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6-9-15

To: Rains County Leader

From: Stephen Gowin
CEA-Agriculture
Rains

Re: News Article

Rain, rain, rain, has it gone away. Who knows? Thank goodness this has been a wet spring. It has taken us out of our long time drought and the lakes have risen to full capacity. I have heard reports ranging from 6.5 inches to 10.0 inches last month in various parts of the county. I am glad that we have gotten these rains because we have more grass in the pastures and hay meadows than we have had in recent years. However, the rain is causing a variety of problems that we will have to deal within the next few weeks. The main problems include fungi, molds and mildew in lawns and orchards.

One of the biggest problems that we will be facing is in home lawns, gardens, and orchards. Cool, wet, and humid conditions are perfect for a variety of fungi, molds, and mildew. Right now on a variety of shrubs, ornamentals and vegetable plants you can expect to see powdery mildew. Powdery mildew is characterized by a white powdery growth on foliage of plants. Infected pods and foliage become malformed and the fungal spores are spread by the wind. It can be easily controlled by approved fungicides.

We must also be on the lookout for leaf spots, canker, and root rot in most of our plants in the lawn and garden. I have seen a few cases of gray leaf spot, which is a fungus, in St. Augustine Grass. Gray leaf spot cause's irregular brown - to - gray spots on the leaf blade. The leaf spots are often diamond shaped. Gray leaf spot can spread rapidly through your lawn and can severely injure or kill the grass. It can be controlled with turf fungicides.

Another thing that we must watch out for is brown rot in orchards. These fungus attacks fruit in the blossom stage at maturity, and during storage. Brown rot is described as brown rotting fruit that typically stays attached to the tree. The fungus enters through natural openings or wounds and rapidly develops a brown, water-soaked lesion on the fruit. Healthy fruit touching the diseased fruit will quickly decay. Control can be achieved by applying fungicide during pink bud, bloom, petal fall, and at pre-harvest. You will need to increase fungicide applications at pre-harvest during periods of excessive rain.

I want to remind everyone that with fungicide applications or any chemical application you need to read the label on any product that you buy to make sure that it is labeled for intended use.

I have just briefly touched on a couple of the many problems that you could be facing during this wet, humid period. To find out more information on plant diseases and problems you can log onto <http://plantpathology.tamu.edu/Texlab/index.htm> for the Texas Plant Disease Handbook. This is a great tool to look up problems affecting your plants, trees, ornamental, fruit crops, vegetables, and etc. You may also give me a call at 903-473-4580 if you are having any problems.