



Home Gardening Newsletter

August-September
2019



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Swain County Fair

When you think about a county fair you may find yourself cracking a smile recalling memories of fun experiences you had as a child. The importance of county fairs dates back to a time when rural folks loved to get together and celebrate. It's a time of festivity where youth and community members gather together to display their best harvest and crafts, along with enjoying long-lasting relationships and traditions. An air of anticipation, excitement, and high energy surround people of all ages during a county fair. Youth and adults alike are drawn together to rekindle friendships, to be together as families, and to show off their achievements. Communities are inspired by the efforts of volunteers who work together to create a cohesive atmosphere that defines a county fair.

Experiencing a county fair allows youth who participate in livestock projects to balance fun with practicing communication skills, appreciate competition, learn independence and how to handle issues that come up in life. For example, showing livestock has show time deadlines that need to be met. A county fair provides opportunities for each young person to get feedback on their project not only in livestock but in other areas such as: artwork, displaying vegetables from the garden and more! Of course, there's no fun, mentoring or offering feedback unless there are volunteers and parents helping everyone be successful. It takes a "village" to make a fair happen and help youth gain important life skills from the fair experience.

Benefits of a County Fair

A county fair is a community celebration that brings folks together each year. Citizens come together to socialize, meet new people, learn and enjoy good local food and entertainment.

Through contests, exhibits, shows and entertainment, there are so many different things to see and do at the county fair. You can check out the quilts, canned goods, artwork, or gardening and crop exhibits to see the fruits of labor that was achieved throughout the year.

A county fair is an excellent opportunity to learn and try new things. Exhibits and entertainment provide life lessons to all who come to enjoy them each year. It's always so much fun to look through everything and gain new knowledge. Because everyone remembers fun, they remember friends and they remember what they've learned. These are the most important values of the county fair and its impact to our local community.

What You Can Do to Help with the Swain County Fair on Saturday August 17th?

Become an Exhibitor - Many people don't realize or think about the fact that they can bring their interest and talent to the fair as an exhibit. The more exhibits the better as folks love to come to the fair to see things. So, check out our Swain County Fair website to see what you can do to become an exhibitor or to setup an education booth.

Get Involved & Volunteer - Time is precious but volunteering your time at the county fair is time well spent. Helping out will enable you to make new acquaintances, discover new opportunities, see the other side why things are the way they are and unearth the county fair's importance.

Invite Others to Exhibit & Help Them

Do you have a friend who is a gifted crafter or has amazing artwork? Invite them to showcase their talents at the fair. Tell them about opportunities at the fair and help them learn how to be an exhibitor.

For more information about the upcoming Swain Fair go to:
<https://swain.ces.ncsu.edu/2019/05/2019-swain-county-agricultural-fair> and like us on Facebook too!



Migrating Millipedes

This summer, I've received a lot of phone calls and e-mails about "millipede sittings" with questions such as; what are these critters, where do they come from and how do I control them? Millipedes which can be confused with centipedes, are occasional pests that sometimes invade our homes and commercial buildings. Typically, millipede migrations occur when the weather turns hot and dry or conversely with an excessive amount of rainfall. In either scenario, millipedes leave their habitat for cooler or higher and drier ground.

While millipedes infrequently enter in large numbers, they do not bite, sting, or transmit diseases, nor do they infest food, clothing or wood. Millipedes vary in both color and size and although they are often called "thousandleggers," they actually have two pairs of very short legs per body segment while centipedes have only one pair of legs per segment. The garden millipede touted as the most common millipede, is about 1-inch in length with a habit of curling up into the shape of a "C" while giving off an unpleasant odor for protection when ever disturbed.



Garden Millipede (*Oxidus gracilis*)
M. Bertone

Once millipedes begin looking for cooler or drier ground, they love to climb and can be seen crawling up to the second floor and even the roof but, are more commonly observed under the door and in areas where moisture accumulates, such as crawlspaces, basements and garages. It's not uncommon for homeowners to find piles of dead millipedes outdoors along walls and on driveways.

Control Options

The most effective, long-term measure for diminishing entry of millipedes is to reduce excess moisture and hiding places, especially near the foundation. Remove heavy accumulations of mulch (keep 6-12" away from wall), leaves, grass clippings, wooden boards, stones, and similar items lying on the ground beside the foundation.

Prevent water from accumulating near the foundation, in basement walls or in the crawl space. Keep gutters and down spouts free of debris and use either splashguards or perforated pipe to reduce puddling. Homes with poor drainage may need to have foundation drains installed, or the surrounding ground contoured or sloped to so that surface water drains away from the building. Prevent water from puddling where there are leaking exterior water spigots or pipes from air conditioning units. Reduce the humidity in crawl spaces and basements by providing adequate ventilation, sump pumps, polyethylene soil covers, dehumidifiers, etc.

Since millipedes often thrive in the moist, dense thatch layer of poorly maintained turf, keeping the grass mowed close should make the lawn less suitable for millipedes. Over-watering or watering during the evening may also contribute to millipede problems.

Consider sealing pest entry points. This means sealing cracks and openings in the outside foundation wall, and around the sills of doors and basement windows. Install door sweeps on all exterior entry doors, and apply caulk along the bottom outside edge and sides of door thresholds. Seal expansion joints along the bottom of basement walls on the interior to reduce entry of pests and moisture from outdoors.

Indoor control - Application of insecticides along baseboards and other interior living areas of the home do not really stop millipede invasions. Once indoors, millipedes end up in kitchens, living rooms, etc. and soon die from a lack of moisture. Vacuuming up dead millipedes is the best approach.

For outdoor control - Insecticides may help to reduce inward invasion of these and other pests when applied along the bottom of exterior doors, around crawl space entrances, foundation vents and utility openings, and up underneath siding. For more information on outdoor control measures go to the NCSU website: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/controlling-millipedes-in-and-around-homes>

August Horticulture Tips



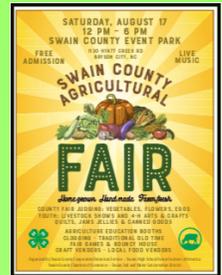
Lawns

- Check for white grubs under turf late in the month. Treat with insecticide if needed.
- Submit soil samples for fall fertilizer recommendations.
- Do not seed or fertilize fescue or bluegrass before the last week in August.



Vegetables

- *Enter your vegetables as an exhibit at this years Swain County Fair August 17th*
- Plant for fall garden: beets, mustard, onions, spinach, turnips, lettuce, kale, squash.
- Transplant broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, Chinese cabbage and cauliflower.
- Continue monitoring for diseases and insects.
- Dig Irish potatoes this month or next.
- Harvest onions about a week after tops have fallen over.
- Submit soil samples so lime can be applied in the fall.
- Maintain fungicide sprays on tomatoes to prevent late blight.
- Remove crop residues after harvest. Put plants in compost pile if not infected with insects or disease.



Fruits

- Harvest peaches and early apples.
- Fertilize strawberries with nitrogen fertilizer. Keep weeds pulled from the strawberry bed.
- Spray trunks of peach and nectarine trees for peach tree borers at the end of the month.
- Continue grape and fruit tree sprays. Follow label directions for pre-harvest interval.
- Keep weeds pulled from around grape vines and fruit trees.

Trees Shrubs & Flowers

- Cut back and feed annuals to produce new growth and fall blooms.
- Remove spent blossoms from purple coneflowers, daisies, Black-eyed Susans, and butterfly bush for blooms until frost.
- Divide daylilies if crowded. Cut back to 6-8" above ground.
- Perennials to start from seed include: poppy, lupine, cardinal flower and Shasta daisy.
- Feed roses for the last time by mid-month.
- Do NOT prune or fertilize shrubs.
- Continue to monitor for insect problems. Remove and destroy bagworms.
- Continue to control weeds.

Miscellaneous Tasks

- Prepare landscape plan for fall planting.
- Empty and refill birdbaths regularly to prevent mosquitoes from breeding. Scrub with bleach solution to prevent algae buildup.
- Be alert for yellow jacket nests. Beginning in August, populations that have been docile become defensive around the nest.



Upcoming Bee Events

Jackson Bee Chapter - This new and growing bee chapter has their monthly meetings every 3rd Tuesday of the month (Aug. 20th & Sept. 17th), 7:00 p.m. at the Jackson Extension Center located on 876 Skyland Dr. Sylva, N.C. All those interested in Beekeeping are most welcome! Find them on FaceBook!

Smoky Mountain Beekeepers - New and veteran beekeepers from Swain and neighboring areas meet the 2nd Thursday of the month (Aug. 8th & Sept. 12th), 7:00 p.m. at the Swain Extension Center on 60 Almond School Rd.(SCC Bldg.). For more information go to website: smokymtnbeekeepr.com



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Sincerely,
Christy Bredenkamp, Extension Agent
Agriculture-Horticulture



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