



Pottawatomie County Cooperative Extension Service
 Oklahoma State University
 14001 Acme Road
 Shawnee OK 74804

Volume 4 Issue 3

August, 2008

Pottawatomie County Horticulture Newsletter



FLOWERS FOR THE FAIR

If you haven't ever entered flowers in the fair, or even considered doing so, you should. It is easy, you often have a good chance at some ribbons and perhaps even monetary awards, and you will be adding to the beauty for all to see.

Most underestimate the quality of their flowers. By following a few simple steps you'll be able to pick the best quality flowers, and have them last as long as possible (often referred to as a long "vase life"). These steps can also help even if just cutting flowers to enjoy in your own home or to give as gifts to neighbors.

First you should call your local county, regional, or state fair, and obtain a copy of the "premium" guide. This lists all the directions on flower categories and their details, when to enter, premiums awarded to winners, and more. Be sure and follow directions to avoid disqualification. If the category calls for three stems, make sure you have three stems, not four, not one stem with three branches.

If making an arrangement, make sure you follow rules for the theme or style. This might include number of different types of flowers. Or it might include height and width. If making a dried arrangement, make sure you use fresh dried flowers. Use ones you collected and dried this year, not ones that have been collecting dust for several years. Of course most fairs require flowers in arrangements to have been grown in your garden,

not purchased from a florist.

When you go to the garden to start looking, take a pail with water. I like to use a large five gallon bucket to keep flowers with long stems upright. I also put some flower preservative in the water there, as well as in the final vases or containers. You can buy this, usually as a powder, at florist shops. It has all the ingredients flowers need to stay fresh.

You should also make sure the pail or bucket, and all containers and vases, are clean. Otherwise microscopic bacteria may start growing, clogging the water vessels in flower stems, and resulting in them wilting prematurely. After scrubbing containers clean, you should use one part bleach to nine parts water to further kill such bacteria. Just make sure you rinse the containers well with clean water afterwards.

Armed with your rules or flower list, your clean pail and water, and sharp scissors or pruners, you're ready to cut flowers. Look for those just beginning to open-- they'll last the longest in vases. For roses that open rapidly, you should cut them when the buds are just about to unfurl. For gladiolus, cut them when only a few lower flowers are beginning to open.

Look for freedom from spots on flowers and leaves. These could indicate pest damage, disease, or poor culture such as lack of water and sunscald. Of course don't pick flowers with excessive holes or chewed leaves. Look under leaves as well for signs of disease or even lurking pests. Having live

pests on entries is a sure way they'll quickly be thrown out!

If only a few damaged leaves, you can merely cut them off. But enter a stem totally devoid of leaves, and the judges might wonder what was wrong with the leaves! Speaking of leaves, make sure none are on the lower stems and in the water of vases or containers. They will rot and cause organisms to spoil the water. When removing leaves before placing in containers, also recut an inch or so off the stems. This exposes newly opened water vessels in stems which are better able to absorb water.

Lastly, for longest vase-life, keep flowers as cool as possible, out of drafts, and out of direct sun. This keeps them from drying out as quickly. Follow these simple steps for choosing and harvesting flowers, and enter some of your more unusual flowers, and you may just take some ribbons home from the fair!

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PECAN WEEVIL INFESTATION

The pecan weevil is the major pecan insect pest in Oklahoma. Weevil populations are variable from one orchard to another. Certain factors like annual rainfall and crop maturity can be linked to infestations, but cultivar selection, surrounding topography, and soil type also play a role. Pecan weevils cause different kinds of damage, depending on the stage of fruit development at the time of attack. The typical damage symptoms are:

■Dropped and punctured nuts caused by adult weevils feeding on the kernel in the water stage of pecan development. Nuts punctured late in the season after shell hardening, often remain green and adhere to the tree past normal harvest. Shallow feeding by male weevils after shell hardening may cause scarring on the shell but results in no noticeable damage to the nut meat. Females feeding through the kernel on nuts after shell hardening can cause smaller nuts with the shuck adhered to the shell often called “sticktights” or “pops”. If the

kernel is simply probed by the female and not fully penetrated, then black spots, pits or molds can occur. These spots, similar to those created by stink bugs feeding on pecan late in the season, can make each affected kernel taste bitter and thereby decrease marketability.

■Larval feeding within partially matured nuts occurs for several weeks. Damaged mature nuts do not drop, while the larvae continue to feed within the nut. This causes the shuck to adhere to the shell. Two to four larvae within each infested nut easily destroys the entire kernel.

■Each female weevil can oviposit 30 to 54 eggs; therefore, one weevil could affect as many as 15 to 27 pecans. When kernel formation and expansion begins in the pecan near the end of August, adult weevils start seeking oviposition sites. Oviposition has been observed as early as 2 days after emergence; however, the average preovipositional period is about 6.5 days. Peak egg production in pecan weevils is generally reached

10-12 days after emergence. Delays in mating, egg maturation and oviposition have been observed in late maturing and/or large-seeded cultivars.

Since most of the life stages of the pecan weevil inhabit protected environments, applications used to control this pest are generally targeted at the adult stage. Many attempts have been made to control weevil larvae in the soil using an insecticide. These have been unsuccessful. Regardless of insecticide selected, multiple applications will likely be needed throughout the weevil season, especially if nuts are marketed for retail sales. To ensure penetration and through coverage, commercial growers should treat both sides of each tree. The insecticide choice for many homeowners is Sevin insecticide, which is still an effective and safe choice for most applicators, but complete coverage is difficult on large trees.



Watering Trees and Shrubs

How often should water be applied to established trees and shrubs?

During hot, dry periods, water your plants every six to 10 days. If the soil is very rocky, gravelly, sandy, or has poor water-holding capacity, water once every six days, but do not put on more than one inch per watering. For clay-loam soils, apply water every 10 days to two weeks, but put on about two inches of water per watering. Newly planted trees and shrubs need water every five to seven days.

To gauge how much water is applied, use a commercially available rain gauge or place a coffee can under the sprinkler. Check the time required to fill the can one inch deep with water. With this information you can calculate the time needed to put on more water and when to move the sprinkler or turn it off. Remember drip or soaker hoses are most efficient in water usage.

Be careful not to overwater, but be sure to put on enough to wet the ground to a depth of approximately 30 inches deep. You should wet the entire root area, which extends out at least as much as the limb spread.

Water well or not at all. Shallow watering will "starve" the deeper roots, causing more growth of the surface roots. In causing more root formation near the surface and less deeper down, you will predispose those roots to freezing conditions. Roots near the surface are not protected as well from the cold as are deeper roots.

Master Gardeners Plan Fall Meetings

The Master Gardener Association fall meetings have been scheduled:

- September 17 9:30 a.m. Tree & shrub Pruning
- October 15 9:30 a.m. Noon Luncheon
- November 19 9:30 a.m.
- December 17 9:30 a.m.



There will be a Tree & Shrub Pruning educational program available at 10:30 a.m. to Master Gardeners and others interested after the Master Gardener meeting on September 17th. These meetings will be held in the Cowboy Classroom at the OSU Extension Center, 14001 Acme Road, Shawnee.

2009 Master Gardener Program

We will attempt to put together a new Master Gardener class after the first of the year. If you or if you know of folks that would be interested, have them contact the office for specifics, 273-7683. Remember, the state office has given us a 20 class minimum to conduct the class.

The cost will be \$75.00.

Upcoming County Fair Dates

The Pottawatomie County Free Fair is coming to the Shawnee Expo Center!!! Fair dates are **September 4-6**. All **entries** will be taken on **Wednesday, September 3, 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.** Check for specific times to bring both fresh flowers and potted plants for judging on Thursday.

Sales Tax Questions Answered

Many of you have probably heard that the county will vote on a measure to extend the county one cent sales tax on **August 26th**. I thought I would give you some information.

This is not a new tax and it is not an increase in taxes. It is an extension of the current sales tax that county residents have voted for twice in the past ten years. The new proposal would start in 2013, when the old sales tax expires. Those on the sales tax committee are asking it become permanent. The biggest reason is that most of the entities that receive funds would have no other means to obtain funding other than the sales tax. The County Commissioners must submit a five-year plan for roads and bridges. The county jail trust will be getting a substantially smaller portion of the sales tax and will need a number of years to put into place funding measures to assure their stability. The cost of an election can run from \$5,000-\$15,000 each time. These are all reasons that the committee has chosen to go to election at this time and make it permanent.

The funds in the past have been used for such things as:

- 124 bridges built or repaired, 114 miles of roads hard surfaced
- New Jail/Safety Center which will be paid off by 2013
- Supports all twelve county fire departments with equipment and resources
- A debt free enhanced 911 service for county will go online starting in August
- Senior Citizen Centers, equipment, replaced/repared buildings, three centers would have no outside funding
- Economic Development projects in Shawnee, Tecumseh, McLoud and Wanette
- Funds Co. Fair/Jr. Livestock Show, largest youth fundraising effort in county, purchased swine pens/wash racks, have the ability to continue these activities

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The Pottawatomie County Horticulture Newsletter is published quarterly by the: Pottawatomie County Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
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- Soil Conservation has funded outdoor classroom and purchased new equipment
- The other entity receiving funds is the County Extension Office. The county purchased a permanent location after having moved four times in 20 years. We have been able to double our staff in the area of 4H & Youth Development, this allows us to put emphasis on youth and allows the county to have a full time Ag educator and FCS educator, thus allowing the Extension Service to reach over 16,000 Pottawatomie County residents this past year. The proposed fund distribution goes this way for the continuation of the one cent sales tax that would take affect in 2013.

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Roads	60%
Jail/Safety Center	20%
Fire Departments	7%
Economic Development	2%
Emergency Services (Ambulance, 9-1-1, Sheriff)	4.25%
OSU Extension Center	2.75%
Senior Citizens	2%
Soil Conservation Service	1.0%
Jr. Livestock/County Fair	1.0%

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