D's Notes

April 17, 2017

Tractor Safety Operator's Course to Be Held

Many teenagers are beginning to think about summer employment. In many cases in Southwest Kansas, that may be working on a farm. The Extension Councils from Clark, Comanche, Edwards, Ford, Gray, Hodgeman, Meade and Pawnee counties along with the Walnut Creek Extension District will be hosting a Tractor Safety Operator's Course on **Saturday, May 6, 2017 at the Edwards County Fair Building, 1305 South Niles (South Highway 183) in Kinsley**

The purpose of this course is to provide teenagers with a fuller appreciation and awareness of the needed safety practices around tractors and farm machinery. The law requires any young person, ages 14 to 16 who will be employed by someone other than his or her mother or father on the farm is required to complete a certification course. Any teenager, regardless of age is encouraged to participate. Those that are 14 will receive an operator's permit upon completion of the requirements of the course. Those over 16 do not need a certificate, but are also encouraged to participate.

Topics to be covered include instruments and controls, PTO and hydraulics, maintenance and safety checks along with presentations on fire extinguishers, public road safety and anhydrous ammonia.

Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m. at the Edwards County Fair Building. The course runs from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. A minimal registration fee covers the noon meal, breaks and handouts.

Pre-registration is required by April 29th. A flyer and registration form can be found online at www.hodgeman.ksu.edu. You can pre-register by contacting the Hodgeman County Extension Office at 620.357.8321 or by e-mailing hg@listserv.ksu.edu.

Cedar Apple Rust

The birds are singing, the tulips are blooming, and junipers (also called red cedars) are "blooming" in another fashion. Cedar apple rust is here. The pathogen (a fungus) spends part of its life cycle on a juniper tree, and the other part of its life cycle on apples, crabapples, hawthorns, or quince. To simplify, we'll just call them "apple hosts."

Those jelly-like orange masses on the junipers produce spores that infect the apple hosts. Once infection occurs, leaf spots on apple leaves develop in 1-3 weeks. Eventually, fungal spores are produced in these leaf spots on the apple tissues. The spores are spread by wind and rain back to junipers starting in about July. Without both hosts, the fungus can't complete its life cycle.

The disease looks dramatic on junipers, but it does not cause any harm. The rusts can cause problems in the apple host, however. If infection is severe, many leaves drop off early and the tree is weakened due to reduced photosynthesis. If your tree only gets a small amount of rust each year, it probably won't be an issue for long term tree health.

Management options (for apple hosts):

1) Resistance: For new plantings of fruiting or flowering apples, consider planting a rust-resistant variety. Information on crabapple cultivars is available at:
http://www.midway.k-state.edu/lawn-garden/docs/flowering%20crabapples.pdf

2) Tree care: For any apple tree, proper pruning will allow air movement through the canopy. This practice reduces the leaf wetness that promotes disease. Maintaining overall tree health will also help prevent the disease.

3) Fungicides: Homeowners with a bad history of this disease (severe defoliation), might consider preventative fungicide sprays on the apple hosts when leaves are out and the orange galls are active. For best control, applications should continue through May or as long as the orange galls are active.

Products with the active ingredients myclobutanil or propiconazole are examples of materials labeled for cedar apple rust management in flowering crabapples and non-fruiting apples. Propiconazole products include Bonide Infuse Concentrate and Fertilome Liquid Systemic Fungicide. Some myclobutanil products are labeled for fruiting apples. However, in all cases, make sure you check the label carefully. For example, the myclobutanil product "Immunox Plus" is labeled for rust on flowering crabapples, but not for fruiting/eating apples, as it contains an insecticide along with the myclobutanil ingredient. In contrast, "Immunox Multi-Purpose Fungicide" is labeled for fruiting apples. If your local store does not carry products for fruit trees, you can find internet sites which carry different products.

Commercial fruit growers should consult the 2017 Midwest Tree Fruit Spray Guide, available here: http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1282.pdf

More information on cedar apple rusts is available at this site: http://www.plantpath.k-state.edu/doc/extension-factsheets/apple-rust.pdf There is also a video on rust diseases at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQdwSPtvhH8 (Megan Kennelly)

Henbit and Chickweed in Lawns

The plant with the little purple flowers that have been showing up in home lawns is called henbit. If you are not sure this is what you have, check the stems. If they are square rather than round, you have henbit. A plant that also is low growing but has round stems and tiny white flowers is chickweed.

Both these plants are winter annuals and start to grow in the fall. They spend the winter as small plants and so most people do not pay much attention to them until they start to flower in the spring. Trying to kill either one at this late stage with a herbicide usually is a waste of time and money. Though plants may be burned back, they will rarely be killed. So what should you do? Remember, these are winter annuals that will die as soon as the weather turns hot. Keep the lawn mowed until nature takes its course.

However, you can do something next fall that will help next spring. Henbit and chickweed usually germinate about mid-October. Spraying with 2,4-D, Weed-B-Gon, Weed Free Zone, Weed Out, or Trimec in late October to early November can go a long way toward eliminating these plants as they are small and relatively easy to control. Choose a day that is at least 50 degrees F so the young plants are actively growing and will take up the chemical. Spot treating will probably be needed in the spring (March) to catch the few plants that germinate late. Use Weed Free Zone, Speed Zone, Weed Out, Weed-B-Gon, Trimec, or one of the special henbit herbicides early in the spring before they have put on much growth. (Ward Upham)

TURFGRASS

Controlling Grassy Sandbur

Grassy sandbur is the "sticker" plant that looks like a grass. It will often invade thin lawns, especially in dry years. Therefore, the best control for this weed is a thick, healthy lawn. However, if your lawn is thin this spring and grassy sandbur was a problem last year, use a preemergence herbicide before the sandbur comes up. However, not all preemergence herbicides are effective. The three products that can help minimize grassy sandbur are oryzalin, pendimethalin and prodiamine.

Oryzalin is sold under the trade names of Surflan and Weed Impede. It can be used on all warm-season grasses as well as tall fescue. It should not be used on cool-season grasses other than tall fescue such as Kentucky bluegrass. Apply oryzalin about April 15 when redbud trees approach full bloom.

Pendimethalin is sold commercially as Pendulum as well as several other names. On the homeowner side, it is sold as Scotts Halts. Pendimethalin is best applied as a split application with the first half applied about April 15 and the second about June 1. Alternatively, make the first application when redbud trees approach full bloom and the second six weeks later. Prodiamine is sold under the commer-

cial name of Barricade. It is also the active ingredient in a number of homeowner products. It can be used on all of our common lawn grasses. Apply as is done for oryzalin, about April 15 or when redbud trees approach full bloom. Only one application is needed per year.

None of the "weed preventers" will give complete control but each should help. Quinclorac (Drive) can provide some postemergence control especially if the sandbur is in the seedling stage. Quinclorac is also found in a number of combination products that control both broadleaf weeds and crabgrass such as one of the following. Ortho Weed-B-Gon Max + Crabgrass Control Bayer All-in-One Lawn Weed and Crabgrass Killer. Monterey Crab-E-Rad Plus Fertilome Weed Out with Q Trimec Crabgrass Plus Lawn Weed Killer Bonide Weed Beater Plus Crabgrass & Broadleaf Weed Killer Spectracide Weed Stop for Lawns Plus Crabgrass Killer. Again, the best control for grassy sandbur is a healthy, thick lawn. Oryzalin is also sold as a combination product with benefin as Green Light Amaze. As with oryzalin alone, it can be used on all warm-season grasses as well as tall fescue. It should not be used on cool-season grasses other than tall fescue such as Kentucky bluegrass. Apply Amaze about April 15 when redbud trees approach full bloom. (Ward Upham)

How Low Should You Go?

We often are asked whether it is good to mow lower in the spring. The answer is yes and no. It doesn't hurt to mow lower than normal the first mowing or two. As a matter of fact, it can actually speed green-up by removing old, dead grass and allowing the soil to warm up more quickly. But the mowing height should be raised to normal after the first or second cutting to discourage crabgrass and encourage deep rooting.

Crabgrass seed must have light to germinate, and a high mowing height will help shade the soil. Also, root depth and mowing height are related on upright growing grasses such as tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass — the higher the height of cut, the deeper the root system. A deeper root system means a more drought-resistant turf. So, how low should you go on the first cutting? On tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass, you can mow as low as 1 to 1½ inches. Be careful you don't go so low that you scalp the turf. After that, raise the mowing height for Kentucky bluegrass to 2 to 3 inches but 3 to 3½ inches for tall fescue. (Ward Upham)

Proper Timing for Crabgrass Preventers

Crabgrass preventers are another name for preemergence herbicides that prevent crabgrass seeds from developing into mature plants. Many people have a somewhat foggy idea of how they work and assume they kill the weed seed. Such is not the case. They do not kill the seed or even keep the seed from germinating but rather kill the young plant after it germinates. Therefore, they do not prevent germination but prevent emergence.

Crabgrass preventers are just that – preventers. With few exceptions they have no effect on existing crabgrass plants, so they must be applied before germination. Additionally, preventers do not last forever once applied to the soil.

Microorganisms and natural processes begin to gradually break them down soon after they are applied. If some products are applied too early, they may have lost much of their strength by the time they are needed. Most crabgrass preventers are fairly ineffective after about 60 days, but there is considerable variation among products. (Dimension and Barricade last longer. See below.)

For most of Kansas, crabgrass typically begins to germinate around May 1 or a little later. April 15 is normally a good target date for applying preventer because it gives active ingredients time to evenly disperse in the soil before crabgrass germination starts. However, this year, we may want to go a week or two early. For southeast Kansas, this week would be appropriate, and for northwest Kansas, mid-April would be best.

Even better, base timing on the bloom of ornamental plants. The Eastern Redbud tree is a good choice for this purpose. When the trees in your area approach full bloom, apply crabgrass preventer. A

follow-up application will be needed about 8 weeks later unless you are using Dimension or Barricade. Products that do require a follow-up application include pendimethalin (Scotts Halts) and Team (Hi-Yield Crabgrass Control).

Dimension and Barricade are the only two products that give season-long control of crabgrass from a single application. In fact, they can be applied much earlier than April 15 and still have sufficient residual strength to last the season. Barricade can even be applied in the fall for crabgrass control the next season.

Dimension can be applied as early as March 1. Because of the added flexibility in timing, these products are favorites of lawn care companies who have many customers to service in the spring. Though Dimension is usually not applied as early as Barricade, it is the herbicide of choice if it must be applied later than recommended. It is the exception to the rule that preemergence herbicides do not kill existing weeds. Dimension can kill crabgrass as long as it is young (two- to three-leaf stage). Dimension is also the best choice if treating a lawn that was planted late last fall. Normally a preemergence herbicide is not recommended unless the lawn has been mowed two to four times. But Dimension is kind to young tall fescue, perennial ryegrass, and Kentucky bluegrass seedlings and some formulations can be applied as early as two weeks after the first sign of germination. However, read the label of the specific product you wish to use to ensure that this use is allowed. Lawns established in the fall can be safely treated with Dimension the following spring even if they have not been mowed. Note that products containing Dimension and Barricade may use the common name rather than the trade name. The common chemical name for Dimension is dithiopyr and for Barricade is prodiamine. Remember, when using any pesticide, read the label and follow instructions carefully.

We recommend crabgrass preventers be applied before fertilizer so that the grass isn't encouraged to put on too much growth too early. However, it may be difficult to find products that contain preemergents without fertilizer. Those that don't contain fertilizer are listed below. I didn't find any products containing Barricade that did not also have a fertilizer. If anyone knows of other products that should be listed, let us know and we will publish them in a later newsletter.

Pendimethalin - Scotts Halts

Team (Benefin + Trifluralin) - Hi-Yield Crabgrass Control

Dimension - Hi-Yield Turf & Ornamental Weed and Grass Stopper, - Bonide Crabgrass & Weed Preventer, - Green Light Crabgrass Preventer

(Ward Upham)