

Larry Crouse

Extension Horticulture Agent

BEES - POLLINATORS AND PESTICIDES PROGRAM

Bees and other pollinators play a significant role in our well-being. Without them and the work that they do we would live in a much different world. Not every plant or crop is reliant on bees and other pollinators, but the list starts with Apples and goes through Zucchini. It is difficult to overstate their importance to agriculture and feeding the people of this world.

There will be a program on *Pollinators and Pesticides at the 4-H Bldg in El Dorado on Tuesday, March 20th, at 6:30 PM.* Dr. Raymond Cloyd, K-State Entomologist, will begin the evening with his talk on Pesticides and Bees. What can be used, methods to lessen pesticide/bee interactions, and the different modes of action and what they mean to beekeeping and honey production. The second part of the program will be given by Pam Paulsen, K-State Horticulture agent in Reno County. Pam will present information on how to attract bees and other pollinators, what plants to plant that provide them with the food they need, and the care needed for them.

There will be a *\$8 fee* for this program and light refreshments will be served. *To register please call the Butler County Extension office at (316)321-9660 by March 16th.*

Lawn Calendar for Buffalograss

Buffalograss has become more popular in recent years due to its reputation as a low-maintenance grass. Buffalograss can survive with less water and fertilizer than our other turfgrasses but may have problems competing with weeds in eastern Kansas.

Buffalograss is an open growing grass that will not shade the soil as well as most of our other turfgrasses. Weeds are often the result. A regular mowing schedule can reduce broadleaf weed problems as most broadleaves cannot survive consistent mowing. Those that do either have a rosette growing pattern (dandelions, shepherds purse) or are "creepers" (henbit, chickweed, spurge). Annual grasses such as crabgrass or foxtail can also be a problem. A good weed preventer (prodiamine, pendimethalin, oryzalin or dithiopyr) may be needed prevent problems.

March - Spot treat broadleaf weeds if necessary. The most important treatment for broadleaf weeds should be in late October to early November well after the buffalograss is dormant. Spray early enough in March that the buffalograss is still dormant. Look at the base of the plants to make sure there is no green. Try to treat on a day that is 50 degrees F or warmer. Rain or irrigation within 24 hours of application will reduce effectiveness. Use a combination product such as Trimec, Weed-B-Gon or Weed-Out. Weed Free Zone is also good and will give quicker results under cool conditions.

April - Apply crabgrass preventer between March 20th, and April 10th, or apply preventer when the eastern redbud is in full bloom. If using a product with prodiamine (Barricade), apply two weeks earlier. Crabgrass preventers must be watered in before they will work. Avoid using broadleaf herbicides as the buffalograss is greening up as injury can result.

June - Fertilize with ½ lb. to 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet during June. If grubs have been a problem in the past, apply a product containing imidacloprid by mid June.

Late-July through August - If you see grub damage, apply a rescue treatment grub killer containing Dylox.

Late October to Early November - Spray for broadleaf weeds. Use a product that contains 2,4-D as it increases effectiveness on dandelions. Treat on a day that is at least 50 degrees F.

Rain or irrigation within 24 hours reduces effectiveness.

Growing Blueberries

Blueberries are not native to Kansas but will grow in the eastern half of the state with good preparation. They are related to azaleas and rhododendrons and require an acid pH, preferably 4.8 to 5.2. Blueberries do not have root hairs, so watering and mulching are important.

It is best to start planting preparations a year ahead of time to allow for pH adjustment, weed control, and the addition of organic matter. The first step is a soil test to determine how much the pH needs to be reduced. For a pH up to 5.5, the addition of sphagnum peat moss at the rate of 2 cubic feet per 100 square feet will be adequate. For a pH 5.5 to 6.0, add 1 pound of sulfur per 100 square feet of bed in addition to the peat moss. For a pH 6.0 to 6.5, add 1.5 pounds of sulfur per 100 square feet of bed. For pH levels above 6.5, use 2 pounds of sulfur per 100 square feet of bed and double the amount of sphagnum peat moss suggested earlier. Do not use aluminum sulfate to correct a high pH because excessive levels of aluminum can be toxic to blueberries. For each 0.5 movement up the pH scale from 6.5, add an additional pound of sulfur. Treat only the row. Row width should be 8 feet. Blueberries are normally spaced about 5 feet within the row. Sulfur takes time to react, so allow as much time as possible between sulfur application and planting, preferably one year. Blueberries will bear more if you plant more than one variety. **Recommended varieties** vary, but you may want to try *Bluecrop* because it is adaptable. *Patriot* also seems to do well. You may want to try some other varieties. Blueberries should be mulched. Sawdust is the traditional material, but straw and wood chips will work as well. Mulch to a depth of about 3 inches. Blueberries must be irrigated. Soils should be kept moist but never waterlogged. Adding peat moss to the planting row will elevate the planting bed enough that standing water should not be an issue. An elevated bed will dry out more quickly, so there must be a means of adding water. Trickle irrigation works well. Watering twice a week during the summer with enough water to wet the soil 8 inches deep should be sufficient except under extreme heat. Watering once a week may be enough during the cooler spring and fall weather. As you might guess, there is more to growing blueberries than can be included in a short article. Dr. Art Gaus from the University of Missouri shared this instruction sheet on how to grow blueberries more than 25 years ago. It is still excellent information on blueberry culture.

You can access it by going to: <http://hnr.kstate.edu/doc/extension-gardening-tips/Blueberry%20Production.pdf>

Blueberries require commitment. Anything less than excellent preparation and care will result in failure.