Spring is on the Way!

Another funky winter has come and gone, and spring can’t come sooner.

We have another new hire at our office! Stop by and say hi to Suzanne Diequez-Kimmel. Or give the office a call—she will likely be the one answering! Suzanne will take over for Cheryl as Office Associate. She likes basketball, chocolate, and snow (well, maybe not so much the snow).

With hellos must come goodbyes—Cheryl Lightfritz is retiring from OSU Extension after 25 years of service here in March and is currently working in the office part-time. We had an office reunion at her retirement party—needless to say some of us were not prepared for the photo op (see above).

Happy planting!

Erika Lyon
Extension Educator, Agriculture & Natural Resources
Ohio State University Extension
BILL INTRODUCED TO EXEMPT AGRICULTURE FROM CERCLA AIR EMISSIONS REPORTING
By Peggy Kirk Hall, Ag Law Specialist, OSU Extension

A bipartisan group of eight U.S. senators have introduced a bill to exempt agricultural producers from reporting requirements under the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). We’ve reported previously on the new mandate that would require livestock operations to report air emissions, the result of a U.S. Court of Appeals decision last year that struck down the EPA’s rule that exempted agriculture from the reporting requirements. The U.S. EPA has repeatedly requested the court for a delay of the new reporting mandate, now delayed until after May 1, 2018. The proposed legislation would establish a new exemption that would protect farmers from the upcoming reporting mandate.

Senator Deb Fischer (R-Neb.), a primary sponsor of the legislation, stated that “[t]hese reporting requirements were designed to apply to industrial pollution and toxic chemicals, not animal waste on a farm or ranch.” Co-sponsor Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) assured farmers that requiring them to “spend their time and money on reports that will go unused by EPA would be burdensome and needless.”

The text of the senators’ proposed Fair Agricultural Reporting Method (FARM) Act, S. 2421, is available at http://go.osu.edu/CERCLABILL. The proposal includes:

- A statement that CERCLA reporting does not apply to air emissions from animal waste, including decomposing animal waste, at a farm.
- A definition for “animal waste,” which means feces, urine, or other excrement, digestive emission, urea, or similar substances emitted by animals (including any form of livestock, poultry or fish), and including animal waste that is mixed or commingled with bedding, compost, feed, soil, or any other material typically found with such waste.
- A definition of “farm,” which means a site or area (including associated structures) that is used for the production of a crop or the raising or selling of animals (including any form of livestock, poultry, or fish) and under normal conditions, produces during a farm year any agricultural products with a total value equal to not less than $1,000.
- A statement that maintains the current exemption from CERCLA reporting for applications, storage and handling of registered pesticide products.

Senator Fischer introduced S.2421 on February 13 and the Senate has referred the bill to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

FORAGE NEWS, FROSTBITE, & FESCUE FOOT
By Christine Gelley, OSU Extension, Noble County

A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to attend the American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Conference with some of our other Ohio Extension Educators. It was a wonderful experience to learn from others and share what we have learned with forage producers and professionals across the country.

Two sessions that I sat in on for the benefit of my local producers were “Managing Cover Crops in the 21st Century” and “Understanding and Mitigating Fescue Toxicosis.”

The clover session included a presentation by Dow Agrosciences about treating broadleaf weeds in clover stands and progress they have made toward an herbicide that works as well as their leading pasture herbicide, without killing white clover. It will still be a couple years before the product is released for use, but it is coming.

In the fescue toxicosis session, we were reminded to watch for fescue foot in winter. The decreased circulation that results from the constricted blood vessels in the animal makes them increasingly susceptible to frostbite. Frostbite can easily go unnoticed in snowy and cold situations and could even lead to gangrene. If this occurs, the appendage (foot or tail) will be lost and the animal will need to be culled. This is usually a problem that starts in summer and carries into winter. In most cases, the concentration of the ergot alkaloids that cause these symptoms is low in dried mixed hay. Even so, this is a condition to watch for.

The bitter cold we have experienced in combination with great volumes of snow increases the chances for animals to have frostbite damage. While things begin to thaw, be sure to check the feet and tails of your livestock for signs of frostbite and if you do see it, contact your vet ASAP. I hope that no one encounters a fescue foot turned frostbite injury. If you do, I would be interested in hearing about it. There are ways to mitigate the impacts of fescue endophyte in your herd or flock in all seasons.

There is still a lot of winter left. I hope Mother Nature will be kind...
NON-NATIVE STINGING ANT CONFIRMED IN SOUTHWESTERN OHIO

By Joe Boggs, Assistant Professor of Entomology, OSU

Ant specimens collected in mid-November in southwestern Ohio were confirmed by the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA, APHIS) to be Asian Needle Ants (Brachyponera chinensis (syn. Pachycondyla chinensis)). This is not the first report of this ant being found in the U.S. However, it is the first confirmation of this non-native stinging ant being found in Ohio.

Asian needle ants are not a regulated pest targeted for eradication. That's because this ant has been in the U.S. since the 1930s and is now widespread in a number of states. Thus far, active populations have been documented in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Connecticut, and New York. As with Emerald Ash Borer (Agrilus Planipennis), Asian needle ants are now so pervasive over such a wide geographic area that it would be impossible to eradicate this non-native from the U.S.

However, localized Asian needle ant populations found in new locations, such as southwest Ohio, can and should be targeted for elimination. This ant is a serious concern for three reasons: it stings; it can invade homes and other structures; and it can wreak havoc on forest ecosystems. The ant specimens in Ohio were collected from a single site and aggressive actions were taken to destroy the population.

At this point, we do not know whether or not this was a “one-off” occurrence with a single population becoming established in Ohio that has now ascended to ant heaven, or if this is the tip of the needle ... ants. That's because cool temperatures that arrived shortly after the late-season discovery suppressed ant activity which limited the success of surveys for new populations.

Of course, this means we must be vigilant as temperatures warm in the spring which is why I’ve included this ant in my presentation “Alien Insect Invaders: New Arrivals and Usual Suspects,” at this year’s Tri-State Green Industry Conference.

Appearance and Biology

Unfortunately, I had to rely on alcohol preserved specimens for the images in this report. However, you can clearly see that these ants have slender shiny black to dark brown bodies that measure around 1/8” in length. One striking feature is their long, spider-like light-brown to orangish brown legs.

Also note that these ants have a single, bulbous node (petiole) between their thorax and abdomen. Whether or not ants have one or two nodes (one lump or two?) is an important ant identification feature. For example, Fire Ants (Solenopsis spp.) have two nodes.

The general shape of the top of the thorax is also an important identification feature. The top of the Asian needle ant’s thorax is uneven as opposed to the evenly rounded thorax seen with a number of other common ants including Carpenter ants (Camponotus spp.).

Asian needle ants nest in wide-ranging locations. While they prefer forested locations and are typically found beneath moist leaf litter, rocks, or in rotted logs; these ants will also nest in landscape mulch, compost bins, and in homes as well as other structures. They are “meat eaters” meaning they forage wherever they find tasty meat-treats such as dead (or live) insects and other arthropods as well as earthworms. They have a particular affinity for termites. Needle ants may also find their way into kitchens and dumpsters.

Their colonies may consist of several nests grouped together (polydomous) and each nest often has several queens (polygynous). However, these queens will split from their nests throughout the season to establish new nests; a quality that supports the rapid spread of needle ants.

Asian Needle Ant Impacts

The “needle” in the ant's common name refers to this ant's sting. We have ants in Ohio that can deliver a serious bite, but none that can sting like their bee and wasp cousins.

A survey of sting victims published in 2006 in the Journal of Medical Entomology showed individuals can experience a range of reactions to needle ant stings. The majority (80%) of the victims experienced localized redness and swelling that expanded to about 2” around the sting site with hives sometimes developing at the site. The pain from the sting lasted 2 hrs. to 5 days. More troubling, 8% reported significant local reactions including swelling, recurring pain, and severe hives with symptoms lasting 3 – 14 days. The authors concluded that "P. chinensis [B. chinensis] represents an emerging public health threat throughout its present range in the southeastern United States."

Thankfully, reports indicate that unlike fire ants, these ants are not very aggressive towards humans. They will often flee from probing fingers rather than sting. However, their wide-ranging nesting habits can place them in close proximity to people where they can present a serious threat.

Asian needle ants are highly competitive with several characteristics that give them six-legs up on other ant species. As with most ants, cold fall, winter, and spring temperatures suppress their activity; however, needle ants are able to become active in early spring prior to other ants "waking-up" from their winter naps. This means they can get a head-start on foraging and staking out new territories.

Their production of multiple queens which split from their nests means they can rapidly spread to new locations. Their aggressive foraging means they can out-compete other ants for resources and their bellicose behavior includes attacks on other ants which means they can directly eliminate the competition. Indeed, a study conducted over several years by researchers in North Carolina showed these ants can even displace highly aggressive Argentine ants (Linepithema humile) which have been documented to out-compete fire ants (see More Information below). The bottom line is that Asian needle ants are capable of taking over the sites where they become established including forests.

Recommendations

I strongly urge the you remain vigilant for Asian needle ants in Ohio this coming spring and throughout the growing season. I would appreciate receiving any reports of people being stung by ants: just send me an email at boggs.47@osu.edu. While needle ants can't be eradicated from the U.S., it would be a good idea for us to slow or prevent (if possible) the spread of these ants into our state by eradicating any newly discovered populations.

Asian needle ants can be effectively controlled using a wide-range of insecticides; many were developed for fire ant suppression. These includes baits where insecticides are brought back to nests by foragers as well as residual contact insecticides that can be directly applied to eliminate nests. Of course, as with any pesticide, you need to read and follow label directions including making certain the site you are treating is on the label.

Jessica Louque, Smithers Viscient, Bugwood.org

Mohammed El Damir, Bugwood.org
2018 HORTICULTURE LUNCH & LEARN SERIES

Pruning Trees & Shrubs
Steps to Get a Commercial Pesticide License
Lawn Care 101
Extending the Urban Growing Season

Location: 500 Market Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Steubenville

Wednesdays 12 PM-2 PM
March 7th | March 21st | April 8th | April 18th
Cost: $15/person/session
Join us for soup, sandwiches, and all things plants

PRECISION AG & SPRAYER TECH WORKSHOP
MARCH 29th, 2018  ●  10 AM—2 PM  ●  HARRISON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, CADIZ

Get your questions answered about GPS guidance systems, the best use your field’s satellite data, and sprayer technology, calibration, and applications to get the most from your field. Guest speakers include John Fulton, Precision Agriculture Specialist, and Erdal Ozkan, Agricultural Engineer from the Ohio State University’s College of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences.

There is no cost for this program, but pre-registration is required. Registration deadline is March 23rd. Contact OSU Extension at 740-264-2212 to register.

This program is sponsored by Farm Credit Mid-America.
Conservation in Your Backyard Workshops

March signals the start of Conservation in Your Backyard (formerly Backyard Food Production) monthly workshops. Join us for sessions covering a range of topics, including nuisance wildlife, hops production, hydroponics, birding, and much more! These workshops are free to attend, but contact the Harrison SWCD or Extension so we know how many to expect.

LOCATION
Harrison County Fairgrounds Commercial Building, 550 Grant Street, Cadiz

TUESDAY
MARCH 6th, 2018
6 p.m.—8 p.m.

March Topics
Feral and stray animals, nuisance wildlife management, birding, birds of prey

April Topics
Hydroponics Workshop

TUESDAY
APRIL 3rd, 2018
6 p.m.—8 p.m.

SPRING FOREST WALK AND FUNGAL FORAY

Love walks in the woods, identifying trees, and finding fungi? Want to learn more about identifying morels? Then this event is for you. Bring a good pair of hiking shoes and join us for a forest walk and fungal foray at Fernwood State Forest. We will cover topics on winter and early spring tree identification, forestry management, and spring mushroom hunting.

There is no cost for this program, but pre-registration is required. Contact OSU Extension, Jefferson County at 740-264-2212 or send an email to lyon.194@osu.edu. A map of the hike will be posted on u.osu.edu/lyon.194.

FERTILIZER CERTIFICATION

Thursday
April 19th, 2018
6PM-9PM

Bantam Ridge School
587 Bantam Ridge Road, Wintersville

There is no cost for this program, but pre-registration is required. Registration deadline is Friday, April 13th, 2018. You may call to pre-register at 740-264-2212.
East Ohio
Women in Agriculture Conference

Friday
April 6, 2018
9 A.M. – 3:30 P.M.
R. G. Drage Career Technical Center
2800 Richville Drive SE
Massillon, OH 44646

$55 adults/ $30 Students
* Discount if also registered for Small Farm Conference—see below

Who should attend:
Women who are interested, involved, or want to become involved in food, agriculture, natural resources, or small business.
Topics for this year’s conference include: business & finance, plants & animals, communication, home & family, as well as special interest presentations on marketing strategies.

For more information, call 330-674-3015 or visit http://u.osu.edu/ohwomeninag

REGISTRATION DEADLINE is MARCH 26th.

Living the Small Farm Dream:
2018 Northeast Ohio Small Farm Conference and Trade Show

This intensive conference will give you the opportunity to choose from different seminars taught by Extension professionals and industry leaders on a wide variety of agricultural enterprises. Sessions cover a variety of topics, including horticulture, livestock, aquaculture, farm management, marketing & selling, natural resources, and equipment use & safety. A tradeshow representing the many industries servicing small farms will be present for you to visit during Saturday hours.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE is MARCH 26th.

CONFERENCE COST:
Per Person: $60.00  Students: $30.00

Women in Agriculture (see above) + Small Farm Conference: $100.00
Students attending both programs: $50.00

For more information, visit agnr.osu.edu/smallfarms
The cost of the program is $20 for one or all three sessions, and pre-registration is required. Register by contacting the Jefferson County Extension office at 740-264-2212 one week prior to each session. Make checks out to OSU Extension and mail to 500 Market Street Suite 512, Steubenville, OH 43952. Hot refreshments will be served at all sessions.

**Carroll County Extension Office**
613 N. High Street  
Carrollton, Ohio 44615  
**TIME:** 10AM-12PM  
**COST:** $10/person

Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Call 330-627-4310 to register and pay at the door.

**Spring Grazing Meetings & Pasture Walks**

March 22nd: poultry litter, composting manure, barnyard biosecurity @ Carrollton Friendship Center, 100 Kensington Rd NE, Carrollton  
April 26th: TBA  
Visit [http://www.carrollswcd.org/eastern-ohio-grazing-council.html](http://www.carrollswcd.org/eastern-ohio-grazing-council.html) for more information. Flyers for EOGC events will be posted on u.osu.edu/lyon.194.

**2018 Beef Management School**

The cost of the program is $20 for one or all three sessions, and pre-registration is required. Register by contacting the Jefferson County Extension office at 740-264-2212 one week prior to each session. Make checks out to OSU Extension and mail to 500 Market Street Suite 512, Steubenville, OH 43952. Hot refreshments will be served at all sessions.

**March 12**  
5:30PM-8PM  
Jefferson County JVS, Bloomingdale

**Spring Calving, Health & Ticks**  
Speaker: Wayne Shriver, OSU Eastern Agricultural Research Station Manager, Erika Lyon, OSU Extension

**March 26**  
5:30PM-8PM  
Bantam Ridge School, Wintersville

**Managing the Breeding Season for Enhanced Profitability, Artificial Insemination Synchronization**  
Speakers: John Grimes, OSU Extension Beef Coordinator, Kevin Hinds, COBA

Thank you to our partners and sponsors: Jefferson Cattlemen’s Association, Jefferson Landmark, Carrollton Farmers Exchange, Farm Credit Mid-America, Jefferson County Farm Bureau.
Got questions about horse nutrition, health, and general management?

Then this event is for you!

Join OSU Extension, Jefferson and Harrison Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Mondays, April 16th and 23rd from 6 PM to 8PM for good food, wine and a lot about equines. Topics covered include nutrition & health, hay quality, forage and soil testing, and manure management and composting.

There is no cost for this event, but beverages and meals are at your own expense. Pre-registration is required—register by contacting the Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District's office at 740-264-9790 by the Friday before each session.

April 16th:
Timi’s Cafe
128 E Market St, Cadiz, OH 43907

April 23rd:
Black Sheep Vineyard, Inc.
1454 US-250, Adena, OH 43901

Spring Vegetable Climate Predictions for Planting 2018
By Timothy McDerrmott, OSU Extension, Franklin County

When I am planning when to start seeds in order to get ready for an upcoming spring or fall planting season, I take the frost date into account, but then I adjust that date according to the weather projections as that gives me insight into how I can maximize production by using weather data plus season extension.

For example, the fall frost date in central Ohio is around mid-October. The fall climate prediction data was for a delayed frost date and a warmer fall. Once I read about this I planted my fall vegetables using this data in anticipation of a longer fall growing season for summer vegetables.

I planted green beans and zucchini in the first week of August 2017. Both are about 50-60 day vegetables so they would mature long after the frost date normally, and both do not like frost.

Germination was about a week or so later. Because of the delayed frost date, I was able to enjoy a harvest late into fall and ate green beans and zucchini fresh for Thanksgiving dinner.

This year the climate prediction center states that we will continue to have a February with temperature swings and periods of heavy precipitation.

For the growing season the prediction is for a gradual warm up from March through May with a wetter than normal spring. Summer is looking like the warm up continues with a drier than normal precipitation forecast.

Visit http://www.cpc.noaa.gov for climate prediction data.
SEASON CALENDAR

**March**

3/6  Conservation in Your Backyard @ Harrison County Fairgrounds Commercial Building, Cadiz, 6pm
3/7  Horticulture Lunch & Learn Series @ 500 Market Street, Steubenville, 12pm
3/12 Beef Management School @ Jefferson JVS, Bloomingdale, 6pm
3/13 Farm Tax Workshop @ Jefferson JVS, Bloomingdale, 4pm
3/21 Horticulture Lunch & Learn Series @ 500 Market Street, Steubenville, 12pm
3/22 Eastern Ohio Grazing Council Winter Meeting @ Carrollton Friendship Center, Carrollton, 6pm
3/24 Spring Forest Walk & Fungal Foray @ Fernwood State Forest, 10am
3/26 Beef Management School @ Bantam Ridge School, Wintersville, 6pm
3/29 Precision Agriculture & Sprayer Tech Workshop @ Harrison County Fairgrounds Commercial Building, Cadiz 10am

**April**

4/3  Conservation in Your Backyard @ Harrison County Fairgrounds Commercial Building, Cadiz, 6pm
4/4  Horticulture Lunch & Learn Series @ 500 Market Street, Steubenville, 12pm
4/6  Women in Agriculture Conference @ RG Drage, Massillon, 9am
4/7  Small Farms Conference @ RG Drage, Massillon, 9am
4/16 Equine Management Workshop @ Timi’s Cafe, Cadiz, 6pm
4/18 Horticulture Lunch & Learn Series @ 500 Market Street, Steubenville, 12pm
4/19 Fertilizer Certification @ Bantam Ridge School, Wintersville, 6pm
4/23 Equine Management Workshop @ Black Sheep Vineyard, Inc., Adena, 6pm
4/26 Eastern Ohio Grazing Council Pasture Walk @ TBA, 6pm

EXTENSION’S MOST WANTED...

WATERHEMP. Waterhemp is one weed to keep an eye out for this spring. Much like Palmer amaranth, populations of waterhemp are resistant to site 2 (ALS) herbicides like glyphosate, as well as site 14 (PPO) herbicides.

To tell waterhemp plants from other pigweeds, look for egg-shaped cotyledons, hairless stems, waxy or glossy appearance on seedling leaves, and long first true leaves that are lance-shaped. Mature plants are easier to identify than seedlings.

For more information on waterhemp, visit [http://go.osu.edu/waterhempbiomgmt](http://go.osu.edu/waterhempbiomgmt). Bring in suspected plants for identification!

PREPARING THE VEGETABLE GARDEN FOR SPRING

Now that February has come and gone, gardening activity will be picking up here in the next few weeks. So what should be done at this time of year to get the garden ready for the growing season?

March is a good time to develop a list of supplies needed for the garden, whether it’s tools, fertilizer, plants, mulch, etc. If you ordered seeds in February, you can start these indoors. March is also a great time to get your soil tested—results will generally come back within 2 weeks with information on what your fertilizer needs are. Testing during the early spring is recommended over testing during the growing season since nutrients begin to move more when plants are actively using them, making it difficult to get a good idea of what exactly your soil needs during this time.

April means it is planting time—check how much moisture the soil holds. If it crumbles in your hand, you can start planting your cool season crops such as lettuce, spinach, carrots, radishes, and onions. Apply fertilized based on your soil test recommendations.

By the time May rolls around, some of your radishes, spinach, and lettuce will be ready for harvest. Warm season seeds can be planted once the danger of frost has passed. Garlicscapes can be harvested in late spring from garlic planted in the fall. Bulbs increase in size when the scapes are removed, not to mention the scapes themselves are delicious if you are a garlic lover!

For more information on growing vegetables in the spring, check out our Home Garden Fact Sheets available on ohioline.osu.edu.
SPRING IS THE TIME TO GET YOUR SOIL FERTILITY TESTED

Soil fertility tests provide information about phosphorous, potassium, and much more! Pick up soil test kits from the OSU Extension Office in Jefferson County for only $10 per test.

For help with soil sampling or soil test reports, contact the ANR Extension Educator in your county.

Ohio State University Extension Jefferson County greatly appreciates the support of the Jefferson County Commissioners: Dr. Thomas Graham, Dave Maple, Jr., and Thomas Gentile.

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Roger Rennekamp, Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration, Associate Dean, College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences, Director, Ohio State University Extension, and Gist Chair in Extension Education and Leadership.

Get your newsletter in color and help us save a tree! Sign up for electronic newsletters by sending an email to lyon.194@osu.edu.