



THE NEW HORT THYMES

**CLEVELAND COUNTY
EXTENSION**

Serving Cleveland County, Oklahoma with the most up to date gardening,
lawn, landscaping, and horticulture information.



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Munch, Munch, Munch

There is much munching this time of year

Insects come out in full force this time of year. It seems like it's a constant battle to keep on top of them. Turn away for a minute and a tomato hornworm has defoliated an entire tomato bush. Blink and squash bugs have taken down an entire squash vine. Don't even think about taking a day trip, there's no telling what will have inhabited the garden by the time you make it back.

These are, of course, exaggerations, but that's definitely how it can feel this time of year. Routine scouting is a good strategy to stay on top of the insects. Controlling small populations is a lot easier than controlling large populations. Also keep plants watered and mulched, as stressed out plants tend to attract more insects. Have plants that are so munched on and so tattered that there's likely no saving them? Pull them out! Those new areas are perfect spots to plant your fall crops, like carrots, beets, and leafy greens.

Scaling It Up: Scale Insects on Trees

If a plant is covered in small bumps that can be squished or rubbed off, there may be a scale infestation. Scale insects are a common pest of shade trees and other shrubs. They damage plants by piercing it and sucking the juices out. There are many kinds of scale, but they can be divided into two groups: those that produce honeydew and those that don't. Honeydew is a sugary liquid and byproduct of insect feeding. Soft, kermes, and bark scale produce honeydew as they feed directly on the plant parts that transport nutrients. Armored scales and pit scales do not produce honeydew.

Adult scales are unable to walk and spend most of their life feeding on the same spot of the plant. Eggs will hatch beneath the female and emerge as "crawlers". Crawlers are blown to nearby plants or plant parts. Control is easiest when scale are in the crawler stage. Horticulture and dormant oils can be used to control scale, though pay attention to label instructions, as these can only be applied at certain times of the year. There are also some systemic insecticides available as well, but these cannot be applied while the plants are in flower, as they would have negative impacts on pollinators.

Identifying the species of scale is the first step in effective control. Knowing the species can determine when crawlers are active and the best means of control. Below are some of the common scale in Oklahoma.

Scales That Do Not Produce Honeydew



Obscure Scale

Hosts: pin oaks and red oaks, especially in urban areas

Approx. Crawler Activity: July



Oystershell Scale

Hosts: lilac, birch, dogwood, elm, poplar, maple, privet, walnut

Approx. Crawler Activity: May, July



Euonymus Scale

Hosts: euonymus, pachysandra, bittersweet

Approx. Crawler Activity: Late May to early June, late July to August



Juniper Scale

Hosts: juniper, arborvitae

Approx. Crawler Activity: May, July

Scales That Produce Honeydew



Brown Elm Scale

Hosts: elms, oaks, ash, mulberry, maple, plum, pecan

Approx. Crawler Activity: Late April to early May



Fletcher's Scale

Hosts: yew (taxus)

Approx. Crawler Activity: Mid-June to mid-July



Pine Tortoise Scale

Hosts: pines only

Approx. Crawler Activity: Mid-June to mid-July



European Elm Scale

Hosts: elms of all ages

Approx. Crawler Activity: Mid-May to mid-June

A Cautionary Note: Homemade Remedies

Hungry insects and prolific weeds can make late summer gardening a chore. There are a lot of online blogs and videos that show gardeners how to combat these problems with homemade remedies. These recipes are usually simplistic and made up of ingredients from around the home. Some of these products may include dish soap, vinegar, salt, boric acid, vegetable oil, garlic, or cayenne peppers. It's tempting to give these homemade remedies a shot. However, we must consider some questions:

- Do these remedies actually work?
- Are they harmful to plants or beneficial insects?
- And, just because they contain home products, are they really safe?



Pesticide products purchased from box stores or gardening centers come with detailed instructions on how to mix, what personal protective equipment is needed during application, and how exactly the product should be applied. These products have undergone rigorous testing through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to assess their safety for humans and for the environment. Home remedies have not gone through this testing and do not come with specific instructions.

For example, a common home remedy uses dish detergent or antibacterial soap. These products may contain additives, such as surfactants, solvents, pH adjusters, cleaning enhancers, colorants, preservatives, or fragrances. The long term effects of these additives in the environment are not known. There are also no instructions on when to apply such products, like temperature requirements. Spraying products that contain dish detergent on sunny days can injure the plant, essentially burning it.



Beneficial insects, which essentially can do the insect control for us, can be harmed when using home remedies. Recognizing different life stages of beneficial insects can make insect control in the garden less daunting.

Handling of some of these home remedies can be harmful to humans, like boric acid or high concentrations of vinegar.

If there are concerns over synthetic pesticide use, there are many organic options available to the homeowner. These products have gone through the same testing as traditional pesticides and come with detailed label instructions.

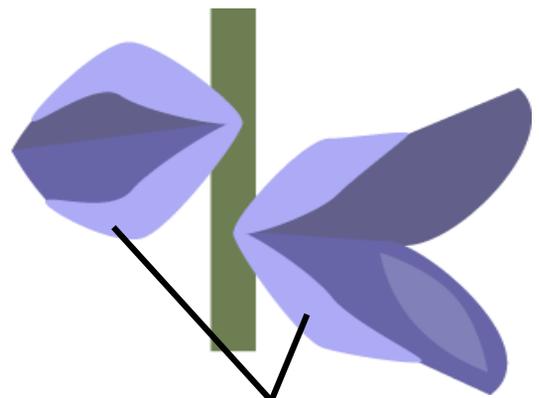


August Plant of the Month: Mealy Blue Sage

A low-maintenance plant to power through the summer

Salvia farinacea, or mealy blue sage, is a 2-3', upright tender perennial that is native to Texas and Mexico. It is named for its mealy-white colored sepals, which are covered with little felted hairs. The flowers are most commonly violet-blue and two lipped on 4-6" racemes. Mealy blue sage has gray-green foliage and lance shaped leaves. The foliage is aromatic and deer resistant.

It is relatively low maintenance, tolerating poor soils and some drought. It is a tender perennial, so treat it as an annual unless planted in a protected location. Cultivars are available in various shades of blue, lavender, and white. Mealy blue sage blooms throughout the summer and attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. It is perfect as a border plant or in cottage style gardens.



Sepal /sēpəl/: modified leaves that encase the developing flower (collectively the calyx)

Garden Tips for August

- August is a good month to start fall vegetables gardens:
 - Bush beans, cucumbers, and summer squash can be replanted for another crop
 - Beets, broccoli, carrots, lettuce, and other cool-season crops can also be planted at this time
- Continue protective insect applications on home fruit trees; a good spray schedule is often abandoned too early
- Towards the end of August, divide and replant spring-blooming perennials like iris, peonies, and daylilies
- Consider leaving annuals seeds to self-sow; cosmos, cleome, and tickseed will reseed themselves for the next year
- Pull weeds as soon as they appear; weeds can grow very quickly in this warm weather
- Water compost during extremely dry periods so that it remains active
- Watch the temperatures and rain fall – consider adding supplemental irrigation to drought sensitive plants during the heat of the summer
- Grassy winter weeds can be prevented with a pre-emergent herbicide application in late August
- Check for grubs in the lawn; mid-to-late August is the best time to control infestations
- Tall fescue should be mowed at 3 inches during the hot summer
- Irrigated warm-season lawns can be fertilized once again in early August
- Discontinue deadheading roses by mid-August to help initiate winter hardiness
- Watch for second generation fall webworm in late August/early September

Eat Seasonally

In-season produce is fresher, cheaper, more nutritious, and better for the environment. These are some of the seasonal crops for August:

Corn



Eggplants



Figs



Green Beans

Okra



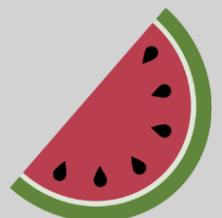
Peppers

Summer Squash



Tomatoes

Watermelon



Upcoming Events

August 4th, 6:30pm to 8:00pm – Fall Gardening

Fall gardens can be started as early as late July. It's difficult to think about fall in the heat of the summer. As the weather cools off, late plantings are perfectly positioned for harvest before the first frost. Join us for a webinar to learn the strategies behind fall gardening and maximize that final harvest.

The class is free, but registration is required. To register, visit

<https://dasnr.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYlc-GuqjMtGdRA89YKtazgVaCNvkdgWJHJ>

September 12th, 9:00am to 4:00pm – Grow Your Own

Oklahoma County Extension Office, OSU Conference Center, 2500 NE 63rd St, Oklahoma City, OK 73111

This full day program will cover everything that you need to know to start gardening. This workshop will help you with garden site selection, soil improvement and composting, garden planning and establishment, choosing the best fruit and vegetable varieties, and starting transplants. Everyone attending will receive vegetables or herbs they can use to start their own fall garden.

Spaces are very limited. Registration is \$10. To register, call 405-713-1125.

September 16th, 6:30pm to 8:00pm – Protecting Pollinators at Home

Over 90% of all known flowering plants, and almost all fruits and vegetables, require pollination to produce crops. Between honey bee colony collapse disorder and the decline of monarch butterflies, pollinators have become a major interest for home gardeners. Join us for a webinar to discuss creating pollinator friendly gardens and just how important these little critters are to our lives.

The class is free, but registration is required. To register, visit

<https://dasnr.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYkcuGsqDMrGNR35h1n4gU0wFzgvZIAdLZA>

About the editor...

Courtney DeKalb-Myers has been the Cleveland County horticulture educator since August 2018. Her position handles homeowner inquiries, master gardener advisement, and other horticulture education programming throughout the state. She is originally from Norman, Oklahoma and developed a passion for gardening at a young age. She went onto study horticulture at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater with an emphasis in entrepreneurship. After graduating from OSU, she moved to Raleigh, North Carolina to attend NC State for graduate school. Her research was heavily focused on vegetable production, specifically processing tomatoes for a local salsa product. The emphasis on local products motivated her to move back to Oklahoma and she is so excited to now serve the town that raised her.

