

Bethany's Extras September 2023

Although we've seen temperatures reach the 100's these past few weeks, cooler weather is on the horizon! Fall temperatures are perfect for fire ant activity and foraging, making it an opportune time to put out fire ant bait. While the warm weather is rolling out and cooler air moves in, fire ants are still actively out feeding. Fire ants look for protein-rich foods all year, but especially in the late spring and early fall. Foragers usually continue searching for food until temperatures drop below 75 degrees Fahrenheit. Using treatment plans like the Two Step Method can provide specific and continued control of fire ants, in a cost-effective way. The two main things you want to do are:

1. Broadcast fire ant bait. Broadcasting fire ant bait is relatively inexpensive and environmentally sound. Fire ants in the area generally pick up most of the bait particles in a short period of time, meaning there is minimal impact on non-pest ants. The goal is for these fire ants to pick up the bait and carry it back to the queen, killing off the whole mound. It may take more than one application which is why the next step is important too.
2. Treat nuisance mounds or colonies that move into the bait-treated area. In compliance with the product label, each mound should be treated when it is warm outside, but not too hot, generally in the mornings or evenings. For increased success, controlling fire ants should be a team effort! Working with neighbors or surrounding landowners can boost your chances of knocking a dent in the population. Fire ant control is more effective when larger areas are treated.

The fall season brings many fresh and exciting changes including a new chapter for our MG interns! We are thrilled to announce that the 2023 Jefferson County Master Gardener Association Interns will be celebrating their graduation on Tuesday, November 14th from ~~11:30am~~-1pm. This hardworking group will be giving a presentation on their group project, and we're in the process of coordinating a delicious catered lunch. More details are in the works but go ahead and mark your calendars to join us as we celebrate and support the newest members of JCMGA!

Looking ahead at next year- Jefferson County Master Gardener Intern registration and enrollment will be open from November 1st through November 30th. The wait list is filling up fast, so if you know anyone that is interested in joining, please have them contact me: bethany@aces.edu

With football season here and holidays right around the corner, this month can slip right by very quickly. Try keeping on top of general weeding and watering. Seeds from non-hybrid plants can be saved from the garden for planting next year. Now is a good time to begin preparing your compost piles for all the fallen leaves that autumn will bring! Just remember that a little time spent in the garden now will pay dividends over the coming months!

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