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### ***'Ugly' Corn Stage***

Much of our corn right now has entered in to what I've heard deemed the 'ugly corn' stage. Plants might be a little yellow. Stands might be streaked. There might even be uneven growth. In some cases, those symptoms could signify problems, but as nodal roots continue to expand the area they occupy below the soil's surface (by V4, they have overtaken the seminal roots as the primary root source), plants typically 'straighten out' and all is well. It also means some critical growth stages are just around the corner.

At V6, we lose that first true leaf and the growing point emerges above the soil surface. At this point, all plant parts are initiated, with the potential number of rows around (ear girth) determined between here and V10. It's a critical growth stage and recent moisture should help maximize potential ear size. Ugly corn goes away quickly as we reach this growth stage.

Rapid nutrient uptake also begins at V6. If you don't have adequate nutrients (especially mobile nutrients like nitrogen) available to the plant by this point, the potential for deficiencies increases. Want to see how rapidly nutrient uptake increases? Check out this University of Illinois reference: [http://cropphysiology.cropsci.illinois.edu/research/nutrient\\_uptake.html](http://cropphysiology.cropsci.illinois.edu/research/nutrient_uptake.html) . For more growth staging notes, request a copy of our KSU Corn Growth and Development poster available upon request from any Meadowlark Extension District Office.

### ***Trees Slow to Leaf Out***

Trees slow to leaf out this spring are likely seeing the effects of dryer than normal weather that started last fall and extended through the winter and even in to early spring in many locations. Trees went in to fall under stress and they're showing the effects now.

Recent moisture has helped alleviate some concerns, but continued soil moisture monitoring will be necessary as soils dry out. In most cases, trees handle a single stress well. Add a second, maybe a third, and suddenly it's ability to handle stresses can be compromised. We can't control all stressors, but we *can* plan ahead to help alleviate future moisture stress.

How do we know if supplemental moisture is needed? As soils start to dry out, monitor at least the top 12 inches of the soil profile. Eighty percent of a tree's roots are located in this top foot of soil, so moisture will need to reach this depth. To monitor how quickly soils might be drying, use a metal rod, wooden dowel, electric fence post, etc... to check depth. Dry soil is much harder to push through than wet and your probe will stop when it hits dry soil, providing you with an idea about how much of that main rooting depth has adequate moisture.

If (maybe when is a better assumption...) supplemental water is needed, consider using a soaker hose with Y-adaptor (instructions on page three of the KSU Horticulture Newsletter at: [https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/2022/May24\\_2022\\_21.pdf](https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/2022/May24_2022_21.pdf) ) for best water distribution. On larger trees, the soaker hose can circle the trunk at a distance within the dripline of the tree but at least half the distance to the dripline (the outermost reach of the branches. On smaller trees, circle the tree several times so only soil which has tree roots will be watered. Watering every two to three weeks during dry weather *should* be sufficient.

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### **Mishaps That Might Spoil Your Father's Day Fun**

Falling close to the first days of summer, Father's Day is a day that's frequently celebrated with a barbeque, picnic, or pool party. In preparing for your festivities, you may need to run extension cords for entertainment, cooking, and tidying up around the house before your guests arrive.

All of this means the use of outdoor electrical connections, which you should always undertake with the utmost of caution. To ensure your celebration isn't spoiled by an electrical mishap, follow these safety tips:

**Electric grilling---**When using an electric grill, avoid using it in the rain or near combustible items. To prevent the risk of electrical shock, plug your grill into a GFCI-protected outlet. Always unplug it before cleaning it and when you're not using it.

**Landscaping---**Inspect your electric gardening equipment for frayed cords and damage plug before you use it and make the necessary repairs or replacements. Be sure to keep children a safe distance away when using gardening equipment.

**Using Indoor Appliances Outside---**When using an extension cord to plug in stereos, appliances and power tools be sure to use a three-pronged grounding plug marked for outdoor use. Never use an extension cord rated for indoor use outside. When using electrical equipment, always work closest to the outlet and then move away, keeping the cord behind you to prevent it from becoming entangled.

**Repairs---**Some outdoor projects require the use of an aluminum extension ladder, which conducts electricity. Always apply caution when using power tools and standing on an aluminum ladder. When securing loose siding, adding a window box, plant hanger or installing a light fixture, make sure there is no electrical wiring running behind the wall you're working on before drilling or installing nails or screws. Always plug power tools into a GFCI-protected outlet.

Use a stud finder to confirm that you are not cutting into a stud. There are also voltage detectors that will indicate the presence of live electrical wires. These tools are relatively inexpensive and help you avoid a potentially hazardous accident. If a tool you're using comes in contact with a live wire you could be shocked, burned or worse.

**Keeping Children Safe---**Keep children away from power tools, mowers, and outdoor electrical appliances. Never let them bring electrical devices near a pool or wet area. Don't allow them to fly a kite during stormy weather or near power lines. If you live near an electrical substation, make sure you teach your children not to play near the area.