

The NEBLINE

Nebraska Cooperative Extension
Newsletter
Lancaster County

THE NEBLINE is published monthly by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Rd., Suite A, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68528-1507. Contact the extension office, (402) 441-7180 for more information.



Gary C. Bergman, Extension Educator—Unit Leader

NOTICE: All programs and events listed in this newsletter will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center unless noted otherwise. Use of commercial and trade names does not imply approval or constitute endorsement by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County.

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Extension Calendar

All programs and events will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center unless otherwise noted.

- July 14**
Pesticide Container Recycling Collection, *Farmers Coop, Waverly Fertilizer Plant* 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.
- July 17**
Market Journal Satellite Conferences 8-10 p.m.
- July 18**
Hoof Trimming Clinic, *Gordon Chapelle residence* 6-7 p.m.
- July 28**
Pesticide Container Recycling Collection, *Plymouth Coop at Fairbury* 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.
- July 29**
4-H Food Booth Training - *State Fair Park* 6-7:30 p.m.
- July 30 - August 6**
County Fair Activities (see insert)
- August 4**
Pesticide Container Recycling Collection, *Plymouth Coop at Plymouth* 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.
- August 11**
Pesticide Container Recycling Collection, *Plymouth Coop at Wilber* 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.
- August 21**
Market Journal Satellite Conferences - Lancaster Extension Education Center 8-10 p.m.

Mosquitoes Have Discriminating Tastes



Are you one of the unlucky persons who always seems to get more mosquito bites when you are at an outdoor barbeque? According to a research study conducted by University of Florida entomologist Jerry Butler and research assistant Karen McKenzie, mosquitoes choose some people over others. The trick is to try to determine why.

Mosquitoes are attracted by carbon dioxide and other odors and can hone in on a blood meal 40 miles away. They fly in a zigzag fashion, using chemosensors on their antenna until they are close to the victim. Then they use vision and heat sensors to select the most attractive person to feed on.

What are the attractants? More research is needed, but Butler and McKenzie already know natural secretions through the skin and skin care products affect the mosquitoes' appetite.

Here are a few factors they have observed:
-As a person perspires and bacteria start to grow, a person may increasingly become more attractive to mosquitoes. Bathing before you attend an outdoor

evening event may be helpful.
-After bath products, skin-care products and cosmetics have ingredients that often attract mosquitoes and may last longer than insect repellents.
-Butler and McKenzie observed some medications can change an attractive person into one who is repellent or vice versa.

-They also observed a research volunteer was diagnosed with a brain tumor in the middle of the research study. Before the tumor was removed, he was repellent. Afterwards, he was attractive to mosquitoes.

Butler and McKenzie theorize mosquitoes who need cholesterol and B vitamins, but can't make them on their own, can sense which host has the richest source of nutrients. Outcomes from this research may be helpful in identifying substances that are repellent to mosquitoes.

They also suggest if you can figure out which of your friends is attractive to mosquitoes, always invite that person to your barbeques to spare your guests (and yourself) from mosquito bites. (BPO)

WORMS

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quality, than a dry or granular fast-acting chemical fertilizer of 10-20 pounds. In fact, these fertilizers may even repel the earthworms that are present. As the fertilizers become soluble, they may leach down into the soil and force the earthworms to seek refuge elsewhere.

Worms make other contributions, such as adding calcium carbonate, a compound which helps moderate soil pH. Overtime, earthworms can help change acid or alkaline soils toward a more neutral pH.

Earthworm tunnels help to aerate and loosen the soil. This allows more oxygen, which not only helps the plant directly, but also improves conditions for certain beneficial soil bacteria. Finally, the tunneling of the earthworms provide an access to deeper soil levels for the numerous smaller organisms that contribute to the health of the soil.

How can you encourage earthworm activity? First, use a mulching mower, one that leaves the grass on the lawn or spread the lawn clippings in the garden area to "feed your worms." Because earthworms are less active when the soil is dry, watering may be necessary.

Since earthworms are beneficial, control measures are not required and there are no treatments registered for earthworm control. If the mounds of soil on your lawn really bother you, you can break them up with a rake.

In summary, earthworm activity in your soil is good for your lawn and garden and should be encouraged. They help incorporate organic matter, improve the soil structure, improve water movement through the soil, improve plant root growth, and minimize thatch build up in lawns. Source: Ask Jeeves website. Check out: <http://www.askjeeves.com> (BPO)

Calling all Artists! 2001 White House Easter Egg Artistry Contest

The 2001 White House Easter Egg Artistry Contest is underway! The American Egg Board (AEB), in conjunction with the Poultry & Egg Division of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, is again sponsoring this statewide contest. Nebraska artists are asked to decorate an egg to represent some special feature(s) of the State of Nebraska.

The winning egg chosen from the state of Nebraska will be sent to the American Egg Board for inclusion in the 2001 Easter Egg Display at the White House in Washington, D.C. Entries for this year's contest are due September 7, 2000. For contest criteria or futher information, contact Mary Torell by e-mail at mtorell2@unl.edu or call 402-472-0752. (GB)

