Volume 16, Number 9
September 2010

Don't Forget to Put Your Lawn to Bed for the Winter

Fall brings a lot of activities that keep us scurrying around trying to finish everything before winter weather sets in. One activity that is often overlooked is fall lawn care and fertility for turf health. Keeping your turf healthy in the fall with adequate nutrients goes a long way in fighting off weeds, stress, and diseases during the summer months.

If you haven't taken a soil test in the last 3-5 years, you might want to consider collecting a sample to determine if soil pH, phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) are at sufficient levels to keep your turf healthy. Contact your County Extension Center about how to collect & submit a good soil sample for analysis or on the web at: http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=G6954 Soil Testing for Lawns.

Fall is the best time of the year to feed your cool-season grass lawn as the roots remain active long after the lawnmower is winterized. Turf roots need the additional nutrients to help them gain a competitive edge on weeds in the spring. A healthy plant is better equipped for fighting off insects and disease during the growing season. Nitrogen (N) is a major element necessary for grass growth and is typically applied at a rate of 2 to 4 lbs/1000 ft^2 annually depending on species. Fertility practices and general lawn care are found in the Lawn Maintenance Calendar at: http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=G6705 . The preferred application time is September thru November. If you prefer natural fertilization, avoid the use of corn gluten in mid-September when you are over-seeding your lawn due to its adverse effect on seed germination. However, corn gluten can be applied after seedlings have emerged and reach a height of 1.5 inches at a rate of 0.8 lbs/1000ft^2. For more information see http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=G6749 for Natural Lawn care.

Source: *Todd Lorenz, Agronomy & Horticulture Specialist*

From the Lawn Maintenance Calendar & fall consideration to make your turf healthy for the next growing season

September

- This is the most important time to fertilize. Use well-balanced lawn fertilizer to apply 1 to 11/2 pounds of N per 1,000 square feet.
- Plant or sod new lawns early. Keep soil moist.
- Aerate where needed.
- Rake. Dethatch. Kill weed patches. Overseed thin spots. Resume top-dressing if needed.
- Late September is the best time for broadleaf herbicides, especially for perennial broadleaf weeds.

October and November

- Mow at regular heights until growth stops.
- Apply lime if soil test indicates need.
- Fertilize moderately after cool days slow leaf growth. Nutrients at this time will encourage root growth and thickening of turf. Soluble N fertilizers are used more efficiently by turf in late fall.

Japanese Beetles a Crop Pest?

Typically thought of as a garden or lawn pest, Japanese beetles (JBs) will feed on a variety of agricultural crops.

Japanese beetles were accidentally introduced to the United States in 1916. Since that time, they have become one of the most devastating landscape pests in the eastern United States. Japanese beetles are prolific and feed on 220 plants in the U.S. and more than 400 worldwide.

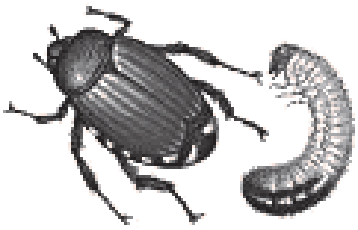
As little as 10 to 15 years ago, Missouri was somewhat free of this pest with only a few scattered pockets being found. Some experts in the Eastern US said we would not have a problem since we have such high clay content soils. However, we have abundant habitat for this particular insect and numbers this year have been the highest historically for Missouri.

Large areas of turfgrass and pastures provide desirable habitat for developing grubs with no effective natural enemies. Since the grubs feed on plant roots, the sandier soils of the grassed levees around corn and soybeans in river bottoms provide a suitable habitat for developing grubs. This may lead to increased crop losses near levees due to grub feeding on roots and adult foliar feeding.

Currently, Missouri's JB population is in the colonization or build-up stage. Once the diseases, parasites and predators of JBs become well established, the beetle population numbers will be generally lower and only cause problems sporadically like many other pests. Until then, damage from JBs will likely be more common and more serious.

The life cycle of JBs is one year. Most adult lays eggs in July that hatch and develop into white larvae, which overwinter in the soil and mature during the spring. The beetles typically emerge in mid-June, when they begin feeding. Each healthy female lays 40 to 60 eggs.

Scouting fields near the time of corn pollination and when soybeans are flowering is important. However, there is a greater likelihood of severe damage to corn yields because of their feeding preference for corn silks. They will fly up to three miles for something like corn.



Adult Japanese beetle & Grub

Adult beetles are 3/8" long, metallic green beetles with copper-colored wing covers. White tuffs of hair protrude along the underside of the wing covers. This is a positive characteristic for JB identification. Adult beetles will usually start their feeding at the top of a plant and work their way down. Adults will feed on the upper side of leaves between leaf veins giving a skeletonized appearance.

Eggs hatch in July and grubs grow very quickly, to nearly full size by August. Grubs continue to feed on roots. Especially anywhere there is a grass cover like in pastures, levees, ditch banks and roadsides.

Soil moisture is important for the survival of eggs and small grubs during the summer months. Females prefer moist soils to lay eggs. Irrigated lawns, sports fields, and golf courses will often have higher grub populations, especially during droughty periods. Older grubs move deeper into the soil profile where moisture exists, becoming more tolerant of droughty conditions.

Most people are familiar with white grub damage. Root pruning by grubs will create brown patches of dead turf that easily pulls up and separates from the soil.

There are JB traps available. Sex attractant hormones lure beetles to the traps and can attract thousands of beetles a day. Unfortunately, research indicates that traps attract far more beetles than are actually caught. A trap is valuable to access the presence, buildup, decline and relative numbers of beetles. This information is also available for the state at: http://ppp.missouri.edu/pestmonitoring/jb/viewall.cfm.

In field corn, an insecticidal treatment is justified if pollination is less than 50% complete, 3 or more beetles are present per ear, and green silks have been clipped to ½ inch or less from the husk. For soybean, treatment is justified if foliage feeding exceeds 30% prior to bloom and 20% from bloom through pod fill. Contact your local MU Extension Agronomy Specialist for insecticides that are recommended for control of JB in field corn and soybean in Missouri.

Article from: Japanese Beetles (Popillia japonica) Numerous in 2010 by Dr. Wayne Bailey, MU Extension http://ppp.missouri.edu/newsletters/ipcm/archives/v20n12/a4.pdf

***Source:** Jim Jarman, Agronomy Specialist*

Taxation Tidbit
Unwinding an Early Social Security Retirement Election

One of the most debated questions for workers nearing retirement age is: Do I elect early Social Security retirement as early as age 62, or continue working until the full-benefit retirement age or even later? The big issue with electing retirement prior to the full-benefit retirement age is the percentage reduction of benefits which will remain associated with your Social Security retirement benefits for life (and the life of your spouse, if their benefit is based on your benefits).

Wouldn't it be great if you could elect early retirement and later (perhaps several years later) re-evaluate your financial needs and your health (life expectancy) and decide then, if you would be better served to have started drawing Social Security retirement early or to have elected to start receiving Social Security retirement benefits between your full-benefit retirement age and age 70. Recall there is a substantial benefit increase for each year Social Security retirement is postponed between the full-benefit retirement age and age 70.

Well there is a provision that allows you to do just that. It is called commonly called "resetting". The biggest catch is, but it shouldn't be a surprise, you'll have to pay the government back the Social Security benefits you've received prior to electing to reset your retirement age. The good news is you'll be getting a much greater monthly retirement benefit and there is no penalty or interest to pay on those funds you have to pay back. Thus, you're in effect paying back an interest-free loan.

Certainly this is not a provision that will be beneficial to everyone, and even some that could benefit will not be able to afford the required payback. However, if you elected early Social Security retirement, are healthy and believe you'll live longer than average, and you have the financial resources to pay prior benefit payments back to the government – you should at least investigate the potential benefits of resetting your retirement age. This consideration is particularly relevant if your spouse is or will be receiving Social Security retirement benefits based on your retirement benefits.

For more detailed information on "resetting", go to the following Social Security web site: "If You Change Your Mind" – http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/withdrawal.htm

Source: *Parman R. Green, Ag Business Mgmt. Specialist*

Oil Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Program: Information for Farmers

Last year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized its amendments to the Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) rule pertaining to oil, gasoline, diesel and other oil-based products. Under the new rule, revised requirements have been promulgated for farms and ranches; aboveground fuel storage capacity is the major factor in determining if a producer must have a spill control plan. Farms that meet all of the following criteria are covered by the SPCC regulations:

- Stores, transfers, uses, or consumes oil or oil products, such as diesel fuel, gasoline, lube oil, hydraulic oil, adjuvant oil, crop oil, vegetable oil, or animal fat; and
- Stores more than 1,320 US gallons in aboveground containers or more than 42,000 US gallons in completely buried containers; and
- Could reasonably be expected to discharge oil to waters of the US or adjoining shorelines, such as interstate waters, intrastate lakes, rivers, and streams.

Farms with a storage capacity above 10,000 gallons may need to complete a plan certified by a professional engineer. Operations with storage capacity less than 10,000 gallons but greater than 1,320 gallons *may* complete and self-certify a plan using a template provided by EPA, but the criteria should be reviewed to make certain this option is available.
The compliance date is November 10, 2010; however, EPA is telling farmers they must prepare a plan *now* if their farms were in operation before August 16, 2002.

EPA's guidance may be found online at http://www.epa.gov/emergencies/content/spcc/index.htm

If you have any question or for more information about SPCC contact **Kent Shannon**, Natural Resource Engineering Specialist e-mail: shannond@missouri.edu or (573) 445-9792 .

Upcoming Field Days

Date, event, place and contact person are:

- September 9: Tomato Festival; Bradford Research Farm; Columbia, MO; Tim Reinbott, 573-884-7945
- September 10: Southwest Center Field Day; Mt. Vernon, MO; Dr. Richard Crawford, 417-466-2148
- September 14: FFA Field Day; Bradford Research Farm; Columbia, MO; Tim Reinbott, 573-884-7945
- Sept 30-Oct.1: Grazing School; Wurdack Farm, Cook Station, MO; Field Day; John Poehlmann, 573-882-4450
- October 2: South Farm, Columbia; Showcase; John Poehlmann, 573-882-4450
- October 7: Wurdack Farm, Cook Station, MO; Field Day; John Poehlmann, 573-882-4450
- October 16: Missouri Chestnut Roast; Horticulture and Agroforestry Research Center, New Franklin, MO; Nancy Bishop, 660-848-2268

For a complete list of all the field days and events go to http://cafnr.missouri.edu/research or

College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
Office of Research
2-44 Agriculture Building
Columbia, MO 65211
Phone: 573- 882-7488

In This Issue: