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SOLUTIONS

Newsletter of the Alamance County Cooperative Extension Service

Spring Is In The Air!

I am sure everyone is glad to see the arrival of spring. The winter didn't turn out to be as bad as predicted, but I am definitely ready for some warmer weather. Spring is also a time for new things. Spring can be new crops in the field, new farm animals in the pasture, new landscaping for our homes, or new vegetable gardens. In our case, we have a new staff member. We are pleased to welcome Taylor Jones as our new 4-H agent. You can learn more about Taylor on page 3. One thing that is not new this spring is our commitment to helping our community. Alamance County Cooperative Extension is here to provide solutions for you.



Mark S. Danieley

Calendar Updates

- Wed., Apr. 6 -Thurs., Apr. 7 🌸4-H Blueberry Plant Sale pick up days
- Sat., Apr. 09 10:00-4:00 - Homegrown In the Park - Burlington City Park
- Tues., Apr. 12 12:30p ACCA Annual Field Day - Circle M Cattle Co., Burlington
- Wed., Apr. 13 -Thurs., Apr. 14 🌸Central Piedmont Jr. Livestock Show & Sale
- Thurs., Apr. 14 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Herb Gardens
- Sat., Apr. 16 8:00-1:00 Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Day (see page 6)
- Thurs., Apr. 28 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Home Vegetable Gardening
- Thurs., May 5th 🌸4-H County Activity Day
- Mon., May 9 - Fri., May 13 🌸4-H Family Summer Sizzle Registration
- Wed., May 11 Regional Small Flock Poultry Seminar, Winston-Salem
- Thurs., May 12 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Gardening For The Wild Life
- Mon., May 16 - Fri., May 20 🌸4-H Summer Sizzle Registration (Open to the Public)
- Thurs., May 25 Regional Pastured Swine Seminar, Winston-Salem
- Thurs., May 26 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Butterfly Landscaping
- Thurs., Jun. 9 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - Make Your Own Rain Barrel – FEE
- Mon., Jun. 13-Wed., Jun. 15 🌸 NC Citizenship Focus
- Sat., Jun. 18 🌸4-H North Central District Activity Day
- Thurs., Jun. 23 10:00 **THINK GREEN THURSDAY** - How To Garden With Children
- Tues., Jun. 28-Wed., Jun. 29 🌸 Youth Livestock Skillathon and Judging Clinics

For more information and to register
 Call 336.570.6740 or visit
[http://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu/](http://alamance.ces.ncsu.edu)



Empowering People • Providing Solutions

Annual Flowers Are In The Air!

by: Mark Danieleley, Horticulture Agent

Spring is in the air and it will soon be time to add some color to our landscapes. Planting flowering annuals is a popular way to add color to our landscapes, however don't be fooled by the recent warm weather. We can still have nighttime temperatures in the upper twenties through the third week of April. You may want to wait until the first of May to do your planting.



Begonias are the first possibility. While they are available in both bronze and green leaf varieties, I prefer the bronze leaf because of the greater contrast between foliage and flower colors. Begonias are available in shades of white, pink, rose and red. They will tolerate full sun to heavy shade, but have low drought tolerance. Regular watering is essential for them to look their best.

Geraniums are the next possibility and are one of my favorite flowers. My earliest memories of flowers are of the geraniums that were on my grandmother's sun porch. Geraniums prefer full sun and will bloom continually until frost with proper deadheading. The deadheading is the only down side to geraniums. It doesn't take long to do, but is an extra chore for the busy gardener. Geraniums are available in numerous flower colors, even some varieties with variegated foliage.



Impatiens seem somewhat tender, but are very heat tolerant. They are usually grown in the shade, but can do quite well in the full sun as long as they have plenty of water. The flower colors and forms are almost too many to count. Impatiens can reseed themselves, so an annual bed may return year after year. If the plants get too tall, they can be easily cut back and will grow back and flower again within a few weeks.

Marigolds are another heat tolerant annual. They prefer full sun and have moderate drought tolerance. The varieties vary in height from 6 inches to almost four feet tall. Flower colors are shades of yellow, orange, gold and cream. Deadheading marigolds will help promote continuous blooming.



Petunias are a garden favorite. Their spreading growth habit allows a few plants to cover a large area. They also work well in hanging baskets and flower boxes. There are hundreds of varieties of colors and flower forms. They have moderate drought tolerance and prefer full sun to part shade.

Vinca is considered to be the impatiens for the sun. The flower is similar to impatiens, but vinca is much more drought tolerant. They grow well in full sun to partial shade, but you need to be careful planting vinca after pansies. There is a root rot disease that affects both pansies and vinca and repeated rotations of these plants can make the disease worse.



Last, but certainly not least are the zinnias. There are many different colors and sizes. The dwarf series will get to be about twelve inches tall where the giant series may get to be four feet tall. Our favorite at the office is the Benary's Giant series. We plant them by the flagpole and they can be seen from a block away. They perform well all summer and have good resistance to powdery mildew. They are great as cut flowers with excellent vase life. They did so well last year we are planting them again this year.

Successful annual beds are a combination of good soil preparation, proper plant selection and regular attention. Most annuals will not thrive on neglect, even the most heat tolerant plants. Watering, fertilizing, and weeding are required for an annual flower bed to look its best.

4-H Fun Is In The Air!

Taylor Jones, 4-H Agent

Hello Everyone! My name is Taylor Jones, and I am the new 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent in Alamance County. I am so excited to be back home here in Alamance County. By now, I have met many of you but I wanted to take this opportunity to formally introduce myself and give you a little background bio on myself. I grew up right here in Alamance County. I was very active in 4-H as a cloverbud and junior but got very involved in FFA once I got a little older. I graduated from Western Alamance High School and was very active in FFA as a member and officer all four years. I also competed in Rodeo and traveled the state going to different little towns to catch a calf or ride a bronc just about every weekend. I was even a nationally ranked roper when I was much younger.

After graduating from High School, I was accepted into North Carolina State University. This was a dream come true, even as young as 5 years old, I knew I wanted to go to NC State and study agriculture. So that is what I did, well sort of. I actually majored in Extension Education which is a curriculum solely based around the Cooperative Extension Service which is where 4-H falls into place as the youth development component. I also minored in Animal Science and Horticultural Science and that is where my agricultural subject knowledge comes to play. I love all kinds of plants and animals!

After graduating from college, I was hired to become the 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent for Granville County. I worked there from June 2015 to mid-March of this year. I really enjoyed my time in Granville County, getting to know so many wonderful 4-H families and youth, however I am VERY glad to be back home. I have recently moved back home that is occupied by me and my two kids, Cash (Border Collie) and Gizmo (Australian Shepherd). They are quite literally like my children. When I am not planning programs and leadership opportunities I enjoy gardening, fishing, kayaking, hiking, and spending time with my wonderful family and beautiful fiancé, Katie.

My objectives as the new 4-H Youth Development Agent in Alamance County are to support and promote all things 4-H in the county. Whether it be livestock and poultry, or electricity and S.T.E.M., it all is a part of 4-H! I am very excited to serve the youth of this county and hope to create meaningful, educational, and FUN programming for everyone to experience. If you ever have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to give me a call or stop by my office. My door is always open to those interested in 4-H youth development. Thanks so much and I hope to see you all again at a 4-H event real soon!



Cooperative Extension's
Youth Development Program



Flies Are in the Air!

By: Lauren Langley, Livestock Extension Agent

Everyone I have spoken with recently suggests that the flies will be out earlier and in full force this year. Now is the time to think about your fly control methods. Did you have a control strategy last year? If you did, what kind of results did you have? If you didn't, you most certainly need a plan! When talking about livestock species and fly control, you most often think of cattle and horses as the main species that you find flies landing on and bothering the most. Goats and sheep do have some fly on animal issues but they have other external parasites that cause a bigger concern such as lice, mites, and bot flies. Poultry and swine are other species that do not really have fly on animal issues but more along the line of premises problems.

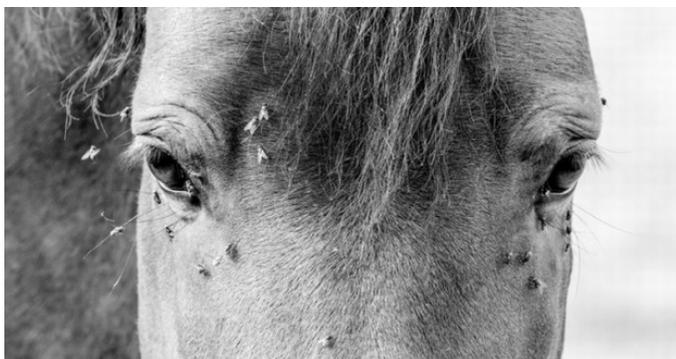


Photo Credit: www.acreagelife.com

Let's take a look at how to control flies on the animal and then we will look at premises control. First of all, you need to know what pest you are dealing with. Is it a stable fly, horn fly, face fly or another type of external parasite like lice, ticks, etc.?



Once you have determined what type of fly or external parasite you are dealing with, then you can choose a method of control. Methods range from ear tags to feed through minerals.



Producer spraying cattle with an insecticide for fly control.

Some methods are available for certain species. For all species, you will be able to find an insecticide that can be used on the animal either in liquid or powder forms. Make sure you follow instructions and also plan to rotate chemical classes so you do not build resistance. For more information on integrated pest management and a rotation schedule please [click here](#).

Premises control is important for all species but critically important around horse stables, poultry houses, swine pens, and anytime animals are confined where manure builds up. Also, hay feeding areas after the winter become breeding grounds for flies. Make sure to drag out those areas and plant grass to avoid a weed invasion. Methods include traps, sprays, automatic mist, tape, and more. The best method of control is sanitation, picking up manure, and keeping the bedding fresh. For more information related to each livestock species, please click the links below.

[Equine External Parasites](#)

[Cattle External Parasites](#)

[Swine External Parasites](#)

[Poultry External Parasites](#)

[Sheep & Goat External Parasites](#)

Spring Is In The Air! and that means.....

By: Dwayne Dabbs, Field Crops Agent.

...Farm Equipment Is On The Roads!

As the weather begins to warm up, you will start noticing more and more farming equipment out on the road. This is a busy time of year for farmers, because they will be preparing land, planting corn and soybeans soon, as well as topdressing small grains. The problem is tractors and equipment can only go 25 to 30 miles an hour at top speed, (most of the time it's more around 15 miles an hour). Your car on the other hand will go 55 to 60 miles an hour, so it is not hard to run up to a tractor before you realize it. I know that most are in a hurry when they get behind a slow-moving piece of equipment, and your first instinct is to go around it. Well, usually that is not the best solution.

For example if a farmer is hauling a four-row tobacco setter on the back of the tractor, the setter can easily span 16 foot, and that can be a problem when there are a lot of mailboxes lining the road and cars coming from the other direction. The farmer can see farther up ahead than you can and they will get over on the side of the road when it is safe for you to pass them.

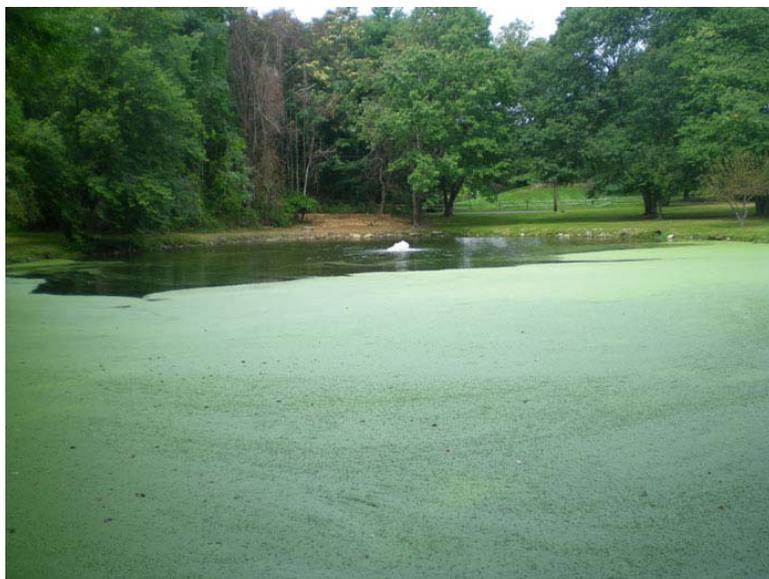
Another problem that I hear on a regular basis is people passing a stopped tractor on the highway. Usually when a tractor is stopped, there is something or someone coming the other way, so don't try to slide by the tractor. Farmers will usually give you a hand signal or have a turn signal on the tractor going to let you know what they are going to try and do. So I ask that you drive carefully this spring season, because the farmer's safety is in your hands, just as your safety is in theirs.



...Weeds Are In The Ponds!

As the weather warms up and the flowers start to bloom, so do the weeds in your pond. The weeds can be treated many different ways, but until you know exactly what you are dealing with, it is hard to control it. I have had a few calls already with the 80 degree days that we have had and the problems are beginning to show up. The best way that I can help you figure out what type of weed you have growing in your pond is to collect a sample of the weed and bring it here to the office.

To collect a sample, you can use a mason jar or any container that you have that has a tight fitting lid. Please make sure that the lid is tight fitting; I have had a few samples dump out on me and trust me, that is no fun! Depending on how big the weed is will depend on how much you will have to get. If you have a large weed such as coon's tail, then I ask that you get as much of the weed as you can. Since some of these weeds are almost identical, sometimes the stems or the leaves are the only way that I can tell them apart. With that being said, if it is something small, like watermeal, then you can get a little bit in a jar, and I can tell you what it is. If you have any questions about collecting these weeds you can always give me a call here at the office and I can help you out with it.



Strawberries Are In The Air!

As the official red berry of North Carolina, strawberries are not only tasty, but are packed with nutrients! In fact, strawberries are a top source of vitamin C (providing over 150% of what you need each day), antioxidants and are low in calories (only about 50 calories per cup). This sweet berry is also a good source of potassium and fiber.

Here are some tips to get the best from the State Red Berry during its peak season:



Select berries that are dry, firm, plump, and well-shaped. Plan to eat within a week of purchase. If you can't eat them right away, see below for freezing strategies.

Look for strawberries that are a bright shade of red with fresh green caps. Once strawberries are picked, they will not continue to ripen. If you're picking your own strawberries, leave a half-inch stem on the berry. They will keep better this way.

At home, check them over and discard any bruised or damaged fruit. Eat overripe berries within 24 hours. Return the other berries to the original container or arrange unwashed in a shallow pan lined with paper towels. Plastic wrap the entire container. Berries should be washed and caps removed just prior to use.

To freeze, select fully ripe, firm strawberries with a deep red color. Wash berries, drain and remove caps, then:

Dry-pack: Pack berries into plastic freezer bags or vacuum package, seal, label and freeze.

Sugar Pack: Slice berries lengthwise into halves or thirds. Mix one part sugar to six parts strawberries. Allow to stand until sugar dissolves, about 10 minutes. Gently stir. Pack Strawberries and syrup into can-or-freeze jars or plastic freezer boxes, leaving 1/2" headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

Syrup Pack: Prepare a heavy syrup (4-1/4 cups sugar mixed with 4-1/4 cups water to yield 7 cups syrup). Leave strawberries whole or slice. Pack into can-or-freeze jars or plastic freezer boxes. Ladle syrup over berries, leaving 1/2" headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

Here's a recipe to try with those springtime jewels:

Strawberry-Pecan Salad

- 1/2 c toasted pecans (or walnuts)
- 4 cups mixed spring greens
- 1-1/2 cups fresh strawberries
- 1 Tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 5 Tablespoons Extra Virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta (or blue cheese)

In a large salad bowl, whisk together the honey, mustard, vinegar and salt. Slowly stream in olive oil while whisking to emulsify. Add remaining ingredients and toss gently with the dressing.



Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day

The next Collection Day will be Saturday, April 16, from 8 am until 1 pm at 100 Stone Quarry Road, Haw River. The types of hazardous waste that will be accepted are as follows:

- ☺ Household cleaners, drain openers, toilet bowl cleaners, oven cleaners, disinfectants
- ☺ Solvents, thinners, shellacs, varnishes, sealers, wood preservatives
- ☺ Automotive products including brake fluid, antifreeze, used motor oil up to 5 gal, filters, gasoline
- ☺ Pesticides
- ☺ Miscellaneous materials such as acids, bases, kerosene, batteries, photographic chemicals, pool chemicals, mercury, fluorescent tubes
- ☺ Latex and oil based paint and spray paint



The following will NOT be accepted: Gas cylinders, radioactives/smoke detectors, medical waste, electronics/TVs/computers, explosives/ammunition