlands, gardens and landscapes. They quietly go unnoticed until late in the summer when they migrate from fields and woodlands and begin the disagreeable behavior of biting humans. Their bite is surprisingly painful for such a small insect as they probe their short blunt beak into the skin. They do not feed on blood or inject a venom or saliva. They are quick to fly following a bite. Wearing dark clothing on very warm days when pirate bugs are abundant may help. Repellents are generally not effective though you may want to see for yourself if they work or not for you.

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

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