

# My Child Was Sent Home With Head Lice — Now What Do I Do?

If your children are in school or in day care, they will probably be exposed to head lice at some time. Head lice are indiscriminate. Your family is just as likely to end up with head lice as the Jones' down the street.

## What am I looking for?

**Head lice** are small; adults are only one-tenth to one-eighth inch long and immature lice are even smaller. They are tan to grayish-white and are hard to see when on the scalp. Head lice cannot fly or hop, but they do crawl quickly through the hair.



Lice eggs, or nits, are glued to hair strands about one-half inch from the scalp.

**Nits** are lice eggs. You will need to be looking for the nits especially if your school or day care has a "no-nit policy." A no-nit policy means that your child will not be allowed back to school if they have nits. Nits are white when first laid. The nits turn coffee-colored before they hatch. The nits are glued to the hair strands about one-half inch from the scalp. This glue is so strong that nits cannot be as easily removed as dandruff or other hair debris.

Lice are very hard to see so look for the nits. Check the hair near the scalp especially behind the ears and the nape of the neck.

## How do I treat lice?

We suggest that you use an insecticidal product that is labeled for head lice control. There are many products available over the counter. Visit your grocery, pharmacy, or discount store.

There are also products available by prescription. We do

not recommend the shampoo prescription for KWELL®. This product is not as effective as other treatments and it is more hazardous.

Ovide® is a prescription product that has been reintroduced to the United States. It has been used in European countries for many years. You may have success with this product if the over-the-counter products do not seem to be working.

## Combing for head lice

Combing is a safe, non-toxic control method. It takes time and patience but you can even eliminate the use of head lice control products if you are diligent. Combing is **essential** in any head lice treatment and it must be done correctly for it to be effective.

## Resources

The Extension office has detailed information on head lice treatment, tips on prevention and reducing the chances of reinfestations, and most important - directions on combing for head lice. Fact sheets in English and Spanish are available. The award-winning video, "Removing Head Lice Safely," is currently being shown on 5CityTV (Cable Channel 5 in



A family of head lice. Adults are only one-tenth to one-eighth inch long.

Lincoln). Check your cable programming schedule. You can also access the video via your computer by visiting our office Web site at [www.lancaster.unl.edu](http://www.lancaster.unl.edu). You may want to check with your school nurses or day care administrator—they may have a copy of the video in their reference library. If you would like to purchase the video, contact the Extension office for more information. (SC)

Next Month's NEBLINE: *Combing for Head Lice - Essential for Success!*

## Why Don't Lice Treatments Seem to Work?

Head lice affects thousands of Nebraska children each year. Parents are frustrated with treatment options that do not seem to work. Why don't these treatments work?

- Some parents use head lice products improperly by not following the label directions *exactly*.
- Other parents are reluctant to use insecticidal products and are using home remedies, like oils and mayonnaise. No studies have shown

that these home remedies are effective against head lice.

- Insecticidal treatments are generally effective, however, studies have shown that head lice may be developing some resistance to these products.

Resources from the Lancaster County Extension office are available to help you make the best treatment choices. Call (402) 441-7180 for more information or [www.lancaster.unl.edu](http://www.lancaster.unl.edu). (SC)

# Facts and Myths of Hedge Apples

This time of year, hedge apples — the fruit from the Osage-orange tree — are being sold at farmer's markets, garden centers, and other locations. Many people have heard that these fruits can be used as an insect repellent, but the truth is that many people don't know much else about this unusual tree and its fruit.

## The Tree and Its Fruit

The Osage-orange is a small to medium-sized tree, having a short trunk and a rounded or irregular crown. The twigs are

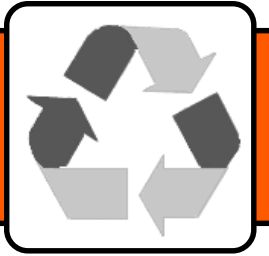
buff to orange-brown and are armed with one-half inch long spines. The stems exude a milky sap when cut. The Osage-orange is dioecious, meaning that male and female flowers are produced on separate trees. The small, green flowers appear in May or June. Female trees produce 3- to 5- inch diameter fruit which ripen in September or October and fall to the ground.

## Native Habitat and Current Distribution

The Osage-orange is native to a small area in eastern Texas,

southeastern Oklahoma, and southwestern Arkansas. This region is the home of the Osage Indians which gives the tree its common name. Settlers found that the Osage-orange transplanted easily, tolerated poor soils, extreme heat, and strong winds and had no serious insect or disease problems. It was widely planted in the Midwest as a living fence because, when pruned into a hedge, it provided an impenetrable barrier to livestock. The development of barbed wire curtailed its widespread planting, but many

## Environmental Focus



# Eek! There's a Mouse in the House

This is the time of the year that mice move into buildings seeking shelter. The earliest sign could be the scampering of a mouse across a room which startles even the least squeamish of us. Mice in an unfamiliar structure sometimes move in the open because they haven't yet found hiding places and established pathways. Now is the time to start control efforts! Mice are a lot easier to control before they get established.

Set several snap traps in the vicinity where you have seen the mouse or its droppings. Traps should be placed next to walls or in corners, especially in areas where droppings are found. Try baiting the trap with peanut butter; bacon is also good. Sometimes, a clever mouse will lick the peanut butter off the trigger without springing the trap. Tying a small piece of bacon to the trap plate with thread will force the mouse to tug on it. Female mice look for nesting material. Try tying a cotton ball to the trigger to catch females.

Live traps can also be useful in catching mice, especially in barns or granaries where numbers are high. These traps don't need to be baited, although they do need to be checked regularly, daily, if possible. Release captured mice far away from the building so they don't return and

get recaptured.

Sticky boards should be placed in conjunction with traps. Sometimes mice that lick the trap clean will get caught in the sticky trap.

Toxicant baits can also be used for rodent control although there are disadvantages of using bait to control rodents in homes. Offensive odors can result when mice die inside walls after feeding on a toxicant bait. These odors cannot be eliminated without removing the dead rodent, although the odor will dissipate over time. Dead animal carcasses may become infested with insects that may also infest the home, including several kinds of flies and carpet beetles. The larvae of carpet beetles may also damage leather, woolens, and other animal products inside the home.

To keep mice and other unwelcome critters outside, caulk or fill cracks around windows and foundations that are one-fourth inch or greater. Mice can squeeze through spaces as small as the width of a pencil. (Caulking cracks will also help prevent insect invaders.)

People who are extremely uncomfortable with do-it-yourself rodent control, can work with professional pest control companies who will exterminate rodents. (BPO)

## Insect Quiz

Match the Picture With the Common Name



A



B



C

- Wireworm
- Pillbug
- Centipede
- Millipede



D

Answers on page 11

Osage-orange trees can still be found in fence rows.

## Uses of the Osage-Orange

The wood is extremely hard, heavy, durable and shrinks or swells little compared to the wood of other trees. The wood is used for fence posts, treenails, furniture, and archery bows. In fact, many archers consider the wood of the Osage-orange to be

the world's finest wood for bows. Another common name for this tree, bodark, is from the French bois d'arc mean "bow wood." This tree also produces a bright yellow dye which can be extracted from the wood.

The fruit of the Osage-orange is a nuisance in the home landscape and has little value. Hedge apples are not an impor-

See **HEDGE APPLES** on page 11