

AG NEWS

November 2020

Forage / Grazing Management

Soil Fertility Management – Fall and winter is a good time for correcting imbalances in pH. Soil fertility and pH should be monitored regularly.

- pH in pasture soil drops relatively fast because of leaching of calcium carbonates and lack of soil mixing like in a cropping system with frequent tillage.
- Correcting pH will take several months so it is wise to check lime requirement before next year's growing season.
- Collect at least 15 subsamples per pasture using a zig-zag course. Mix the subsamples and then submit one composite sample to our office.



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Weed Control – It's not too early to start thinking about winter annual weed control.

- Start spraying pastures where there were problems in the past. Late fall and winter spraying are very effective.
- For identification and control recommendations, refer to MP522 – <https://www.uaex.edu/publications/pdf/mp522.pdf> - or contact our office for your copy at 870-845-7517.

2019/2020 Demo Highlights

Electric Fence Demo – No new damage due to deer; 100% increase in pear production. Peaches did not produce as well this year but was not due to damage from deer. Producer has also implemented a watering system that helped production.

Pasture/Forage Demo – Producer sees pasture conditions are improving after following recommended soil reports. Producer has seen an 82% increase in forage production and quality.

Lime Demo – Producer followed recommended lime needed from soil report; and has seen a 30% increase in hay production and an increase in quality.

Tomato Demo – Tomatoes never turned dark green or really grew. There might be a problem with the soil, so another soil analysis will be done. Producer did not have problem with insects this year.

Lawn/Spurweed Demo – This is one that is very visual right behind the courthouse at the EH Center. There were good results that was easy for many people to see.

Strawberry Workshop/Demo - I taught a workshop in February about growing strawberries in containers. Our containers were displayed in front of the EH Center all spring and summer for people to see.



Spurweed (Stickers) Control for Lawns

Spurweed, also known as stickers or burweed, is a winter annual weed. It is a tiny plant with parsley-like leaves and grows close to the soil line. Spurweed germinates in the fall and winter months in lawn and turf areas, particularly in areas where turf is thin or patchy. During the winter, spurweed remains small and low-growing where it usually goes unnoticed until the plant matures.

In late winter, spurweed blooms are tiny white flowers. In the spring when temperatures begin to increase, the pollinated flowers of lawn spurweed begin to set fruit. The fruiting structures appear as small rosette buttons and develop in the leaf axils. As the fruit matures in mid to late spring, the seed in the fruiting structures develop spines, and when the fruit becomes dry, the spines become very sharp. These sharp spines are what make the lawn spurweed so undesirable.



As you walk across a turf area barefoot, more than likely you will notice any encounter with this weed, due to the painful spines that penetrate in the skin.

How can I control spurweed?

You can prevent spurweed by maintaining a healthy turf. A healthy turf competes for water, nutrients, and space. Fertility, irrigation, and mowing height can encourage a healthy turf that acts as a physical barrier, choking out many opportunistic weeds. If your managed turf site is a warm-season grass (like bermudagrass or zoysiagrass), it may be helpful to adjust your mower to its highest cutting height for the last cut of the season in fall to ensure the thickest canopy is present over winter. This can prevent many winter annual weeds from developing. **However, if spurweed is already present, it is critical to control before the fruiting structures develop, otherwise, the burrs will persist as hazards in your turf and shed seeds to re-infest your property next year.**

Spurweed can be easily controlled during the winter months of December, January, and February. This is the ideal time to apply herbicides for spurweed control, especially because warm-season turf species are dormant and not sensitive to many herbicide applications. In most areas of Arkansas, the weed can also be effectively controlled in March.

What herbicides should I use for spurweed control?

Preemergence herbicides that are effective on controlling spurweed are atrazine (AAtrex, a Restricted Use Herbicide), simazine (Princep, others), isoxaben (Gallery), and metribuzin (Sencor Turf). **This group of herbicides should not be used on bermudagrass over seeded with a cool-season turfgrass or on tall fescue as they are injurious to cool-season turfgrasses. Note that isoxaben is effective for suppression of germinating spurweed seeds, so its application must be timed prior to germination in the Fall.**

The best option to control spurweed by homeowners is a post-emergence application of one of the various two and three-way mixes of 2,4-D, dicamba and MCPP. Trimec is one of the most common trade names in this category. These products can be used on tall fescue, tall over seeded bermudagrass in which the over seeded cool season grass has been mowed four to five times, and non-over seeded bermudagrass.

How do I apply herbicides for spurweed?

The postemergence herbicides should be applied on a warm (air temperatures at least 55 degrees Fahrenheit), sunny day. Two to three weeks after the initial application, spurweed control should be evaluated. If control is not acceptable, an additional application may be necessary. Make sure to read the label before application to make sure the specific formulation and percentage of chemical that you choose is appropriate for your lawn and always follow mixing and sprayer instructions to insure effective control and proper use of the herbicide.

Fall/Winter Beef Production Calendar

- **Sept. – Oct.** Forage test, and plan feed supplementation
 - Forage test hay to determine nutrient value.
- **Sept. – Nov.** Care of newborn calves
- **Oct. – Nov.** Vaccinate cows
- **Mid Nov. – Mid Jan.** Heifer breeding season
 - Heifers should weigh 65% of their mature weight before their first breeding.
- **Nov.** Finish up sire selection and management
- **Nov. – Dec.** Check body condition scores
 - For fall calving season you want to see a proper body condition score of 5 to 6.
 - Fall calving cows need to be monitored closely for calving difficulties. Facilities and equipment need to be readily available for dystocia.
- **Nov. – Dec.** Equipment and facilities repairs
- **Dec.** Cow breeding season
- **June – Dec.** Watch for prussic acid poisoning
- **All Times:** Provide free choice mineral; watch for nitrate poisoning



Fall/Winter Forage Production Calendar

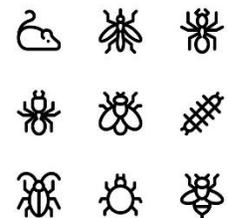
- **Jan. -Dec.** Take soil samples any time soil is moist enough to collect 6" deep cores. Usually spring to fall.
- **Jan – Dec.** Apply lime
 - Lime should be applied 6-12 months before planting. On established fields, apply any time.
- **Nov – March** Apply herbicides for winter annual weeds in dormant bermudagrass.
- **Nov – Dec.** Spray for Buttercup and other winter annual weeds.
- **Sept – Dec.** Cool season perennial grasses
 - Begin grazing late Sept. to mid Oct. when forage is approximately 6" tall.
- **Nov – May** Cool season annual grasses
 - Begin grazing mid Nov. when forage is approximately 8" tall.



Home Pest Control Safety

The most effective way to reduce or eliminate pest problems and risks posed by pesticides is to first prevent pests from entering your home. Around the home, pest prevention measures include removing sources of food and water and eliminating pest shelters and breeding sites:

- Store food in sealed plastic or glass containers. Make sure food and food scraps are tightly sealed and garbage is regularly removed from the home. Garbage containing food scraps should be placed in tightly covered trash cans.
- Fix leaky plumbing and do not let water accumulate anywhere in the structure. Don't let water accumulate in trays under houseplants or under the refrigerator.
- Don't leave pet food and water out overnight. Also, if you apply pesticides, pet food and water should be removed from the area.



- Clutter provides shelter for pests-places for roaches and mice to breed and hide-and makes it difficult to provide effective pest control. Keep the level of clutter down. Stacks of newspapers, magazines, or cardboard provide excellent shelter for roaches and other pests.
- Close off entryways and hiding places. For example, you can caulk cracks and crevices around cabinets or baseboards and use wire mesh to fill holes around where pipes go through a wall, ceiling, or floor.
- Check for pests in packages or boxes before carrying them into the home.



County Extension Council Top 5

Because of Covid 19, the Agriculture Expansion and Review Committee meeting was held this year by mail out surveys. The top 5 topics discussed that I plan to address in the upcoming year are:

- **4-H Livestock**
 - Proper care of your show animal
 - How to choose the right feed
 - How to choose a prize-winning animal
 - What it takes to be a great showman
- **Pasture/Forage Improvement**
 - Electric fencing
 - Fertilizer practices
 - Weed control
 - Rotational grazing
- **Establish a Master Gardener Program in Howard County**
- **Lawn Maintenance and Improvements**
 - Weed control
 - Equipment maintenance
 - Soil sampling
 - Basic lawn care
- **Horticultural and Gardening**
 - Offer programs that include pruning fruit trees and ornamentals
 - Offer gardening programs at farmers market using the educational garden

In addition to the programs above, the committee wants to continue the use of social media and weekly new articles when getting information out to the public. They would like to continue a quarterly newsletter that has information covering forages, horticulture, home lawn and garden, weeds, poultry, and beef.

Sincerely,

Samantha Horn
County Extension Agent-
Agriculture