

UGA Extension Meriwether County ANR E-Newsletter

October 5, 2017

RECENT OBSERVED PESTS IN MERIWETHER

Last Thursday I was asked to look at a Bermudagrass hay field because the grower said that it hadn't put on any growth after the last fertilization. This grower hadn't experienced a bermudagrass stem maggot infestation earlier in the summer but this pest had finally made it into his fields. Classic symptoms were seen and the newest leaves were yellowish or tannish in color and easily pulled from the stem.



Grub damage by May/June beetle larvae was seen in three lawns around the county. In two of these locations large areas were damaged with roots of the turf completely devoured. Handfuls of dead grass were easily picked up. Armadillos (and possibly other animals) were digging to find and feed on the grubs. Unfortunately, it is never easy to successfully apply pesticides to soil. We haven't had a good soaking rain in a while and there must be adequate soil moisture for any insecticide applications to treat for grubs. By this time of the year the grubs are usually too large to really be impacted by an insecticide. Typically grubs do not cause damage year after year so hopefully anyone experiencing their presence this year won't see them again next year.



If you have any questions about these pests or suspect you may have them too you can contact me at 706-977-0882 or scj24262@uga.edu.

PECAN PRODUCTION

I had a request for information on managing pecan trees, so a lot of information follows. To harvest well developed, edible pecan kernels, owners must care for the pecan trees just like they would any other crop. The tree's requirements for correct soil pH, nutrients, water and sunlight must all be met. They must also be protected from the numerous pests and diseases that can impact their health. Many of these conditions cannot be met adequately in a home setting and may even be difficult in a commercial setting especially with older, larger trees.

Commercial pecan producers test the orchard soil on a regular basis in order to apply lime and fertilizer correctly. In really productive orchards water is applied regularly through drip irrigation. In order to understand how critical irrigation is in pecan production let's look at the period when the demand for water is highest. During August and September pecan nuts move through the gel stage and into kernel formation. At the same time, trees are determining whether to make vegetative or reproductive shoots for the next year. Meeting the water needs of a pecan tree at this time is critical. It will determine how good a nut you harvest this year and whether or not you have any next year. A mature pecan tree can use up to 300-350 gallons of water per day during this time. That equals 3600-4200 gallons per acre per day in a pecan orchard. If you do the math that comes to either an inch of rainfall or irrigation needed per week. Water availability must be consistent to keep the tree from becoming stressed. Once a tree is stressed damage of some type is likely to occur. Nut quality in the present year or production in the following year may decline. Trees will also be more susceptible to diseases and pests.

Trees are planted originally in orchards with a spacing that will allow each tree to intercept adequate sunlight. If planting at a high density eventually some trees will be removed. It's very important to remember that plants supply their own food through photosynthesis and light is a critical component of the process. In our area pecan trees are frequently exposed to many gray, cloudy days during the spring and summer that reduce available sunlight by 30-40% which strongly impacts photosynthesis. This reduction in exposure to sunlight may be the most limiting factor to nut production in our area. Trees in Western US orchards in semi-desert areas can have twice the nut production of our trees because of more sunlight. So orchards with crowded or overgrown trees will not maximize production even if enough water or fertilizer is applied. A new practice that is being evaluated in Georgia is "hedging" which is a process of mechanically removing tree branches in a regular manner. Keeping the trees in a tighter formation allows more sunlight into the orchard and makes it easier to apply pesticides. A closer tree spacing can be used for a period of years but eventually some trees will still need to be removed.

There are a number of pests and diseases that impact pecan production in the southeast. Conscientious growers become familiar with the most important ones, know what they need to do for management, know when to do it and then do it. Spraying pesticides is a part of the management process. Being able to apply them is one important advantage that the commercial producer has over the homeowner. Air blast sprayers are the most common spray equipment used for pesticide applications in orchards. Large volumes of water and materials are mixed with large volumes of air in this equipment to get adequate spray coverage on small and large trees. It can be a very timely and expensive operation though. Research has shown that thorough coverage on a mature pecan tree over 30 feet high can only be done by spraying one side of the tree at a time. That means twice the distance must be traveled with the spray going in only one direction in orchards with large, mature trees. In orchards with young trees the spray

can go in two directions as the equipment moves down the row. So in orchards with large acreage of mature trees the sprayer may be in constant use for months.

Pecan scab (*Fusicladium effusum*) is the most serious disease of pecans in the southeast. Pecan scab can infect leaves and twigs but most people only notice it on the shucks of the nuts which have black lesions. Usually the nut falls in the blackened shuck because the shuck sticks to the shell and it is impossible to separate them. In large orchards all other pesticide applications either fit into the fungicide spray schedule used to manage pecan scab or they aren't applied. As mentioned above, the sprayer may be in use for months starting in June at the latest and continuing into mid-August when nuts start hardening. Planting scab resistant varieties may or may not be an effective practice in managing scab. Research has shown that there are multiple races of pecan scab that infect specific pecan varieties. As different pecan varieties are introduced to an orchard typically the race of pecan scab that infects that variety will eventually build up to high numbers in the orchard. The same thing will happen in a home setting also even if scab resistant varieties are planted. If you have older trees you may have varieties or seedlings that are susceptible to scab and only regular fungicide applications will protect them from the disease. Unfortunately using an air blast sprayer is not an option in home settings and adequate coverage is not possible with other spray equipment especially on mature trees. Sometimes a drought year, such as 2016, will keep down disease pressure from scab and reduce the need for a fungicide.

The most common insect pest of pecans that I have encountered in Meriwether County is the pecan phylloxera (*Phylloxera devastatrix*). This insect spends most of its life cycle in plant tissue where pesticides won't affect it. The only time that it is susceptible to insecticides is when budbreak occurs in early spring. My belief is that many pecan trees in yards and unmanaged orchards are not producing nuts because of phylloxera damage. Sometimes phylloxera will only infest leaves but if they get into the stems they can do a lot of damage. Pecans are produced on two-year old wood. If phylloxera damaged this year's new growth, your tree will not have nuts next year because there will be no two-year old wood. Once again, though, you need the right spray equipment to get an insecticide to the new terminal growth as it breaks and in the home setting that is typically not an option.

Pecan weevils (*Curculio caryae*) can be a problem too. If you have nuts with a small hole in them your tree most likely had a pecan weevil infestation. This pest is one that can be treated by the homeowner without too much trouble. Pecan weevils spend part of their life cycle in the ground in orchards. Peak emergence of adults from the soil is normally between August 10 and September 20, but it may occur from July into October. Commercial orchards use traps to monitor emergence and then treat depending on the number of adults. In some dry years, such as last year, the adults may not emerge because the ground is too hard for movement. Damage is caused by the weevil by direct feeding on the nuts and by the female laying eggs inside the nuts. It's a good practice to remove any nuts that drop prematurely since it's likely that they are infested. Removing them before larval emergence will help disrupt the life cycle and reduce the population. Pecan weevils can also be managed by spraying tree trunks with an insecticide containing the active ingredient carbaryl in a liquid formulation. Mix the pesticide in a hand sprayer and spray a two-foot-wide band around the tree trunk about waist high and up, taking care to get thorough coverage. Treatment should usually begin in mid-August and be repeated about three weeks later.

If you have pecan trees that are of bearing age but they aren't producing quality nuts (or any nuts) look at what you aren't doing that you should be. When was the last time you had a soil test done? Do you lime and/or fertilize? Irrigate? Do you know what pests or diseases are in your orchard? Do your trees have phylloxera damage? Pecan weevil damage? Do you have symptoms or signs of other problems? Is it possible to get spray equipment to your pecans? If you have an older orchard that you can't manage sometimes you can lease the property to someone who can. For the homeowner it's possible that a certified arborist may be able to help maintain the health of your trees. Georgia is the top pecan producing state in the country and UGA has multiple websites that offer production guidance. Dr. Lenny Wells, UGA Pecan Specialist, has a pecan blog that you can sign up for to get production tips and pests alerts in a timely manner. There is a website with general guidance on pecan production. You can contact me for assistance in identifying pests and diseases or if you need a copy of the UGA pecan factsheets mailed to you. You can also purchase the book, The Southeastern Pecan Growers' Handbook. The bottom line, though, for the pecan tree grower is that in order to reap a bounty of nuts you must give your trees what they need to maintain health and vitality. Without these critical inputs there may well be no outputs.

For more information on pecans please visit:

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension-outreach/commodities/pecans.html>

<https://blog.extension.uga.edu/pecan/>

https://estore.uga.edu/C27063_ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=4500&SINGLESTORE=true

For information and images on pecan insect pests visit the Meriwether County ANR Extension website below and click on the link to the left for the ANR E-Newsletter Archives. Check out the May 26, 2017 issue for information on and images of pecan phylloxera and then for information on fall webworms and pecan weevil, check out the August 18, 2017 issue.

<http://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/meriwether/agriculture-and-natural-resources.html>

ALL BUGS GOOD AND BAD WEBINAR SERIES

New Invasive Ants to Know About

New invasive ant species? Yes, when we think we know about all the ant species, along comes new invasive ant species capable of invading our space. Dr. Tim Davis, UGA Extension ANR Agent for Chatham County and Vicky Bertagnolli of Clemson University Extension will introduce these new invaders on Friday, October 6 from 2:00-3:00 pm.

To register for the webinar please visit:

<https://extension.zoom.us/webinar/register/c34115a5f1495359d746f627e8486654>

STRAWBERRY PRODUCERS

Southeast Strawberry Expo

The North Carolina Strawberry Association is hosting the Southeast Strawberry Expo on November 1-3, 2017. Topics for the educational sessions include breeding, pest management, plasticulture, low and high tunnels, labor issues, marketing and more. Researchers from NCSU, UGA, Clemson University, and Virginia Tech will participate. There will also be tours of close by strawberry farms and businesses.

The Expo will be held at the Hilton Wilmington Riverside located at 301 N Water St, Wilmington, NC 28401. For more information or to register please visit: <https://ncstrawberry.com/>

UPCOMING LOCAL UGA PROGRAMS

Hunting Lease Workshop: What's a Good One?

With Dr. Mark McConnell, Wildlife Outreach Specialist with the UGA Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources

Tuesday, November 14th from 7:00-8:00 PM

Troup County Ag Center located at 21 Vulcan Materials Road in LaGrange, GA

Presented by Troup, Harris and Meriwether counties

For more information or to pre-register please contact Susan James at 706-672-4235 or scj24262@uga.edu

Get Creative Series:

For more information or to pre-register for any of the Creative Series classes please contact us at 706-672-4235 or scj24262@uga.edu

1. Creating Your Own Hand Crafted Artisan Soaps

Rena Abernathy of Thalia Farms and Apiary and maker of artisan soaps for over 16 years will demonstrate the process. Preregistration and payment is required along with safety glasses and long sleeves. Participants limited to 15. Cost is \$10.00.

Saturday, November 4th from 9:30 am-12:00 pm. The location is Thalia Farms and Apiary at 3005 County Line Church Road, Warm Springs GA.

2. Making Holiday Wreaths for Thanksgiving and Beyond

Susan James, ANR Agent and Ashley Harman 4-H Agent for Meriwether County, will help participants create wreaths with natural materials collected from the garden and woods. Participants limited to 15. Cost is \$10.00. All materials will be provided except ribbon so participants are encouraged to bring any that they would like to use.

Saturday, November 11th from 9:30 am-12:00 pm.

3. Holiday Swags of Native Greenery

Susan James and Ashley Harman will demonstrate how to create swags with natural materials collected from the garden and woods that can be used to decorate mantles, porches, doorways, etc. Participants limited to 15. Cost is \$10.00.

Saturday, December 2nd from 9:30 am-12:00 pm.

The classes for Holiday Wreaths and Swags will be held at the Meriwether County Extension office. We will be either at our present location down the hall from the Tax and Tag office on the Square in Greenville or we will be in our new location in the old Greenville Middle School building at 2100 Gaston Street in Greenville.

Beekeeping

A Year in the Life of a Honey Bee

Tuesday, November 28 7:00-8:30 PM

Another great class with Jim Quick, Research Professional in the UGA Entomology Department and Master Beekeeper. This class will take a closer look at the tasks necessary throughout the year to maintain hives. We will meet again at New Hope Church Fellowship Hall at 7719 Callaway Road, Greenville. Drinks and snacks will be provided. Please call 706-672-4235 or email scj24262@uga.edu if you plan to attend.

Forages

Managing Insect Pests of Forages with Pesticides

The class, taught by Susan James ANR Agent, will go over the various insect pests of annual and perennial forages grown for pasture and hay, including alfalfa, grasses and small grains. The different chemical modes of action (MOA) of recommended pesticides and their precautionary statements and personal protection equipment requirements will be discussed. 1 hour of recertification credit is offered for Georgia Private Pesticide Applicators, Commercial Pesticide Applicators in Categories 21 (Plant Agriculture) and 24 (Turf and Ornamentals).

Monday, December 4th 6:00-7:00 PM

Hopefully this class will take place at our new office space in the old Greenville Middle School building at 2100 Gaston Street, Greenville, GA 30222.

For more information or to pre-register please contact Susan James at 706-672-4235 or sci24262@uga.edu

GEORGIA NATIONAL FAIR & AGRICENTER

Perry, GA October 5-15, 2017

Visit the Georgia Grown Building, the livestock competitions, horse show, educational exhibits, art exhibits, as well as enjoy the fair rides, food, live music, fireworks, circus performance and lots more! I will be working at the Extension booth in the Georgia Grown Building on the morning of October 7. If you are there be sure to stop by and say hello!

<http://georgianationalfair.com/>

SUNBELT AG EXPO

North America's Premier Farm Show October 17-19

The Sunbelt Ag Expo is an agricultural-based trade show that is held at Spence Field in Moultrie, GA. The Expo's unique site has a 100-acre exhibit area adjoining a 600-acre working research farm. Along with industry representatives, eleven universities and colleges, including UGA and FVSU, will help contribute research-based information in seminars. The latest in cutting edge technology and equipment will be on display and utilized in a farm setting. Field demos will showcase harvesting and tillage equipment used for row crops and hay. For more information and to purchase tickets please visit:

<http://sunbeltexpo.com/>

LOCAL EVENTS

Cotton Pickin' Fair in Gay

Saturday, October 7th and Sunday October 8th from 8-5

Shady Days in Gay Arts & Crafts

Saturday, October 7th from 9-6

Sunday, October 8th from 9-5

Southeast Region Rodeo Finals

QC Arena at Quercus Farms

The International Professional Rodeo Association Southeast Region Finals will be held on Friday, October 13th – Saturday, October 14th, 2017 in Gay, Georgia. The rodeo will be held at QC Arena. Gates open at 6:00 PM and the rodeo begins at 8:00 PM.

Events include: Bareback Bronc Riding, Barrels, Cowgirl's Barrel Racing, Cowgirl's Breakaway Roping, Saddle Bronc Riding, Steer Wrestling and Tie Down Roping.

This year the rodeo will benefit the **AMERICAN RED CROSS**.

Tickets can be purchased in advance for \$12.00 online at www.sfrodeo.com. Tickets at the gate are \$15.00.

Warm Springs Harvest Hoe Down

Saturday, October 14th and Sunday, October 15th from 10-6

There will be arts, crafts, food vendors, kids' activities, kiddie train rides, fruit and vegetable stand, hands-on crafts for children, and more. A parade will be held at 11 am on Saturday.

Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery Annual Open House

On Saturday October 14th just around the corner from the Harvest Hoe Down, the Fish Hatchery will be hosting its annual open house from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at 5308 Spring Street in Warm Springs. Staff members will be on hand to talk about their roles as stewards of species conservation by showcasing their programs. There will also be guided tours of the public aquarium, boardwalk, and display pool areas. Please join them to learn more about how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

Fala Day at the Little White House Historic Site

Also taking place on Saturday October 14th in Warm Springs is the annual celebration honoring President Roosevelt's Scottish terrier, Fala, at 401 Little White House Road. The opening ceremony begins at 11:00 am. Activities include a parade and a variety of contests. For more information please visit: www.stcga.biz

Manchester Rail Road Days

Saturday, October 21st from 9-4. There will be railroad collection displays, model layouts, Railroadiana sales, a Rotary Club car show, food vendors and the always enjoyable Observation Deck.

There's plenty to do in the coming weekends and I hope you get the chance to go out and have fun! Susan