



Getting A Good Start

This class from the Four-County Head Start program's site in Longwood was among the 60 four-year-olds entertaining parents and other guests last week in observance of National Head Start Awareness Week. One day a year is set aside especially for welcoming visitors and hearing their suggestions and comments, according to Willie Mae Stanley, lead teacher. Pictured are students of Penny Jones (rear left) and Phyllis Gore (rear right). They are (front row, from left) Dominique Stanley, Shantae Hill, Eric Bellamy (second row) Alicia Clarida, Jessica Bland, Bianca Vereen, Garrick Grant (third row) Braxton Cotton, Joshua Reaves, Charles Goss, Antwan Ash, Kenneth Thorne, Kyle Watts (fourth row) Karry Pigott and Ela Clarida.

STAFF PHOTO BY LYNN CARLSON

Fruit, Nut Tree Care Takes Know-How

Dear Plant Doctor: I recently bought a home which has several fruit and pecan trees. Please tell me what I need to do to make my trees produce.—Wallace

Answer: Much is written about fruit and nut tree care and production. The first step is to gather and read as much information about fruit and pecan culture as you can hold. Second, take inventory of all your fruit and nut trees. Third, take soil samples around your trees and have them analyzed for soil nutrient content. Fourth, plan to prune these trees in January or February. I expect a drastic pruning will be in order if plants have not been properly cared for in the past.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service offers a wealth of information on nearly every fruit, nut or vegetable crop. Several publications I have found helpful include "Growing Peaches in North Carolina," AG-30, "Growing Pears in N.C.," AG-80, and "Pruning Fruit Trees in N.C.," AG-29. Check with your County Extension office for these publications or contact the Publications Office, Box 7603, N.C. State University, Raleigh, N.C. 27695-7603.

Dear Plant Doctor: I have raised tomatoes for many years with great success but this year was not one of them. I planted a late crop of Better Boy tomatoes on June 1 in well limed and fertilized soil. Plants were staked with old creosoted fence posts. When plants were 6 feet tall and loaded with fruit, all of my plants turned yellow (from the bottom to top), the leaves dropped off and the plants died.

My questions are: What could cause this problem? Could nematodes do this? Can creosoted posts cause this problem?—Aberdeen

THE PLANT DOCTOR

C. BRUCE WILLIAMS
Extension Area
Turf Specialist



Answer: A number of fungal, bacterial or nematode pathogens can cause the symptoms you describe on your tomatoes. I doubt the creosote posts caused the problem although the fumes produced by creosote can be very troublesome in a greenhouse or enclosed plant bed.

The problem probably involves a pathogen that either destroys the function of the root system (like nematodes) or blocks the flow of water in xylem (the vascular tissue responsible for water conduction to the leaves).

Bacterial wilts kill tomato plants because the bacteria reproduce at such a rapid rate they physically "clog up" the essential plumbing of the plant. When the plant cannot get the water to its leaves, the leaves wilt and the plant eventually dies.

Fungal pathogens can also act similarly but in addition, some fungi produce lethal toxins that are translocated to all parts of the plant. The best cure is prevention. No pesticide can "cure" a systemic fungal or bacterial disease or remedy a severe nematode problem.

The best solution is genetic resistance. Genetic resistance to nematodes, bacteria, and fungi is routinely bred into a plant's genetic makeup. For example, buy Better Boy FVN rather than just Better Boy. The letters FVN indicate that the va-

riety has genetic resistance to some strains of Fusarium disease, Verticillium disease and Nematodes. Many new tomato varieties look like they have an alphabet behind the variety name. You may want to try some of these new or improved varieties.

Dear Plant Doctor: What can you tell me about the planting and care of the eucalyptus? Any information would be greatly appreciated.—Pinehurst

Answer: The genus *Eucalyptus* includes more than 600 species of woody plant that are native to Australia. Many of these plants would probably adapt to our conditions in eastern North Carolina but few are available in the nursery trade. I have very sparse resources on the production, care and planting of *Eucalyptus* but will check with NCSU Forestry researchers for more information.

One of the most cold hardy and more common species is perhaps *Eucalyptus gunnii* or the Cider Gum *Eucalyptus*. This species will tolerate temperatures to 0 degrees Fahrenheit once the plant is established. Most species are deciduous, rapid growing and relatively maintenance-free.

Dear Plant Doctor: I am a new arrival to Brunswick County from Long Island. Please help me find garden information that is applicable to southeast North Carolina. Where can I find out what varieties to plant?—Calabash

Answer: Please make an appointment to visit the Brunswick County Cooperative Extension Office. Environmental, soil and growing conditions in southeast North Caro-

lina are drastically different from Long Island. The Extension office has information on all aspects of gardening and variety selection. You may even want to get involved in the Master Gardener classes!

Send your gardening questions and comments to The Plant Doctor, P.O. Box 109, Bolivia, N.C. 28422.

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SADD Members Seeing Red In Drug-Free School Effort

Members of the West Brunswick High School chapter of SADD, Students Against Drunk Driving, are literally "seeing red" this week.

They've been busy with the high school's observance of National Red Ribbon Week, advocating drug- and violence-free schools and communities, under the guidance of faculty advisor Melba Johnson, said reporter Paige Sloane.

Activities have included mounting red bows and "Drug Free" posters on classroom doors, hanging a banner at United Carolina Bank and distributing red ribbons, pens and apples to faculty members.

In preparation for Friday's football game, they are wrapping the goal posts on Rourke Field with red ribbon, providing red ribbons and carnations for cheerleaders to wear during the

game and designing a "run-through" for the football players.

SADD members are tying red ribbons with flyers to student cars Friday, distributing red ribbons to local churches and restaurants, and selling red ribbons to students during lunch period.

Members also participated in a countywide National Red Ribbon Essay Contest. Countywide winners at each school level, who were to be recognized Tuesday in Southport, include Bruce McAfee, first place high school with a \$100 savings bond; and Sam Spayd, second place high school, \$50 savings bond.

Officers of SADD this year include Madonna Gause, president; Nicole Norris, vice president; Mindie Vince, secretary; Lamar Hardee, treasurer; and Paige Sloane, reporter.

Public Meeting To Address Gypsy Moth Spraying Program

State agriculture officials will hold a public meeting Thursday, Oct. 28, at 7:30 p.m. at the county government complex in Bolivia to outline plans for controlling an infestation of gypsy moths recently discovered in Brunswick County.

In their larval phase, gypsy moth caterpillars feed on the leaves of trees. A severe infestation can defoliate woodlands and eventually kill large numbers of trees.

The European gypsy moth affects more than 4.2 million acres of forest each year, mostly in the southeast. The Asian gypsy moth, which only recently reached the U.S., is considered even more of a threat to woodlands because the females of this species can fly, unlike the European variety. Consequently, Asian gypsy moths can spread much more quickly.

In July, an infestation of Asian gypsy moths was found aboard a munitions vessel docked at the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point near Southport. The N.C. Department of Agriculture plans to spray large areas of Brunswick and New Hanover counties next spring in an effort to

contain the spread of the pest.

Public meetings are scheduled in both counties to discuss those plans.

"We're looking for public comment about the gypsy moths and treatment options," said Agriculture Commissioner Jim Graham. "This pest poses a serious risk in North Carolina and must be stopped before it spreads further."

Attending the public meetings will be a panel that has been created to develop a gypsy moth control program. Team members include representatives from the state and federal departments of agriculture, the N.C. Forest Service, the N.C. Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Department of Defense, the N.C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources and the Brunswick County Cooperative Extension Service.

Bill Dickerson, plant pest administrator for the NCDA's Plant Industry Division, will head the program. For more information contact Dickerson at (919) 733-6930 or Milton Coleman, director of the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service in Bolivia at 253-4425.

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