

Ag. News

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Preparing For Fall

Even though we have received rainfall in our area, isn't it interesting how quickly we can feel the effects of drought? 2011 continues to be the year we blame for our troubles, but the facts are we have been experiencing droughts before then. 2011 was the trigger year that set all the damage in motion. It is very important to continue watering through the fall and winter months. The meteorologists predict a wet fall and winter along with temperatures colder than normal. However, if we endure prolonged dry periods in the fall and winter, trees, shrubs, lawns, and perennials will need to be watered periodically to prevent root damage that affects the health of the entire plant. The result of long, dry periods during fall and winter is injury or death to parts of plant root systems. Affected plants may appear perfectly normal and resume growth in the spring using stored food energy. Plants may be weakened and all or parts may die in late spring or summer when temperatures rise. Weakened plants also may be subject to insect and disease problems.

Fall is also the time fruit tree care is forgotten or neglected, but it's a critical time for controlling some of the peach and plum tree diseases to insure a good crop next year. Applying a copper fungicide now can stop or at least reduce three of the major diseases that attack peach and plum trees in Wise County. Those diseases are peach leaf curl, bacterial leaf spot and bacterial canker. Timing of the fall spray is critical for effective control and for avoiding tree damage. Unless applied correctly, copper, a metal, may cause severe defoliation. Spraying should be done when 70 percent of the leaves have fallen.

Another problem many homeowners are experiencing this fall is in St. Augustine grass. Brown patch is a chronic lawn problem for many Wise County residents. This fungal disease is

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characterized by large, circular, brown patches of grass. Since it is a fungus, fungicides can be helpful. Granular fungicides are easier to apply than liquid and they have longer residual. Inspect your lawn, if the blades pull away easily from the stem and have a gray, rotted appearance, which is a sure symptom of the disease.

For more information on preparing for fall please call the Extension office at 940/627-3341.