DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

AG News

Spring 2025

PAT

The last chance for a Private Pesticide Applicator Training in Howard County until November will be on Friday, March 14th at the Extension Homemaker's Educational Center 425 N Second St, beginning at 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. Call our office at 870-845-7517 to register. The cost of the training is $20.00.

Bangs Vaccinations

On-farm bangs vaccinations for Howard County producers will take place on April 8th. Bangs vaccinations are for heifers aged 4-12 months. The animals need to be pinned with working facilities. To register for this free program, call Dawson Bailey, CEA – Agriculture, at 870-845-7517.

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Grass Tetany

As spring approaches and the grass starts growing, you as a producer may have to watch out for a forage-related problem called grass tetany. Grass tetany is caused by reduced magnesium levels in the animal's blood. It generally affects older, lactating cows. During early lactation, cows produce large amounts of milk which results in a high release of magnesium. This combined with older cow's reduced ability to mobilize bone magnesium leads to low blood magnesium levels and grass tetany symptoms. Grass tetany can also be seen in dry cows, young cows, and rarely growing calves.

Clinical signs of grass tetany may range from slight changes in behavior to death. Early in the disease, the affected cow may have a decreased appetite, decreased milk production, a tendency to stay away from the herd, increased alertness, or a stiff or unsteady gait. As the disease progresses, cattle may become recumbent or exhibit muscle tremors, an increased heart rate, and an

increased breathing rate. If the disease is left untreated at this stage, the cow will likely die.

Young cool-season grasses, and small grains are commonly associated with grass tetany. It most frequently occurs in the spring. High levels of nitrogen and potassium in the soil can increase the risks of grass tetany because they reduce the availability of magnesium to the animal. Producers should refrain from grazing cattle in a field that has recently been fertilized or has had the disease before. Pastures that have been fertilized with a significant amount of manure often have excessive potassium fertility, increasing the risk for grass tetany.

Increasing the legume content in the pasture can help with magnesium levels. The preferred method to reduce the occurrence of grass tetany is to feed minerals or give supplements high in magnesium. High magnesium mineral mixes are available at most feed stores. Cattle should begin consuming high magnesium minerals during the late winter months and into early spring as new plant growth is starting. Once temperatures are consistently above 60 degrees F a producer can stop feeding the high magnesium mineral. The mineral needs to contain at least 10% magnesium. If stocking rates are high, several mineral feeders should be used and conveniently located in the pasture, so cattle have adequate access to minerals at all times.

Year-Round Home Gardening Planting Chart MP422

March	April	May
Apply and Incorporate Compost Prune Fruit Trees and Shrubs Matted Row Strawberries (1-5 years) Asparagus (Perennial) Lettuce (45-65) Carrots (66-75) Kohlrabi (50) Radish (24-30) Cauliflower (66) Cabbage (60-82) Broccoli (50-75) Sweet Corn (80-94) Mustard (40-50) Turnips (40-55) Swiss Chard (60) Beets (54-68) Irish Potatoes (90-110) Onions (80-120) Spinach (42) English Peas (60-70)	Asparagus (Perennial) Sweet Corn (80-94) Squash (Summer) (42-54) Okra (55-58) Peppers (65-75) Cucumbers (51-68) Sweet Potatoes (90-120) Eggplants (63-76) Tomatoes (55-105) Beans (Snap, Lima) (48-71) Edamame (65-90) Kohlrabi (50) Broccoli (50-75) Cabbage (60-82) Collards (50-75) Swiss Chard (60) Lettuce (45-65) Radish (24-30) Beets (54-68) Watermelon (75-92) Cantaloupe (75-90)	Edamame (65-90) Asparagus (Perennial) Pumpkins (95-112) Tomatoes (55-105) Squash (Summer) (42-54) Southern Peas (55-70) Sweet Potatoes (90-120) Peppers (65-75) Okra (55-58) Eggplants (63-76) Cucumbers (51-68) Watermelon (75-92) Cantaloupe (75-90) Beans (Snap, Lima) (48-71) Collards (50-75) Radish (24-30)

*The numbers following each crop are approximate days from seed sowing to maturity. Range in parentheses ( ) shows variations in maturity between crop varieties or cultivars.

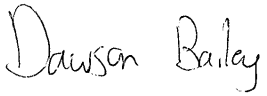
The closer to the bottom of the box a vegetable or activity is listed, the closer to the end of the month it should be planted or performed.

Pruning Crape Myrtles

Crape myrtles have the potential to be wonderful trees or shrubs if they aren't butchered every year during pruning. They are probably the most incorrectly pruned plants we grow, with "crape-murder" being the norm.

Crape myrtle trees bloom on the new growth every year so pruning should take place before any new growth begins. For most of the south, this will be from mid-February to mid-March. They are often one of the last plants to start growing so there is still plenty of time left to prune if needed. Some gardeners may begin pruning in the fall after the leaves have dropped, but you should avoid this for two reasons: 1. You have a pruned look all winter long which is less appealing and not natural looking, and 2. Extra growth is an added buffer for any potential winter damage, which can then be pruned off in February or March. Well-established and well-structured plants may not need annual pruning. Pruning while the trees are young will build the structure and form that the trees need. There is a great demonstration video of how to properly prune crape myrtles on our website (https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/resource-library/crapemyrtle/pruning.aspx).

Something else you should watch out for on your crape myrtles later in the season is the crape myrtle bark scale. Adult female crape myrtle bark scales appear as white or grey encrustations on small twigs to large trunks, often appearing near pruning wounds or in branch crotches. An infestation may cause a black sooty mold to appear on the bark. If you notice crape myrtle bark scale on your trees, you may wash what you can reach with a soft brush and a mild solution of dishwashing soap. Another form of control that has shown promise is the application of systemic insecticides as a drench to the root zone. Imidacloprid, thiomethoxam, and dinotefuran have shown the best control when applied between May and July. It may take several weeks for the product to be distributed throughout the plant.



Dawson Bailey – CES Agriculture