



Meadowlark Extension District Weekly Agent News Articles

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Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Preventing Sunscald

If you have a maple in your landscape, fruit trees in an orchard, or other thin barked tree species (honey locust, ash, young oaks, willows, etc...), now is the time to start thinking about sunscald prevention. The aforementioned species, as well as just about any young tree species, can be very susceptible to sunscald and bark cracks that can hamper tree growth.

Sunscald normally develops on the south or southwest side of susceptible trees during late winter. When we get sunny warm days, bark may heat to relatively high temperatures. IN fact, Georgia research has shown that the southwest side of the trunk of a peach tree can be 40 degrees warmer than shaded bark! This warming action may result in a loss of cold hardiness of the bark tissue resulting in cells becoming active. When active, the cells can become susceptible to lethal freezing when temperatures drop at night.

If freezing damage does occur, damaged bark tissue becomes sunken and discolored. Damaged bark will then crack and eventually slough off. While trees often recover, they do need attention! In particular, this attention should include watering during dry weather.

Prevention is your best option! Do so in October/November by applying a light-colored tree wrap from the ground to the start of the first branches, especially on recently planted trees. Remove the wrap the following March. Failure to remove the tree wrap in the spring can prove detrimental to the tree.

Did You Know – Soybean Harvest Moisture

A very interesting survey from two University of Nebraska Extension Educators found that 33 percent of the soybean loads sampled were harvested at a moisture of 11 percent or below. That number would likely be similar in Kansas as well. Is it a concern?

Maybe. Maybe not. There is little argument, however, that moistures less than 13 percent result in fewer 'bushels' to sell since we continue to determine bushels based on weight divided by a 60 pound bushel (assuming 13% moisture) even when moisture may be at 11%. We know that we can't harvest every acre of soybeans at the optimum moisture. We also know that there can be 'losses' if moisture drops too low.

Disregarding shatter losses that can occur at lower moistures, soybeans sold at ten percent moisture 'yield' almost four and a half percent less than at 13% and 11% soybeans 'yield' just over three percent less. Is that enough to worry about? Maybe not, but it is food for thought as harvest moisture drops this fall!