

ANR

NEWSLETTER

Greensville-Emporia Winter 2021

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Helping Kids Grow

Sara Rutherford



This summer I had the opportunity to teach the children in the preschool classes at the Emporia-Greensville YMCA about seed germination and growing fruits and vegetables. Their enthusiasm and knowledge about seeds and plants was encouraging and impressive. They were eager to answer my questions and had great guesses when asked if they knew what the parts of a seed were. In extension, it is important that we help children and adults increase their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. It is also important that we engage children on their level, allowing them to learn in ways they understand. Each child planted seeds and vegetable seedlings. The activity helped them understand where their food comes from and allowed them to care for and watch their plants grow throughout the summer.

WHAT'S THAT WEED?

Sara Rutherford



Lawn Burweed- *Soliva sessilis*

Lawn burweed usually becomes a problem in late spring when the flower heads set seed and become hard and brittle. The seed heads harm the bare feet of humans and paws of pets. Other names for this weed are spurweed, knawel and sticker weed. Lawn burweed is NOT a grass and must be treated in the fall when it germinates as a winter annual. It germinates where the grass is thin as temperatures cool. It remains small and inconspicuous during the cold winter months. In the spring when temperatures warm, lawn burweed grows rapidly and begins to form spine-tipped burs. The seeds are contained within this hooked bur. This is often the most prominent identifying characteristic.

Overall, the plant gets 3" to 4" tall, has leaves that are approximately 1/2 to 1 1/2 inches long and 1/4 to 1/2 inch wide and if left untreated, can quickly take over weak parts of the lawn. To control this weed without herbicides, use cultural control methods, like liming and fertilizing according to soil test results and mowing at the proper height and...

Upcoming Programs

September 11- Family & Farm Day from 9:00am to 2:00pm at the Extension research center; located 2.5 miles east of Blackstone on route 40. Bring the whole family and enjoy learning about Virginia's largest and oldest industry, agriculture!! Corn maze, farm animals, reptiles, crafts for kids, and much more! This is a free event. Concessions provided by the Nottoway FFA. No pre-registration required.

A History of Peanuts in Virginia

Sara Rutherford- Extension Agent, Greenville/Emporia, VA

It is currently August and the peanut crop in Greenville County is progressing well. Peanuts have been grown commercially in our area since the 1840's. The first noted crop was in Sussex county. In 1860 peanut production increased due to the decline in cotton from the boll weevil infestation which plagued farmers. By 1900, specialized peanut farming equipment was being used, and by the 1920's, breeding programs for the Virginia-type peanut began. In 1930, Amedeo Obici (Suffolk, VA) founded Planters Nut and Chocolate Company (Planters Peanuts). By the conclusion of World War II, Virginia was no longer the peanut production leader in the United States. Other states, such as Georgia, Alabama and North Carolina filled that role. In 2002, the U.S. government stopped its support and allotment programs for peanuts. This caused many peanut farmers to cease growing the crop. Some even went out of business completely.

Today peanuts are currently only grown in the counties of Dinwiddie, Greenville, Isle of Wight, Prince George, Southampton, Suffolk, Surry and Sussex. Even though the number of acres of peanuts planted have decreased drastically since the early 1950's, yield continued to rise during that time as efficiency in growing the crop increased, allowing farmers to produce more peanuts on fewer acres.

There are two types of peanut currently grown commercially in the United States; Virginia and runner-types. Demand for the Virginia-type peanut has grown in previous years due to consumer preferences. Consumers also purchase a lot of peanut butter, which is made mostly from runner-type peanuts. Although Virginia peanut growers mainly grow Virginia-type peanuts, some also grow runner-types. Virginia peanuts have the largest seeds, excellent flavor and can be consumed in a myriad of ways. They also have a high oil content, which is attractive to the manufacturers of peanut oil.

Today, peanuts have made a comeback in Virginia and many other southeastern states. Other countries, such as Brazil, have entered the international peanut market, expanding buying options for countries in search of peanuts for their consumers and processors. Notably, China has been a large buyer and consumer of peanuts and peanut products. By the end of 2020, almost all of the United States peanuts had been sold, thus causing domestic and international demand to increase. The 2021 peanut crop should yield a higher price due to supply and demand, which is great news for peanut farmers in Virginia and the U.S.!

There are many local commercial peanut processors and shellers in Virginia like the Wakefield Peanut Company, Old Dominion Peanut Company, Birdsong Peanut Company and Planters Peanut Company. Smaller, local peanut sellers in Virginia include Belmont Peanuts in Southampton, The Good Earth Peanut Company in Greenville, Hubs Virginia Peanuts in Suffolk and the Virginia Diner in Sussex, to name a few.

For more on Virginia Peanuts, visit <https://www.aboutpeanuts.com>.

Spotted Lanternfly: A New Invasive Pest in Virginia

Dr. Eric Day, Dr. Doug Pfeiffer and Dr Theresa Dellinger, VT Entomology Dept.



The spotted lanternfly (SLF) has been on the move in Virginia after it appeared near Winchester in January of 2018. It is native to China, where it has been documented in detail dating as far back as the 12th century. It is also found in India, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. SLF was first detected in the U.S. in eastern Pennsylvania in September 2014. Researchers believe SLF likely arrived from China on shipping materials, possibly two years earlier than when it was first detected. SLF is highly invasive and can spread rapidly when introduced into new areas. The invasiveness of SLF

is attributed to its wide host range (more than 70 host plant species) and a lack of natural native enemies in invaded areas. SLF has overwintered successfully, and its geographical range in the Mid-Atlantic states is expected to expand.

Newly emerged nymphs disperse from egg masses and feed on a wide range of plant species. Nymphs are most often observed on leaves and branches of host plants. Look for nymphs on smaller plants and vines during the summer. Nymphs are active and can easily jump several feet to avoid capture. Nymphs and adults typically gather in large numbers on host plants. While they may become especially active at dusk or night as they migrate up and down the trunk of the plant, they are often conspicuous in mid-day as well. Adult SLF are found on tree trunks, stems, and sometimes near leaf litter. Although winged, adults are better jumpers than flyers, and they prefer to move up trees by walking. Adults favor feeding on tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) and grapevine (*Vitis vinifera*). In the fall, adult SLF focus on tree-of-heaven as a host for feeding and egg laying, although females will lay eggs on other trees or on any smooth vertical surface, natural or man-made.

SLF is a phloem feeder, sucking sap from trunks, stems, and leaf petioles. Heavy feeding can cause wilting of leaves and young branches. Reduced photosynthesis due to SLF feeding weakens the plant and leads to branch dieback, thinning crowns, and, eventually, host plant mortality. Heavy feeding can also cause the plant to weep or ooze sap, which ferments and produces a disagreeable odor. Oozing sap will leave a grayish-black trail down the trunk. SLF excretes large volumes of honeydew – a sugar-rich fluid that covers the stems and leaves of trees and the ground underneath infested plants. Honeydew supports the growth of sooty mold that covers leaves and blocks photosynthesis, weakening the plant and leading to its death. Blackened soil and even patches of yellowish-white mold can form at the base of an infested tree. Fresh honeydew often attracts other sugar-seeking insects such as yellow jackets, hornets, bees, ants, and flies. Fermented honeydew has a sour, vinegary smell.

Removal and destruction of SLF egg masses and tree banding might reduce nymphal populations, but these methods are not likely to eradicate SLF. Special precautions should be taken to avoid spreading SLF egg masses into other areas. Check any lawn furniture, grills, playground equipment, storage containers, and landscaping materials for egg masses before moving these items outside of infested areas. Remove and destroy any egg masses found.

(Article continued on page 4)



For more information on Spotted Lanternfly in Virginia, visit <https://resources.ext.vt.edu> Keyword search: Spotted Lanternfly

Programs & Reminders

VSU's College of Agriculture offers many educational programs, online webinars, Facebook live events, workshops and field days. To find out more, visit: <https://ext.vsu.edu/calendar>

There is a \$50.00 fee for all returned checks.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in extension activities, please contact the Greenville-Emporia extension office, (434) 348-4223, during the business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00p.m. to discuss accommodations at least 5 days prior to the event. *TDD number is (800) 828-1120.



The health of your soil is important! Routine soil sampling is encouraged for lawns, ornamental and vegetable gardens, row crops, specialty crops and pastures. Soil sample boxes and forms can be picked up at the Greenville/Emporia extension office Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm.

(Spotted Lanternfly, continued from page 3)

Although there have been no sightings of SLF in our part of the state, we want you to be aware of this rapidly spreading species and what it can do to trees, shrubs and specialty crops like grapes, apples and other tree fruits in Virginia.

More on Lawn Burweed Treatment from Page 1

...frequency for your specific grass type. Healthy lawn grasses can outcompete burweed for light, water and nutrients and reduce the level of infestation.

For chemical control after the seeds have germinated in the fall, you must apply a post-emergent herbicide in September or early October, or, whenever you see lawn spurweed start to germinate. The weed is easier to control when it is small and has not developed burs. Control is not impossible in April or May, but by this time, the spines have already formed and will remain after the weed dies. The only solution to combatting this weed is early identification and control.

Note: Read and follow all label instructions when using herbicides. Repeat applications 10 to 14 days apart may be required for acceptable control using post-emergence herbicides. Do not mow within 48 hours after application of most herbicides. Most post-emergence herbicides need to dry on the leaf surface before irrigation or rainfall occurs.

Hand removal of dead lawn spurweed plants and their hooked spur seeds is another cultural control option. It will remove most of the seed source, getting rid of new germinating seeds from the soil surface. To dispose of the dead plants or seeds, gather them in trash bags and take them to a landfill or burn in a safe, designated area. Do not compost or throw plants into the woods edge as re-infestation will most likely occur.

For more information on herbicides to control lawn burweed in residential turf grasses, please see the [Home and Garden Information Center's Factsheet, 2323](#), from Clemson Cooperative Extension. Herbicides must be registered for use in Virginia.

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