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"I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden."
- Ruth Stout

TREE GALLS GENERALLY CAUSE LITTLE DAMAGE TO TREES

Mysterious and usual vegetative growths on tree leaves and stems typically cause concern among homeowners but cause little real damage to the tree. Commonly referred to as galls, these growths typically result from an interaction between the gall maker (either an insect or a mite) and the tree itself. The gall provides inside protection and food for the developing insects. There are more than 1500 different species of gall producers. As a result, galls produced by insects and mites come in various shapes, sizes and colors unique to each tree species attacked.

Are galls harmful to the host plant? Except for being distracting to the host plant, galls generally cause little damage and only raise questions and curiosity. There may be exceptions. Some galls appearing on branches or stems can over time can weaken or kill portions of the tree.

What are the most conspicuous galls that can cause tree damage? The gouty oak gall is a growth commonly observed infesting the twigs and small branches of scarlet, pin and black oak. The gall is solid and woody and can completely encircle the branch restricting the flow of nutrients and water through out the branching system. The result of this type of gall is dieback and vigor loss to the tree. Eventually, the tree can die with these.

What control measures are available for the gouty oak gall? Insecticidal control is virtually impossible with galls. Several tactics have been researched including the application of systemic and non systemic insecticides as the adult insects emerge from the galls in the spring. Injecting insecticides directly into the vascular system of the tree have not been very effective. Pruning out gall infected branches is the only effective means of control. Once the tree is heavily infected, very little can be done. Contact your local Extension Center and request MU guide sheet G7272, “Insects and Mite Galls on Missouri Trees” for specific gall identification and information.

By: Gaylord Moore, University of Missouri Extension retired horticulture specialist
FREQUENTLY ASKED VEGETABLE QUESTIONS

What is the best kind of manure for the garden? Cattle, horse or swine manures containing straw are the best. Cattle and pig manure contains 5-10 pounds of nitrogen per ton. Poultry and sheep manure have higher levels of nitrogen and may supply more nitrogen than needed early in the season. Whatever manure is used, don’t apply fresh manure to the garden before planting. It is preferable to compost the manure for about a year before using. It may also be plowed under in late summer for planting a garden the following spring.

How much cattle or barnyard manure can be used on the garden? It is generally safe to use composted manures at a rate of 50 to 100 pounds per 100 square feet of garden.

Can I apply too much lime to the garden? Yes. Most vegetables grow best in soils slightly acid. Excess liming can make the soil too alkaline, which reduces the availability of some nutrients and reduces plant growth.

Is it safe to add sawdust (shavings, other wood products) to the garden? Yes. However, it is better to have these products composted for a year before addition. Wood products, especially when fresh, tie up nitrogen so plants may become starved. When wood products are added, additional nitrogen is necessary. A nitrogen fertilizer such as ammonium nitrate (34-0-0) may be added at about 3/4 cup per bushel of sawdust, or 27 pounds per 1,000 square feet of area with a layer of sawdust 1 inch deep added. Sawdust is excellent for improving the structure of the soil.

How do I control worms in my cabbage and broccoli? Use a lightweight row cover to exclude moths and prevent them from laying eggs. Using a Bt (Bacillus thuringiensis) insecticide such as Javelin, Dipel, Thuricide, Biobit, Agree and Xentari will effectively control worms and conserve beneficial insects. Begin application when worms are small. You may want to apply a couple drops of liquid detergent per gallon to aid in spray coverage.

My potatoes have formed a green fruit that looks like a tomato. Is it possible that the potatoes cross-pollinated with my tomatoes? No. Tomatoes, peppers, eggplants and potatoes are in the Solanaceae or nightshade family, but they are self-pollinated. The green fruit that is observed is actually the true fruit of the potato that contains many small seeds. The fruit is poisonous and should not be eaten.

Are green-skinned potatoes really dangerous? Green skins are caused by exposing potatoes to light. The green portion contains an alkaloid called solanine that can cause illness. All green portions should be thoroughly cut off before cooking.

Why are the stems of my rhubarb leaves green rather than red? There is a difference between varieties in stem color. However, lack of color development in plants that once had red stems may be the result of too much shade.

MASTER GARDENERS TO HOLD PLANT SALE

The Salt River Master Gardeners will hold their 7th Annual Plant Sale Saturday, May 8, beneath the viaduct at the old Admiral Coonz Armory at 301 Collier Street in Hannibal. The sale begins at 8 a.m.

A wide variety of standard and unusual annual and perennial garden plants, as well as houseplants, will be for sale. Experienced Master Gardeners will be available to assist with landscaping decisions and determining which plants best suit your needs. Proceeds will support the Salt River Master Gardeners’ Demonstration Garden, and fund a scholarship for a John Wood Community College horticulture student.

Questions? Contact Brenda West at 573.221.0724 or catfan@dishmail.net or Alix Carpenter at 573.769.2177 or carpenterac@missouri.edu.

TRUMAN STATE STUDENTS START COMPOSTING PROJECT

We, The Two-Wheeled Composters, seek a healthier life for all. We plan to do this by providing a service in which we pick-up compost, food scraps, and yard clippings. We will transport these materials via bike and trailer from residential homes to the Commumiversity Garden, where it will be tended. The food scraps and yard clippings will be transformed to a nutrient rich organic fertilizer. We will provide free organic compost, education on the vitality of the soil, cycling advocacy, and awareness of environmental objectives through this service. Our service will also help local gardeners, farmers, and all who participate. If you're interested or have questions about receiving our service, composting, or bicycling please send us your questions along with your name, address, and phone number to: Kirksville Compost, 216 N. Eli Street, Kirksville, MO 63501 or email to KirksvilleComposting@gmail.com.
MASTER GARDENER TRAINING TO BE HELD IN KIRKSVILLE

We are going to try something different this year with Master Gardener training. Classes have always been held in the evenings, but this fall I want to try having an afternoon class. I know this is not convenient for those who work, but may be ideal for those who are retired, work part-time, or anyone available in the afternoon who has been wanting to take the training. We will go back to evening trainings in the future. The Master Gardener training classes will be offered on Monday afternoons from 1:00-4:00 pm, August 23-November 15. Classes will be held at the Kirksville TCRC, 315 S. Franklin St. Classes will cover a wide variety of gardening topics including diseases, insects, soils & fertilizer, vegetables, fruit, trees & shrubs, pruning, organic gardening, flowers and lawn care. Cost for the training is $100 person and includes: Missouri Master Gardener membership, completion certificate, official Master Gardener name badge, handouts and guides, and speaker fees. Additional person(s) from the same household will be $55 each (based on sharing one set of materials).

The deadline for registering is Monday, August 16, 2010. To be a Master Gardener, you must attend 30 hours of classroom training AND provide 30 hours of volunteer service your first year after training, and 20 hours of volunteer service each year thereafter. For more information or to register for the classes, contact the Adair County Extension Center at 660-665-9866 or email schutterjl@missouri.edu.

SPRING ALLERGENS

If you like to garden but don’t like the sniffles and sneezes that might go along with it during spring allergy season, there are some ways to make your horticultural pursuits more enjoyable. “As people start to work in their lawns and gardens, they can take short and long-term precautions to control allergy symptoms,” said Karen Funkenbusch, University of Missouri safety and health specialist.

Substances called allergens, airborne pollens and mold spores, commonly trigger allergy symptoms in more than 35 million Americans. To combat the symptoms, start with what you wear, Funkenbusch said. Have separate clothes for gardening and leave them away from your living area. Gloves, goggles or sunglasses and a paper mask can help when mowing or raking stirs pollen and spores.

Avoid rubbing your eyes. Wash your hands and rinse your face and eyes if you are working outdoors for an extended time. Leave all tools and other materials outside. Shower and change clothes immediately after prolonged exposure to pollen, she said.

Take allergy medications well before starting chores in the yard. In spring, limit your afternoon gardening. That’s when pollen counts tend to be highest. Beware of molds from compost and bark mulches. Consider using gravel instead. Avoid hedges that can trap dust, pollen and mold. Keep existing ones thinned. Try to choose low allergen-producing plants when establishing a new garden or to replace others in your landscape, said David Trinklein, MU horticulturalist.

“Plants that are cross-pollinated by the wind are the biggest offenders from the standpoint of causing allergies. Self-pollinating plants are better bets from the standpoint of not causing allergic reactions,” he said. Most of the herbaceous ornamentals that are planted are relatively non-offensive as allergens. Examples include petunia, pansy, geranium, salvia and rose, he said. “While not all of these are self-pollinated, those that are cross-pollinated are insect pollinated and have heavy pollen that clings to insects visiting their flowers,” he said.

Bright, showy flowers tend to cause fewer allergy problems because they are insect, rather than wind, pollinated. In some cases, however, allergy sufferers may also be allergic to the scent of these flowers, in addition to the pollen, he said. “Trees are especially bad since they produce pollen in such large quantities,” said Trinklein. Major tree offenders include cedar, cottonwood, mulberry, oak and walnut. Their blooming season is relatively short and the best idea is to limit outdoor activity during that time.

Finally, though it has nothing to do with gardening, don’t hang bed sheets or other laundry outdoors during high pollen periods and be sure to wash any pet that might be outside while you are doing your chores, said Funkenbusch.
GARDEN TIPS FOR MAY

ORNAMENTALS
- Pinch azaleas and rhododendron blossoms as they fade. Double flowered azaleas need no pinching. Fertilize azaleas after bloom. Use a formulation that has an acid reaction.
- Apples, crabapples & hawthorns susceptible to rust disease should have protective fungicidal sprays applied when the trees bloom.
- Begin planting gladiolus bulbs as the ground warms, at two-week intervals.
- Plant hardy water lilies in tubs or garden pools.
- Continue monitoring pines, especially scotch and mugo, for sawfly activity on new shoots.
- Don't remove spring bulb foliage prematurely or next year’s flower production will decline. Bulbs can be moved and divided as foliage dies.
- Canker worms (inch worms) rarely cause permanent damage to ornamentals. Use B.T. if control is deemed necessary.
- Begin planting warm-season annuals. Plant summer bulbs like caladiums, dahlias, cannas, & elephant ears.
- Scale crawlers are active now. Infested pines and euonymus should be treated at this time.
- Trees with a history of borer problems should receive their first spray now. Repeat twice at three-week intervals.
- Begin fertilizing annuals. Continue at regular intervals.
- Pinch back mums to promote bushy growth.

VEGETABLES
- Slugs will hide during the daytime beneath a board placed over damp ground. Check each morning and destroy any slugs that have gathered on the underside of the board.
- Growing lettuce under screening materials will slow bolting and extend harvests into hot weather.
- Place cutworm collars made from cardboard strips around young transplants.
- Set out tomato plants as soils warm. Place support stakes alongside at planting time. Set out peppers and eggplants after soils warm.
- Isolate sweet, super sweet and popcorn varieties to prevent crossing.
- Thin plantings of carrots and beets to avoid overcrowding.
- Control caterpillars on broccoli and cabbage plants by handpicking or use biological sprays such as B.T.
- Plant dill to use when making pickles.
- Remove rhubarb seeds stalks as they appear.
- Watch for striped & spotted cucumber beetles now. Both may spread wilt & mosaic diseases to squash and cucumber plants.
- Plant sweet potatoes now.
- Make new sowings of warm-season vegetables after harvesting early crops.

FRUITS
- Mulch blueberries with pine needles or sawdust.
- Don’t spray fruits while in bloom. Refer to local Extension publications for fruit spray schedule.

-GARDENS TIPS FOR MAY-

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 30: Heartland MG: meet at the Library at 1 pm to plant flowers. Rain date is May 1.
May 3: Fabius MG club meeting, 6:30 Presbyterian Church, Memphis.
May 4: Salt River MG meeting, 7 p.m., Flower City Park Sesquicentennial Building (Palmyra), program: Patrick Beckman of Hosta Heaven (Quincy, Illinois) will present the evening’s program: “Hostas – Propagation, Pest Control, and More”. Patrick has over 550 varieties of hostas.
May 11: Sullivan Co. MG mtg, 7 pm, Fisher Home, program: edible plants.
May 11: Magic City MG meeting, 6:30 pm, Randolph Co. Extension Ctr
May 18: Kirksville Area MG club meeting, 7 pm, Adair County Extension Center. Program: “Spring and Summer Care of Roses”.
May 24: Macon-Shelby MG meeting; 7:00 pm, Planting at the nursing homes-barrels, etc. Meet at Extension Office at 6:00pm. Working meeting.
July 18-24: NEMO Fair, Kirksville.

Garden Talk!

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