

Crazy Ants Abound in County

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



PHOTO BY Mike Quinn

Local residents increasingly have to deal with tawny crazy ants. This ant is super competitive and develops such huge populations that they can displace fire ants. An educational program on this insect pest will be presented by Drs. Robert Puckett and Paul Nester on Thursday (July 30) at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park.

The Dog Days of August will be arriving very soon. Daytime temperatures have already danced around the century mark during the last week of July so there is no need to remind you that August is the peak of the heat season in Galveston County. Working outside this month tends to be more tolerable during early morning or late evening

hours. Given our present dry weather conditions, plants in the landscape and garden will require attention if they are to remain vigorous and provide us with many desirable benefits including color, shade, beauty, etc.

The gardeners' calendar of activities for August includes the following:
Seminar of Tawny Crazy

Ants: When an ant has "crazy" as part of its common name, you would likely suspect that such an insect can pose problems. The tawny crazy ant is an invasive species that came into Texas a little over 13 years ago in the Houston area and has been a problem in some residential areas there since that time. It has spread into Galveston County and many homeowners (and local beekeepers) are dealing with this insect pest.

The tawny crazy ant was formerly called the Raspberry crazy ant after Tom Rasberry, a pest management professional from Pearland who in 2002 first realized he was dealing with a new ant species. The accepted common name for this ant has been changed to tawny crazy ant.

They are called crazy ants because they don't trail like other ants, but erratically move in all kinds of directions. Tawny crazy ants are so competitive and develop such huge populations



July 29, 2015



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News column printed in the Galveston Daily News, The Post, and other Galveston County Newspapers.



that they displace fire ants, and that's saying something.

Tawny crazy ants don't have a single nest where the queen stays, but rather have multiple nests and queen areas essentially forming a super colony made up of a lot of smaller colonies.

To learn more about tawny crazy ants, an educational program will be provided at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday (July 30) at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main St. in La Marque). Pre-register by email (GALV3@wt.net) or phone (281-534-3413, ext. 12).

The program will be presented by Dr. Robert Puckett, Assistant Professor of Entomology and Extension Specialist at College Station, and Dr. Paul Nester, an Extension Entomologist with the Harris County AgriLife Extension Office.

Seminar on Growing Strawberries: Master Gardener Robert Marshall will provide a seminar on how to successfully grow strawberries in the Galveston County area. His seminar will be provided on Saturday, August 1, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main St. in La Marque). Pre-register by email (GALV3@wt.net) or phone (281-534-3413, ext. 12).

Topics covered will include the correct time to plant and choosing the best varieties for this ar-

ea. Also covered will be how to prepare your garden beds, watering and fertilization, as well as disease and pest control.

Inspect Trees Before Storm: The Gulf of Mexico has been rather quiet thus far. However, the peak season for tropical storm and hurricane formation occurs over August and September.

Inspect larger trees for broken, dead, damaged and weakly attached limbs as soon as possible before a tropical storm or hurricane threatens. Strong winds can tear such limbs from trees and turn them into dangerous projectiles. Also, inspect tree trunks for signs of structural damage. Obtain the services of a qualified tree care professional as needed.

Large limbs are capable of causing damage to homes, vehicles and other property as well as causing harm to people in the event of violent weather. It is wise to consider calling a professional for help with big jobs who have the know-how and equipment to avoid injury.

Divide perennials. It is time to divide spring-flowering perennials, such as iris, shasta daisy, ox-eye, gaillardia, cannas, day lilies, violets, liriopse, and ajuga.

COPPER PLANTS: If you planted copper plants for fall color, be sure to pinch out the tips of branches to encourage branching and to develop bushy, compact plants.

The sultry, sweaty days of Au-

gust will soon be at hand. So, carry an extra-large glass of iced tea or water and make sure to wear a hat for protection from the sun.

