

Extension Perspectives

June 2009

Waldo County

Volume 27

Protecting Yourself from Lyme Disease

By far, the best way to avoid Lyme disease is to be aware of the risk of tick bites and to act accordingly.

The good news is that deer ticks usually do not transmit Lyme bacteria until they have been attached for at least 24 hours - up to 48 hours for adult ticks.

In addition, even in highly endemic areas, only 40-50% of adult deer ticks may be infected.

In a recent study, no more than 3.4% of individuals seen by physicians for deer tick bites who were not treated with antibiotics eventually developed Lyme disease. Diagnosed in its early stages, Lyme disease is easily and effectively treated with oral antibiotics. If Lyme disease is unrecognized and untreated, it may progress to cause arthritis and neurological problems but treatment is still usually effective.

Some precautions to take when you are outside include: tuck your pant legs into your socks and your shirt into your pants. Wear light-colored clothing so ticks may be seen more easily. Use a repellent containing DEET according to label directions -- particularly on shoes, socks, and pant

legs. Avoid applying high-concentration products to the skin, especially on children. Inspect yourself, your clothing, your children, your companion, and your pets for ticks when you get in from the yard, garden or field. Ticks often attach in body folds, behind ears and in the hair.

Prompt removal of attached ticks is extremely important. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible, preferably with fine tweezers, and pull gently but firmly until the tick lets go. Do not handle ticks with bare hands. Do not squeeze the tick. Apply antiseptic to the bite. Save the tick in a small vial of 70% alcohol.

Common tick removal methods, such as scorching the tick with a match, or applying Vaseline or nail polish are not recommended because they may cause infected tick body fluids to be expelled into the skin. One recent study showed that a single dose of antibiotic was effective in preventing Lyme disease if given within 72 hours after a deer tick was removed. Consult your physician immediately if you remove an engorged deer tick.

Source: *Protecting Yourself From Lyme Disease*, Maine Medical Center Research Institute Vector-Borne Disease Lab, <http://www.mmcri.org/lyme/prevent.html>

University of Maine Cooperative Extension
992 Waterville Rd, Waldo ME 04915
1-800-287-1426 • www.extension.umaine.edu/WaldoCounty

CALENDAR

Doing Business Radio Show

Thursday 10am - 11am
June 4 *Doing Business with an Artisans' Coop*
WERU 89.9/102.9 FM Live broadcast encourages listeners to phone the station with comments, reactions, & questions.
Visit www.umext.maine.edu/Waldo/Radio

The 9th Annual Maine Fiber Frolic

Saturday-Sunday 9 - 4 pm
June 6 - 7 **Windsor Fairgrounds**
Rt. 32, Windsor - Maine Admission is \$4/adult, \$2/senior adult, and children under 12 are free. This is the 10th Anniversary of the Llama Drill Team!!! More info at: www.fiberfrolic.com

Waldo County Extension Assoc Meeting

Monday 6:30pm - 8pm
June 8
University of Maine Cooperative Extension, 992 Waterville Rd, Waldo. Public welcome

Ecological Weed Management

Tuesday 5pm
June 16 **Dixmont**
At Peacemeal Farm. Workshop will offer ecological & cultural approaches to weed mgmt. with experts from MOFGA and UMaine. Featuring a weed control primer using various forms of cultivation equipment available to vegetable growers. Part of the Farm Training Project series from MOFGA.

From the Soil Up, a course for begging vegetable gardeners - Part 2: Garden Maintenance & Ecological Pest Management

Monday 1-3pm
June 22 **Unity, ME**
Unity Community Center, 32 School St. For more information email richardk@umext.maine.edu or call 1-800-287-1426. Total cost of the course \$10. Pre-registration req. (Part 3 on August 3: Harvest & Storage of Season's Bounty)

Intro to Farm Equipment:

Safety, Operation & Basic Maintenance

Tuesday 5pm
June 23 **MOFGA, Unity**
Join staff from MOFGA and UMaine Extension. We'll cover tractor operation & safety; attaching, adjusting & operating farm implements, basic preventative lubrication & maint. Participants practice driving tractors of different models and sizes and attaching and operating implements. Part of a series: the Farm Training Project, designed for and targeted to participants in MOFGA's Apprenticeship Program, though free and open to anyone interested. Participants are invited to stay for discussion. For more info about series or directions to workshops, or to get yourself on our FTP reminder mailing list, email April at education@mofga.org or call 568-4142.

Parents Are Teachers Too program

If you are expecting
or recently had your first baby,
call **1-800-287-1426** for more information
or to enroll in the **PATT** program
to help your child get the best possible start in life.

Eat Well program

Could you use help in stretching food stamps,
cooking and shopping for one or two,
providing snacks for children?
Contact UMaine Cooperative Extension
Eat Well Program for a Nutrition Aide to help you.

In complying with the letter and spirit of applicable laws and in pursuing its own goals of diversity, the University of Maine System shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin or citizenship status, age, disability, or veterans status in employment, education, and all other areas of the University. The University provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request. Questions and complaints about discrimination in any area of the University should be directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity, The University of Maine, Room 101, 5754 North Stevens Hall, Orono, ME 04469-5754, telephone 581-1226 (voice and TDD).

Any person with a disability who needs accommodations for this program should contact Jane Haskell at 1-800-287-1426 to discuss their needs at least 14 days in advance.

Northeast Pasture Consortium Website

Link to graziers, Research Summaries, extension resources and other grazing websites. For more information, contact Rick Kersbergen at richardk@umext.maine.edu, 1-800-287-1426, or visit www.umaine.edu/grazingguide

2009 Maine Swarm Collectors Directory

To download the latest edition of beekeepers willing to collect swarms of honeybees, visit:
www.maine.gov/agriculture/pi/apiary/documents/2009SwarmCollectors.pdf

Selling Eggs in Maine

When selling eggs in Maine, the size and grade of the eggs, the name and address of the packer and the statement that refrigeration is required must be on the egg carton or label. No license is required by the State for producers of eggs with less than 3000 laying hens. Eggs must be stored and transported at 45°F or less. For specific questions or additional information about regulations, contact Dana Finnemore at (207) 287-3841 or dana.finnemore@maine.gov

Farmers: would you like to keep in touch with your customers?

Small Farm Central in Pennsylvania has a *How-To Guide for Establishing a Customer Email Database* for farmers at www.smallfarmcentral.com/node/158 For more information on customer service, contact your Extension office.

June Garden Activities

- Check your garden at least once per week for signs of pest activity and decide if you need to apply any controls. If you don't know what the pest is bring a sample of insect, diseased leaves or damaged leaves into your Extension Office for identification. **Many people have begun emailing digital pictures of pest problems. You can email digital pictures to richardk@umext.maine.edu**
- Finish planting the garden and prepare for succession plantings (lettuce, followed by beans, followed by lettuce) to keep your garden productive all through the summer and into the fall.
- Listen to the weather prediction for night time temperatures and be prepared to cover any cold sensitive crops (tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, etc.) when temperatures go below 40°F. Tomatoes will benefit from protection against temperatures cooler than 50°F.
- Protect strawberry flowers from frost with a light mist of water early in the morning when frost comes early in the morning.
- Check the soil moisture and keep an eye on the rain fall amounts. Remember most crops do best with about an inch per week. Daily light watering is usually not beneficial.
- Annual flowers will benefit from regular applications of fertilizer during the summer. Also, dead heading flowers will maintain their flowering habit longer.

Before May is out, Don't forget to ...

- Remove caterpillar nests with a gloved hand from small trees and shrubs on your property, or clip off the stem supporting the nest with shears. Dispose of the sticky nest in the trash, bury it in your compost pile, or submerge the nest in soapy water. Removal of the nests will considerably reduce the caterpillars that defoliate your trees. Do not use flame (torches) to destroy the nest. This is very risky and will likely damage the tree.
- Consider getting your lawn mower into the shop for a maintenance check or perform a maintenance check yourself by sharpening the blade(s), changing the oil, changing the spark plug, checking the belts and cleaning it up for a new season.
- Do a “walk around” your property to see what needs to be done with plants. Did everything make it through the winter? Prune off any damaged portions of the plants.
- If you have not done so by now, rake the lawn and place rakings in the compost pile.
- Many perennial shrubs, berry plants and trees can be planted now, while the nursery stock is still dormant and readily available.
- Start “hardening off” purchased or self-grown seedlings by gradually acclimating them to winds and other weather conditions.
- By the end of the month and after the threat of frost is past, it should be safe to plant tomato, eggplant, pepper and cucumber seedlings as well as direct seeding beans, summer squash and winter squash outside.
- When setting out seedlings, consider using a phosphorous rich “starter solution” as a fertilizer. Phosphorous may not be available to plants in cold Maine soil in the spring. By adding a fertilizer with a high Phosphorous value (the middle number in fertilizer analysis N-P-K), you will promote rooting of the new seedlings. Fertilizers such as 10-20-10 or 15-30-15 provide readily available phosphorous.
- Every Friday evening at 5:30 you can view "Your Garden" segments on NBC affiliates WCSH 6 and WLBZ2.
- Place 3-6" of mulch on the soil around your perennial plantings to inhibit weed growth. Materials such as bark, woodchips, shavings and/or pine needles work well.
- Consider taking photos of your property each month this growing season. You could be surprised how trees, shrubs and other plantings change over 4-5 months.
- Consider planting new plants in your landscape. Visit your local nursery or garden center to check out the options. Always consider the mature size of a plant when purchasing. Know how tall and wide it typically will grow.

By Richard Brzozowski, Extension Educator, Cumberland County, Maine, rbrz@umext.maine.edu ; Dr. David Handley, Extension Specialist, Highmoor Farm, dhandley@umext.maine.edu

New Publications!

Order publications at www.extensionpubs.umext.maine.edu or call (207) 581-3792

Storey's Guide to Raising Chickens Item #2234 Retail price: \$18.95

Gail Damerow. Described by Ron Macher of Small Farm Today magazine as "the best single book on chicken raising I have seen," this comprehensive guide covers choosing, housing, feeding, and managing a flock of meat birds or layers, as well as collecting and storing eggs, incubation and hatching, chick care, health care, and preparing chickens for show. Damerow is editor of Rural Heritage magazine and a contributor to Backyard Poultry magazine, and has raised chickens since 1970. 52 pages, 1995.

The Maine Home Garden News

Free monthly electronic newsletter from UMaine Extension. It is issued March through October and is designed to equip Maine home gardeners with practical information on successfully growing vegetables, fruits and herbs, as well as flowers, lawns, shrubs and trees. To subscribe, visit: www.umext.maine.edu/gardennews or call (207) 581-3792.

Squirrels Eating Your Bird Seed?



A recent National Home Gardening Club newsletter article suggested using hot pepper spices to stop squirrels from eating birdseed. They suggest that it doesn't hurt the squirrels, but the hot flavor will make them seek other food and leave the bird seed alone for the birds. A company has started marketing sunflower meats treated with a peppery Cajun coating called Cole's Hot Meats birdseed from <http://www.coleswildbird.com/>

While birds can't taste the heat at all our wildlife specialist Cathy Elliott suggests that even though they might not be able to taste it, or feel the heat, she is a little cautious of exposing them to a continuous diet of hot peppers. Their digestive systems are fairly robust, but she is not convinced that too much of a good thing would be ... well ... too much until more long term studies and determine the affect of long term hot pepper spiced diet.

If someone is thinking of using this commercial seed (or adding cayenne to their bird seed) Cathy would suggest using it for a while and then going back to "clean" seed ... that would give the birds a break and give the person an opportunity to see if the lesson learned stays with the squirrels for a bit.

Source: National Home Gardening Club newsletter, May 7, 2009.
www.gardeningclub.com



Winter Squash: Big Yields From Spectacular Plants

A 50-foot row of winter squash can yield 80 pounds or more-80 pounds of a high-fiber vegetable that is rich in vitamins and minerals, can be stored long into winter and makes a delicious main course, side dish or dessert. Yes, winter squash takes a fair amount of room to grow, but its bounty is an excellent way to help feed yourself quality food for much of the year.

A good soil for growing winter squash will be well-drained, fertile and high in organic matter. A technical bulletin called "Basics of Organic Vegetable Gardening" (available from the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association at www.mofga.org under "Publications") recommends digging a hole 10 to 12 inches deep for each "hill" of winter squash plants. A hill is not a mound, but simply a group of three to five plants. Put 1/2 to 1 cup of rock phosphate (if a soil test shows that your garden needs phosphorus) and 4 or 5 cups of well-rotted manure in the bottom of the hole. Mix 1 cup of wood ashes with the soil that you dug from the hole and fill the hole with that soil. Make additional hills 3 to 5 feet apart.

After the last spring frost (usually in mid-May to early June, depending on your location in Maine), sow three to five seeds in each hill. Some gardeners start squash plants indoors a few weeks before the last spring frost and transplant them to the garden after the last frost-being careful not to disturb their roots. And some put black plastic mulch down a couple of weeks before planting and plant seeds or transplants through that after the last spring frost.

Once the plants or seeds are in the ground, keep the soil moist: Mulch with newspapers covered with grass clippings if you did not use plastic mulch; or water the plants when the soil starts to become dry.

To keep cucumber beetles from attacking these plants (and spreading bacterial wilt disease, which can kill the plants), cover them with fabric row covers-but remove

the covers once the plants flower so that bees can get at the flowers to pollinate them.

Harvest winter squash after its skin is mature enough to resist being punctured by your fingernail. Store the vegetables at room temperature in a dry place. Check them every week or so. Any that seem to be softening or showing imminent signs of rotting should be cooked right away. You can freeze cooked squash flesh for later use.

Winter squash will be the featured "crop of the year" at MOFGA's Common Ground Country Fair exhibition hall on September 25, 26 and 27 this year. The Exhibition Hall coordinators hope that gardeners and farmers will enter enough variety to create a spectacular display of not just the common 'Buttercups,' 'Hubbards' and 'Waltham Butternuts' but also heirloom varieties from around the world-such as 'Japanese Futsu,' 'French Galeux d'Eysines,' 'Australian Queensland Blue,' 'Yugoslavian Finger Fruit,' 'Pennsylvania Dutch Crookneck' or 'Italian Marina di Chioggia'.

For more about growing winter squash, see "Growing Superior Winter Squashes," a talk that Rob Johnston Jr. of Johnny's Selected Seeds gave at the Maine Agricultural Trades Show a few years ago. It's posted at www.mofga.org/mofga/other/mofgm04j.html.

Article by Jean English and Eric Sideman. Photo by Jean English. This article is provided by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), PO Box 170, Unity, ME 04988; 207-568-4142; mofga@mofga.org; www.mofga.org. Joining MOFGA helps support and promote organic farming and gardening in Maine and helps Maine consumers enjoy more healthful, Maine-grown food. ©2009



Maine Forest Service Issues Firewood Warning

Campers heading to their favorite Maine campsites are being reminded: **Leave Your Firewood At Home!**

Invasive insects that could destroy Maine forests can be carried in firewood from one location to another. Campers should buy firewood at their camping destination, instead of carrying it with them, according to MFS Forest Entomologist Charlene Donohue.

“I can’t begin to emphasize how important this is,” Donohue said. “There are several dangerous species that can destroy Maine trees, such as maples and ashes. That destruction not only could kill our forests, but also affect our important forest and tourism industries.

“All campers, especially our out-of-state visitors, can do a lot to preserve our woods heritage and our economy by following this simple suggestion,” she stressed.

Campers at state parks, particularly those from other states, will be asked about their firewood, Tom Morrison, Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands operations and maintenance director, said Monday. Signs warning of the problem also will be posted at the parks this summer, he said.

One highly dangerous insect – the Asian longhorned beetle – is already too close to Maine, Donohue said. This beetle, which kills maples, birches, poplars, willows and other tree species, already has been found in Worcester, Mass., as well as in New York, New Jersey and Toronto, Canada.

A federal quarantine is in place, prohibiting the transportation of firewood across quarantine lines, the MFS entomologist said.

“If this nasty bug ever gets established in Maine, it could destroy our maple sugar industry and our foliage tourism industry,” Donohue warned. “This is serious business.”

Invasive species can lodge in, on or under firewood bark, or be deep within the wood, the entomologist said. The insects often can’t be seen in the wood. Infected wood that is transported to “clean” locales, especially if it’s left lying around for any length of time, can allow the spread of the bad bugs, she said.

Left alone, an invasive insect might spread only a few miles in one year, Donohue said. Carried in firewood, it can spread hundreds of miles in one year, she pointed out.

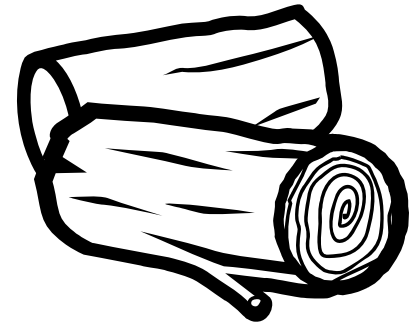
One of the most serious invasive bugs is the emerald ash borer, which has the potential to kill all ash trees in North America. Ash wood, in particular, is used to make baseball bats.

The emerald ash borer, which can kill a tree in three to five years, has killed millions of trees in the Midwest and has been found, as of 2008, in Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Wisconsin, Missouri, Maryland and Ontario, Canada.

Just last week, state officials in Minnesota reported the presence of the emerald ash borer in that state. Three infested trees were found in a line of trees in front of some town houses in a St. Paul neighborhood.

Donohue has been giving firewood and invasive species training to Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands staff people, Morrison said. Park staffers will be on the look-out regarding firewood, particularly that brought in by campers from areas where known insect problems exist, the BPL operations director said.

“We will be talking to campers, particularly campers from where there is a known problem,” Morrison said. “If they bring in firewood, we will be asking them to burn it the first day.”



Firewood will be available at most parks, Morrison said. Campers can buy it there or from local vendors, he said.

Remember these four safety tips:

- Use firewood you obtain locally;
- Don’t transport firewood more than 50 miles (across county lines, to second homes, such as summer houses, cottages, cabins & hunting shacks);
- Don’t take firewood home that you got elsewhere;
- If you’ve already transported firewood, don’t leave it or bring it home – burn it!

For more information, contact Maine Forest Service Forest Entomologist Charlene Donohue at 287-3244 or email: Charlene.Donohue@maine.gov or call Maine Forest Service Insect & Disease Lab at 287-2431 or email: forestinfo@maine.gov or go to: www.maine.gov/firewood or www.dontmovefirewood.org or www.twincities.com/ci_12374493



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