

**Larry Crouse****Extension Horticulture Agent****GETTING HEALTHY WITH HERBS****Learn how to grow and use them!!!**

On Thursday, April 27th, at 6:30 PM in the Butler County 4-H/Community Building at 206 N. Griffith in El Dorado, KS. After last years stormy weather that caused a lot of folks to miss this we have decided to come back to El Dorado this year. Here is hoping for more congenial weather! Kay Neff, owner of Neff Family Farms, will share her vast knowledge of all things herbal. Kay will not only be giving tips on what herbs grow here and how to grow them, she will also be sharing recipes and have a good selection of herbs for sale for those in attendance.

Barb Roths, Butler County Family and Consumer Science Agent, will be a co-presenter. She will cover a lot of the nutritional aspects of including herbs in your diet. Barb will also be preparing different dishes that are relatively easy to make. So before, during and after the program people will be able to taste the different offerings to see what might interest them.

We are asking that you please pre-register for this event, this will help insure that we have enough materials for all attending. The cost to attend is \$5.00 per person, and the registration deadline is Friday, April 21st. To register, come by or call the Butler County Extension office at (316) 321-9660. Or you can e-mail the Butler County Extension office using slewis2@ksu.edu. Put "Herbs" in the subject line and include your name and phone number in the body of the e-mail. So please come and join us for information on buying, growing, preserving, using and cooking with herbs!

**Fertilizing the Home Orchard**

Fruit trees benefit from fertilization around the bloom period, but the amount needed varies with the age of the tree. Normally, trees primarily need nitrogen, so the recommendations are for a high nitrogen fertilizer such as a 27-3-3, 29-5-4, 30-3-3 or something similar. Though recommended for lawns, these fertilizers will also work well as long as they do not contain weed killers or crabgrass preventers. Use the following rates:

- Trees 1 to 2 years old, apply one-fourth cup of fertilizer per tree;
- Trees 3 to 4 years old, apply one-half cup per tree;
- Trees 5 to 10 years old, apply 1 to 2 cups per tree;
- Trees more than 10 years old, apply 2 to 3 cups.

You may also use nitrate of soda (16-0-0) but double the rate recommended above. If a soil test calls for phosphorus and potassium, use a 10-10-10 but triple the rate. On apple trees, last year's growth should be 8 to 10 inches, cherries should have 10 to 12 inches, and peaches should equal 12 to 15 inches of terminal growth. If less than this, apply the higher rate of fertilizer, and if more, apply the lesser amount. Spread all fertilizer evenly on the ground away from the trunk of the tree and to the outer spread of the branches. Water in the fertilizer.

**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.
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 "Immune 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.

### **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.