

# Concho Valley Horticulture Update

June 2018

## Common Turf Pests

Some may think that weeds are a primary cause of lawn stress, but they really come up after the lawn is already stressed and thin. So the key to keeping out weeds and stickers is to encourage thick grass with deep roots and the first steps are correct watering (deep but infrequent – one inch applied one day per week in hot weather) and frequent mowing (mow often enough to not cut more than 1/3 of the height of the grass).

Two of the most frequent lawn problems that homeowners ask about are take-all root rot disease, which is showing up this time of year, and khakiweed which will start showing up later in the season. Take-all root rot is a fungal disease that can affect any type of turf but is seen a lot in St. Augustine lawns. Like the name says, it causes the roots to decay; symptoms usually show up in the spring and early summer. The initial symptom is a yellow color to the grass that eventually turns brown, and the lawn gradually thins out leaving large dead patches.

The best treatment for take-all root rot is the application of sphagnum peat moss at the rate of one to two bales per 1,000 square feet. If the disease is prevalent, the application of a turf fungicide such as azoxystrobin (trade name Heritage) is also helpful. Take-all is an opportunistic pathogen, meaning it most often only affects stressed turfgrass – for example excessive shade, temperature extremes, improper fertilization or improper irrigation. So prevention starts with best management practices and healthy root development.

Khakiweed (*Alternanthera pungens*) is not prevalent yet this early in the season but is in my opinion one of the worst weeds that we deal with in west Texas landscapes; homeowners that have struggled with it in the past should get a head start and make plans for prevention and control now. Khakiweed grows flat on the ground with oval shaped leaves and it produces extremely annoying burs. There has been little research done on control, but broadleaf post-emergent herbicides can help – try a product that has a combination of 2,4-D with mecoprop, carfentrazone, dicamba, or metsulfuron (for example, Fertilome brand Weed Free Zone). Apply early when the plants start to emerge, when they are still small; large mature plants will not be easily controlled.

Khakiweed is a perennial, meaning it comes back from roots so pre-emergent will not totally control it – but pre-emergent is still very helpful if applied in the late winter to prevent more plants from coming up by seed. Khakiweed is also very opportunistic and grows well in bare spots and thinned out turf, so good turf management will help prevent this pest. Don't scalp the lawn or mow too low, as the weed loves to grow out flat on the ground. Raise the mower and cut the grass a little higher so the turf can shade it out if needed.

## June To-Do's

- Continue to dead-head flowers
- Replenish mulch as needed
- Keep beds weeded to eliminate competition for water
- Watch for chinch bug & grub damage in lawns

## Pecan Update



Keep an eye out for walnut caterpillars, for more info click here:

[http://lubbock.tamu.edu/files/2015/05/Walnut\\_caterpillar\\_2015.pdf](http://lubbock.tamu.edu/files/2015/05/Walnut_caterpillar_2015.pdf)



Photo from Pecan IPM Newsletter,

## Control Mosquitos

Gardeners know that the best time to be outside working in the yard or garden in the hot summer time is during the morning and evening when it's cooler. But unfortunately, this is the time that mosquitoes like to come out too. Mosquitoes are known to transmit harmful diseases, so gardeners need to be conscientious about protecting themselves from these insects.

A good mosquito repellent is the best defense. Deet is the most common active ingredient, but now there are other options too.

The EPA has put together a helpful website that has an insect repellent database. Go to [citybugs.tamu.edu](http://citybugs.tamu.edu), and search "Help selecting mosquito repellents" to get the link.

You can get a list of all available products, or enter in how long you need it to work, or if you're looking for a specific active ingredient. It will give you a list of all the currently registered products.

It's also important to not have any stagnant, standing water in the yard. Ditches or other low spots are breeding grounds for mosquitoes. If possible, try to improve drainage so they dry out faster. If you have a



rain barrel to catch and store rainwater for landscape use, it needs to have a screen or filter over it to keep the mosquitoes out.

You can also use a product called a mosquito dunk, which is a biological pesticide. It contains a bacteria called Bt that is only toxic to mosquitoes. You can put it in water features and rain barrels and it won't hurt plants, pets, or other insects.

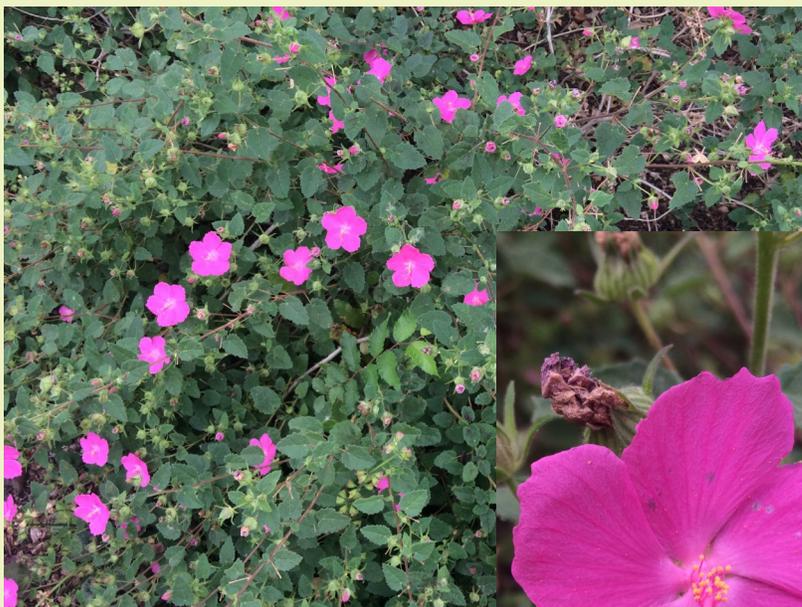
The Aedes species of mosquito, that is the carrier for the Zika virus, is known to prefer small amounts of standing water – such as water in an old tire or even an unused pet water dish. So be careful to eliminate any potential mosquito breeding spots, even small ones.

## Plant Spotlight

### Rock Rose

*Pavonia lasiopetala*

This deciduous to semi-evergreen shrub is very hardy and easy to grow. The flowers appear like small hibiscus blooms. Size varies from 2 to 4 feet tall and wide depending on local growing conditions.



## Visit Local Gardens

We are fortunate in the San Angelo area to have some beautiful city parks and gardens. We may be in west Texas, but the Concho Valley is an oasis in the desert. If you're looking for something to do on a beautiful summer day, you might enjoy taking a walk in a park or taking a picnic to one of the gardens.

For a complete list of city parks, visit <http://www.cosatx.us/departments-services/parks/parks-list>

One must-see is the Civic League Park, which is best known for the international water lily collection. The water lily ponds are beautiful water gardens that contain even prettier water lily flowers. They come in all different shapes, sizes and colors and are a lot of fun to photograph. Also in the civic league park is a rose garden. It is located at the corner of West Beauregard and Park street. Save the date for September 15th, when the annual Lily Fest will be held.

Another nice spot is the Sunken garden, located at the corner of S. Abe and Ave D. In the summertime it's a sea of color, as all the cannas bloom. The grounds surrounding it have recently been reseeded, so as soon as the grass is established it will be a great place for a picnic.

There are many more parks in San Angelo, so check them out! Spending time outdoors is a great way to get fresh air, vitamin D, and see landscaping features that can give ideas and inspiration for your own yard.

*Beautiful  
crinums  
blooming  
at the  
Sunken Garden,  
5-23-2018*



## Summer Landscaping

Summer is not as big of a time for gardening and landscaping as the spring and fall, but there are plenty of things to do to keep the yard looking nice and the garden productive; just be careful and don't get overheated when working outside. Now is a good time to shear salvias to keep them compact and flowering; also continue to dead head annual flowers to help them bloom their best. Heat-tolerant annuals and perennials like moss rose, pentas, lantana and Esperanza can be planted to add a pop of color to the landscape.

Be sure to replenish mulch in beds to a depth of three inches to keep weeds out and to keep the soil moist longer. Water plants deeply and thoroughly to promote deep roots so the plant can handle the hot, dry weather. Water conservation is critical this time of year, so use every method possible to be efficient with water use. If using an automatic sprinkler system, do an irrigation audit to make sure the spray heads are watering correctly. A good resource for knowing when and how long to water the yard is the website [watermyyard.org](http://watermyyard.org).

Keep an eye out for insect pests such as spider mites, pest caterpillars (but be careful not to kill butterfly caterpillars), stink bugs and leaf footed bugs. Learn to identify before attempting to control, since effective control measures are very dependent on proper identification. Also, there are many beneficial insects in the yard and garden working hard to pollinate and control pests, and haphazard insecticide sprays can damage their populations. Some common beneficial insects include bees, lady bugs, green lacewings and mantids. For help identifying potential garden pests, contact the Extension Office.

## Iron Deficiency

If you've done much gardening or landscaping in the Concho Valley, you've probably come across plant symptoms of yellow leaves with green veins – a kind of striped look. This is usually due to something called Iron chlorosis, which is a very common issue for us because we have alkaline soil – and the high pH limits the amount of iron that plants can get from the soil.

Besides the discolored leaves, if the issue persists it causes leaves to be small, and even turn brown and eventually branches die back.

To solve iron deficiency problems, you can apply iron fertilizer to plants, and there are many different iron fertilizer products to choose from, in all different price ranges.

The more expensive iron products will act faster and last longer, while the inexpensive ones won't have lasting effects. Chelated iron will last the longest, but is the most expensive type of iron. Chelated iron is just iron that has been chemically treated so that it will stick around longer and won't get tied up in the soil. Plants will have access to it longer.

To decide which iron product to use, check your favorite nursery or horticulture supply store. Find something that contains 15 to 20 percent iron. Apply it to the soil around affected plants, and water it in.

It also helps to increase organic matter in the soil by adding compost, and aerating soil if it's heavy and compacted.



## Plants for Shade

Shade trees are a great thing to have in the yard, especially in the summer when it gets so hot! But while we enjoy the shade, it can be hard to find flowering plants that like it as much as we do. When we seek out plants that are tough and drought tolerant and well adapted to this area, they usually do best with part sun or full sun.

Some beautiful annuals that have colorful flowers and do well in the area are begonias and impatiens. Caladiums and coleus are two more colorful shade plants, they don't have flowers - but their leaves provide lots of beautiful color.

Begonias can have a double impact in the landscape, because the foliage can range in color from red to bronze to green. They have flower colors ranging from white, to pinks, to reds.

Impatiens come in many flower colors, in all different shades of pink, white, purple, blue, and orange.

When planting annuals, bed preparation is important. Incorporate lots of compost to loosen up the soil and add nutrients. Also when gardening with annuals, it's important to use them in mass plantings. A few annuals scattered throughout the bed will not have much impact, but if planted in a large pocket of color they have a great impact.

Flowering perennials for shade are harder to come by, but some good ones would be plumbago, turk's cap, daylily, and columbine. These would all provide beautiful color under shade and are available in various colors.

There are more options for shade if just greenery is needed, shrubs like yaupon holly and Indian hawthorn can take shade and groundcovers such as liri-ope, mondo grass and Asian jasmine can grow in shade. Always use good plant selection and choose plants that are adapted to all the local conditions, not just the amount of light—there are some shade loving plants available in garden centers that are not as well adapted, and may not be able to handle our hot summers or alkaline soil –such as hosta.

# Upcoming Events

June 2018

Thursday, June 21, 2:00pm-5:00pm

## **Gardening Seminar—Insects in the Landscape and Garden**

**NEW Location:** People/Plant Connection Headquarters -Butterfield Bldg, 224 W. Beaugard  
Second green door, going downstairs—look for the PPC banner

Cost: \$25

Speaker: Linda Rowe, Master Gardener

Hosted by the People/Plant Connection; Learn about insects—the good, the bad and the ugly! Find out which insects are beneficial and good for your garden, and how to treat unwanted pests. **Call to register:**

**325-656-3104**

Friday, June 29, 12:00pm

## **Lunch N Learn Class - Drought Tolerant Landscapes + Rain Barrel Workshop**

**NEW Location:** People/Plant Connection Headquarters

Butterfield Building, 224 W. Beaugard

Second green door, going downstairs—look for the PPC banner

Cost: \$5

Speaker: Allison Watkins

Hosted by the People/Plant Connection; Learn how to create a beautiful landscape that is drought tolerant and can handle water restrictions; also see a demo on how to make a rain barrel. FMI call Susan at 325-656-3104

Saturday, June 30, 9:00am-12:00pm

## **Water Conservation Seminar—Every Drop Counts**

Location: Tom Green 4-H Center, 3168 N. US Highway 67

Cost: Free to attend!

Speaker: Dr. Dotty Woodson, Extension Water Resources Specialist

Hosted by the Concho Valley Master Gardeners; Learn how to save money on the water bill! Topics include rainwater harvesting and irrigation efficiency. See attached flyer for more info. Call to RSVP: 325-659-6522

For more information on any of the topics, or to ask questions please contact:



**Allison Watkins**

Texas A&M Agrilife Extension

Tom Green County

113 W Beaugard

San Angelo, TX 76903

325-659-6528

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