

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION IN COSHOCTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER



June 26, 2024 (Edition #184)

- Managing Heat Stress of Beef Animals
- Ohio Beef Day to be held in Crawford/Marion Counties
- Pasture Walk Scheduled – Goat Production
- Upcoming Dicamba Cutoff Reminder
- Application of Manure to Double Crop Soybeans to Encourage Emergence
- “Okay, so I have an “employee” on my farm, now what?”
- Planning for Future of Farm Workshop to be held in Cortland, Ohio
- Common Mullein- Mother Nature’s Answer to our Toilet Paper Shortage?
- Two OSU Extension Food Preservation Workshops This Summer
- Sweet song of birds fills the summer air

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Ohio State University Extension is part of
The Ohio State University College of Food,
Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

Hello Coshocton County!

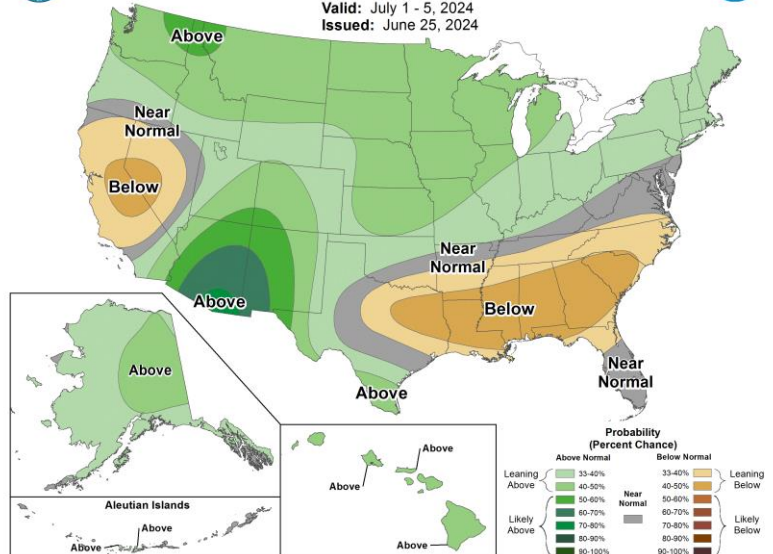
I look forward to seeing several of you tomorrow evening for **Beef Quality Assurance Recertification**. Christine Gelley will be teaching this on Thursday, June 27 from 6:30-8:00 PM in Room B100 of the County Services Building. Please call our office to register at 740-622-2265.

It's been good to see so much hay made in the past couple of weeks, but we need some meaningful rain amounts soon. July looks to be dry, but there may be hope early in the month.



6-10 Day Precipitation Outlook

Valid: July 1 - 5, 2024
Issued: June 25, 2024



Have a safe and healthy day!

Sincerely,

Emily Marrison

Extension Educator



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Managing Heat Stress of Beef Animals

By: John Yost, OSU Extension Educator, ANR, Wayne County

Source: <https://u.osu.edu/beef/2024/06/26/managing-heat-stress-of-beef-animals/#more-16540>

We are accustomed to hearing the weatherman talk about the “actual” air temperature versus the “feels like” temperature. While we each have a “feels like” temperature where we are most comfortable, we can’t translate our comfort to the physiologic and welfare comfort of our ruminant livestock. Heat generated by the fermentation process in the rumen allows cattle to tolerate much colder temperatures than humans. Conversely, they can begin to experience heat stress at temperatures we would consider mild.

Beef Cattle Temperature Humidity Chart													
		Relative Humidity (%)											
		30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85
Temperature (°F)	100	84	85	86	87	88	90	91	92	93	94	95	97
	98	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	93	94	95
	96	81	82	83	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93
	94	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91
	92	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	85	86	87	88	89
	90	78	79	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	86	87
	88	76	77	78	79	80	81	81	82	83	84	85	86
	86	75	76	77	78	78	79	80	81	81	82	83	84
	84	74	75	75	76	77	78	78	79	80	80	81	82
	82	73	73	74	75	75	76	77	77	78	79	79	80
	80	72	72	73	73	74	75	75	76	76	77	78	78
	78	70	71	71	72	73	73	74	74	75	78	76	76
	76	69	70	70	71	71	72	72	73	73	74	72	75
Temperature Humidity Index (THI)													
		Normal <75											
		Alert 75-78											
		Danger 79-83											
		Emergency >84											

Figure 1: Cattle Temperature Humidity Index Chart

The Thermal Heat Index (THI) considers the air temperature and relative humidity to identify combinations where livestock can begin to experience heat stress (Figure 1). Critical THI values will vary depending on the type of livestock and how they are housed. Generally, cattle can begin to experience mild heat stress at temperatures as low as 76 degrees if the relative humidity is 85% or higher. While heat stress events are inevitable during the summer months, they are manageable if temperatures cool off each evening. It is when the temperature remains high through the evening and early morning hours that cattle are unable to dissipate excessive heat, compromising their health and welfare. A THI of 84 is the threshold where we need to implement management changes to help our cattle manage heat stress.

Much of our knowledge about the adverse effects of heat stress in cattle have been studied in dairy cows. Heat stress contributes to increased concentrations of the stress hormone cortisol, which has a significant impact on reproductive performance. Elevated cortisol suppresses estradiol production which reduces the duration and intensity of standing heats. There will also be subsequent reduction in follicular development females and sperm production in males. Early embryonic death is also more likely in heat stressed cattle. The efficacy of vaccinations and antibiotic treatments will also be reduced, as will overall animal performance s depressed due to depressed feed intake.

It is important to be able to recognize the signs of heat stress. The USDA Agriculture Research Service created a heat stress scale ranging from Stage 1 to Stage 6 utilizing animal behavioral cues. Under mild conditions (Stage 1) you can begin to cattle with elevated breathing rates, restlessness, and they will spend more time standing. As conditions worsen (Stages 2 to 6), breathing will become more labored, they will open mouth breath with their tongue protruding, they will become lethargic and have their heads down, and they will progress from grouping up to the most affected individuals isolating themselves from the herd.

Pastured cattle will instinctively manage mild heat stress conditions. They will voluntarily seek out shaded areas of pastures, only coming out to consume water, and may avoid grazing until late evening or after dark. As managers, the most important thing you can do is ensure that your cattle have liberal access to cool, clean, water and shade. Cattle prefer water that is between 40 and 65 degrees. When water temperature reaches 80 degrees, reduced water intakes are observed. You can help this by keeping your waterers and water troughs shaded. It is also helpful if the waterlines are buried or shaded by taller grasses in fence rows. If possible, allow animals to graze in pastures that have ample shade from trees or bushes and/or allow access to open barns.

As THI approaches the 84 threshold, we also need to consider avoiding animal handling and transport. Cattle body temperature will peak about 2 hours after the air temperature peaks, and it can take 4 to 6 hours for their body temperature to return to normal. If you need to work or transport your cattle, consider the following suggestions.

- Work cattle during the early morning, before 8:00 AM and never after 10:00 AM, utilizing low-stress handling practices.
- Work cattle in small groups to limit time in the handling facility to 30 minutes or less.
- Provide access to water while in the handling facility.
- Heat production from rumen fermentation peaks 4 to 6 hours after feeding. It is recommended that feedlot cattle received at least 70% of their daily ration 2 to 4 hours after peak daytime temperatures.
- Transport only those animals that are fit for transport. Avoid hauling animals that are sick, lame, or those that have low body condition score or are over conditioned.
- Reduce number of animals hauled at one time.
- If possible, transport in the early morning and arrive at your destination by 8:00 AM
- Open all the baffles of your trailer to maximize air flow.
- Don't stop until you reach your destination, and if you do have to stop, do so later in the evening or park in an area that shades the trailer.

2024 Ohio Beef Day



Saturday August 10th 9:00 – 3:00

Crawford County

Agenda

8:00 Registration Opens

Crawford County Extension Office
808 Whetstone St Bucyrus OH 44820

8:40 Welcome and Introductions

Garth Ruff, OSU Extension Beef Cattle Field Specialist
Mark Gottke, President Ohio Cattlemen's Association

9:00 Depart for Tour

Hord Livestock

Fed Cattle Nutrition & Facilities

Kocher Farms

Feeding Dairy Beef

Center Street Meats

Farm to Table Beef

Lunch at Center Street Meats

Sponsored by Crawford/Marion County Cattlemen
and AgCredit

J & B Stahl Farms

Commercial Cow-Calf Operation

Adjourn

Please complete program survey and have a safe
trip home!

PROGRAM DETAILS

\$10 per person

Register at:



go.osu.edu/2024beefday
by August 2, 2024

Provided in the registration fee:

- Refreshments
- Lunch
- Resources

Education Credits Offered

Beef Quality Assurance Certification
(BQA)

Contacts:

Garth Ruff, OSU Extension

ruff.72@osu.edu

740-305-3201

Kendra Stahl, OSU Extension

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419-562-8731

Tim Barnes, OSU Extension

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AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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For more information: <http://go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity>.

Ohio Beef Day to be held in Crawford/Marion Counties

Source: <https://u.osu.edu/beef/2024/06/26/ohio-beef-day-to-be-held-in-crawford-marion-counties/>

Plan to attend, register today!

Field days have long been a great educational tool used to show farmers new technologies and management practices. OSU Extension is pleased to announce the return of a statewide Ohio Beef Cattle Field Day. The program will make its reappearance in Crawford and Marion Counties on Saturday August 10, 2023.

In order to see several aspects of beef cattle production this event will begin at the Crawford County Extension office. While at the Extension office we will hear remarks from Mark Gottke. Mark farms in Allen County and is the current president of the Ohio Cattlemen's Association. The tour will depart with attendees driving their own vehicles as we caravan from one stop to the next. We recommend carpooling as much as possible due to limited parking at one of the tour stops. The tour stops are as follow:

Hord Family Farms

Hord Family Farms is a 5th generation operation that raises pigs, grain, and cattle. Their cattle are purchased and raised from feeders to market in open-air hoop barns powered by solar panels. Annual forages are a significant part of the rations fed to the cattle.

Center Street Meat Company

The Lohr family owns and operates Center Street Meat Company, a full-service butcher shop and a retail store. This wholesale business offers custom-butcher and packaging services. Their retail store carries a variety of locally sourced groceries, including freshly made deli salads, homemade baked goods, local maple syrup, sauces, and dressings. Lunch will be served at Center Street Meat Company.

Kocher Farms

Kocher Farms is a family-owned operation located near Galion Ohio. Their cattle operation raises and finishes nearly 1,300 head of dairy beef feeders and dairy-beef crosses. Kocher Farms partners with United Producers Inc. to purchase and sell the cattle.

J & B Stahl Farms

J & B Stahl Farms is a family-owned operation located north of Bucyrus Ohio. The commercial angus cow-calf operation averages 60 head of cattle annually. Their practices include pasture rotation and conservation techniques ranging from heavy use pads, recycled tire water tanks, and hay production.

Pre-registration for the program is required and can be completed online at <https://go.osu.edu/2024beefday> by August 2. The program fee is \$10 per person to cover costs. Refreshments, lunch, and Beef Quality Assurance certification will be provided to all attendees. If there are any questions regarding the program contact Garth Ruff, Beef Cattle Field Specialist at ruff.72@osu.edu, Kendra Stahl, Crawford County Extension Educator 419-562-8731, or see this flyer. We hope to see you in Crawford and Marion Counties on August 10.

Pasture Walk Scheduled – Goat Production

One more Pasture Walk remains for 2024 here in Coshocton County. These annual walks are a joint program led by Coshocton Soil and Water Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRSC) with support from OSU Extension.

The next walk is Tuesday, August 29, at 6:30 pm at the Travis Hahn farm 23794 County Road 93, Fresno, OH 43824 and will highlight goat production. There will be signs posted to help you find the farm. We hope you will join us to hear directly from the landowner about their operation and get ideas to use on your farm.

Reservations are not required. If you would like more information or to receive a postcard for pasture walks please call Coshocton SWCD at 740-622-8087 x 4.

Upcoming Dicamba Cutoff Reminder

By: Alyssa Essman, OSU Extension State Specialist, Weed Science

Source: <https://agcrops.osu.edu/newsletter/corn-newsletter/2024-20/upcoming-dicamba-cutoff-reminder>

There has been much uncertainty regarding the use of dicamba for the 2024 growing season and beyond as a result of the vacated dicamba registration in February and the EPA's existing stocks order for dicamba use in 2024 that soon followed. The EPA's order allowed for existing stocks of dicamba products (Engenia, Tavium, and XtendiMax) purchased for use in dicamba-tolerant (DT) soybeans to be sold and distributed through May and to be applied through June. The future of dicamba applications over-the-top (OTT) to DT soybean remains uncertain, but a reprieve from the intense heat experienced last week and growing weeds means that POST applications will continue to take place this week across the state. The last date for OTT applications of dicamba in DT soybean in Ohio is by the labeled soybean growth stage, or June 30th, whichever comes first. The date and growth stage cutoffs for the respective products are as follows:

Engenia – no later than June 30th

Tavium – V4 growth stage or through June 30th, whichever comes first

XtendiMax – R1 growth stage or through June 30th, whichever comes first

At the plant level, soybean is at the V4 growth stage when there are four open trifoliates on the plant. A soybean plant is at the R1 growth stage when there is one open flower somewhere on the main stem. At the field level, a certain growth stage is achieved when greater than 50% of the plants within the field exhibit the designated characteristics. For detailed descriptions and pictures of soybean growth stages, check out this soybean growth stage guide. Information related to POST applications including maximum crop size and harvest intervals for corn and soybean can be found in Table 8 and Table 18 of the weed control guide, respectively. Scouting fields before planning POST applications can help determine management practices including product selection and application timing. As always, be sure to check all herbicide labels before treating fields.

Application of Manure to Double Crop Soybeans to Encourage Emergence

By: Glen Arnold, OSU Extension Field Specialist, Manure Nutrient Management

Source: <https://agcrops.osu.edu/newsletter/corn-newsletter/2024-20/application-manure-double-crop-soybeans-encourage-emergence>

The summer manure application window following wheat harvest is typically the 2nd largest application window each year. In recent years there has been more interest from livestock producers in applying manure to newly planted soybeans to provide moisture to help get the crop to emerge.

Both swine and dairy manure can be used to add moisture to newly planted soybean fields. It's important that the soybeans were properly covered with soil when planted to keep a barrier between the salt and nitrogen in the manure and the germinating soybean seed. It is also important that livestock producers know their soil phosphorus levels, and the phosphorus in the manure being applied, so soil phosphorus levels are kept in an acceptable range.

An acre-inch of water is 27,154 gallons. Applying 10,000 gallons per acre of dairy manure would be about 0.37 inches of moisture. Applying 7,000 gallons of swine manure would be about 0.26 inches of moisture. While we strongly encourage the incorporation of livestock manure whenever possible, using manure to help with double-crop soybean emergence does not allow for incorporation unless one uses a Grassland applicator toolbar or perhaps an Aerway set on maximum soil disturbance.

If soybeans are just out of the ground, swine-finishing manure and dairy manure will kill the emerging plants. We applied swine finishing manure to early V3 soybeans at the Hoytville OARDC research farm for three years and while the manure did not kill the soybeans, there was significant leaf burning. Swine nursery manure and sow manure are unlikely to kill emerged soybeans.

If manure is incorporated before planting double-crop soybeans be sure the manure salt and nitrogen are not placed in the planting zone. Placing the manure in contact with germinating seeds can result in severe emergence problems.

If red clover was frost seeded in the wheat, young clover is easy to kill with a summer manure application. Livestock producers have told me stories of accidentally killing clover stands when applying manure to wheat stubble just after wheat harvest. As always, print out the weather forecast when surface applying manure.

“Okay, so I have an “employee” on my farm, now what?”

OSU Extension Agronomy and Farm Management Podcast

Episode 143 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0SiDP2ytjFc>

On this week’s episode of the Agronomy and Farm Management Podcast, Bruce and Josh talk to Jeff Lewis, Program Coordinator for OSU Income Tax Schools & ANR Extension. Jeff talks about employees on the farm and some of the legal obligations associated with employees and independent contractors.



Planning for Future of Farm Workshop to be held in Cortland, Ohio

Source: <https://u.osu.edu/ohioagmanager/>

The OSU Extension offices in northeast Ohio invite you to participate in a Planning for the Future of Your Farm workshop on August 22, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Trumbull County Extension office in Cortland, Ohio. This workshop is designed to help farm families learn strategies and tools to successfully create a succession and estate plan that helps you transfer your farm’s ownership, management, and assets to the next generation. Learn how to have the crucial conversations about the future of your farm.

The registration fee is \$25 per person which includes lunch, refreshments, and course materials. Registration deadline is August 16, 2024. This program is made possible at a discounted rate due to the generous support from the Hertzner Family Trust.

More information can be obtained by contacting Lee Beers at the Trumbull County Extension office at 330-638-6738 or via email at beers.66@osu.edu .



DATE:
August 22, 2024

TIME:
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

LOCATION:
Trumbull County Extension
520 West Main Street
Cortland, Ohio 44410



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Planning for the Future of Your Farm Workshop

The OSU Extension offices in northeast Ohio invite you to participate in a **Planning for the Future of Your Farm** workshop. This workshop is designed to help farm families learn strategies and tools to successfully create a succession and estate plan that helps you transfer your farm's ownership, management, and assets to the next generation. Learn how to have the crucial conversations about the future of your farm.

Workshop topics include: Developing Goals for Estate and Succession; Planning for the Transition of Control; Planning for the Unexpected; Communication and Conflict Management; Legal Tools and Strategies; Developing Your Team; Getting Your Affairs in Order; and Selecting an Attorney.

The registration fee is \$25 per person which includes lunch, refreshments, and course materials. Registration deadline is August 16, 2024. This program is made possible at a discounted rate due to the generous support from the Hertzner Family Trust. More information can be obtained by contacting Lee Beers at the Trumbull County Extension office at 330-638-6738 or via email at beers.66@osu.edu.

For more information, visit go.osu.edu/farmsuccession.

EVENT SPONSORS: OSU Extension - Ashtabula, Trumbull & Geauga Counties, Farm Financial Management & Policy Institute and the Hertzner Family Trust

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College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
Extension / Farm Office
farmoffice.osu.edu

Maintaining Farm Family Legacy Through Farm Transition and Estate Planning

Our teaching team will help answer the following questions and much more!

- *Who should we leave the farm to?*
- *How do we prepare the next generation to manage the farm in the future?*
- *How can we overcome family communication issues?*
- *How do we value sweat equity?*
- *What is the difference between a will and trust?*
- *Will I lose my farm to estate taxes or to the nursing home?*
- *What do we need to do to be better prepared to meet with an attorney and other professionals?*
- *What resources does OSU Extension have to assist us as we develop our plan?*



David Marrison,
OSU Field
Specialist, Farm
Management



Robert Moore, Attorney,
Agricultural and
Resource Law Program



Lee Beers, Ag &
Natural Resources
Extension
Educator

Planning for the Future of Your Farm Workshop Registration Form

Name(s) of Attendees _____
 Phone Number _____ Email address _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zipcode _____
 County _____

Registration Fee Required

\$25 Base Registration		\$ _____
Number of Attendees	x	_____
Total Due		\$ _____

Pre-registration is requested as seats are limited. Registration deadline is August 16, 2024.

Mail form and check payable to OSU Extension

Trumbull County Extension Office

520 West Main Street

Cortland, Ohio 44410



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farmoffice.osu.edu

Common Mullein- Mother Nature's Answer to our Toilet Paper Shortage?

by David Marrison, OSU Extension Farm Management Field Specialist (a throwback to 2020...)

When the news broke that we would need to retreat to our homes due to Coronavirus-19, the run on milk, eggs, bread and toilet paper began at our local grocery stores. I have been especially fascinated by the hoarding of toilet paper. Every time I have been out to get food and supplies, the toilet paper shelves have been completely bare.

As my wife Emily and I were out taking a Sunday evening walk, I noticed along the ditches some green, soft-looking plants which appeared to be the lambs-ear plant, with which many of us are familiar. After closer inspection, the plant we were looking at was Common mullein or *Verbascum thapsus*. Emily was quick to respond that locals refer to the plant as **Cowboy's Toilet Paper**. Then the light bulb went off---could this be Mother Nature's answer to our COVID-19 toilet paper shortage?



Besides Cowboy's Toilet Paper, you may have heard it referred to as Quaker's rouge, candle wick, flannel leaf, velvet dock, big taper, bunny's ear, miner's candle, or poor man's blanket. These names commonly reflect some characteristic the plant exhibits, such as the flower stalk or leaf texture. If you read survival guides, this plant is mentioned as an emergency roadside toilet paper due to the large, fuzzy leaf of this botanical wonder. One word of caution however, the fuzzy leaf may cause some skin irritation when used as toilet paper.

The history of this plant is fascinating. Common mullein traces its roots back to Europe as it was planted in gardens for its medicinal purposes as an expectorant, diuretic, pain relief and healing of abrasions. Interesting enough, since Quaker women weren't allowed to wear make-up, they would rub the hairy leaves on their cheeks to create a homemade blush look. Hence the name Quaker's Rouge. However, its major claim to fame is definitely its use as a toilet paper.

Like many plants, it escaped the confines of cultivation and is now a weed which can be found across the United States. In Ohio, we tend to see it in disturbed areas such as railroad right-of-ways, roadsides, fence rows, ditches, and pastures. In fact, it is one of the first weeds to germinate when an area is disturbed. It prefers sunny, hot, dry conditions. It grows quicker than native plants so it can quickly take over a newly disturbed area. Common mullein is a minor problem in cropping systems because it is unable to survive cultivation and is intolerant of shade. However, it can persist and remain problematic in overgrazed pastures due to it generally being avoided by livestock.

Common mullein is a spring-germinating biennial. In the first year, it produces a large basal rosette (7 to 24 inches) of large, furry leaves with a substantial crown. The leaves are covered by dense hairs, making it similar to felt fabric. Those hairs make it very undesirable to livestock and wildlife that might feed on the foliage of the plant. The rosette overwinters, and in the second year, it produces a single, thick, erect flowering stem with yellow flowers reaching upwards to 5 feet in height.



The flowers are present from June through September. The flowers are sessile on 1 or 2 terminal cylindrical spikes (7-19 inches in length by 1 3/16 inches wide). Individual flowers are just under 1 inch in diameter and have fused yellow petals with 5 lobes. A single plant can produce up to 175,000 seeds and those seeds can remain viable up to 100 years. The seeds have wavy ridges alternating with deep grooves that resemble corn cobs. The seeds are typically 1/32 inch in length. After flowering, the plant dies leaving the tall stem and the dead stems can persist for more than a year.

Source: Vaughn
Hammond, University
of Nebraska



Common mullein is difficult to eradicate once established, due to its long-lived seed bank, but there are several options for management. One simple method is to ensure good open space competition by encouraging good groundcover, since this weed is one of the first to germinate in bare ground. Hand pulling is an effective method, if plants are pulled before seed production. Similarly, removing plants with a hoe, making sure to cut through the crown, can control common mullein.

Chemically, one-year old rosettes can be controlled easily using non-selective herbicides such as glyphosate products applied directly to the plant. Greater care must be taken when applying these products to the upright, two-year old plants, in order to reduce drift onto non-target plants. It is important to use a surfactant in conjunction with the herbicide. Control with herbicide is considered difficult due to hairs on the foliage, which can reduce herbicide absorption. However, using a surfactant can alleviate that problem. Selective broadleaf herbicides such as triclopyr are a better choice in areas where desirable grasses may be present. Other chemicals which been found to be effective include picloram + 2,4D; aminopyralid; aminopyralid + 2,4D; metsulfuron methyl; metsulfuron methyl +dicamba+ 2,4D. Refer to the pesticide manufacturer's label for specific information and restrictions regarding proper herbicide use.

French author, Marcel Proust, once said "The real voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes." The coronavirus pandemic is providing us an opportunity to see the world with a new set of eyes. As we distance ourselves socially, I encourage you to get outside and take a walk. You never know when you will stumble across a plant like Common Mullein which could be the answer to our toilet paper shortage!

References:

Weeds of the Northeast, UVA, Neal & DiTomaso. ISBN: 978-0-0814-8334-9

Common Mullein, Hammond, V. <https://communityenvironment.unl.edu/common-mullein>

Common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) Montana State University
http://www.msuinvasiveplants.org/documents/extension/weed_posts/2016/December%20Weed%20Post_common%20mullein.pdf

Chemical Control of Common Mullein. Walter H. Fick and Sandra Wick, Department of Agronomy, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS. <http://ncwss.org/proceed/2006/abstracts/145.pdf>

Plant Conservation Alliance. Fact Sheet: Common Mullein.
<https://www.invasive.org/weedcd/pdfs/wgw/commonmullein.pdf>

Two OSU Extension Food Preservation Workshops This Summer

Ohio State University Extension in Coshocton County will offer two free food preservation workshops this summer.

A **Freeze-Drying Fundamentals** class will be Tuesday, July 16 from 6:00-7:30 PM at Schumaker Farms, 52441 Co Rd 16, West Lafayette. Learn about equipment, logistics, and taste some freeze-dried foods. OSU Extension in Morrow County is generously lending their freeze dryer to prepare food for the class. Participants will be able to view this equipment and see how the controls work during the class. The class is free, but pre-registration is required at go.osu.edu/coshoctonfreezedry . You can also learn more about freeze drying on the OSU Extension Live Healthy Live Well blog at livehealthyosu.com .

A **Canning Basics** workshop will be Wednesday, August 7 from 6:00-7:30 PM at Schumaker Farms. Learn about the differences between water bath canning and pressure canning, and why it is important to use the correct process to produce safe food. Participants will be able to view different types of canners, jars, and lids. Also learn about the costs and benefits of other canning gadgets available in the marketplace. There will be lots of tested recipes and some samples to taste. The class is free, but registration is required at go.osu.edu/coshcanning2024 .

Emily Marrison, Family and Consumer Sciences Educator will teach both classes. Please contact her with questions at 740-622-2265 or marrison.12@osu.edu .

Sweet song of birds fills the summer air

By: Emily Marrison, Family and Consumer Sciences Educator, Coshocton County

Source: Coshocton Tribune, June 23, 2024 <https://www.coshoctontribune.com/story/news/local/coshocton-county/2024/06/22/sweet-song-of-birds-fills-the-summer-air/74135324007/>

Last summer I had the opportunity to hang out at a couple 4-H meetings with the Cloverbud members of our 4-H Club. While the older members have their business meeting, these Kindergarten and first graders learn a lesson or do a craft. After completing a nature hunt during one of the first meetings, it was obvious these children liked being outside.

So, a few weeks later, I took a couple of field guides for them to look through with plants and birds. They were enthralled with the bird book. I quickly found an app to download with bird calls. Before I knew it, I was the one completely enthralled. How in nearly five decades of my life had I not appreciated the complexity and uniqueness of these songbirds that surrounded me every year?

As I sit here typing on my front porch, the sun will be setting in about an hour. The shadows are stretching out longer and longer and the smell of fresh mowed hay is on the breeze. I'm sure I hear at least ten different types of bird songs.

The cardinal is the most distinct right now. When my brother was little he had a key chain with five different alarm sounds. (It drove us crazy.) My little cardinal friend is perched up on the power lines and he sounds like about two of those alarm sounds. He almost sounds like he is calling to my neighbor, "Judy! Judy! Judy!"

My son built bluebird houses with my dad a couple of summers ago. We put one up last summer so we could see it from the sliding glass door in the backyard. They were so fun to watch peek in and out, and in and out. There is just no blue quite as vibrant as the Eastern bluebird.

Not long ago, while enjoying dinner on the patio, I quizzed my family with bird calls from that free Audubon Bird Guide app. Chirps and tweets and screeches and trills. Then I noticed that a red-bellied woodpecker was making his way closer to us. The more I played the calls on my phone, the more he responded until finally getting bored with us and made his way back to the trees.

My next feat was calling the swallows out of the barn to swoop around the patio umbrella. How amazing that they heard me from 50 yards away and came out to see who the new bird was in their territory!

I have an Extension colleague who is a self-proclaimed bird nerd. I was able to go on a short hike with her this spring during a work retreat and her fascination was contagious. Laura loves to spend time in nature and observe birds. In an OSU Extension Live Healthy Live Well post, she shared several benefits that have been confirmed by research. A study found that just listening to bird song contributes to perceived attention restoration and stress recovery. Regular exposure to nature is associated with improvements in cardiovascular disease and longevity.

I must confess that I used to be annoyed at 4:30 AM when the birds began making a racket. Now I have learned that many songbirds sing a special song first thing in the morning. It is only sung to welcome the dawn. Now I hear praises rather than racket, and that gives me a new appreciation and joy during these summer months. I encourage you to observe the birds you encounter this week.

In fact, if you send a bird photo to me at marrison.12@osu.edu by June 30, I'll put your name in a drawing for a free bluebird house. I can't wait to see your pictures.

Today I'll leave you with this quote from David Attenborough, "Everyone likes birds. What wild creature is more accessible to our eyes and ears, as close to us and everyone in the world, as universal as a bird?"

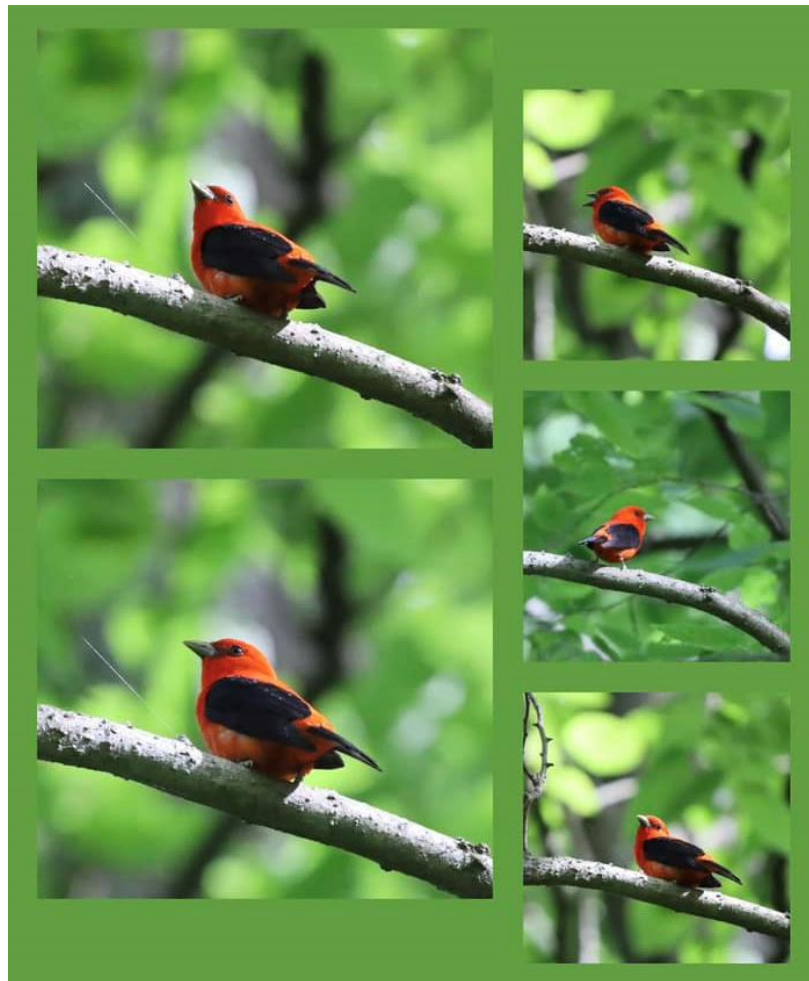


Photo credit: Laura Stanton, FCS Educator, Warren County