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Jody G. Holthaus
District Extension Agent
Livestock and Natural Resources

No news from Jody at this time.

David G. Hallauer
District Extension Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Multi-stemmed Brush Species – Buckbrush

One of the more common woody species found in eastern Kansas grazing lands is coralberry. More commonly known as buckbrush, it's a native perennial predominantly spread by runners, with plants eventually forming dense patches that shade out desirable forage species.

Control is typically a multi-year approach. If using a controlled burn or mechanical removal (mowing, etc...), removal of top growth after plants have leafed out can be effective. At this growth stage, carbohydrates stored in roots are at their lowest level, requiring the plant to 'start over from scratch'. Over time, this can weaken plants and make them less competitive.

For either method to be successful, timing is important. As of mid-April, most buckbrush is just beginning to leaf out. Prescribed fire at this stage may not be late enough to attain maximum control and even if it does, multiple years of fire are likely going to be necessary to make much of a dent in established colonies. Mowing in early to mid-May is a possibility during this growth stage as well, but multiple years are required for mowing to be effective.

If using herbicides, the best application window occurs just as the leaves start to change from a light to dark green color (the low point in the nonstructural carbohydrate cycle). Numerous herbicides are labelled for buckbrush control with a number of 2,4-D LVE formulations typically effective at a relatively economical rate. If you're after other weed/brush species as well, consider combination products with additional active ingredients like picloram (restricted use), triclopyr, aminopyralid, etc...

Herbicides may damage desirable grasses under the right conditions and all of the aforementioned herbicides will do significant damage to desirable legumes and other broadleaf forbs in the forage stand. *Always* read and follow label directions prior to application. For additional information on rates/timings/products, request a copy of (or link to...) the 2021 KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide available through any District Office.

Pest Control on Fruit Trees

If you've got fruit trees in northeast Kansas, you have plenty of pests to contend with – on both the insect *and* disease front. It will soon be time to initiate a control program, but there's one step you should probably take before you get started: checking fruit buds.

Without fruit buds, there is no fruit, and in most cases no reason to get too excited about a pest control program. To check fruit buds, simply touch a few buds. Dead buds will readily fall from the tree. There is some concern that the cold snap in February damaged peach, nectarine, and apricot trees, so pay special attention to those fruit species.

Once you've determined fruit buds are intact, start planning a control program if you have not already. If you're new to fruit pest control, or think a good refresher might help, check out all three of our fruit pest control publications: *Spray Schedules for Growing Apples at Home*, *Spray Schedules for Growing Stone Fruit at Home*, and *Fruit Pesticides, Active Ingredients, and Labeled Fruits*. All three are available upon request from any of our District Extension Offices or by doing a simple search for the title followed by KSRE.

Cindy Williams
Meadowlark Extension District
Food, Nutrition, Health, and Safety

Gardening with Kids

It is not always easy preparing healthy meals that your entire family will eat without complaining. If you have picky eaters, it makes that job even more difficult. One tool to help children establish life-long healthy habits is growing a garden.

Nutrition: Many studies show children who help garden are more likely to consume what they planted. This equates to more fruits and vegetables! They are also more likely to help choose more fresh produce at the grocery store. This makes it a little easier to prepare meals if you can find a couple of vegetables to offer that they will eat. So increased nutritional status is a plus.

Physical Activity: Another positive that comes from gardening with your children is the benefits that come with physical activity. Teaching them to work the soil, and plant, weed, and water are all great things. They also require movement and utilizing muscles you may not use all the time. Bending, squatting, hoeing---these all use large muscle groups and are great for everyone! Hauling soil, harvesting tomatoes, and picking beans---these are also life skills that will stay with your children the rest of their lives. Teaching them where their food comes from and the work that is put into growing it is important. They will appreciate their food a little more. At the least, they won't answer "the grocery store" when asked where their food comes from!

Family Time: Finally---spending time with your children outside in the sun away from video games and the television is fun. You are building memories. You are working together to provide food for your family while playing with dirt and annoying caterpillars. Can it be any better than that?

If you don't have a big spot for a small garden---plant a tomato plant in a pot. You will get the same outcomes.

Need more information? Here are a few helpful gardening resources:

- This site has lots of great ideas and activities for gardening with children:

<http://kidgardening.org>

Your local Extension office also has many resources for beginning and experienced gardeners! Come check out your local Meadowlark Extension Office for other gardening resources.

Nancy Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

Keeping Your Bones Healthy

Did you play hopscotch or jump rope when you were a child? They are good for your health as an adult too. Regular physical activity will help keep bones strong and slow the rate of bone loss.

What type of exercise is good for your bones? The weight-bearing kind, which is anything that forces you to work against gravity. Your body responds by creating fresh, new bone and greater bone strength.

Weight-bearing exercise is anything that involves an impact on the floor or earth and requires your feet and legs to support you. Some examples include brisk walking, hiking, jogging, jumping, hopping, climbing stairs, dancing, yoga, and tennis.

Good nutrition is also essential for bone health. Nothing beats calcium for your bones, and while you can get plenty of calcium from dairy foods (low-fat options are best), it is also found in vegetables. Choose dark leafy greens such as spinach, bok choy, collard, and turnip greens.

Vitamin D is essential to help bodies absorb calcium. Your body makes vitamin D when the sun shines directly on your skin, and it only takes 10 to 15 minutes of sunlight a couple of times a week to get what you need.

As you age, though, your skin gets thinner and less efficient at synthesizing vitamin D from sunlight. A few foods, like salmon, contain calcium and vitamin D, and some are fortified with both as well, including cereals and orange juice.

Other minerals, like magnesium and potassium, help keep bones healthy. Magnesium helps balance vitamin D balance in your body, while potassium aids in reducing calcium loss from bones. Good sources include spinach and other dark greens, potatoes, sweet potatoes, bananas, legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole grains. Protein is also an essential nutrient for bone health at all stages of life.