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Subject: HORT ALERT 03-07-2018 Survey, Flood Damage, Soil Testing, Mosquito Magnet Recall, Upcoming Events

3/7/2018

Hort Alert Survey

Last month, I provided information about a survey I am conducting, to determine the direction of future Hort Alert email newsletters. I am trying to learn two things: a) how can I make Hort Alerts more useful to you, the receiver; and b) what, if any, impact has there been to the community as a whole, and you personally, from Hort Alerts.

To the 250 people who responded so far...a big THANK YOU! Your opinions will help a lot with the future of this media.

However...Hort Alerts goes out to over 6500 people. Which makes me wonder...are these Hort Alerts of such little value that 96% of the people receiving them can't be bothered to click a link and answer a few short questions? Or, is the format of these Alerts so hard to navigate that 96% of you can't find the information (which was at the top of the page of the last Hort Alert)? Since 96% of you didn't answer, I don't really know.

So...if you have not completed the survey already, please click on this link:

https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1ldBLdvNdoKAmUZ . There are only 20 questions, and this should only take about 15 minutes to do.

Thank you for your help!!!

Flood Damage Recovery

The flooding of late February and early March is beginning to recede. Now, we are in the recovery/repair phase. If you or your neighbors have taken flood damage, you might want to check out some flood damage information housed at the Extension Disaster Education Network: <https://ag.purdue.edu/extension/eden/Pages/flood-qa.aspx> . Purdue's "First Steps to Flood Recovery" (<https://www.extension.purdue.edu/floodpub/>) has information on salvaging furniture and appliances; dealing with flooded carpets, wallboard, and insulation; and considerations for well water.

You can also find useful information at the Indiana Department of Homeland Security:

<http://www.in.gov/dhs/2791.htm> .

As far as horticulture goes: this flooding should have no major effect. Trees and shrubs are still dormant, and very few should be affected by the saturated soils. Had this flooding occurred during the growing season, there may have been some problems with low-oxygen contents in the soil.

Likewise, most turf areas were still dormant during the time of the flooding. Once turf starts growing, flooding may cause the turf to turn yellow or brown. The discoloration is related to the turf losing its

ability to take up nutrients. It doesn't take long once turf is submerged for soil oxygen levels to decline and root hairs to begin to die. As the root system becomes impaired, nutrient extraction and water uptake will be limited. An excellent article on flooding and turfgrass can be found in this Michigan State newsletter article: [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/will my turf recover from spring flooding](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/will_my_turf_recover_from_spring_flooding) .

Soggy soils will need to dry out before you plant on them. Remember, most of our soils are fine-textured, and working fine-textured soils, including tilling, digging, etc., can cause soil compaction. Stay out of the garden until the soil dries out...which may be May or June at this rate.

If your garden has been flooded by overflowing creeks, streams or rivers, you need to assume that there will be fecal contamination from septic systems and farm fields. Consider all such garden soils to be contaminated. While you can plant into these soils once they dry out (I would recommend wearing gloves!), harvesting may be an issue because of potential bacterial contamination. Right now, the best advice is that there needs to be at least 120 days between the time the floods subside and the first crop is harvested. We would also recommend not planting any root or leafy crops (lettuce, collards) in post-flood soils, as they will be in direct contact with potential contamination.

If you planting areas (greenhouses, etc.) were flooded, but the plants themselves were above the highest flood waters, there will be little to no direct contamination. However, be aware that the greenhouse itself has been contaminated so your risk for indirect contamination of the plants is greater. Steps should be taken to clean and sanitize the greenhouse with special care given to avoid splashing flood residue onto the produce or inadvertently transferring microbial contamination through hand or glove contact.

Even if you are working with ornamental plants, if they were affected by flood waters, handle them with gloves. Be sure to wash yourself with soap and water after working with the plants.

Soil Testing Tips

Soil testing is an important task that should be performed every 3 to 5 years in the yard and garden. A soil test lets you know what your current soil fertility levels are. Depending on which soil lab you bring your sample to, and which test you pay for, your soil analysis may report the levels of certain basic elements (phosphate, potash/potassium, magnesium, calcium, and a few others), as well as the level of acidity (the pH).

Without a soil nutrient analysis, you really have no idea what, if any, fertilizer you need to apply to your landscape. You may wind up adding nutrients you don't need, which is a waste of money, and could cause environmental problems. You may skimp on nutrients your plants are sorely needing. You may also be messing up your soil's pH, which affects the availability of numerous "trace elements" in the soil.

Be aware, though, that a soil test does not tell the whole story. Hundreds of gardeners over the years have brought me their soil test reports because they are having problems growing flowers, lawns, or vegetables, only to become frustrated when I tell them that their soil analysis shows no problems. A soil test will not show us problems such as:

- Not enough sun. All plants have minimum, maximum, and optimum sunlight requirements, which differ based on species and cultivar. Even the most shade-loving turfgrass species need at least 3 hours of sunlight per day.

- Poor soil structure. Oxygen must be able to reach the root hairs of our plants. Soils that are poorly drained and/or compacted have very poor aeration (air-movement), which will affect nearly all plants. A soil test won't indicate this.
- Lack of topsoil. Nearly all residential areas had their topsoil bulldozed off so that the house can be built on a firm layer of subsoil. Plants have a terrible time trying to grow in subsoil, which has no organic matter and is usually compacted and poorly drained. A soil test may actually show that this subsoil has all the right amounts of nutrients, but other factors will prevent plant growth.
- Tree roots may compete for water and nutrients, making it hard for lawns and flowers to grow. Likewise, turfgrass is a very aggressive weed as far as the tree is concerned.
- Black walnut toxicity can harm many vegetables and ornamentals.
- Improper watering. Nearly all plants grown in southern Indiana, including trees, shrubs, lawns, flowers, and vegetables, require the equivalent of 1 inch of rain per week. A single deep watering each week is much better for the plants than numerous light sprinklings. Over-watering can be as harmful as under-watering.

So, even though a soil test won't answer all of our questions, it is certainly a good place to start, especially if you have no idea what your nutrient levels and pH are. To learn how to collect a usable representative sample, please download Purdue's "[Collecting Soil Samples for Testing](#)."

Mosquito Magnet Recall

[Please note: Mosquito "traps" don't work quite the way they are advertised to, and in fact, I don't recommend any of them. They tend to attract more mosquitoes to a site than would have been there otherwise. However, since there is a potential for injury and product damage (after all, it's connected to a 20 gallon propane tank!), I will provide the recall information below. – Larry]

Woodstream Recalls Mosquito Magnet Traps Due to Injury Hazard

Name of Product: Mosquito Magnet traps

Hazard:

The recalled mosquito traps can become damaged if cleaning it while powered on with the company's Quick Clear Cartridge kits and can propel broken pieces of the regulator, posing an injury hazard to consumers.

Remedy: Repair

Consumers should immediately stop using the Quick Clear Cartridge kits on recalled mosquito magnet traps and contact Woodstream for a free repair of the regulator hose.

Consumer Contact:

Woodstream Corporation toll-free at 877-224-1538 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET Monday through Friday, email at customercare@woodstream.com or online at www.mosquitomagnet.com for more information.

Pictures available here: <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls/2018/Woodstream-Recalls-Mosquito-Magnet-Traps-Due-to-Injury-Hazard>

Description:

This recall involves Mosquito Magnet traps and Quick Clear Cartridge kits. The traps are designed to attract and capture mosquitos and other insects into the vacuum, where they dehydrate and die. The traps connect to a 20 gallon propane tank and measure about 30 to 35 inches tall. They were sold in green or green/gray combination with a black and green plastic stand. "Mosquito Magnet" is printed on the top front of the units. The model name, model number and serial number are printed on the back of the traps. The traps use Woodstream's Quick Clear Cartridge kits to clean out the nozzle after changing propane tanks.

The following models are included in the recall:

Model	Model Number	Serial Number
Independence	MM3200	IN01450- IN01625
Executive	MM3300	EX01444- EX01630
Commander	MM3400	CM01503- CM01621
Patriot	MM4100	PT01438- PT01542
Patriot/Patriot Plus	MM4200	PT0142- PT01642

Incidents/Injuries:

There has been one report of damage to the mosquito trap line regulator while using the Quick Clear Cartridge kits. No injuries have been reported.

Sold At:

Home Depot and various hardware and home improvement stores and online at www.mosquitomagnets.com from December of 2014 through December of 2016 for between \$330 and \$1,000.

Pond Workshop

When: Tuesday, March 20, 9:30 am – 2 pm CST

Where: Wirth Park Community Center, State Road 64, Oakland City, Indiana. You can see a map of the site on their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Wirth-Park/143672148987781>

Cost: \$10, which includes lunch and handouts.

This workshop will showcase topics geared to getting your pond back in shape for the summer while creating a healthy environment for aquatic life below the surface.

Schedule:

9:00 am: Registration

9:30: Deciding Your Pond's Location and Construction (Mike Wathen, Vanderburgh County)

10:30: Selecting Fish Species and Stocking Rates (Mike Wathen)

11:30: Lunch catered by Fazoli's

12:15: Pond Maintenance and Invasive Identification (Patrick Whitson, Aquatic Control)

1:30: Demonstration of the "Pond Daddy" app (Dan Stevens, The Cisco Company)

This program will provide 5 CCHs for Category 5 (Aquatic) Commercial Pesticide applicators.

To register, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/southern-indiana-pond-workshop-tickets-42946473057> .

For more information, contact the Vanderburgh County SWCD by Email: erin.shoup@in.nacdn.net or by phone: 812-423-4426 x 3.

Early Detector Training

Numerous invasive species of insects and diseases are attacking, and killing, our forests and landscapes. In order to keep an invasive pest from wiping out massive swaths of woodlands, as emerald ash borer is currently doing, government agencies and university specialists need to know what is out there, and where it's being found. The best way to do this is to encourage landowners to act as our eyes and ears, and report to us when something new is found.

If you would like to participate in the Forest Pest Outreach and Survey Project and protect our trees, please consider signing up for the Early Detector training. This program is FREE, and open to the public. We are encouraging Master Gardeners, foresters, and land owners to participate at one of these upcoming programs:

May 22nd

5:30-8:30 PM CST

Mesker Park Zoo

Carousel Event Room
1545 Mesker Park Drive
Evansville, IN 47720

May 23rd

5:30-8:30 PM EST

Falls of the Ohio

201 W. Riverside Dr.
Clarksville, IN 47129

May 24th

5:30-8:30 PM EST

Dearborn Adult Center

311 W. Tate St.
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025

Registration is REQUIRED but there is NO COST to attend.

Light refreshments will be provided.

Register at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FPOSP1>

Questions? Contact Elizabeth Barnes at barne175@purdue.edu or 765-494-0822.

Master Gardeners may count this program as 3 hours of Continuing Education...SWIMGA members please use code 902.

Certified Arborists and pesticide applicators may receive continuing education hours.

Upcoming Events Featuring Yours Truly as Speaker

I will be offering various garden-related programs in the Evansville area over the next couple of months. Please consider attending a few! All of the following programs are FREE (unless otherwise note), and open to the public. Master Gardeners may be able to earn continuing education hours for participating in any of these. All times are Central time, unless otherwise noted.

- Saturday, March 10, 9 am Eastern time; “Gardeners Gathering,” sponsored by Wabash Valley Master Gardeners Association.
 - Wabash Valley Fairgrounds, Community building and exhibit hall. 3901 US 41, Terre Haute, IN 47802
 - Topics include: Changing Climate, Wildlife Habitat, Stupid Human Disease in the Landscape, and invasive plants and insects.
 - **Cost for the event is \$1 or a canned food.**
 - Please contact the Vigo County Extension office for more details (812 462 3371).
- Monday, March 19, 6:00 pm; Willard Library, 21 First Avenue, Evansville, IN
 - “Beginning a Backyard Garden on a Small City Lot”
- Saturday, April 14, 9 am – noon; Keep Evansville Beautiful Garden Workshop
 - Combs Landscape and Garden Center, 3801 North Burkhardt Road, Evansville, IN 47715
 - Topics include discussions on protecting pollinators from pesticides; using native plants in the landscape; and advanced vegetable gardening tips.
- Saturday, May 5, 8 am; Master Gardener Plant Sale
 - Vanderburgh 4-H Center, Auditorium Building
- Monday, May 21, 6:00 pm; Willard Library, 21 First Avenue, Evansville, IN
 - “Stupid Human Disease in the Landscape”
- SWIMGA Birthday Party! June 9-10, various locations throughout Vanderburgh and Warrick Counties. Stay tuned for more details!

Pests to Watch For

Eastern tent caterpillar should be hatching out any time now. It’s difficult to predict when they’ll hatch out...they are notoriously sneaky! The egg masses are usually laid on fruiting trees, including ornamental cherries, crabapples, etc. Once they hatch, they will form a silken tent in the crotch of the trees. Kentucky has an article on how to examine the egg masses and catch the hatch:

<https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef449> .

Crabgrass pre-emergent herbicides should be applied now...or as soon as possible. Many annual weeds, especially crabgrass in lawns, germinate early, as the soil warms up. Crabgrass tends to germinate at the same time as forsythia shrubs begin to bloom. The best way to control crabgrass and other annual weeds is to apply the pre-emergent herbicide before the weeds germinate. The herbicides should be applied according to label directions, and will need to be watered in.

Ticks may be a serious problem again this spring. Consider getting your pets medicated by your veterinarian with some of the long-term flea and tick medications. Take precautions when working in

the garden as the temperatures warm: perform frequent tick-checks, wear light-colored clothing, and use insect repellents, especially on your legs and pants.

[Hort Alert is a free service from the Purdue Extension Service of Vanderburgh County. Your name and email will never be shared with anyone else. If you wish to stop receiving Hort Alerts, just reply to this message and type "UNSUBSCRIBE" in the Subject line. Archived copies of Hort Alerts can be found here: <https://extension.purdue.edu/Vanderburgh/Pages/article.aspx?intItemID=9300>].

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