Spring Weed Control in Home Lawns

With what many folks would describe as a mild winter so far, our winter (Cool Season) lawn weeds are beginning to thrive. While it is normally March-May when burweed/stickerweed (Soliva pterosperma) is noticeable growing in lawns and on turf that we receive calls to the Extension Office on how to eradicate this prickly pest, the best time for control and sticker prevention is now, because the plant is just beginning to sprout from seed and grow.

Burweed/stickerweed is best described as a low-growing, freely branched winter annual. The real identifier is that once the plant reaches a reproductive stage the small fruit clusters (small rosette buttons) begin to form down in the leaf axils. At the tip of each seed within the cluster is a tiny spine that at maturity will stick into bare feet, knees, hands, or whatever parts of the body or clothing that may come in contact with the bur. This weed is actively growing now and the stickers will terrify bare feet well into the summer. While growth is just becoming noticeable, this plant is actually a winter annual that germinates late fall and remains very small and hard to see through the winter. As spring warm-up begins, rapid growth occurs along with flowering and a small spur or “sticker” forms.

The easiest method to control this weed and other noxious weeds, is all in timing and spraying with a proper herbicide prior to flowering. This is before the spur is formed. If the application of herbicide is too late, you will kill the plant, but the “sticker” will still be there.

In most situations, an application of atrazine or 2,4-D base products will control this weed, with optimal timing being mid-December thru mid-March, preferably when the temperature is above 60 degrees F, but ALWAYS read labels before applying any pesticide to ensure proper applications. The earlier in the season you begin to apply herbicide to burweed the easier it is to control, but plan to make at least two applications around 10 days apart for optimal control.

For more information on how to control this lawn weed or other spring lawn and pasture weeds, please contact your local County Extension Office.
## Upcoming Events for February 2019

### Hancock County Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Title</th>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Growing Great Tomatoes</td>
<td>2:00 p.m. at the Bay St. Louis Public Library.</td>
<td>Tomatoes are the most popular vegetable for home gardeners. This program will provide information on how to be successful growing tomatoes in south Mississippi as well as how to manage many of the common problems home gardeners face when growing tomatoes. Presenter is Christian Stephenson, Hancock County Extension Agent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Getting Started with A Backyard Flock</td>
<td>2:00 p.m. at the Pass Christian Public Library.</td>
<td>Raising chickens in the backyard can be fun and provide homeowners with a great source of eggs. This program will provide an introduction to raising poultry and provide resources to get started with your backyard flock. Presenter is Christian Stephenson, Hancock County Extension Agent.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Harrison County Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Title</th>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Private Applicator Training</td>
<td>1:00 until 5:00 p.m. at the Harrison County Extension Office, 2315 17th St., Gulfport, MS.</td>
<td>This training is for those who own or lease property for agricultural purposes. $20 per individual payable by check or money order. No preregistration necessary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Maintaining Home Landscapes</td>
<td>1:30-3:30 p.m. Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, USM Gulf Park Campus, Long Beach, MS.</td>
<td>Through this seminar you will learn how to conduct proper maintenance practices in all facets of your landscape including identifying and controlling insect, disease and weed pests, proper pruning and timing, identifying year round maintenance needs, and fertilization and irrigation. Presenter is Tim Ray, Harrison County Extension Agent. For more information or to register, visit: <a href="https://www.usm.edu/lifelonglearning">https://www.usm.edu/lifelonglearning</a>. The costs is $10.00.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Pearl River County Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Title</th>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pearl River County Master Gardener Meeting</td>
<td>12:30 p.m. at the Crosby Arboretum in Picayune, MS.</td>
<td>Gregg Nordstrom will be the guest speaker talking about butterflies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pearl River- Stone County Forestry Association Meeting</td>
<td>12:00 noon. The Sawmill Restaurant, 2205 Highway 49, Wiggins, MS.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Smart Landscapes</td>
<td>11:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. The Senior Center of South Pearl River County.</td>
<td>Presenter: Dr. Eddie Smith, County Coordinator/ Extension Agent. No RSVP required.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Smart Landscapes: Biodiverse Landscapes for Wildlife</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. at the Crosby Arboretum in Picayune, MS.</td>
<td>Learn the requirements and resources for designing landscapes attractive to Mississippi wildlife with Pearl River County Extension Agent Dr. Eddie Smith, who will discuss how to use native plants to create sustainable habitat for animals in addition to their other benefits such as protecting water quality, lowering maintenance needs, and increasing property value. Members $3; non-members, $5. Call 601-799-2311 to register.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Maintaining Home Landscapes</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. at the Crosby Arboretum in Picayune, MS.</td>
<td>Improve your home landscape and retain or even increase its property value through regular maintenance and proper care, with Pearl River County Extension Agent Dr. Eddie Smith, Learn how to maintain a variety of popular landscape plants, recognize various diseases, pests, nutrient deficiencies, how to prepare your landscapes for changing seasons, and how to adapt your maintenance practices to a maturing landscape. Members $3; non-members, $5. Call 601-799-2311 to register.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stone County Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Title</th>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pearl River-Stone County Forestry Association Meeting</td>
<td>12:00 noon. The Sawmill Restaurant, 2205 Highway 49, Wiggins, MS.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Garden Calendar: February

Planning
• Decide on plants you would like to have in your spring garden and flower beds.
• Consider buying new plants that you have not tried before.
• Determine how many seed packets you need. Remember to order extra seed if you are planning to replant for a second crop of flowers after the heat of the summer.

Planting
• Plant cold weather annuals: Nasturtiums, Pansies, Snapdragons, English Daisies, Sweet William, and Calendulas
• Start cold weather vegetables in cold frame: Broccoli, Cauliflower, Onion sets, English Peas, Kale, Carrots, Collards, Beets, Radishes, Kohlrabi, and Chinese Cabbage.
• Plant Asparagus in prepared beds.
• Start seeds of Herbs indoors for transplant outdoors.
• February is an ideal time to set out Dogwoods. Planting site should be well drained and plants should be planted shallowly. Dogwoods prefer acidic soil.
• Broad-leaved Evergreens such as Magnolia, Holly, and Photinia can be set out at this time.
• Plant new Roses, or move old Roses soon after February 15.

Fertilizing
• Roses -- Apply top-dressing of organic fertilizer under thick layer of compost or rotted manure.
• Fertilize Trees and Shrubs (not spring Flowering Shrubs) if not fertilized in January.

Pest Control
• Spray garden with dormant spray. This will kill many eggs and spores of insects and diseases. Do not apply if temperatures will dip below freezing within 4 hours of application.

Pruning
• Prune Evergreens for size and shape. Cut out dead wood of Flowering Shrubs. Dispose of clippings to prevent disease or insect spread.
• Prune Hydrangeas during the last week in the month.

In Bloom
• Crocus, early Daffodils, Helleborus, Hyacinth, Pansies, Scilla, Snowdrop, Snowflake, Violet, Camellia, Forsythia, Flowering Quince, Loropetalum, Pussy Willow, Thumbergia Spirea, and Winter Jasmine.
Quick Bites
February 2019

Quick Bites programs are offered through the Mississippi State University Extension Service and provide information in a wide variety of topics through interactive video. The programs are held during lunch (12-1 pm) on Thursdays. Sessions will be held in Bost 409 for those who are on campus. Contact your county office to participate via interactive video.

February 7

**Sweet Designs for Your Sweetheart**
*Lynette McDougald, Instructor*
*Plant & Soil Sciences*

Say “I Love You” by creating and making your own Valentine’s Day design. Get tips on how to design floral gifts guaranteed to warm their February heart!

February 14

**Is It Time? Learn Basic Pruning Tips From a Pro**
*Dr. Jeff Wilson, Assistant Professor*
*North Mississippi R & E Center*

Winter is still here but now is the time... Join in with Dr. Jeff Wilson for the why, when, and how to prune your shrubs, trees, and fruit plants for the best outcome in your plants and landscape.

February 28

**Farm Bill 101**
*Dr. Beth Baker, Assistant Research Professor*
*Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture*

Do you have questions about basic understanding of Farm Bill conservation programs for landowners? Join Dr. Baker as she provides information about these programs that will assist landowners with technical and financial assistance for basic land management.
Photinia Leaf Spot

Photinia leaf spot, caused by the fungus *Entomosporium mespili*, is a common disease of redtip photinia and Indian hawthorn. Some cultivars of pear are also susceptible. The first symptoms of this disease are small, circular, bright red spots on the upper and lower surfaces of leaves. These spots may coalesce into large purple blotches, and older spots will develop a grey center. The fungus is most active during cool, wet weather and during these times spots may be seen on stems or petioles. Severe infections may lead to extensive loss of leaves, and eventually death of the plant.

The fungal pathogen overwinters on infected leaves and shoots from the previous year. These are important as sources for future outbreaks. Spores are released from fungal reproductive structures located in the leaf spots during late winter and early spring. These spores are primarily spread by splashing water. New leaf spots will appear 10 to 14 days after infection.

Infections usually start on the bottom of the leaf canopy and move upwards during cool, rainy periods. Reddish new growth on photinia is most susceptible to infection, and practices that encourage new growth such as summer pruning or fertilization may favor the development of disease.

Unfortunately, there are currently no resistant varieties of photinia for this disease. Cultural practices are very important for management. When planting new redtip photinia, be certain to purchase plants that do not show symptoms. Plants should be placed with adequate spacing to allow for air movement. Removal of fallen leaves is important in preventing the spread of the fungal pathogen. Fungicides such as myclobutanil, chlorothalonil, or propiconazole should be used in combination with cultural practices in the spring to maintain healthy plants. Severely damaged trees should be removed and replaced with disease resistant plants when possible.
The Importance of Chilling Hour Requirements of Fruit Trees

Knowing chilling hour requirements when purchasing fruit trees can be the difference between failure and success. The dormant buds of many plants require a period of cold weather to grow, flower, and develop properly. For dormant buds of fruit trees, this is commonly referred to as the chilling requirement. Chilling hours are defined as period of time between 32°F and 45°F, however, at temperatures below 32°F, generally no chilling is accumulated. Once the adequate number of chilling hours has been reached and temperatures warm the plant will be ready to break dormancy and buds will begin to grow and the plant will flower. For this reason it is important to choose varieties that have similar chilling requirements as what is received at your location. This will ensure in most years adequate chilling is achieved and that plants do not come out of dormancy before the winter is over.

Different crops require a different amount of chilling hours before they are ready to break dormancy. Plants are assigned a certain chilling requirement based on the amount of cold needed to cause 50 percent of the buds to break and flower in the spring. Most blueberries have a chilling requirement of 400-600 hours. Peaches are planted using the chilling requirement as a criteria for variety selection and range from a low of 400 to a high of 1250. For example: a very popular peach variety called Redhaven has a chilling requirement of around 950 hours. The average chilling hours during the winter in and below Hattiesburg are 400-600. Therefore, a different variety selection would be more beneficial for south Mississippi.

Planting a variety that requires more chilling hours than what is accumulated on average often results in delayed to no bloom, reduced fruit set, and/or reduced fruit quality. Cold damage to emerged buds is common when low chill varieties are planted in an area that receives medium to high chilling hours on average. For example: A peach variety with a 200 chilling hour requirement planted in a place with 700 average chilling hours is likely to break bud if an un-seasonal warm spell occurs once the 200 hours have been met. However there is still likely to be 500 more hours of cold temperatures for that location! This peach variety is likely to experience cold damage to blooms in most years. For a list of fruit and nut trees for your location in Mississippi, refer to Publication 966: Fruit & Nut Recommendations for Mississippi on the MSU Extension website.

Knowing your areas chilling hour requirements when choosing fruit varieties can prevent serious impacts to plant growth when chilling hours are accumulated during the dormant period. Chilling hours are calculated as a tool for fruit producers to gauge whether their crop has been exposed to cold temperatures for a long enough time period. Dr. Eric Stafne, Fruit and Nut Specialist with Mississippi State University Extension, developed an app updating current Chill Hours for IOS or Android that can be found at https://webapps.msuces.com/chill_hours/. For more information, please contact your local Extension office.
Spud-tacular Potatoes

From its humble beginnings in the Andes Mountains of Peru, the potato has become one of the world’s staple foods. Baked, fried, mashed, or stuffed - you name it, and people will eat it. The average American consumes 126 pounds of potatoes each year. Sounds like a lot until you hear about the 745 pounds per capita consumption in Belarus!

The potato is a great vegetable. It is rich in protein, carbohydrates, minerals, and vitamins such as riboflavin, niacin and Vitamin C. Plus, by selecting the right colored varieties, you can add antioxidants.

Varieties commonly grown in Mississippi include: ‘Red LaSoda’, ‘LaRouge’, ‘Superior’, ‘Atlantic’, ‘Norchip’, ‘Kennebec’, and ‘Yukon Gold.’ These all have white flesh except ‘Yukon Gold’ which is buttery yellow.

If you want to be the star of the potato patch this spring, plant some ‘All Red’ which has red skin and red flesh. ‘All Blue’ has blue skin and blue flesh. These plus some of your white-fleshed varieties will make a truly patriotic potato salad for the Fourth of July picnic. These specialty potatoes will have to be ordered.

January through early March is the best time to plant in Mississippi. You can also plant them in the fall if you can get seed stock. Potatoes prefer loose, loamy, well-drained soil. Planting in heavy clay can result in a bumpy looking potato. Plant your potatoes on a raised bed that is 12-15 inches high to prevent damage during heavy spring rains. Most roots and all tubers will develop at the same level and above the level that the original seed potato was planted.

Buy certified disease-free seed potatoes from local farm supply stores or through mail-order catalogs. Do not use potatoes from the grocery store (unless they are organically grown) because they have been treated with a chemical to inhibit sprouting. Cut the seed potatoes into 1-1/2 to 2 ounce seed pieces with at least one ‘eye’ on it. Store the cut potatoes in a warm spot for a few days to heal over the cut surface.

Plant your potatoes in a trench 10-12 inches deep with the seed pieces 10–12 inches apart and cover with 3-4 inches of soil. As the plants grow taller, gradually fill in the trench with soil around the plant. Some gardeners prefer to cover with straw mulch instead of soil. This makes harvesting easier. Each potato plant will produce 2-4 pounds of potatoes.

Potatoes are a cool-season crop and grow best when the day temperatures range from 60-65 degrees and night temperatures are between 45-55 degrees. Tuber production will stop when the temperatures exceed 85 degrees.

Harvest at the appropriate time for the type of potato you want. ‘New’ potatoes are harvested in May while baking potatoes are harvested sometime in June. Use a spade or fork to dig up the potatoes. Immediately use any injured potatoes before they rot. Store the good potatoes in a cool (40-50 degree), dark, humid place. Remember the old-fashioned root cellar. Store the potatoes in the dark because light will cause them to turn green and make them inedible.

It is still cold at night but the soil is warm enough to get potatoes growing. Make the effort to grow your own potatoes and be the envy of the neighborhood. If you need more information, contact your local Extension office.