

The Grapevine

The Grasshoppers are Coming!!

Grasshoppers are starting to become a problem in various places across Butler County. There are over 100 different species of grasshopper in Kansas but luckily there are only a few that cause damage to our home landscapes and gardens. Typically, grasshoppers are more of a problem for rural locations, but they can be a pest in urban areas as well. Unfortunately, grasshoppers can be difficult to control, and one size doesn't fit all when it comes to reducing the population.

When it comes to biology, not all grasshoppers are created equal even though there are some similarities between species. Grasshoppers will lay their eggs in the fall in non-crop locations such as ditches, fencerows and fencerows in pods of 8-30 eggs. The eggs will hatch in the spring from April to June depending on the species of grasshopper. From there the eggs will go through five instars over 35-50 days before becoming adults. Most species of only have one lifecycle in a year but the differences in spring temperatures can lead to successive hatchings of eggs and make it seem like an endless hatch of new grasshoppers all summer long.

What makes grasshopper control hard is that a hungry grasshopper can fly for miles looking for new sources of food so while you may have killed the grasshoppers in your yard they can easily come in from somewhere else. If possible pick plants that are not a preferred food by grasshoppers, [Oklahoma State has a wonderful list here](#), to reduce the likelihood they will munch on your flowers. If there is a plant that is very susceptible to grasshopper damage that needs to be protected use floating row covers over plants to exclude the pests. If the infestation warrants spray use chemicals with the active ingredients carbaryl, cyfluthrin or acephate (ornamental plants only). Pyrethrins only have a limited effectiveness on grasshoppers.

Grasshoppers are an unfortunate fact of life that we will likely always have to deal with. So far this summer doesn't appear to have a plague of grasshoppers like other areas of the country. Hopefully these tips will help keep the hoppers under control in your garden.

Reminders-

- Treat for Japanese Beetles if necessary.
- Time to start seeds for fall gardening.
- Now is the time to plant potatoes for the fall if you can find seed potatoes.
- Continue to pick bagworms off as you see them. Once bagworms reach 1-2" in length they are hard to control with a spray.

Pollinator Plant of the Week-

One of my favorite wildflowers and another favorite of bees is Liatris. This Kansas native is also known as blazing star and is a tall, upright, bunch forming perennial that is commonly found in the tall grass prairies or in marsh areas. Known for its spikes of bright purple or white flowers this perennial is usually one to five feet in height in its native habitat but typically is two to four feet tall in cultivated settings. Liatris has thin, grass like leaves that whorl around the stem as it grows. An easy plant to grow, Liatris is relatively free of disease and bug issues but may require staking in rich soil conditions if the plant gets too tall. Use this beautiful perennial in pollinator gardens, as a perennial border or in cottage garden settings. Liatris will spread slowly if allowed to however it is not invasive. There is a cultivated variety called "Kobold" that is smaller and more compact than the true species. Native Americans used the roots of Liatris to treat colic.





Insect of the Week-

This week's insect is Kermes Scale. These insects have been causing damage to local oak trees this summer. They feed on the tips of Oak branches which can cause the leaves to twist, curl and eventually die if the population is large enough. This insect is relatively small ranging in size from 1/8-1/4" and ranges in color from creamy white to brown depending on the specific species. They are smooth in appearance and look similar to a bud or gall on a branch however unlike buds or galls the scale insects can be easily removed from the branch. Kermes scale overwinter as "crawlers" or young versions of the scale insect that are mobile, hence the crawler name. Once the scale insect finds a good spot to feed, they settle on that branch and no longer

move. The scales feed on the oak branch, sucking sap out using their piercing-sucking mouth parts. Kermes scale are most likely found on Bur Oak trees and in large enough numbers they can cause the leaves to be stunted and deformed. At this time of year there is no treatment to be made. Soil applied systemic insecticides can be used in the fall for spring control, Dormant oil can be applied just before trees leaf out in the spring to smother crawlers or spray in April as the crawlers are active using the active ingredients acephate or cyfluthrin to kill crawlers.

Upcoming Events

- *July 28th, 2022: Fall Gardening*

Growing a garden doesn't just stop once the tomatoes and squash are planted in the spring as there are many crops that can be grown in the fall. Join us at the Augusta Community Garden to learn about planting a fall garden and get some tips on how to extend your gardening season later into the year. Class starts at 6:30.

- *August 3, 2022: Landscaping for Wildlife*

How you landscape your property and the plants you select can create a welcome invitation for wildlife to visit your property. Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent, will discuss basic landscaping concepts that will encourage wildlife to visit your yard. Learn about recommended native plant material to utilize, as well as key management techniques that will provide benefits to many different wildlife species. The KSRE Garden hour sessions are held via Zoom starting at noon. For more information or to register [click here](#).

- *August 4, 2022: Turf and Ornamental's Field Day @ John Pair Research Center*

The field day program is designed for all segments of the turf & ornamentals industry - lawn care, athletic fields, golf courses, landscape, nursery, and grounds maintenance. Included on the program are research presentations, problem diagnosis, commercial exhibitors, and equipment displays. There will be time to see current research, talk to the experts and get answers to your questions.

- *August 6, 2022: John Pair Open House*

For more than 50 years, the John C. Pair Horticultural Research Center in Haysville, KS has been studying trees, shrubs, flowers, turfgrass, fruits, vegetables -- and now even industrial hemp -- to see which varieties grow best in Kansas. K-State plant researchers at the Pair Center have looked for the greenest turf grasses, maple trees with the best fall color, the toughest evergreen trees, the most drought tolerant plants, and more in order to recommend the best plants to grow in the weather extremes of Southcentral Kansas. The John C. Pair Horticultural Research Center will host a public Open House on Saturday, Aug. 6 from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

- *August 20, 2022: Nature in your Neighborhood- An Urban Conservation Workshop*

This workshop will cover a variety of topics from how to choose the best tree or plant for your location to composting and improving your backyard for our native pollinators and birds. Join the Butler County Master Gardeners, the Butler County Conservation District and K-State Research and Extension for Nature in Your Neighborhood, an environmental stewardship partnership. Call our office at 316-321-9660 to register to make a rain barrel. Rain barrels are limited to the first 25 to register. Cost is \$15 for the rain barrel, workshops are free.