

August 2011

Athens Clarke County Cooperative Extension

Shades of Green

From Gardener, To Gardener



What's Buggin' You? By Pam Snyder

This month's focus is on a killer... Cicada Killer wasp that is. *Sphex speciosus* is a solitary hunter and one of the largest wasps you may ever see. They are active in the months of July and August which by no coincidence is the same months their prey, the cicadas appear.

The female hunts prey and paralyzes it with its' stinger before flying or dragging it back to the nest for their larvae to eat.

Nests are built in sandy areas by burrowing in about six inches, sometimes with branching tunnels or rounded cells.



The burrow of a cicada killer.
Photo by Zachary Huang, Mich. St. Univ.

Although they use their stingers for prey, the female seldom bothers people or animal and their venom is not as potent as social wasps. They can be a nuisance when nesting in large numbers due to their size and low flying. The males are not capable of stinging but can be more aggressive as their job is to guard the nest entrance.



Photo by Ronald F. Billings, Texas Forest Service

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Amanda Tedrow, Editor

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Untrue Confessions of a Master Gardener Intern By Helen Wenner

Frowning, I glance out the window at the driveway. Nothing yet, but they'll probably show up any minute. Maybe both of them, Amanda and Andrea, coming together for mutual support as they read aloud to me the revocation of my Master Gardener intern privileges and collect my temporary badge for the trash bin.

It's not fair really. The kudzu beetles (*Megacopta cribraria*) festooning every long, twining stem of my lima and pole beans—they can't blame me for not knowing about those. I mean, they're called KUDZU beetles, not bean beetles, and all I remembered about them in MG school was that they can get in your house to overwinter and cause a stink if you mess with them. They're still so new to the area they haven't even made it into the Georgia Pest Management handbook yet.



I just figured they were some sort of olive green lady bugs having a jamboree. Incorrect identification. Strike one.

In a different part of the farm, my husband and I had been looking forward to all the wonderful Beaugard sweet potatoes we would soon be harvesting this year. A Master Gardener could be proud of this separate garden with its landscape fabric between the rows and drip tape for irrigation. It never occurred to me that the water trough and salt blocks for the horses on the other side of the electric fence might just be a magnet for other hooved critters as well, which they were. I learned that Beaugard sweet potato leaves must be just about the tastiest treat in Georgia for a hungry deer that has just slaked her thirst. I guess they're even yummier when salted too. The potato row looked as if some spiteful neighbor had snuck a lawnmower over the electric fence while we slept and mowed every plant to a uniform 3" height.



Shoulda foreseen the temptation and relocated the salt blocks. Bad Integrated Pest Management. Strike two.

Beleaguered as I was by the problems in my bean garden and my sweet potato garden, I surely can't be blamed for overlooking what was going down in my brand-new-this-spring squash garden, situated about a hundred yards from the other vegetable plots as I've had trouble growing squash in the past. The young plants just mysteriously wilt and die overnight. Figuring it could be some sort of disease organism in the older garden soils; I plowed up a new spot for the squash babies and hoped my new MG know-

how would help me overcome all obstacles. Ha! There they were all 6 hills of a variety of squashes with a row of zinnias thrown in for color and cut flowers.

The morning after the sweet potato massacre I squinted along the fence line and counted just 4 squash plants raising their leafy little arms toward the sky. Two plants were a wilted, lifeless mass. It was happening again, just like last year. My best MG CSI revealed nothing. No holes in the stems with a squash vine borer eating away plant guts. The roots showed no indication of disease or attack, so I turned my attention to one of the surviving plants—bingo! Squash bugs scattered as I tenderly picked up the leaves. Squash bug eggs filled the leaf axils like tiny orange billiard balls racked up and ready to roll. I'm guessing there were nymphs there somewhere too but my glasses were in the house. Die, you nasty beasties, and quit running to hide among my zinnias! For the life of me I can't understand why squash bugs inject a toxin when they feed on the plant

sap. Killing the host makes no sense at all. OK, so I shoulda known to inspect the plants daily, put a shingle or small board down near the plants so the bugs could shelter under there (and be squished!), maybe use insecticidal soap to wash off the leaves, etc. Bad



IPM again. Strike 3. I'm out.

(Helen later found those nymphs!)

So that's why I'm all sour-faced sitting here at the window waiting for Amanda and Andrea to come and make my MG failure official. Meanwhile, my wonderful next door neighbors just left after having brought over some of their excess squash and cucumbers for our enjoyment. Bless their hearts. They've had a bumper crop this year, eh? I think I'm going outside to my squash garden to pick some pretty zinnias—bugs and all--make a bouquet, and trot it on over to them while they're still out

tending their precious vegetables. Share the wealth, share the wealth...

Helen is retired from St. Mary's Hospital and the American Red Cross Blood Services. She rides and boards horses on her farm and is currently training for her first triathlon sprint, if she doesn't first drown or injure herself falling from her bicycle. She is also a Master Gardener Intern who is earning her volunteer hours at the extension office, Plant A Row garden at Thomas Orchard in Oconee county and the native plants greenhouses at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia.



Your Extension at Work



Pat Van Gorder enjoys volunteering at the extension office regularly. She has exceeded her required 50 hours as a Master Gardener Intern and will graduate in January 2012. Your ROCK Pat!



The squash that were planted by our Master Gardener volunteers has taken over this raised bed. Barely visible on the far right side are the tomatoes that had been planted at the same time. Excellent work all.



Meet Sam Ingram. He is a recent graduate from the University of Georgia with a Bachelors of Science in Agriculture. His background is Animal Science, and is specifically interested in beef production. He is interning with us for the summer where he deals mostly with horticulture issues. He says the contrast between the two fields gives him a welcome opportunity of continuing his education in agriculture.

Most recently, Sam has been teaching Forestry Judging along with 4-H Program Assistant Mildred Felton. This class teaches youth to identify

trees, insects and diseases of trees, as well as saw-timber volume estimation, compass and pacing, and forest site evaluation.

Don't miss Sam's presentation of "*Raising Backyard Critters*" which will detail the benefits of raising backyard small stock. This talk will include care, maintenance and local ordinances concerning goats, sheep and poultry. See our section on area gardening events for date, time and location.

We are so happy to have you with us Sam!



Your Extension at Work, continued



What is G.C.L.P.? Georgia Certified Landscape Professional Program is a voluntary testing program that certifies those in the landscape profession who have mastered a thorough knowledge and understanding of job skills required to be successful in the industry.

Benefits of G.C.L.P. Certification include:

- Customers will recognize certification as a mark of quality
- Athens-Clarke County Water Conservation Office & Athens-Clarke County Cooperative Extension promote the use of G.C.L.P. Certified professional
- Special access to graduate resources and continuing education

Who should take the course? The horticulture or landscape professional who wants to differentiate themselves in the marketplace by achieving the G.C.L.P. certification. Registration required, deadline is August 15, 2011. More information at: <http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/clarke/anr/index.html>

IPM ~ Organic Home Brew



This article was submitted by a Master Gardener volunteer and includes his personal recipe for deer repellent. It is not recommended to use products which contain raw egg or dairy on edible plants due to bacterial and poisoning issues on uncooked food. Cooperative Extension is not able to recommend homemade repellents which contain these items.

Homemade deer repellent for ornamentals.

For one quart, mix the following in a blender on low speed:

- 1 cup milk
- 1 egg, raw
- 2 T vegetable oil
- 1 T liquid soap
- 1 T hot sauce
- 3 cups water

John says that he has had excellent success with this mixture, but be aware that it needs to be reapplied monthly and

after a heavy rain. He also says that it has a pungent odor but worth the sacrifice. John Aitkens retired in 2010 after forty years in sales and marketing management. He is passionate about landscaping and gardening, especially with vegetables and perennials and will graduate as a UGA certified Master Gardener in January 2012. Thanks for all you do John.

Gardening Events in Our Area



Taste Your PLACE: Taste Your Tapas, Silent Auction and Athens Local Food Awards, 7pm-8:30pm, Thursday July 21.

Rain-barrel Workshop at Thyme After Thyme, 4pm to 6pm, Friday July 29 for more information www.athensclarkecounty.com/Calendar.aspx?EID=2537

Beaverdam SlowDown Dinner, 7pm both Saturday and Sunday July 30, 31. Limited reserved seating \$45.00 each. Hosted by Roots Farm. www.rootsfarm.org

Live Smarter At Winterville Depot

~Raising Backyard Critters, Thursday Aug. 11, 10AM, free

Contact our office for registration or additional info, (706) 613-3640

Amanda Says



July has been an interesting month for home gardens. Powdery mildew, downy mildew, leaf spot on red tips and Indian Hawthorne, turf diseases, and lots of tomato problems are just some of the samples that have been dropped off to the office.

From that list the most upsetting one we have seen are all the tomato diseases. Athens saw extremes for the hot weather during the time of year that most tomato plants are trying to get established in the garden. That stress during establishment, combined with the current high humidity and



temperatures has killed or maimed many plants in the area, causing some gardeners to give up until the weather calms. Some gardens have continued to thrive during this time, often due to the use of mulch and water conservation methods such as soaker hoses and drip irrigation.

July has also been a month for planning gardening activities. We are currently accepting applications for the 2012 Master Gardener program and we are planning a certified landscape professionals program. Another interesting program we are coordinating is a Master Composter program. Stay tuned for more infor-

Inquiring Gardeners

Q What use does blood meal have in the garden?

A Blood meal is a dried blood product and has a typical analysis of 13-1-0 making it a quickly available source of nitrogen. It stimulates top growth and promotes greener foliage.

Blood meal is a good organic fertilizer for heavy feeders such as corn and lettuces and other leafy greens, but use caution in application as it can also burn if used excessively. Also, it is not recommended to apply to seedlings.

My green thumb came only as a result of the mistakes I made while learning to see things from the plant's point of view.
~ H. Fred Dale

Classified Ads



Free Water Lilies, 8 varieties for sale. Call Don Sellers at 706-540-0664.

Blueberries on Jim's Farm ~ Jim is having ongoing health problems and needs pickers to help bring in this year's crop. You keep

20% of what you pick from 8am to noon. Email Jim at: jimsfarm@windstream.net

Please call Pam Snyder at 706-613-3640 or send an email to: clarkepa@uga.edu if you would like to place an ad.

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**Learning
for Life**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Cooperative Extension's mission is to respond to the people's needs and interest in Agriculture, the Environment, Families and 4-H/Youth in Athens-Clarke County with unbiased, researched-based education and infor-