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K-State Wildlife specialist says “Let Wildlife be Wild”

While that fawn lying alone in a patch of thick vegetation might seem vulnerable and in trouble...odds are, it's not.

Kansas State University wildlife specialist Drew Ricketts said many species of wildlife, like white-tailed deer, have adapted to hide and hold entirely still when young, which makes it common for people to think they've been abandoned.

“Most likely that critter was left there by its mom, and she's off forging nearby,” he said. “If we pick that deer fawn up and try and take it home, we're taking it away from where it's supposed to be and where it has the best chance of surviving.”

Not only can those who intervene possibly upset natural animal processes, but they also risk contracting several diseases that wildlife carry.

“Pretty well all species that folks might encounter out on the landscape can carry diseases that can be passed to humans,” Ricketts said. “Raccoons, foxes, coyote pups – all can carry canine distemper virus, while foxes and coyotes also could have parvovirus.”

Human-wildlife interactions expose domestic pets to the numerous zoonotic diseases wildlife can transfer.

“There are ectoparasites like mange mites and ticks, and lots of wildlife have parasitic worms too,” Ricketts said. “Another concern is that we could bring avian influenza virus home right now if we deal with waterfowl.”

Beyond health concerns, Ricketts reminds those who enjoy wildlife that legal issues may arise if found possessing

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them without proper licensing.

“It's not legal in Kansas for citizens who do not have a wildlife rehabilitator license to have wild animals,” he said. “That fine can be up to \$1000, so if you want to possess those wild critters, you should become a wildlife rehabilitator.”

Sometimes, those who like observing wildlife anthropomorphize with them; that is, think about animals as though they have the same feelings and experiences as humans. However, Ricketts said they simply do not.

“Even if we don't do that, if we have pets and those sorts of things, it can be easy to see wild animals though they are pets,” he said. “It's important to remember that they're not, and we need to leave them alone because most of them are not very easy to make into pets either.”

Yet, injured animals that are threatened or endangered wildlife species may be reported to and accepted by a rehabilitation facility.

“If you do encounter those sorts of species, reach out to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, so that you can get some instruction from them about what to do with that animal,” Ricketts said.

More information about wildlife reporting and endangered species is available online through the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

By Jacob Klaudt, K-State Research and Extension news service

EXTENSION FOCUS

Jessica Kootz, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, Midway Extension District.

What are some guidelines to follow with planting your soybean crop?

Well, some places around north central Kansas are waiting for moisture while others have been fortunate to receive some. Producers are busy this time of year moving equipment, planting along with other spring tasks, so be careful out there and be aware of this most precious commodity....our American farmer!

After considering the effects of genetic yield potential and the environment, **planting date** is one of the primary management practices under the farmer's control that can highly influence soybean yields. In recent years, Kansas producers have been planting soybeans slightly earlier. However, in past growing seasons, the “50% planting date” mark was achieved at a similar time, the first week of June, statewide.

Soybeans can be planted over a wide range of dates, including May 5 to June 30, depending on which part of the state you live in. For northcentral Kansas, generally the planting window is May 5 to June 10, but it also depends on adequate soil moisture conditions, as germination and emergence could be reduced and/or delayed in cool soils that are less than 60 degrees F. According to our KSU Mesonet Weather Data Library stations in Jewell, Mitchell and Osborne and Smith counties, the average 2" soil temperature in the last week for the four locations is 61° F. while the 4" average soil temperature is 59° F. So, temperatures are hovering right around the targeted 60° F. for the more ideal planting conditions. Periodically checking the soil temperatures prior to planting soybeans is highly recommended.

The **maturity group** of a soybean variety is also an important component of your cropping enterprise. The recommended maturity varies across Kansas by the area of the state. Generally, for northcentral Kansas, group three is the recommended maturity group.

Ultimately, weather patterns dictate soybean yields, especially under dryland conditions. There is no guarantee that any certain planting date will always work out the best when it comes to soybean yields in Kansas. In fact, the distribution and amount of rainfall and the day/night temperature variations around flowering and during the grain filling periods have large impacts on defining soybean yield potential. Thus, when the risk of drought stress during the growing season is high, diversifying planting dates may be a good approach to consider.

When planting early, seed should be treated with a fungicide and insecticide. Selecting varieties with resistance to soybean cyst nematode and sudden death

syndrome is also advisable. Do not plant into soils that are too wet or until soil temperatures are close to 60° F. But, if planted into soils cooler than 60° F, seedlings may eventually emerge, but will have poor vigor.

In drier areas of Kansas and on shallow soils, yields have been most consistent when planting soybeans in late May to early June. By planting during that window, soybeans will bloom and fill seed in August and early September, when nights are cooler and the worst of heat and drought stress is usually over.

The **optimum seeding rate** is one of the most influential factors for increasing soybean profitability as seed cost is one of the most expensive inputs. Soybean seeding rate, row spacing, and planting date are all tied together. The final number of seeds per linear foot of row decreases as row spacing narrows. For example, at a target population of 105,000 plants per acre and 85 percent germination, 30-inch rows will need twice the number of seeds per linear foot as 15-inch rows (6 vs. 3 seeds per linear foot). Seeding rate will need to increase at later planting dates to compensate for the reduction in the growing season since more plants are needed to increase early light interception and biomass production. Seeding rates generally range from 80,000 to 140,000 seeds/acre with the average around 110,000 seeds/acre depending on your yield environments. In summary, adjusting seeding rates reduces risks of yield losses especially in low yielding environments, while limiting higher seed costs especially for medium and high yield environments. Furthermore, soybean plant populations above the optimal plant populations increase the risk of lodging and disease development without adding a yield benefit.

The optimum **planting depth** is from 1 to 1 1/2 inches and be sure to use an **inoculate** to ensure adequate nodulation which provides approximately 50-60% of the total nitrogen demand.

K-State Research and Extension has an excellent publication, “**2025 Soybean Management**”, that is available ONLINE or at any of our Post Rock District Offices. The publication is an excellent resource that provides detailed information on variety selection, planting, fertilization, insects, weed control and harvesting.

For further information on soybean production, contact me at any Post Rock Extension District Office in Beloit, Lincoln, Mankato, Osborne or Smith Center.

Post Rock Extension District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne, and Smith counties.

tilizing with nitrogen after August 15. Bermudagrass needs about one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet every four weeks. Zoysiagrass requires less nitrogen. Apply ¾ to one pound of nitrogen in two applications; one in June and one in mid-July. Buffalograss will survive without supplemental nitrogen, but providing it will improve the color and density of the lawn. Sometime between now and early June apply one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. If a darker green is desired, follow the same fertilizer recommendations as zoysiagrass.

If you have any additional questions or need more information, contact your local Midway District Extension Horticulture Agent, Craig Dinkel. Dinkel can be reached by email at cadinkel@ksu.edu, or by phone at 785-472-4442, or 785-483-3157.

Information sourced from Cynthia Domenghini, Instructor and Horticulture Extension Specialist

EXTENSION FOCUS

Clinton Laflin, Livestock Agent, Midway Extension District

Time to Fertilize Warm-Season Grasses

Turfgrasses should be fertilized when they are actively growing. For warm-season grasses, that time is near. Late spring/early summer fertilizer applications are ideal for bermudagrass, buffalograss, and zoysiagrass. Fertilizing too early encourages cool-season weeds to grow.

The first step in determining proper fertilizing applications starts with pulling a soil sample. Soil sample probes are available to check out in both Midway District offices the samples will then be sent to the KSU soil lab for analysis, and horticulture agent Craig Dinkel will go over the results with you.

In Northern and northwest Kansas can wait until May 30 or later to fertilize warm-season grasses, but most of the state can fertilize beginning now (midMay). Fertilizing too late in the season (late summer) can increase their susceptibility to winter damage. Avoid fer-

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