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Agriculture & Natural Resources/Horticulture Educator

Lake County CES Website

www.extension.purdue.edu/counties/lake/

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Upcoming Programs

LCMGA Education Program—Maraine Ridge Wildlife Rehabilitation Center

April 18 1:00 p.m. (CST)

Lake County Extension Office

LCMGA Education Program—Composting

May 2 6:30 p.m. (CST)

Lake County Extension Office

Plant Sale—Lake County Fairgrounds

May 6

How to Fertilize you Lawn with Fred Whitford

Warm Weather May Cause Problems for Ornamentals

Writer: Kyle Daniel, Nursery and Landscape Outreach Specialist, Horticulture and Landscape Architecture

The last few days, and coming week, temperatures across Indiana and the Midwest are abnormally high for February. The southern part of the state should expect temperatures in the 70's, while the northern parts are expecting upper 60's. Though the temperatures are a welcome reprieve from a 'typical' winter for us, most plants can have serious problems due to breaking bud too early. Most of Indiana has accumulated greater than 900 chilling hours, which fulfills dormancy requirements for most ornamentals. Temperatures play a key role in de-acclimation from dormancy in the spring. When an extended time of warm temperatures occur, and chilling hours have been met, bud break begins to occur, as well as phloem begins to move within the vascular tissue. If temperatures cool, the bud swell can be suspended, but it appears the long term forecast calls for temperatures around 50 for most of the state. When bud break occurs followed by cold temperatures injury can occur, such as bud kill. Since phloem may be active, bark splitting or cracking may also occur on thin barked trees if a cold period occurs after extended warm temperatures. At this point it is too early to determine whether any damage will occur, but you should be inspecting plants as bud break occurs. Damage may not be visible on the outside of the plants, but necrotic (dead/dying) tissue will be evident in the vascular tissue. Pruning out dead branches of trees and shrubs may be required this spring after damage has been assessed.

Moldy Green on Trees?

Writer: Nikky Witkowski,
Purdue University Extension Educator, Lake County

I get lots of questions about moldy tree or green growth on the trees. The next question usually is how to get rid of it. The majority of the time the culprit is called lichen. This is a complex between a fungus and algae that grows on the tree. Keep in mind, this relationship is so not harmful, that it's like painting your walls (I'd say hanging a picture, but that actions does create a hole in the wall...). There is no reason to necessarily be concerned about them. There are some studies that say they grown in areas with good air quality. So breathe easy! You can find research that shows they tend to grow heavier on sick trees, but they didn't cause the 'sickness'. My theory: they have more light to grow. They can have lots on interesting shapes and colors. You can find more about them on the Purdue Plant and Pest Diagnostic lab website or visit: www.lichen.com for some awesome images of them.



Figure 1. Elm buds beginning to swell due to warm temperatures



Figure 2. Tulip Bulbs beginning to emerge, especially in dark mulch, due to the warming soil temperatures.

Buying good grass seed

Writer: Nikky Witkowski,
Purdue University Extension Educator, Lake County



After hearing some ads on TV, be a wise consumer. There are lots of seed products out there with lots of 'gimmicks'. If you want to keep the cost down, spend money where you should. For example: there are many shade or sun mixes of seed you can buy. Look at the 'ingredients' or what types of seed are in the bag. How much is ryegrass?? Even worse, how much is ANNUAL ryegrass that lives for 1 year and dies? You then hope it made enough seeds to come back. Ryegrass should ideally make up more no more than 10-20% of the seed in the bag. You really want more Kentucky Bluegrass or Fescue varieties in the bag. Also keep this in mind: if the bag doesn't say what type of seed is in it...why would you get it as compared to a mystery can of food at a grocery store? Not many people will buy the mystery can so don't buy mystery seed that you could have to replant. Lastly, keep in mind about what's in the bag or how far will it go when buying seed. There may be some out there that you have more 'fluff' in the bag as it basically is including like potting mix. The roots of a grass plant need to grow into your soil. If you give it good potting soil or materials, it won't want to grow into your soil. It needs to learn to grow into your soil or you will water it constantly when the heat of the summer strikes. So be an aware shop-

Tar Spot on Maple

Writer: Nikky Witkowski,
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While many individuals noted a problem with maples and black spots, don't get too worried. You may be asking if you can do any fungal treatments, but they are really not necessary. You can read from the following article that this is really not a serious problem and your tree will survive assuming it's healthy overall. (put this article after my blurb) <https://ag.purdue.edu/btny/ppdl/Pages/Tar-Spot-on-Maple.aspx>



Freeze Damage in Red Raspberries and Blackberries

Writer: Bruce Bordelon, Professor, Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, Purdue University

The weather this spring has been a bit like a roller coaster ride. After a mild winter, we had a very warm February, one of the warmest on record. March, however, has been more normal with several freeze events. This has many gardeners concerned about potential damage to plants. Damage to early blooming Forsythia and daffodils is obvious following a hard freeze in mid-March. Less obvious is damage to some of our fruiting plants, particularly red raspberries and black berries.

Read the full article at: <https://ag.purdue.edu/btny/ppdl/Pages/POTW2017/POTW03272017.aspx>

Crabby Grasses in Your Lawn?

Writer: Nikky Witkowski,
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This is the time of the year to start treatments for Crabgrass preventer according to Purdue's Growing Degree Day (GDD) Tracker. We have had enough warm spells that you could start to apply it in late March to Early April this year. Make sure that if you are doing it, that you calibrate the spreader that you use to make sure you are applying the product correctly. There can be various ones out there, so take your pick. Keep in mind: if you are planning on seeding anything (putting more seed down as an overseed or seeding a portion of your lawn), you cannot use crabgrass preventer in that area or it will kill your new seed.



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