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FALL IN THE LAWN AND GARDEN

Fall is a great time of the year for adding trees and shrubs to the landscape. The warm soil and cool air is good for root development. In some cases, plants that are planted in the fall tend to establish themselves better than ones planted in the spring. This is because they have all of the fall and following spring to get established before the most stressful time of the year, which is summer.

October 15 is the rule of thumb date for reseeding a lawn in northeast Missouri. Lawn grass must get established before cold weather sets in. If you still need to reseed, you have a couple of more weeks to get it done. Fall is also the best time to feed a lawn. Fescue lawns can be fertilized in mid to late September and again in November with a winterizer fertilizer.

Are you running into spiders or spider webs around your home and garden? They seem to be everywhere right now. **Garden spiders** hatch in the spring, reproduce and die in the fall. They lie low most of the summer, trying not to be eaten, and those that survive are now large enough to start spinning webs. Female spiders will lay eggs in the fall. Garden spiders such as the black and yellow Argiope are Orb-Weaving spiders. Orb weavers produce a neat, flat, classic spider web. The web is used to capture prey as these spiders have poor vision. There are more than 2,500 species of orb weavers in the United States, but one of the most recognizable is the black and yellow Argiope. They are large and marked with black and yellow. The web may be up to 2 feet in diameter and stretched across a path, between shrubs or across tall weeds. Other orb-weavers are various colors, shapes, and sizes. Their webs can span many feet. They are great at catching all kinds of insects.



Wolf spiders are usually big, brown, hairy, and fast. Their size varies from 1/4 inch to 1.5 inches in body length with a leg span of 3 inches. Wolf spiders produce a venom designed to paralyze their prey (normally a small crawling insect), but, in the case of the wolf spider, this venom is not especially toxic to humans. Generally speaking, a wolf spider bite is no more dangerous or painful than a bee sting. Typical reactions to a wolf spider bite include initial pain and redness, but both symptoms gradually subside in most people. In fact, medical histories hold no records of serious consequences resulting from a wolf spider bite. On rare occasions, however, people have been known to have an allergic reaction. Wolf spiders move into homes for the winter. They have very good vision and hunt down prey day and night. They do not make webs because they are hunting spiders.

There are approximately 40,000 species of spiders in the world. Spiders are excellent insect predators, even more efficient than birds. They remove pesky

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insects from your yard. Most of the large-abdomen garden spiders you see in webs probably are females. Males are a bit smaller and tend to roam. The spider web is made from a liquid protein inside the spider's body that hardens to polymer when exposed to air. For its diameter, web material made by some spiders is stronger than steel. Garden spiders are orb-web builders: They put their abdomen to the night air and emit webbing into the wind until it attaches to some distant thing. They strengthen the first key strand several times, then use it as a highway between points, building a framework of sticky silk. Once the framework is in place, they begin spiral construction, keeping in touch with the previous strand by a leg and thus maintaining the nearly perfect, concentric measure so admired by humans and Halloween merchants. Many orb-weavers build a new web each day. Generally, towards evening, the spider will consume the old web, rest for approximately an hour, then spin a new web in the same general location. Besides the orb spiders, the grass spiders (otherwise known as the funnel web spiders) spin webs on the lawn and are ground dwellers. Abandoned spider webs are called cobwebs.

DEW ON WEBS OF GRASS SPIDER MAY INDICATE A BEAUTIFUL DAY

By: Kelly McGowan, Horticulture Specialist, SW Region

Following some nice fall rains, many homeowners have discovered beautiful webs among the grass blades of their lawn in the morning. The phenomenon typically happens in lawns with cool season grass and lots of shade.

Funnel spiders, also known as Grass Spiders, (Family Agelenidae) are small to medium sized spiders that spin sheet webs of nonsticky silk with a characteristic funnel extending to one side. There is actually a web spun above the funnel, which is where the spider hides while waiting prey. These webs are nearly invisible unless covered with dewdrops on a cool morning.

Grass Spiders can move very quickly over the surface, and (especially when the web is dry) it looks like the spider is walking on air. Grass spiders are beneficial predators, eating a variety of insects in the lawn. They very rarely leave their webs, so they won't usually enter homes.

These spiders are not considered dangerous. There is no need to treat for these spiders. As a matter of fact, if you do try to eradicate them, you will probably see a great influx of pests in your garden.

According to legend, when there is dew on Grass Spider webs in the morning, it will be a beautiful day.



ADAIR COUNTY WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE WORKSHOP OCTOBER 5

The Adair County Women in Agriculture workshop will be held Friday, October 5 from 9:30-3:30 at the Missouri Department of Conservation Northeast Regional Office at 3500 S. Baltimore Street, in Kirksville.

Attendees will learn about and get updates from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and Farm Service Agency (FSA). Other topics of interest on the agenda are tree and forest health, Emerald Ash Borer, livestock programming, critters you may encounter on your farm, plus create and take home a fall flower arrangement.

A minimum of 10 participants is required to hold the workshop. This event is free and is sponsored by the Adair County Soil and Water Conservation District. Pre-registration is required by Monday, October 1 by calling the Adair County SWCD office at 660-665-3274 ext. 3.

SHIITAKE MUSHROOM WORKSHOP NOVEMBER 2

A shiitake mushroom workshop will be held Friday, November 2, from 9:30-4:00 at the Winigan Community Center in Winigan, MO.

Participants will learn how to grow shiitake mushrooms on logs, and will inoculate five logs to take home. The workshop will include information on growing and caring for shiitake mushroom logs, and a visit to Winigan Farms log yard where participants will see resting racks and fruiting racks of mushroom logs.

The cost is \$50 per person and includes lunch, or \$60 for two people from the same family, if only five logs are desired. The workshop is limited to the first 25 people to register. Pre-registration is required by October 26. Payment must be received before the deadline.

To register call the Adair County Extension Center at 660-665-9866 or email schutterjl@missouri.edu for a registration form.

DEALING WITH DROUGHT STRESSED TREES, PART 2

Listed below are tree maintenance procedures that can significantly increase a tree's chance of making it through drought periods.



- **Mulch** around trees with 4 inches of organic mulch to reduce moisture loss. Use wood chips, shredded bark, leaves or evergreen needles as mulch – avoid the use of stone or rock near trees as this increases air temperatures and moisture loss from leaves and stems. Pull back mulch 6” from the trunk of the tree.
- **Do not fertilize a tree that is under drought stress.** Salts in fertilizer may burn roots when there is not sufficient water. Fertilizers may also stimulate top growth resulting in too much leaf area on the plant for the root system to maintain during periods of limited soil moisture.
- **Keep your trees healthy and pest free.** Postpone any construction activities planned near your tree to reduce impact to the trees' roots. If your tree has any insect or disease problem that may be adding additional stress – treat them accordingly to reduce the overall stress to your trees.
- **Properly prune trees and shrubs during time of drought to improve structure, limb stability and to remove dead and weakened branches.** Leaving broken, dead, insect-infested or diseased branches can further weaken a tree during drought and set the tree up for deadly secondary insect and disease problems.
- **Many tree species are harmed by herbicides used in the lawn.** Trees already stressed by drought can be harmed by a heavy application of herbicide in the root zone.

Following these guidelines will help preserve our trees, the most valuable assets to our landscapes, and will also meet guidelines for water conservation during drought periods.

- **Prioritizing watering needs for different types of trees.**
 - The first trees to consider watering are those that will be most vulnerable and affected by dry conditions.
 - ◇ Newly planted and young trees (1-7” diameter) are not yet established and have a limited root system. These trees generally need supplemental water even when we are not experiencing drought conditions. Generally it will take one full year per inch of trunk diameter to get established. Ex. It will take 3 years for a 3” caliper tree to establish itself.
 - ◇ Trees growing within a restricted root zone. Examples are trees adjacent to a driveway or house, growing within a landscape strip between your sidewalk and the street, growing in a median or traffic circle.
 - ◇ Trees that have recently received root injury due to construction work will need supplemental watering because the root system has been compromised.
 - Next to consider are the trees that are generally better equipped to withstand drought conditions.
 - ◇ In continued dry conditions even older trees will start to show symptoms of drought stress and will need supplemental water although less frequently than younger trees.
 - ◇ Established drought tolerant species may also need supplemental watering with continued drought.
 - ◇ Volunteer trees (self-seeded) or “weed” trees typically have extensive root systems and need less water.
- **The need to water your trees in the winter.** Even in years when drought is not a concern – winter watering is crucial, especially with evergreen trees! Well-timed fall and winter watering may allow a tree to survive on less water than a regime of plentiful water applications during the growing season. Tree roots continue to grow throughout the winter and need moisture to survive. Generally, water one to two times per month October through March on a warm day when the ground is not frozen. Use the same amount of water as during the summer months.

GARDENING TIPS FOR OCTOBER

ORNAMENTALS

- Plant spring bulb flowers.
- Continue watering, especially evergreens if soils are dry.
- Container grown and balled & burlapped trees and shrubs can be planted. Loosen the soil in an area 5 times the diameter of the root ball before planting. Mulch well after watering.
- For best bloom this winter, Christmas Cactus, potted azaleas, and kalanchoe may be left outdoors until night temperatures drop to about 40 degrees.
- Cannas and dahlias can be dug when frost nips their foliage. Allow plants to dry in an airy, frost-free place before storage.
- Spring bulbs for forcing can be potted up now and stored in a cool, frost-free place until it is time to bring indoors, usually for 12-15 weeks.
- Transplant deciduous trees after they have dropped their leaves.

FRUIT

- Persimmons start to ripen, especially after frost.
- Monitor fruit plantings for mouse activity and take steps for their own control if present.
- Place wire guards around trunks of young fruit trees for protection against mice and rabbits.

VEGETABLES

- Continue harvesting tender crops before frost.
- Harvest winter squash and pumpkins before frost.
- Dig sweet potatoes before a hard freeze.
- Gourds should be harvested
- Sow cover crops such as winter rye after crops are harvested.

TURFGRASS

- Seeding should be finished by October 15.
- Broadleaf herbicides can be applied now to control cool season weeds such as chickweed and dandelion.
- Continue mowing lawns until growth stops.
- Keep leaves raked off grass to prevent smothering grass.
- Now is a good time to apply lime if soil tests indicate the need.
- Winterize lawn mowers before storage.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Week 1-Fall color begins
- Week 3-Begin peak fall color in maples, hickories, and oaks.
- Week 4-End of peak fall color.

- Missouri Botanical Garden -



UPCOMING EVENTS

September 12 - November 13:
Master Gardener training currently being held in Hannibal and Kirksville.

October 1: It's a great time to join 4-H! Contact your local county extension center for more information.

October 5: Adair County Women in Agriculture workshop, MDC Northeast Regional Office, Kirksville. To register, call the Adair County SWCD office at 660-665-3274, ext.3. See page 2 for more info.

October 13: White Oak, Whiskey and Wine Tour, starts at 8:30 am at Hilton Garden Inn, Columbia.

November 2: Mushroom workshop, Winigan Community Center in Winigan. See page 2 for more info.

November 10: Pantry For Adair County soup bowl fundraiser, 11-2, First Christian Church, Kirksville. Come and select a soup bowl of your choice to take home, fill it with soup, enjoy some crackers and desserts with it, and visit with friends. It is a fundraiser-the costs will vary in price depending on the type of bowl you select. Cost is \$30 for a pottery bowl, \$20 for other unique bowls.

November 30-December 1:
Missouri Livestock Symposium, Kirksville.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
 Extension Garden Talk!

Produced monthly at the Adair County University of Missouri Extension Center, 503 E. Northtown Road, Kirksville, MO 63501

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