

Woodruff County Cooperative Extension Service  
Richard Klerk - County Extension Agent - Staff Chair  
502 North Third St. Room 122  
Augusta, AR 72006  
Phone: 870-347-2556  
Fax: 870-347-3075  
E-mail: raklerk@uaex.edu

*"The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, sex, gender, identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer."*

Visit our web site

[www.uaex.edu/woodruff](http://www.uaex.edu/woodruff)



## Propagating Woody Plants from Softwood Cuttings



*Take cuttings after a rain or after the plant has been well watered.*

Now is a good time to start new trees and shrubs from existing ones. Many ornamental trees and shrubs can be reproduced by taking cuttings from new growth that occurred this spring. Though these softwood cuttings root relatively easily, they are susceptible to wilting and need close attention to watering and relative humidity.

It is best if cuttings are taken after a rain or several hours after the plant has been well watered to ensure the cuttings remain turgid. Stems should be mature enough that they snap rather than bend when placed under pressure. Cuttings should be about 6 inches long with cuts made at an angle just

below a node, the area where a leaf joins the stem. The angle provides a larger cut surface and more area for the cutting to callus and root.

Strip off the lower leaves and place the cutting in a moist rooting media after it has been dipped in rooting powder. Several rooting mediums are suitable including sand with peat moss, sand with vermiculite, perlite with peat moss, and perlite with vermiculite. A suitable medium should provide good moisture-holding capacity and be open enough to provide good aeration to the roots. Though some plants can be rooted directly in water, roots formed in water do not adapt well to soil.

Rooting containers vary. Some

gardeners prefer flats because the number of cuttings each will hold. Others prefer small, individual pots for each cutting so cuttings can be removed from the propagation environment as they root. Regardless of the container used, relative humidity should be kept at a high level.

This can be done by enclosing the container or containers in a plastic bag. Use wooden dowels, plastic straws or a similar object to keep the plastic off the top of the cuttings. Place the rooting container in bright, indirect light and check often for watering needs. When roots are about 1 inch long, cuttings can be removed from the propagation chamber and potted.

June 2016  
Volume 1, Issue 1



## After-Effects of Too Much Rain

### Inside this issue:

| Article                               | Page |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| <i>Flooding Damage</i>                | 2    |
| <i>June Gardening by Janet Carson</i> | 3    |
| <i>Propagating Woody Plants</i>       | 4    |

Some areas have had saturated or near-saturated soils for several weeks now. Gardeners are likely to assume that watering won't be needed for quite some time now as soil moisture levels are very high. Actually, watering may be needed much sooner than you expect. Excessive rain can drive oxygen out of the soil and literally drown roots. Therefore, as we enter hotter, drier weather, the

plants with damaged root systems may be very susceptible to a lack of water. Don't forget to check your plants for signs of wilting or leaf scorching and water as needed.

If irrigation is called for, water deeply and infrequently. Usually once per week is sufficient depending on the weather. Soil should be moist but not waterlogged.



*Too much rain can literally drown the roots of plants.*

## Deadheading Flowers

Some plants will bloom more profusely if the old, spent flowers are removed, a process called deadheading. Annuals especially, focus their energy on seed production to insure that the species survives. If you remove old flowers, the energy normally used to produce seed is now available to produce more flowers. Perennials can also benefit by lengthening the blooming season. However, some gardeners enjoy the look of spent flowers of perennials such as sedum or purple

coneflower. Also, the seed produced can be a good food source for birds.

Not all plants need to be deadheaded, including sedum 'Autumn Joy', melampodium, impatiens, most flowering vines, periwinkle (Catharanthus), and wishbone flower (Torenia).

Those that do increase bloom in response to deadheading include hardy geraniums, coreopsis, petunias, marigolds, snapdragons, begonias, roses, campanulas, blanket flowers

delphiniums, zinnias, sweet peas, salvia, scabiosa, annual heliotrope, geraniums (Pelargonium), and yarrow.

Deadheading is easily accomplished by removing spent flowers. With some plants, pinching between a thumb and finger can do this, but tough, wiry stems will require a scissors or pruning shears.

### Interesting Facts:

- Deadheading is the removal of spent flowers.
- Some plants bloom more if deadheaded.
- Not all plants need to be deadheaded.
- Most deadheading can be done by pinching with your fingers.

## Flooding Damage



*Trees differ markedly in their ability to withstand flooding.*

Waterlogged soils push out oxygen that roots need to survive. Every living cell in a plant must have oxygen or it dies. Some plants have mechanisms to provide oxygen to the roots even under saturated conditions but most of our vegetables and flowers do not. The longer these plants are subjected to saturated soils, the more likely damage will occur.

Usually, as long as water drains away within 24 hours, the impact on plant health is minimal. However, shallow, stagnant water under hot, sunny conditions can literally cook plants, reducing survival time to as little as a few hours.

**Vegetables:** What about safety regarding eating produce from a garden that has been flooded? Standing water should not cause a safety problem as long as the aboveground portions of the plant remain healthy. Do not use produce from plants that have yellowed. Also, using produce flooded with water contaminated with sewage (lagoon) or animal manure can also be dangerous.

The safest approach is to discard all garden crops that have been in contact with such water. Certainly, leafy vegetables should always be discarded. However, you may eat fruit from such crops as tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, sweet corn, squash, cucumbers, and similar vegetables that develops after the waters have subsided as long as the fruit is not cracked or soft. Always wash vegetables thoroughly before eating.

**Lawns:** Under the cool conditions of early spring, turf grass-

es can often survive several days of flooding. However, during hot, sunny conditions with shallow, stagnant water, lawns may be damaged quickly, sometimes in a few hours. This situation often occurs when shallow depressions in a lawn allow water to pool. Note such areas and fill in with additional soil once the waters have subsided.

**Trees:** Trees differ markedly in their ability to withstand flooding. Some trees have mechanisms in place to provide oxygen to the roots of plants with water saturated soils and others do not. However, most trees will maintain health if flood waters recede in 7 days or less. It also helps if water is flowing rather than stagnant as flowing water contains more oxygen. If the roots of sensitive trees are flooded for long periods of time, damage will occur including leaf drop, iron chlorosis, leaf curl, branch dieback, and in some cases, tree death. Another danger of flooding is the deposition of sediment. An additional layer of silt 3 inches or more can also restrict oxygen to the roots. If possible, remove deep layers of sediment as soon as conditions permit. This is especially important for small or recently transplanted trees.

Try to avoid any additional stress to the trees this growing season. Ironically, one of the most important practices is to water trees if the weather turns dry. Flooding damages roots and therefore the root system is less efficient in making use of available soil water. Timely watering are vital to a tree's

recovery. Also be diligent in removing any dead or dying branches which may serve as a point of entry for disease organisms or insect pests. The following information on tree survival came from the US forest Service.

**Trees Tolerant of Flooding:** Can survive one growing season under flooded conditions. Red maple, silver maple, pecan, hackberry, persimmon, white ash, green ash, sweetgum, sycamore, eastern cottonwood, pin oak and bald cypress.

**Trees Moderately Tolerant of Flooding:** Can survive 30 consecutive days under flooded conditions. River birch, downy hawthorn, honey locust, swamp white oak, southern red oak, bur oak, willow oak and American elm.

**Trees Sensitive to Flooding:** Unable to survive more than a few days of flooding during the growing season. Redbud, flowering dogwood, black walnut, red mulberry, most pines, white oak, blackjack oak, red oak and black oak.

After the Flood: Soils often become compacted and crust-ed after a heavy rainfall. This also can restrict oxygen to the roots. Lightly scraping the soil to break this crust will help maintain a healthy root system and therefore, a healthy plant. Be careful not to cultivate too deeply as shallow roots may be damaged. If you think the excessively wet weather will continue, bedding up the rows before planting even just a couple of inches, will improve drainage and allow for better aeration.

## June Gardening

Crape myrtles have been extremely slow to leaf out, and many gardeners feared they had died, and began pruning. The slow green up can be attributed to several factors, but primarily the first hard freeze in November caught them unaware. The abscission layer did not form and many leaves persisted all winter. Then low temperatures may have added to the damage. In addition, plants damaged by the crape myrtle bark scale have also been impacted. Be patient. Many will leaf out in time, but do the scratch test. Take a knife and lightly scrape the outer wood. If there is green underneath, wait and they should leaf out. They will be delayed in their blooms, since they do bloom on the current growth.

Figs have also suffered some dieback, but not as severe as expected. They are leafing out, but while they are beginning to grow, there are some dead tips. The good news is that they bear fruit on the new growth, so while your crop may be reduced, you will still have fruit.

Big leaf hydrangeas also suffered some winter damage again this year. Damage has varied from minor to severe. If all the growth is from the base, you will have no flowers again this year, unless you are growing the re-blooming varieties.

In addition to winter damage, we are also having a resurgence of the ambrosia beetle. For more information go to <http://www.uaex.edu/environment-nature/forestry/>

[health/FSA-7064.pdf](http://www.uaex.edu/environment-nature/forestry/health/FSA-7064.pdf)

This small beetle attacks small thin barked trees and goes after both weakened and healthy trees. We don't really know why some years are worse than others, but this is a bad year. Trees leaf out, and then seemingly overnight collapse. If conditions are dry, small toothpick-like protrusions of sawdust stick out of the trunk. Once the damage is done, there is not much recourse. If the tree is healthy, it might survive the attack, but many are permanently damaged.

Japanese maples, dogwoods, redbuds and other small or young trees can be damaged. If you have questions, take samples and/or pictures to your local county extension office.

Scale insects are also fairly common this spring on crape myrtle felt scale, <http://www.uaex.edu/publications/PDF/fsa-7086.pdf> and tea scale is widespread on camellias and hollies. Check the backside of the leaves. If you have small white specks on the underside and some mottled yellow leaves on the top, treating with a systemic insecticide will be needed for control.

We definitely had a late spring and many plants have been delayed, but it was a pretty spring in spite of it all. Check your garden for issues and control if needed.

Now is also a great time to be planting summer tropicals. We have so many choices today. Even in the realm of tropical hibiscus, there are some stunning new varieties with depths of color. Mandevilla are not just pink, but a variety of shades of

pink, red, white and even yellow. Tibouchina has purple velvety flowers and bananas may be red foliaged and dwarf or green and huge. Esperanza will give you showy yellow flowers all summer and may overwinter in a mild winter (which we need again!) and tapioca plant is a vibrant foliaged plant. Whether you put them in containers or plant them in the ground, tropical plants thrive in an Arkansas hot and humid summer. Don't forget to fertilize. If you are bringing out the tropical plants you overwintered, don't forget to prune them hard and repot them. Tropical plants bloom on new growth, and if they are old and pot-bound, they will not bloom well. Regular watering and fertilization will keep them flowering.

Herbs can be planted in the vegetable garden, interspersed with vegetables, grown in containers, or in a stand-alone herb garden, but fresh herbs are a real boon for the cook. Many herbs are perennials, and some like rosemary, sage and lavender are evergreen. Oregano, thyme and chives will also come back year after year with minimal care, and be sure to contain your mint, as it can take over the world if given the chance. Annual herbs need to be planted again each year, and now is a great time to add basil, dill and summer savory. Who doesn't love fresh basil with their fresh tomatoes! So many choices, so start planting.

By: Janet Carson



*The ambrosia beetle attacks small thin barked trees like crape myrtles.*

**"Now is a great time to plant summer tropical such as the stunning new varieties of tropical hibiscus."**



*Early spring turf grasses can often survive several days of flooding.*



*Fresh herbs are a boon for the cook.*