From The 💰 Ground Up

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insects.tamu.edu

By Kathy Osterloh, Master Gardener

Found inside or out, no one wants them around. In South Dakota right now, everyone is asking how to get rid of the creepy, ugly little creatures.

What do they do? Earwigs eat small holes in plant leaves during the night. Earwig damage often appears small compared to the large pest populations present, and it can be confused with injuries caused by slugs, cutworms, or even rabbits. Larger plants will tolerate the feeding, but seedlings and flowering plants can be severely damaged. Earwigs congregate in areas that are shaded or filled with lush plant material, boards, debris, or organic mulch. More than all that, they just generally creep us all out when we find them.

How to get rid of them? Chemically, there are a lot of insecticides and pesticides on the market that will kill earwigs. Sprays are generally not as effective as granule and residual earwig treatments. Boric acid powder, insecticide dusts, and other earwig powders and dusts containing pyrethrins are effective control agents in the home.

Outside of the home, earwig control agents should be spread 6-10 feet from the foundation outwards, all the way around your home. This



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Master<u>Gardeners</u>

The Earwig type of earwig control is made more effective if

sprayed lightly with water to help the poison seep into the ground (2-3 inches) where earwigs generally lay their eggs. Insecticides recommended to control earwigs outdoors include products with the active ingredients: bifenthrin, carbaryl, deltamethrin, lambdacyhalothrin, or permethrin.

Applying insecticides to daytime hiding places will give more successful control. Mulched areas of flowerbeds are often the best sites to treat. Insecticide applications made late in the day are most effective, since earwigs are active at night.

Bait formulations containing carbaryl as the active ingredient are broadcast around the base of plants and are eaten by the insects. Bait formulations are generally considered a means of using insecticides that have more selective effects compared to sprays.

Spot treatments may be most appropriate for many situations. For example, earwigs may be controlled on fruit trees by treating the area around the base of the tree, killing earwigs that crawl across this barrier. As with all pesticides, please read and follow the directions carefully.

Natural control methods: Converting the backyard to a dry, sunny environment with few hiding places will help control earwigs or you can try any of the following:

- Place damp, rolled up newspapers or small cardboard boxes (like a cereal box) in the garden area in the evening. Earwigs feed at night and look for a damp, sheltered spot to spend the day. Cooperative Extension office recommends baiting these traps with oatmeal or bran, but that may not be necessary.
- Place shallow cat food or tuna cans with a little bit of vegetable oil as traps.
- Diatomaceous earth seems to deter them. Apply it to the soil and reapply in 1 week, if necessary.

Overall, earwigs may actually be considered beneficial -- they feed on many plant pests, such as aphids, mites and insect eggs. However, there are situations where control of earwigs is desired, depending on a person's tolerance for "icky bugs".

Summer Lawn Care Tips

By Margaret Murphy, Master Gardener

This summer is promising to bring plenty of hot, dry days. Not the most favorable conditions for lawns comprised of coolseason grasses. These grasses grow best in the cooler temperatures of spring and fall. Kentucky bluegrass is one of the most commonly planted in our home landscapes. During the summer months, Kentucky bluegrass may become dormant as a way to cope with hot, dry periods.

One option is to just leave the grass go dormant as cool-

season grasses are able to survive several weeks without watering. They will stop growing and turn a straw color. Usually, the grass will green-up again with cooler, moister weather. An actively growing lawn needs about 1 to 1 ½ inches of water per week. So to keep a green lawn during dry spells, supplemental watering is necessary. If you opt to let the grass go dormant, keep in mind that Bluegrass lawns are at risk of dying if they are dormant for more than 4 to 6 weeks. To prevent this, give the lawn 1 inch of water in a single application if the grass has been dormant for over a month. Water the lawn again a week later. The grass should start to green up after this second watering.

Lawns that are dormant should not be mowed. Otherwise, during the summer months, remember to raise the cutting height to 3 or 3 ½ inches. Never cut off more than 1/3 of the leaf area at any one mowing; removing more than that weakens the grass reducing its vigor. Proper mowing is essential to the health and longevity of your lawn.

In general, it is not recommended to fertilize cool-season grasses during the summer. The best time to fertilize is in May, mid-September and again in late October, if needed.

Summertime is also not an optimal time to apply herbicides. If you are plagued with broadleaf weeds such as dandelion, plantain, or white clover, these are best controlled with an application of a broadleaf herbicide in the fall.



PAGE 2

July 2012

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Calendar By Kathy Osterloh, Master Gardener

Lawns

- Raise mower cutting height to 3 or 3 ½ inches.
 Taller grass competes better with weeds plus it
- encourages deeper root development resulting
- in improved drought resistance & winter survival.
- Sharpen mower blades as needed. Dull blades can tear or shred the grass tips inviting disease.

Trees and Shrubs

• Water as needed.

Flowers

• Continue to deadhead flowers.

Vegetables

- Plant second planting of beans & other hot weather, short growing season plants
- Install tomato cages, bean trellises, if not already done
- Enjoy your peas, carrots, broccoli, & other bounties from your spring plantings!

General

• Watch for cucumber beetles, squash bugs, potato bugs, fungal infections on roses, flower blights, etc..

Mid-July/August are usually too hot & dry to plant. If absolutely necessary, plant or divide on cooler, overcast days & water well for the next two weeks.

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Herb Garden

By Priscilla Jurkovich, Master Gardener Herbs that can be grown in the South Dakota region.

Lavender, *lavandula angustifolia*, is from the Lamiaceae family. The lavender plant is a woody stemmed shrub with a rounded form. The leaves are evergreen and narrow. The flowers are a purple-gray that are clustered on tall spikes. It is a perennial plant for zone 5 that likes sandy, well-drained soil and full sun. For zone 4, it can survive yearly if mulched in the fall. The flowers bloom from June through August.

Lavender is known for its fragrance and relaxing qualities. The flowers and leaves are used in teas, perfumes, bath salts, massage oils and hair conditioners. Lavare means "to wash".

The essential oils have antibacterial qualities against staph, strep, pneumonia and most flu viruses. Many keep lavender essential oil in the kitchen since it can be used on a burn to assist with healing and pain control. Because of the relaxing qualities, a few drops of the essential oil or a sachet of the dried flowers are put on the pillow for a good night of sleep. The essential oil can be used on athlete's foot, muscle spasms, headaches and to stop itching on an insect bite.



Weed of the Month: Treacle Mustard By Paulette Keller, Master Gardener



Growth: Treacle mustard is commonly found in frequently disturbed ground such as vegetable or flower gardens. It will grow in a variety of soil conditions but grows best in slightly moist loam. The plant likes to grow in full sun but will also grow in part shade. The plant grows into a 6"rosette of leaves in early spring. The leaves are long and narrow and broader in the middle. The margins of the leaves can have either widely set teeth or lobes. With the onset of warmer weather, a stem rises from the center of the plant growing to 2' tall. During spring and summer the stem is tipped with ¹/₄" yellow flowers. Each of these flowers has just four petals which are soon replaced with a slender 2-4" seedpod.

Durations: Treacle mustard is an annual and is sometimes called 'bushy wallflower'. It reproduces through reseeding.

Control: To best control this weed either pull or hoe out when young before it blooms and sets seed. Older plants can be pulled out but they have a taproot that makes dislodging from the ground difficult. Treacle mustard is not a common lawn weed but if it is found there, use a selective herbicide that won't harm the grass.

Pests of squash, pumpkins and other cucurbits By Margaret Murphy, Master Gardener

And so it begins... I checked some of my squash plants the other day and there they were as happy as can be. Two squash bugs enjoying their afternoon on the leaf of a buttercup squash. Upon further inspection, I found a cluster of their reddish-brown eggs nicely stacked on a stem. This is the time gardeners need to stay vigilant about checking their cucurbits (squash, melons, pumpkins, cucumbers, gourds) for summer pests. Here are the three main headliners looking for a cucurbit near you.

Squash bugs: These will attack all members of the Cucurbitaceae family but seem to prefer pumpkins and squash. They feed on the foliage by sucking out the sap but can also feed on the fruit. A severe infestation can cause leaves to wilt, turn brown and die. This makes them more of a concern when plants are seedlings and when they are flowering. The adult is unremarkable in appearance. It has a flat, dark gravish body about 5/8 of an inch long and 1/3 as wide. It can be easily confused with a stinkbug. Adult squash bugs are difficult to kill. Control of adults and any egg clusters found on the underside of leaves or on stems is usually done by picking them off by hand. As squash bugs like to gather under debris, you can also lure the adults by placing a board or heavy cardboard under the plant. Check in the morning and remove those found hiding. Immature squash bugs (nymphs) can be controlled with insecticidal soap or spray. Read the label to ensure it works on the intended pest and can be used on your crop. As with any insecticide, please follow the directions carefully.

Cucumber beetle: A colorful cucurbit pest. The spotted cucumber beetle has a yellowish-green body with prominent black spots. The striped cucumber beetle has yellow and black striping. They feed on the leaves and stems of cucurbits and can kill or greatly curtail the growth of young plants. Adults will also eat the blossoms and fruit. As they forage, cucumber beetles can spread bacterial wilt. A non-chemical control for cucumber beetles is to use floating row covers. These covers create an effective barrier between the beetles and plants. Just remember to take the covers off when plants are in bloom to allow for pollination. If your

crop is small enough, you can remove the beetles by hand. Good cultural practices such as eliminating weeds in and around the garden can help deter them as well. Insecticides are also available.

Squash vine borer: The adult borer is a wasp-like moth with an orange colored abdomen dotted with black spots. It typically appears in late June or early July to lay its eggs primarily on squash and pumpkin plants. The eggs

hatch in about a week. The



Striped and spotted cucumber beetles: hort.uwex.edu coopext.colostate.edu

larvae then bore into the plant stem to feed. Damage to the stem by the tunneling larvae blocks water flow to the rest of the plant causing it to wilt and eventually die. Now is the time to monitor for the presence of the adult borer. The use of floating row covers will prevent this female pest from landing and laying eggs. Chemical control includes applying an insecticide to the stem of the plants at the end of June or early July or when an adult borer is seen.

A note about honey bees and insecticide use: We all know how important bees and other pollinating insects are to our food crops. Try not to use insecticides that are toxic to bees while your garden crops are in bloom. Apply insecticides later in the evening to avoid spraying while honey bees are actively foraging. Keep in mind that when it's hot, bees are active earlier in the morning and later in the evening.

Coming Soon... 2012 Garden Tour

Join us on the Minnehaha County Master Gardeners' Annual Garden Tour. This year the tour will showcase five gardens with many wonderful perennials, annuals, shrubs, and water features.

Garden 1: An urban farming garden in a very small backyard setting. This gardener grows a large variety of vegetables and herbs using a variety of methods: square foot gardening, container gardening, raised bed gardening, vertical gardening – all while conserving soil, water & containers. He also



makes many generous quarts of salsa and herbal teas. Garden 2:

composts and

Water features, perennials, and annuals are put together in combination for sun, part shade, and shade. Many varieties of hosta and fern highlight the shady areas in front and back while roses catch the sunny spots

Garden 3: A large water feature strolls among plants that these gardeners brought from their previous home and added many others to the mix. There are many special specimen trees and plants among the annuals and perennials.

Garden 4: This rural garden has been planted from a nearly empty acreage – only a few trees and no flowers or other plants. Over the 11 years, the owner has planted many varieties of trees, annuals and perennials. She has no basement in her house so built a storm shelter into the ground similar to an old root cellar. It's a "must see".

Garden 5: This is the garden and home of a Master Gardener and landscape designer. Her garden has changed since she first moved in from a young garden with small trees and lots of sun to a mature garden with large trees and much more shade. She has an extensive range of specimen trees and also trees for zone 5 that are doing very well in her protected yard. There are many special annuals and perennials that are mingled among the trees, shrubs and

special features. **Tour Details**

Date: Wednesday, July 11th (July 12th rain date).

Time and Location: Tours are at 9 a.m. & 6 p.m. Busses leave promptly from Spirit of Joy Church on 69th & Western Ave.

Tickets: \$10 - Tickets are available now through the Regional Extension Office at their new location: 2001 East 8th Street, Sioux Fall and can be purchased on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Tickets can be mailed out if you include a selfaddressed, stamped envelope with payment. Unfortunately, due to demand, no reservations will be taken.



Upcoming Events

Sioux Falls Garden Tour Wednesday, July 11, 2012; July 12 rain date **State Update Meeting** "Seasons in the Garden," the 2012 Update, at the new McCrory Gardens Education Center on Sept. 14-16, 2012. Keynote speakers: Sandy Uecker, discussing native grasses and forbs & Carter Johnson, SDSU professor and director of EcoSun Prairie Farms. Breakout topics include Beekeeping, Grapes 101, Landscaping, Back-yard ponds **International Master Gardener** Conference Sept 7-14, 2013- on a Holland Cruise in Alaska. For more details about these events call 605-782-3290 or email minnehahamastergardeners@ hotmail.com

Featured Perennial

By Jayne Wessels, Master Gardener

Lathyrus latifoliou 'Albus' (Perennial Sweet Pea)

Originating in southern and eastern Europe these plants are now common to the United States and are hearty to zone 4. This climbing vine can grow up to 10 feet in one year so it makes a great screening plant on any fence



or trellis. You may also use it as a ground cover on banks or to cover unsightly objects in the yard.

Photo: Jayne Wessels

Tendrils bearing white, pink or light purple blooms are highlighted by the light green stems and paired leaves. For the best blooms plant it in full sun to dappled shade. It is drought tolerant once established and will grow in just about any soil. In our heavy clay soil, they tend to rot if they are over watered. The first blooms start adding color to the garden in July; just remember to dead head it to get more blooms. Don't forget to add them to any bouquet as they are excellent cut flowers. You can remove the pea-like pods if you don't want them to self-seed. They may be propagated by seed or division.

Local Foods Corner

By: Chris Zdorovtsov, Community Development Field Specialist, SDSU Extension Community Garden Site Evaluation

At a minimum the site should have at least six hours of full sunlight per day. Leafy vegetables such as lettuce can tolerate less, but vegetables that develop fruit, such as tomatoes, will do best with more sunlight. Consider the shadows that buildings or nearby trees may cast on the desired space. Additionally, tree roots will compete with the garden crops for water and nutrients.

Next consider how the site will be watered. It is always best to have a faucet nearby. Relying on timely rainfalls in South Dakota is not an option, and gardeners will be less willing to participate if they have to haul water. Vegetables typically need 1-1 ¹/₂ inches of water per week. If there is a nearby church or business willing to host the garden they may donate water or allow for a water stipend to be paid. Installing a new faucet can be extremely expensive, over \$10,000, which may be well outside the budget.



The site should be level and accessible, with room to expand and places for gardeners to park. A well-drained site is preferred. Watch the space after a heavy rain to see is

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water pools. Another option is to dig a 1-foot deep hole, then fill it with water and allow it to drain completely. Immediate refill the hole with water. If the water drains less than 1 inch in an hour the site is poor.

Lastly, research the history of the site. What is the land presently being used for, and what has it been used for in the past. Were any herbicides applied in the last three years? Was there infrastructure on the site that could have left behind toxins? Has there been flooding? Situations such as these may raise concern for potential contaminants at the site and would need to be further investigated.

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