**Weather Report**

Temperatures are on the rise!

In the eastern part of the state conditions will be partly cloudy to mostly sunny in the coming week. High temperatures will range in the mid-70's, with lows in the mid-40's and climbing. On the Plateau, temperatures will be slightly cooler with highs in the low 70's and lows in the low 40's, but rising. From Nashville to Jackson, the daytime highs will be near 80, with lows in the 50's.

**What's new?**

**Washington State University Offers Online Organic Ag Certificate**

Washington State University, the first institution in the country to offer an academic major in organic agriculture, is now offering the nation’s first online certificate in organic agriculture.

“The U.S. organic food industry has grown at a rate of 20-30% each year for more than a decade and is really challenged to find employees who understand the unique approaches used in organic agriculture,” said Kim Kidwell, associate dean for academic programs in the College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences. “Those who complete the certificate will hold the credential they need to succeed in one of the fastest-growing industries in the country.”

Kidwell noted that many of those working in agriculture in Washington and throughout the U.S. already hold a bachelor’s degree, but may wish to expand their skill set to include organic agriculture. “This certificate fills that need,” she said.

The program’s first core course, Soils 101, “Organic Gardening and Farming,” will be available summer semester, which begins May 5. The foundation course was developed by WSU Regents Professor John Reganold, an international leader in organic ag.

Admission to WSU is required to enroll in courses and to earn the certificate, and participants may apply as non-degree seeking students. More information is available at WSU’s Center for Distance and Professional Education Web site: [http://online.wsu.edu/future_students/oc_organic_ag.aspx](http://online.wsu.edu/future_students/oc_organic_ag.aspx) or by calling 800.222.4978.

Other courses in the program focus on topics ranging from economics and resolving environmental conflicts to ecological soil management and crop growth and development. The program also includes an “on ground” practicum or professional internship in organic agriculture.

CDPE Director Janet Kendall said offering the organic agriculture courses online makes them available to a global audience. “Anyone from around the state or around the world with an interest in organic agriculture can participate. As long as they have Internet access, they can take courses,” she said.

On Sunday, May 18, Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) will be hosting a farm tour at the farm of Rick and Lori Watson in Jonesville, VA. The main topic will be weed control for organic growers. Annette Wszelaki of UT Extension will be there to share her research experience with organic weed control. Several members of the Appalachian Harvest Organic Farmers network will be there also to share their personal experience battling weeds on their own farms.

Organic weed control methods range from simple, common sense solutions to entertainingly creative approaches. Come hear them all and feel free to use whatever might help you. The Farm Tour will be Sunday, May 18 at 2:00 PM at the Watson Farm – Go west on Rt. 58 from Jonesville about 6 miles. Turn Right on Rt. 657 (just past Penley Furniture). Look for the 3rd house on Right (white with red doors). Call ASD at 276.623.1121 for more information.

**Are You Ready for Weeds?**

May is a busy month—planning and tilling and planting and seeding—things really get growing in May. And though you may feel too busy to add anything to your plate, you really should be thinking about weeds, as well. Like it or not, they’re growing in May and if you wait too long, you’ll have a real mess on your hands.

This article was taken from a WSU Press Release by Kathy Barnard and Debbie O’Donnell. To learn more about the online organic ag certificate, visit the weblink above.
Crop Report

We’ve reached the last frost free date across the state and vegetable planting continues in full force. Farmers’ Markets are full of greens—even pea greens, asparagus, turnips, radishes, and onions. New potatoes are soon on their way.

The high winds and hail over the weekend in East Tennessee took its toll on several crops, shredding leaves and plastic mulch.

Yesterday at the Plateau Research and Education Center, we planted the tomato variety trial. We are repeating most of the varieties from last year and have included unique varieties for observation. The unique varieties include heirloom, plum, campari, grape and yellow types.

The bicolor sweet corn variety trial has been planted at the Highland Rim Research and Education Center and the corn is up and out of the ground. Corn planting at the Plateau will soon begin so that we will have sweet corn for a taste test at the Steak and Potatoes Field Day in August.

With the cool, damp weather, there have been several reports of damping off in several crops. Also, chilling injury in early planted tomatoes.

In last week’s Fruit Pest News (http://eppserver.ag.utk.edu/Extension/fpn/fpn.htm), Dr. Steve Bost warns to watch for bacterial spot on tomato and pepper transplants from garden centers. Once in a home garden, this disease can easily spread to a commercial field through wind-blown rain or an animal brushing up against a plant. To learn the symptoms of bacterial spot on pepper and tomato, read Dr. Bost’s full article in the Fruit Pest News (see link above).

Weather Report

The USDA Tennessee Crop Weather Report from last week noted that scattered showers across the state kept planters idle or moving slowly as farmers searched for dry fields.

There were 4 days considered suitable for fieldwork last week.

Temperatures ranged near to slightly above normal across Tennessee last week. Rainfall averaged above normal across western and eastern portions of the state, while the Plateau and middle areas averaged below.

This week started out wet, as well, then gave us a one-day break with sunny, warm weather on Tuesday. It looks like we’re back to rain today and then starting to dry up for the weekend.

In Knoxville and the Plateau, high’s will hover around 70 degrees, with low’s in the high 40’s to mid-50’s. In Nashville, daytime temperatures will range from the high 60’s to high 70’s in the next five days, with lows in the 50’s.

Jackson will hit nearly 80 degrees by Sunday and nighttime temperatures will be in the 60’s by Monday.

Enjoy the weekend! I know I’ll get a few more things planted.

What’s on your mind?

How could SPROUTS serve you better?
What are your greatest production concerns?
Irrigation?
Fertility?
Organics?
Season extension?
Weed control?
Disease control?
Insect control?
Postharvest handling?
Food Safety?
If you have suggestions, comments, or topics for articles that you would like to see covered in SPROUTS, please send them to: annettewi@utk.edu.
**Question of the Week**

Q: Had someone come by today with a big time nutsedge problem in a home vegetable garden. Any suggestions for control? Tough - I know!

A: For the answer to this week’s Question of the Week, we turn to Dr. Greg Armel, the UT Horticultural Weed Extension Specialist:

Definitely not an easy answer to this one, but I will try to walk you through my logic.

Cultivation sometimes seems logical in this situation, but it often makes matters worse as it spreads tubers in areas where they did not inhabit before. The only cultural practice that may help is to limit water to the area as nutsedge really likes growing in moist soils.

As for chemical control, many sites will tell you to spot spray Roundup (glyphosate) on the nutsedge around the vegetables. I personally can think of no worse idea for a couple of reasons:

1) glyphosate is not especially good on nutsedge that is young & actively growing;

2) also, there is a tremendous potential for getting spray mist onto tender young vegetables that would likely lead to their demise.

If you want to recommend glyphosate I would recommend it as an end of the season spray. Spray the nutsedge with the highest recommended dose just as the nutsedge starts to form seed heads, but after the vegetable crops have already been harvested for the last time. This should severely limit the number of viable tubers that will emerge the following season.

As for in-season applications, your options are somewhat limited by the types of crops planted in the garden. Unfortunately, many people plant such a variety of vegetables that there are few herbicides that are safe to use on all of them. For example, if the person has corn, peas, spearmint, and peanuts, it is likely they could use some formulation of Basagran (bentazon - 1 pint/acre) for control of yellow nutsedge. This compound has no residual activity and, therefore, can cause harm to neighboring crops that are not on its label.

If you choose to go the Sandea or Basagran route, I would still consider recommending a glyphosate spray over top of any nutsedge survivors once the harvest of crops has ended.

If, however, they have corn, asparagus, cucurbits (cucumbers, pumpkins, squash, watermelons, muskmelons, etc.), tomato, snapbeans, and peppers, then Sandea (halosulfuron - ~1/2 oz/acre) may be a better answer to their issue. This product is one of the best around nutsedge materials, but it does have some soil residual activity and, therefore, can cause harm to neighboring crops that are not on its label.

Therefore, there are several things to consider before making a nutsedge control choice. Clearly, Basagran makes the most sense as a spot spray for nutsedge around areas that do not contain a crop as it has no soil residual activity, while Sandea is the better nutsedge material in areas where there are crops that are tolerant to this herbicide. However, whatever the in-season application chosen or excluded make sure to have them spray with glyphosate at the end of the season as it will help limit future issues.

Hope this helps.

Dr. Greg Armel is an assistant professor of horticultural weed management in the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Tennessee. Corresponding author’s email: garmel@utk.edu.

What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered. -Ralph Waldo Emerson
Upcoming Events

8th Annual NCSU Worm Farming Conference, May 19-20, 2008, Raleigh, NC
Learn about worm farming and vermicomposting from industry experts. This conference is great for beginners or seasoned worm farm operators. For more information: www.bae.ncsu.edu/workshops/worms08/.

Developing & Implementing HACCP for the Fresh-cut Industry, May 20-22, 2008, Extension Food Science Teaching Facility, University of Georgia Campus, Athens, GA
This program has been specifically designed for the fresh-cut industry. The goal of this program is to provide you with the skills and knowledge to design, implement, document and maintain HACCP in your fresh-cut business. For more information and to pre-register, visit: http://www2.unitedfresh.org/forms/MeetingCalendar/.

Domestic Kitchen Tennessee Food Safety Certification Course, 8:30 AM-3:30 PM CST, May 29, 2008, Central Region Extension Office, 5201 Marchant Dr., Nashville, TN
This course meets the requirements for the Rules of the Tennessee Dept. of Agriculture Regulatory Services Division, Regulations for Establishments Utilizing Domestic Kitchen Facilities for Bakery and Other Non-Potentially Hazardous Foods Intended for Sale. The fee for the course is $100 and includes instruction materials, lunch and certificates earned. Pre-registration mandatory. For further information, please contact Nancy Austin at 865.974.7717 or naustin@utk.edu or register on-line at www.wcmorris.com.

United Fresh Produce Associations’ Produce Inspection Training Program, June 2-6, 2008, Fredericksburg, VA.
This program will provide hands-on instruction from USDA experts to anyone involved in the produce supply chain - grower to retailer. Become more knowledgeable about quality control standards, inspection grading, USDA produce procedures and requirements, and more! For details, contact Beth Berman at 202.303.3405 or visit www.unitedfresh.org.

TSU Small farm Expo/Small Farmer Recognition Program, August 8, 2008, Ashland City, TN
More details to follow...

2008 University of Tennessee Research and Education Center Field Days:
(For more information on any of these events, visit http://taes.tennessee.edu/dynamic/events.asp.)

Beef and Forage Field Day, June 12, 2008, East TN Research and Education Center, Knoxville, TN
Fruits of the Backyard Field Day, June 17, 2008, Middle TN Research and Education Center, Spring Hill, TN
Tobacco, Beef and More Field Day, June 26, 2008, Highland Rim Research and Education Center, Springfield, TN
Blooms Days, June 28-29, 2008, University of Tennessee Gardens, Knoxville, TN
Summer Celebration, July 10, 2008, West TN Research and Education Center, Jackson, TN
Tobacco and Forage Production Field Day, July 17, 2008, Research and Education Center at Greeneville, Greeneville, TN
25th Milan No-Till Field Day, July 24, 2008, Research and Education Center at Milan, Milan, TN
Steak and Potatoes Field Day, August 5, 2008, Plateau Research and Education Center, Crossville, TN

SPROUTS: Supporting Producers through Research and Outreach at UT
Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

The University of Tennessee Department of Plant Sciences
252 Ellington Plant Sciences
2431 Joe Johnson Dr.
Knoxville, TN 37996-4561
Phone: 865.974.7208
Fax: 865.974.1947
E-mail: annettew@utk.edu

SPROUTS now archived on the web at: http://plantsciences.utk.edu/wszelaki_pubs.htm

If you would like to subscribe or unsubscribe to SPROUTS: Tennessee Vegetable News, please email: annettew@utk.edu.