



## Planting Time for Fruit Trees

November or anytime during the fall season is a great time to evaluate your existing trees or plant new varieties in your landscape.

It is important, however, to select only those fruit trees that are adapted for the Coast. Chilling hours are very important, since we receive a limited number of them. Chilling hours refers to the number of hours spent below 40 degrees, but above freezing. Fruit trees need chilling hours to successfully produce fruit. The Coast sometimes receives only 350-400 chilling hours per season; therefore, select only those varieties that have the lowest chilling hour requirements to help ensure a lot of tasty fruit next year.

Sometimes people want to plant fruit trees simply because they want to try their hand at it. Fruit trees require a lot of maintenance and patience. The Gulf South is a tough place sometimes to produce high quality fruit. Other times homeowners lose their trees to insects or diseases and wish to replace them.

Unless you have an "orchard," many people have limited space for their fruit trees. Sometimes people will ask, "Can I replant my tree in the same place?" If you do have another suitable open space, it is best not to replant in the same area. Depending on what killed your tree, pests in the soil may have increased over the years and reached levels that caused the tree's death. The soil where you removed your dead or dying tree could be contaminated with insects or diseases that could attack and weaken your new, young tree over time. A weakened, declining tree is even more susceptible to winter injury, insects, diseases and drought.

Sometimes people think if they wait a year or two they can then put another fruit tree in the once contaminated area. In fact, it really depends on what soil disease or insect problem was present in the first place. For example, a common root disease on peaches has been found in the soil 35 years after the tree was removed! Pesticides available to homeowners are of limited value to fruit growers when trying to decontaminate problem areas. Fruit trees, however, do require a rigorous spray schedule each year to combat insects and diseases from ruining your crop. The spray program starts during late winter and continues throughout the season.

I encourage you to consult Extension publications for specific information on the fruit trees of your choice. Proper fruit tree selection, planting, fertilizing, and pruning combined with a pest management spray program is essential to a bountiful harvest of your favorite fruit.



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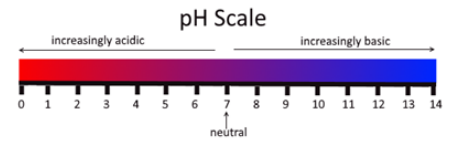
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## Liming to Correct Soil Acidity

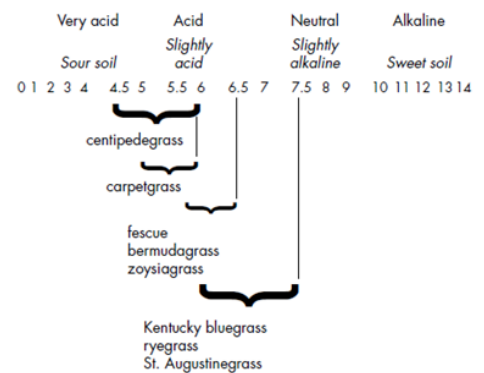
Many of the soil test results that come through my office recommend adding lime to increase the soil pH. Soil pH (potential hydrogen) is an indicator of acidity on a scale of 1-14 with 7 being neutral and above 7 being alkaline. Positively charged hydrogen ions (H<sup>+</sup>) may be added to the soil by decomposition of plant residues and organic matter, or because nitrification of ammonium occurs when fertilizer or manure is applied. This can result in an increase of acidity (lower pH) due to the increase of hydrogen ions. When soil pH is too low (or too high) some nutritional elements aren't available to the plant. Therefore, it's a good practice to maintain the proper soil pH.

When soil tests indicate the need for lime, be sure to follow the recommendations carefully. You can apply lime any time in the year, but you should apply no more than can be dissolved and absorbed at a given time. For lawns, apply no more than 50 pounds per 1,000 square feet to actively growing turf, therefore, several applications may be necessary to apply the total amount recommended by the soil test report. Is there an ideal time to apply lime? Yes. In general, lime takes a few to several months to break down enough to change the pH so allow yourself plenty of time for this transition. So, if you get your garden soil tested in February or March, it's going to be a while before the plants can reap the benefits of a liming application unless it's for a fall garden. Likewise, lime your pasture this year for next years' forage crop.

Two common sources of lime are calcitic lime (ground agricultural lime containing calcium) and dolomitic lime (dolomite containing magnesium). Calcitic lime is the most widely used because of its easiness to apply and is beneficial in most situations. Dolomitic lime is used most often when there is a magnesium deficiency which can occur in more sandy soils. Maintaining a proper pH for your lawn, garden, or pasture is more important than just adding fertilizer itself since nutrient availability depends on it. A soil test will provide you with recommendations for liming application depending on your soil type but remember it takes time for the liming application to work. For more information, contact your local extension service.



The pH scale is an indicator of soil acidity. The lower the number, the more acidic.



Acceptable pH ranges for turfgrass.



# Garden Calendar: November

## Plant

- Plant shrubs and trees after soil cools.
- Plant summer blooming perennials: Iris, Daylily, and Daisies. Plant winter and spring annuals: Pansy, Pinks, Flowering Cabbage, and Kale.
- Root Rose cuttings.



## Water

- Water all newly planted trees and plants regularly.



## Prune

- Remove dead limbs and prune evergreen shrubs.
- Cut off tops of brown perennials, leave roots in the soil.



## Do Not Prune

- Do not prune spring flowering shrubs such as Azaleas, Hydrangeas, Mock Orange, Spirea, and Flowering Quince because flower buds are already forming.
- Delay pruning of most trees and shrubs until February since any new growth stimulated by pruning may be killed by a sudden freeze.

## Miscellaneous

- Put leaves and spent annuals into compost bin.
- Add mulch to your garden and all ornamental beds for winter protection.
- Repair and sharpen garden tools, store with light coat of oil to prevent rusting.
- Build bird feeders and houses.



## In Bloom

- Impatiens, Cannas, Roses, Witch Hazel, Gerbera Daisies, Sweet Olive, Camellias, Sasanquas, Japanese Plum, and Poinsettias.



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## Lichens are not Killing Your Plants and Trees

Nature is full of mysteries, and there is a fascinating one just outside in your landscape. We don't have to look very far to find one of these marvels of creation, the lichen, thriving in our warm, humid, Mississippi climate. At first glance, the papery or fuzzy, white, gray or green growth might lead us to believe that lichens are just another parasite, working to destroy our landscape trees and ornamentals. Although lichens are often found associated with plants that are dead, dying or declining, we must remember that this is only circumstantial evidence, and the lichen is innocent until proven guilty.



Remember way back (for some of us) in junior high school science class when we first learned the meaning of symbiosis? A symbiotic relationship is one in which two organisms live in close relationship with one another to the benefit of each. Such is the case of the lichen. What appears to be one organism are actually two, an algae and a fungus living together that have formed one body. The algae, a green plant, can make its own food, and in this case, shares with the fungus. The fungus, on the other hand supplies the structure, or thallus, within which the algae lives. Lichens can be found attached to healthy plants or those in dead or dying condition. Although sometimes unsightly, they are not parasitic and do not contribute to the poor quality of a plant.



Believe it or not, lichen is actually beneficial to humans for several reasons. First, they are sensitive to air pollution and are commonly used by researchers to determine the air quality of a region. If lichen thrives in your neighborhood, it's a good indicator of quality air. Drug companies use lichen substances to make antibiotics. Some lichens make nitrogen in the air more available to other plants. People eat some lichens but remember a few of them are poisonous! Lichens can also be used to make dye for coloring wool.

It is usually not necessary to treat plants to control lichens. The best practice is to keep landscape plants healthy and growing vigorously. However, for trees and shrubs that lose their leaves in winter (including fruit and nut), tribasic copper sulfate may be used at the rate of 4 teaspoonfuls per gallon of water to remove unwanted lichens. Add a spreader sticker to the spray mix and avoid contact with evergreen plants. Remember to always follow label directions when applying pesticides. Happy Gardening!





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## Sapsucker Damage and Control

I've encountered sapsucker damage many times over the years working in both the landscape industry and as an Extension agent and always suspect they're the culprit when I hear "a line of insect holes on my tree" over the telephone. This is the work of the yellow-bellied sapsucker, a type of woodpecker, and chances are you, too, may have noticed a line of shallow holes neatly drilled into the tree in the front of your home. The yellow-bellied sapsucker is black and white with a red cap and throat patch in males, but not females.

The holes are known as sap wells, and the sapsucker makes the holes so it can eat the sap that drains from inside the tree. It also eats any insects that may have been trapped in the sap, although sapsuckers are mainly interested in the sap itself. Unlike other woodpeckers, sapsuckers do not peck into a tree looking for insects. The sapsucker usually makes new holes in line with the old holes. Holes are approximately one-quarter of an inch in diameter. The sapsucker makes two types of holes. Round holes extend deep into the tree, and the bird uses its bill to probe for sap inside these holes. Shallow, rectangular holes must be maintained so they will continue releasing sap. The sapsucker licks sap from these holes and may also eat the cambium of the tree.

While trees may exhibit holes for several reasons, including other woodpeckers, bark beetles, and other insects, sapsucker damage is notable because the holes are pecked close together and in rows. Other types of holes are not uniformly aligned. Insect holes will be fewer and smaller in diameter. Further, insect holes are often identified by frass or the boring dust left by the insect as it drills through the tree.

Sapsuckers prefer trees with soft, thin bark, such as Bradford pears, maple and birch. The birds also prefer young, vigorous trees, although older trees are not immune. Trees with thick, furrowed bark are better defended against sapsuckers than smooth-barked trees but I've encountered many young Live oaks with sapsucker damage. The tree should recover from minor damage, but excessive numbers of holes can allow entry of insects and decay fungi that can damage the tree. Stress from intensive feeding can lead to cambium girdling, decline in tree health, and eventual death of the tree, although this is rare.

Please keep in mind that sapsuckers, like all woodpeckers, are protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, so lethal control requires a permit. There are other means of control, however. A more common control method is to discourage the sapsucker from returning by wrapping burlap around the affected area but do not keep burlap on the tree indefinitely. Additional methods include encircling the tree with chicken wire, applying reflective tape to branches, and draping the tree with plastic netting found at the local hardware store. A decoy hawk or owl can be used to scare the woodpecker, but you should move it around the tree every few days so the woodpecker will think the decoy is alive.



**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**



**Sapsucker damage on a young Live oak**

# The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Piney Woods Heritage Festival

Crosby Arboretum  
Picayune, MS

Saturday  
November 4, 2023  
10 AM to 2 PM



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
EXTENSION

[www.crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu](http://www.crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu)



**The 21st annual event celebrates the region's heritage with various displays and demonstrations. The event begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 2 p.m.**

**Attendees will see exhibits and demonstrations of traditional skills and arts, including blacksmithing, basketmaking, spinning, music, dance, and more.**

**The event kicks off at 10 a.m. with Hazel and the Ramblers, an old time country and bluegrass group from New Orleans. They will turn the stage over at 12 noon to native American Indian dancers for a performance. At 1 p.m., the Pineywood Cloggers will perform.**

**On arrival, you will be greeted by a Pineywoods cow from the herd of Bob Rouse. This is a rare breed of cattle introduced to the southeastern United States in the early 16th century by Spanish explorers.**

**Vendors will offer jams, jellies, baked goods and hand-crafted wood items made from Mississippi trees.**

**Admission for nonmembers is \$5 for adults, \$2 for children under 12, and \$4 for senior citizens, military members and first responders. The Crosby Arboretum is located at 370 Ridge Road in Picayune.**

**MSU is an equal opportunity institution. For disability accommodation or other information, contact the arboretum at 601-799-2311.**



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## Dollar Spot

As we head into fall, we will begin to see fungal issues in many lawns due to the cooler temperatures and heavier dew patterns. One that has been popping up lately, due to the ideal temperature and extended period of leaf wetness, is dollar spot. While most common in Bermuda and Zoysiagrass, this fungal problem can occur in most warm season turfs. Initial symptoms on leaves will be chlorotic spots that turn to straw-colored areas with a reddish margin. When looking at the lawn, these infected areas will look like small, circular spots that are a light straw color. The disease can sometimes cause an hour-glass shaped chlorotic spot in middle of the leaf and can cause the area to appear “sunken” due to the leaf folding over at this chlorotic point. With the drought we’ve been experiencing this summer through now, this can be somewhat tough to identify as a lot of our turf is now brown due to drought stress.



Managing dollar spot can be done by maintaining soil moisture and soil nutrition. Watering to maintain soil moisture should be done in a way that does not prolong wet periods, such as early morning or late afternoon. Maintaining adequate soil nutrition is important, particularly nitrogen levels, so that the grass can outgrow the fungus. Taking a soil test and following instructions are important because overapplication of nutrients can lead to other issues. Making sure you avoid thatch buildup and removing clippings regularly will also help with this disease.



Fungicides can help manage this disease, but this can be difficult due to various resistances that the fungus may have. Make sure to rotate between fungicides to avoid these problems. Fungicides that have been shown to help include myclobutanil (Fertilome F-Stop Fungicide Granules or similar) and fluxapyroxad (Xzemplar or similar). Make sure you read and follow all instructions to avoid plant damage. Myclobutanil, for example, should not be applied when temperatures are over 85 degrees due to potential for suppressed growth and burning. Applications are most beneficial when applied every 14-28 days preventatively. Trying to eliminate an established problem will take higher application rates more often and may not work.

More information on dollar spot fungus can be found in Publication 3750 or Publication 1322 at [extension.msstate.edu](http://extension.msstate.edu).

## Events

**Pine Belt Beekeepers Association Meeting - November 2, 6 p.m. Lamar County Extension Office, Purvis**

# Let's Get Your Garden Ready!

## Q&A w/Dr. Eddie



4th Thursday of each month  
@ 9:05AM on WRJW



*Have a  
Happy & Blessed  
Thanksgiving Day!*

## Online Private Applicator Certification Program

A private applicator is a certified applicator who uses or supervises the use of restricted-use pesticides to produce an agricultural commodity on his or her own land, leased land, or rented land or on the lands of his or her employer. Private applicators must be at least 18 years old.

In response to limited face-to-face training during the COVID-19 situation, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture–Bureau of Plant Industry has approved an online private applicator certification program developed by the MSU Extension Service. Persons needing to obtain or renew their private applicator certification can complete the online training (two video training modules and a competency exam) by using the following link: <http://extension.msstate.edu/content/online-private-applicator-certification-program>. The fee for training and testing is \$20, payable online by credit card, debit card, or eCheck.



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY  
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# Private Applicator

## TRAINING AND TESTING ONLINE

Watch the training modules, pass the exam, and receive your private applicator certification from MDAC Bureau of Plant Industry.

# \$20

COST

Visit <http://msuext.ms/agmes>  
or contact your local MSU Extension office for info on how to register.