

University of Minnesota Extension, Stearns County News
August 26, 2020

NEWS RELEASES

University of Minnesota Extension is a 100-year-old partnership between the university and federal, state and county governments to provide scientific knowledge and expertise to the public. Through Extension, the University of Minnesota "extends" its resources to address critical public issues in priority areas, including food and agriculture, communities, environment, youth and families. For more information, visit www.extension.umn.edu.



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FOR RELEASE: August 31, 2020

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[Top Dieback and Alfalfa Cutting](#)

[Coronavirus Food Assistance Program \(CFAP\) Webinar](#)

CALENDAR

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



Source: Katie Drewitz, Extension Educator - Horticulture,
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University of Minnesota Extension
Stearns, Benton & Morrison Counties

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

Fall Webworms

By Katie Drewitz, University of Minnesota Extension

ST. CLOUD, Minn. (8/26/2020) — Over the past couple of weeks phone calls and emails have been coming in with concerns about webbed nests in trees. These are fall webworms (*Hyphantria cunea*) nests and are not overly harmful to trees.

The fall webworm is native to Minnesota and hosted by a wide variety of hardwood trees and shrubs. The webbing that is spotted in trees is a result of the caterpillar feeding on the leaves. As the caterpillar matures, the webbed nests grow. The number of nests in a tree will vary, based on the number of caterpillars in that tree. The adult moth does not necessarily return to the same tree or even tree type each year. Therefore, you may be seeing webbing this year even though you have never seen it in the past.



Fall webworm webbing. Photo: Jeff Hahn

The caterpillars are eating the leaves of the tree within their nest. The amount of leaf material they eat changes as it grows. While this may seem concerning the amount of damage is rarely cause for concern, especially on mature trees. If a very young tree is heavily infested the caterpillars could cause complete defoliation which could be very stressful on the tree. If that is the situation that you are facing, or you are otherwise concerned than removal of the nest may be advisable.

In most cases management is not necessary. While the webbing can be unsightly the damage is rarely enough to warrant pesticide use. If you really dislike the look of the nest you can remove it. Otherwise, consider it an early and natural Halloween decoration. Remember that the caterpillars will not return to the nest in the spring and adults may or may not return to lay eggs in the same tree or shrub next year.

If you have questions about this or any other horticulturally related topic, please reach out to your local Extension Educator. Residents in Stearns, Benton and Morrison Counties can email wins0115@umn.edu or call 320-255-6169 ext. 1.

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Source: Nathan Drewitz, Extension Educator-Crops
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NOTE TO EDITOR: Please credit author in published articles. Thank you.

Top Dieback and Alfalfa Cutting

By Nathan Drewitz, University of Minnesota Extension

FOLEY, Minn. (8/26/2020) — With this growing season coming to a close, it is time to be tying up those loose ends for this year and thinking about next year. While harvest has yet to happen, it is never too early to make sure those weed, disease, and insect issues are recorded and available for reference for the next few years. By taking stock of what has happened in fields and recording that information now, prior to harvest, you won't have to try and remember that information at the end of October. It is especially important that pest issues are properly identified and recorded. While this year I have heard reports and seen fields containing the usual suspects in soybeans such as SDS, White mold, and Soybean aphids, I have also received reports of top dieback issues in soybeans.

Top dieback resembles potassium deficiency and can be caused by soybean cyst nematodes (SCN), soybean aphids, clover root mealybugs, and Diapothae/Phomopsis fungi. To rule out Potassium deficiency and SCN soil samples will need to be collected and submitted. If Potassium deficiency is the primary issue, K fertilizer should be applied. If SCN is the issue, consider rotating to a non-host crop, utilize different cultivars with different sources of SCN resistance, and manage weeds, moisture and fertility to reduce stress on plants. With the widespread reports of soybean aphids this year, it would not be surprising if that were the issue. Keep in mind that soybean aphid populations that were present during R5 still should be scouted into R6 to ensure that populations don't boom. Soybean aphids can still take yield at R6 stage soybeans in very heavily infested fields. In these instances, soybean fields may still respond to a late insecticide application.

As a recent meeting has reminded me, the last date for alfalfa cutting is coming up soon. Typically, we think of that early no-cut window starting at some point during the first full week of September with it being riskier the further into September you wait to cut. The goal is to cut early enough that the field accumulates 500 growing degree days (GDD) or cut so late there is less than 200 GDDs left prior to a killing frost of 25 degrees. To calculate GDDs for alfalfa use a base temp of 41 degrees. If cutting later to fit in the 200 GDD window, remember that around 4 inches of growth helps with overwintering. Also, consideration should be given to the winter-hardiness of the alfalfa variety, soil pH, and potassium levels when looking at taking a later cutting. Waiting until the first hard frost to cut the alfalfa is not necessary. Rather you are waiting for it to get cold enough where regrowth is going to be minimal or not occur at all. Typically, that date for late harvest is at some point in mid-October.

For GDD calculations or other information please feel free to contact me at (608) 515-4414 or through email at ndrewitz@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

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survey at z.umn.edu/tricountycrops.

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Source: Brenda Postels, Extension Educator-Agriculture
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Stearns, Benton, & Morrison Counties

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Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) Webinar

By Brenda Postels, University of Minnesota Extension
FOLEY, Minn. (8/26/2020) —

Live webinar with Q & A: August 31, 12:00 pm to 1:15 pm
Register for webinar: <https://forms.gle/7na2y9KnG5AZ952n6>

The deadline to apply for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) is September 11, 2020. You may be eligible for CFAP if you raise specialty crops, non-specialty crops, dairy, wool, or livestock and had your sales or processing disrupted, or saw a greater than 5% price drop, between January 15 and April 15, 2020.

Presenters from University of Minnesota Extension Ag Business Management, Farmers' Legal Action Group, and Sustainable Farming Association will walk you through what eligibility looks like, the forms and steps to apply for CFAP through the Farm Service Agency, and real-world experience of applying from a farmer who has done it.

This webinar is sponsored by Farmers' Legal Action Group, Minnesota Farmers' Market Association, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Farming Association, University of Minnesota Extension, and Minnesota NCR-SARE.

The webinar is free and will be conducted via Zoom. Register here to receive the Zoom link:
<https://forms.gle/7na2y9KnG5AZ952n6>

For more detailed information on CFAP eligibility visit: <https://www.farmers.gov/cfap>

Please contact Brenda Postels, Extension Educator Interim for Stearns, Benton and Morrison counties with any questions at 320-203-6063 or post0060@umn.edu

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