

University of Minnesota Extension, Stearns County News
July 29, 2020

NEWS RELEASES

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STEARNS COUNTY
3333 W. DIVISION ST., SUITE 10
ST. CLOUD, MN 56301
320-255-6169 or 1-800-450-6171
E-mail: mnext-stearns@umn.edu

FOR RELEASE: August 3, 2020

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CALENDAR

***NOTE:** With the dynamic situation surrounding the current COVID-19 outbreak these events are subject to change.*



Source: Katie Drewitz, Extension Educator - Horticulture,
Small Farms and Local Foods
University of Minnesota Extension
Stearns, Benton & Morrison Counties

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Contact: Katie Drewitz
(320) 255-6169 ex. 1



NOTE TO EDITOR: Please credit author in published articles. Thank you.

Japanese Beetles in Central Minnesota

By Katie Drewitz, University of Minnesota Extension

ST. CLOUD, Minn. (7/29/2020) — Japanese beetles (*Popillia japonica*) have been in Minnesota since 1968, but in central Minnesota we do not tend to see them very often. Unfortunately, that trend seems to be changing. I have had several reports just this week from gardeners reporting large numbers of the invasive insect.

The Japanese beetle is incredibly distinct with its metallic green head and thorax and copper brown wing covers. The beetle also has five white patches of hair along the abdomen. Unlike some invasive species the Japanese Beetle is easy to spot due the size (1/3 – 1/2 inch).



While some invasive insects only attack certain species, or types, of plants the Japanese Beetle adult feeds on over 300 different plant species. These range from turf, fruits and vegetables, trees and shrubs, flowers, to field crops. Damage can be recognized on leaves by the skeletonized, lace like appearance. The adults feed on the leaf tissue leaving behind the major veins. Petals of flowers are also eaten and will turn brown. On most mature and healthy plants the damage is mostly cosmetic. Large trees and shrubs will survive significant feeding. Healthy flowering plants will have their blossoms ruined, but the plant is likely to survive. Young or unhealthy trees, and most fruits, vegetables and herbs that are significantly eaten may not survive. Turf damage is mostly done by the larvae that feed on the root systems of grass.



While most damage is cosmetic many people wish to remove the beetle from their plants and help maintain low populations. If you are dealing with a small population or yard sized area you should consider hand removing the beetles and dropping them in a bucket of soapy water. Damaged leaves from adult feeding attracts more beetles to the area so daily management will help in reducing your numbers. Do not use Japanese Beetle traps. These are often sold at garden centers and will end up attracting more beetles to your area. While the traps do capture a large number of beetles it will attract a greater number than it traps. In the end traps cause more harm than good.

If you are dealing with a large area or the number of adult beetles is overwhelming, you can consider chemical controls. Depending on the plants that they are feasting on, the size of those plants and your desire for reapplication will determine which products you use. You can find more specifics at <https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-insects/japanese-beetles>. Always read and follow the label instructions.

Special thanks for Jeff Hahn, Extension entomologist and Julie Weisenhorn, Extension educator for some of the details found in this article. For residents in Stearns, Benton and Morrison Counties who have questions about this or any other horticulturally related topic you can reach me at 320-255-6169 ext. 1 or wins0115@umn.edu. Residents in all other counties please reach out to your local Extension Educator.

Photo Credit: UMN Extension

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Source: Eliza Carlson, Extension Educator
Intern- Horticulture and agriculture
University of Minnesota Extension
Stearns County

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Contact: Eliza Carlson
(320) 255-6169 ex. 1



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How to Clean Your Horses' Water Tanks

By Eliza Carlson, University of Minnesota Extension

ST. CLOUD, Minn. (7/29/20) —With such a dry spring and summer, water is key. It is important to keep your water tanks clean. Frequent water tank cleaning is important, especially in warmer months and with plastic tanks. Horses and livestock in general should always have access to clean and fresh water. Water is essential but is an overlooked nutrient for all livestock.

There are some helpful tips to keep your water tanks clean. First step is to empty the tank, then scrub it clean, next rinse the tank with a 10 percent bleach solution which is 1-part bleach, 9 parts water. Then rinse it twice more with clean water and finally refill the tank and horses or animals can drink from it right away. By keeping your horse's water and tank clean, it encourages drinking and keeps your horses healthy. Another important aspect to consider is to add bleach to your water tank. You can add small amounts of bleach to existing water in a tank at a level that is safe for you horse to drink. By doing that you must effectively disinfect water in tanks by using unscented household bleach in recommended quantities. After adding bleach, wait at least one hour before letting your horses drink from it, this will allow the chlorine time to dissipate. Also, if the water is less than 50 degrees F, increase the waiting period to two hours. There are instances if you want to treat water from a lake, a stream or shallow well, double the amount of bleach you use and wait two hours before letting your horse drink. These water sources can contain chlorine resistant parasites from animals' droppings. You must always use the recommended bleach levels and wait the recommended amount of time to prevent over application, which can lead to toxicity. When using bleach or other chemicals make sure the label is always read and followed.

It is very important to clean your water tanks often. Even in the winter you should be cleaning your water tank, to avoid algae growth and unclean conditions. Algae growth may cause your horse to drink less and can be toxic in some cases. There are also many factors that contribute to a dirty stock tank and poor water quality. Dirt, manure, feed droppings and algae can all contaminate tank water. Algae in the small amounts, can turn the water green and produce a bad odor, which may reduce how much water your horse drinks and in large amounts it makes your horse sick.

The most common factor making water unsatisfactory for livestock is high salinity. High salinity is an excessive concentration of dissolved salts. Other factors that can affect water quality are nitrates, sulfates, alkalinity, and toxic elements. The best way to find out the quality of your water is to have it tested. A quality analysis can test for total coliform bacteria, pH, total dissolved solids, salinity, hardness, nitrates, sulfates, and toxins. Besides testing, there are other ways to make sure the water is

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clean and healthy. If horses or animals that have individual water buckets, they need to have their pails cleaned and disinfected regularly. This is something that people forget more often, and it is very important to clean your water buckets as well.

For more information about cleaning your horse's water tanks visit www.exentison.umn.edu If you have questions about this or livestock related topics, please reach out to your local Extension Educator. Residents in Stearns, Benton, and Morrison Counties can call 320-255-6169 extension 1.

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Source: Nathan Drewitz, Extension Educator-Crops
University of Minnesota Extension
Stearns, Benton & Morrison Counties

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Contact: Nathan Drewitz
(320) 968-5077; (608) 515-4414 (cell)
ndrewitz@umn.edu



NOTE TO EDITOR: Please credit author in published articles. Thank you.

Yearly Palmer Amaranth Update

By Nathan Drewitz, University of Minnesota Extension
FOLEY, Minn. (7/29/2020) —

It seems that it is time for the yearly update on Palmer amaranth. This is due to Palmer amaranth being located in Winona County. This is both the first time Palmer amaranth has been found in Winona County, but also the first population found for 2020. This is now the ninth county, in Minnesota, since 2016 with a known population of Palmer. Because of this weed's capability to compete with different crops, early detection and eradication is necessary to prevent added production costs and preventing rapid spread.

Right now is the time to scout for potential Palmer populations. When looking to identify Palmer amaranth there are a series of factors to look for, however at this time of the year we are looking for these specific characteristics:

- Rapid growth with plants 6 feet or taller
- Smooth with no hairs on stems or leaves
- Leaf petioles often longer than the leaf
- Seed and pollen heads reaching 1 to 3 feet in length
- Spiny bracts on the female seed head

When it comes to rapid growth and height of Palmer amaranth, often times this weed will be taller than waterhemp and noticeably taller than other weeds in a field. Its biology is similar to waterhemp and it is likely Palmer amaranth escapes will be in the same area as waterhemp escapes if present. Scout areas that were missed with weed control attempts and also pay attention to field borders. Given the heavy dairy influence in the area, pay attention to fields where manure has been applied if feed ingredient sources are from southern states.

If you suspect that you have Palmer amaranth please report it to the UMN Extension or the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) immediately. In that report please include pictures of the whole plant, a close-up of the leaf and where it attaches to the stem, the flower head, and the leaf with the petiole folded over. Also include a phone number where you can easily be reached. It is important that you leave the plants alive in the field until either UMN Extension or the MDA can get to the location to verify the identification. Remember that you are not in trouble for having Palmer amaranth in your field. Reporting also means aid from UMN Extension and the MDA in managing populations.

For reporting populations you can use the Arrest the Pest app, email, or phone number to upload and submit a report. You can also contact UMN Extension IPM Specialist Bruce Potter at bpotter@umn.edu, myself at (608) 515-4414 or email ndrewitz@umn.edu, or contact any of the UMN Extension Crop Production contacts at extension.umn.edu.

To receive future events, educational programming, and agronomic updates by email, signup at z.umn.edu/tricountysignup. In addition, if you would like to provide input for future local extension programming in Stearns, Benton, and Morrison counties please fill out the survey at z.umn.edu/tricountycrops

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