

**Adam Watson, Agriculture Extension Agent**

For the safety of our clients and staff, the Washington County Extension Office is-until further notice-closed to public access. Extension staff are working from home and can be reached by phone or e-mail. Please dial (423)753-1680 for immediate assistance. E-mail addresses for each Washington County Extension staff member can be found by clicking [here](#). You're always welcome to reach me, Adam Watson, by email [watson@utk.edu](mailto:watson@utk.edu) or by cell 423-430-6711.

**What's Growing On My Tree?**



I've gotten a few questions lately from homeowners noticing something growing on their trees. It typically is described as a leafy, ferny, scaly, or even hairy growth. What they are seeing are lichens and they pose no threat to the trees. Their presence can even be indicative of good air quality. The lichens are found in many forms and colors and are a very unique organism in that they are actually three organisms performing as a single organism.

Lichens are considered a composite organism because they are composed of a fungus and a photosynthesizing partner either a green alga or cyanobacterium. In at least some lichens a basidiomycete yeast is also included as a third component; the yeast is a recent discovery and is still being researched. The fungus contributes physical structure and protection from the environment. The yeast contributes chemical defenses. The alga or cyanobacterium creates the sugar through photosynthesis used as food by the lichen.

Lichens are also common to find growing on rocks. Lichens can be found in environments ranging from the arctic to deserts.

**Murder Hornets Asian Giant Hornets Explained**

An invasive species is always cause for concern when found in the environment, but angst and concern is probably not warranted for folks in our area. Let me assure you that we do not have these in our region and it's unlikely that we will anytime soon.

The only place that you can possibly find them in the US is Washington state and authorities are actively work to locate and eradicate the Asian giant hornet before they can become established. Worst case scenario is they become established and over time spread to other areas. But here is the key information to put the worst case scenario in perspective, the Asian giant hornet does not pose a direct threat to humans any more than existing native-or other exotic- bees or wasps do.

Native to Asia these hornets are not new to science and have been present in Asia for centuries. There is one group who can express concern and that would be beekeepers. Asian giant hornets will raid hives killing adult bees and stealing the larval bees as a food source. But again, don't expect them here anytime soon.



This a European Hornet which is in our area and is large. Although this hornet has been in the US since the 1800' it still has not reached all areas of the county; it's not found in Washington state for example.

## The Trusty Trowel-June 2020

### **The Hype about Hydrangeas-Michaela Slagle-Saylor**

The Hype about Hydrangeas-Michaela Slagle-Saylor

I personally think that hydrangeas are simply a beautiful. Hydrangeas are a relatively hardy plant that return year after year, if the right maintenance is in place. These flowers burst early in the season with their color showing that spring is finally on its way. The colors of these flowers range from white, green, blue and pink with some variation in between.

These flowers do benefit from irrigation especially during dry spells. It is recommended that they be watered in moderation because they are a plant that prefers to be moist rather than super wet. Be careful not to overwater *Hydrangea macrophylla* as they are known to wilt if temperature is in the high 80's even with adequate moisture; they rebound quickly once the temperature drops.

Hydrangeas also need to be "fed" to help maintain color or to change coloration of these flowering plants. The color of these hydrangea can be changed based upon the pH of the soil. A low pH of 5.2-5.5 will encourage blue coloration by increasing available aluminum and pH of 6.0-6.2 will encourage pink coloration. It's best to get a soil test before attempting to change the soil pH, but in general adding garden lime raises soil pH and adding organic material such as pine needles or sawdust can help maintain acidic soil conditions.

To learn more about all the Hydrangea species and their uses in the garden take a look at [A Tennessee Landscape Contractor's Guide to Hydrangeas W304](#).

#### **When to Prune Hydrangeas**

<i>H. arborescens</i> , smooth	No later than early March. Blooms on "new wood".
<i>H. paniculata</i> , panicle	No later than early March. Blooms on "new wood".
<i>H. macrophylla</i> , bigleaf	After blooms fade, but before August. Blooms on "old wood".
<i>H. quercifolia</i> , oakleaf	Avoid pruning if possible, but before August. Blooms on "old wood".

For flowering perennials pruning timing is based on when flower buds are formed. Typically the earliest blooming plants form flower buds the previous season and are said to bloom on "old wood". Later blooming plants form flower buds on the current season's growth and are said to bloom on "new wood".



"shelf of hydrageas" by Muffet is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

Hydrangeas such as these sold in floral departments are often a variety that is not well adapted to our climate and if planted out in the landscape they may never successfully flower.

## The Trusty Trowel-June 2020

### What is This Slimy Green Stuff?

*Nostoc* is the slimy green growth that is found in wet areas, often, in gravel or lawns. When conditions are dry it appears as a black crusty material.

*Nostoc* are microscopic single celled organisms, cyanobacterium, that form threadlike structures called filaments. These filaments form colonies which surround themselves with a gelatinous material.

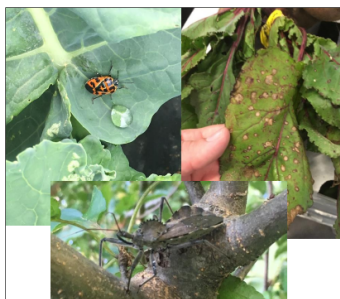
*Nostoc* produces its own energy through photosynthesis and uses specialized heterocyst cells to fix atmospheric nitrogen.



Control of *Nostoc* may be warranted in areas where it poses a danger to footing. The only long term solution is to mitigate the excess moisture issue by addressing causes such as soil compaction or poor drainage.

Chemical control can be challenging as few products are labeled for *Nostoc*. Also, conflicting research reports suggest variable susceptibility to active ingredients perhaps due to differences between the 300+ species of *Nostoc*.

## Upcoming FREE Classes



Photos by Adam Watson

**FREE!**

Register @  
<https://tiny.utk.edu/bugging>

Real. Life. Solutions.

**UEXTENSION**  
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

### What's Bugging My Vegetables?

Are you seeing insects in your vegetable garden? Not sure whether they're good guys or pests? Then join Adam Watson, UT Extension Washington County Agriculture Agent, for *What's Bugging My Vegetables?* on **June 18, 6:30 pm.** Learn common vegetable insect pests and how to control them.



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**FREE!**

Register @  
<https://tiny.utk.edu/houseplants>

Real. Life. Solutions.

**UEXTENSION**  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

### Beginning with Houseplants

Have you always wanted to grow houseplants, but don't have a green thumb? Join Adam Watson, UT Extension Washington County Agriculture Agent, as he introduces the best plants for beginners on **June 25, 6:30 pm.**

## Telamon Tennessee Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Program Acepta solicitudes para cuidado infantil Gratis para niños entre seis semanas y cinco años



### ¿Qué es Migrant & Seasonal Head Start?

Migrant & Seasonal Head Start es un programa de preparación escolar financiado por el gobierno federal para niños de seis semanas a cinco años de edad. Nuestra meta es asegurar que su hijo esté bien preparado y listo para tener éxito en la escuela.

#### Su hijo/a puede ser elegible para Migrant & Seasonal Head Start si:

- Tiene entre seis semanas y cinco años de edad.
- Su familia cumple con las pautas federales de pobreza y la mayoría de sus ingresos proviene del trabajo agrícola

**Sirve a familias que trabajan con ganado (vacuno, cerdos, aves y productos lácteos), pesquerías, viveros, árboles y cultivos**

#### Ofrecemos:

- Día Completo de Cuidado Infantil
- Pañales y Fórmula
- Servicios de Salud
- Educación Individualizada
- Comidas Nutritivas
- Servicios para niños con Discapacidades
- Servicios Sociales
- Transporte

## LLAME PARA MAYOR INFORMACIÓN

### Unicoi County Head Start Center

Sirve a familias que viven en los condados de

Unicoi, Carter y Washington

551 Mocking Bird Court Unicoi, TN 37692

Teléfono: (423) 743-2028

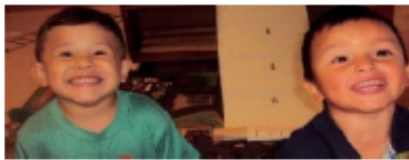


EARLY CHILDHOOD  
& FAMILY SUPPORT

Head Start programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families  
Esta agencia es un empleador de igualdad de oportunidades



## Telamon Tennessee Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Program is Accepting Applications for FREE Childcare for Children Six Weeks to Five Years of Age



### What is Migrant & Seasonal Head Start?

Migrant & Seasonal Head Start is a federally funded school readiness program for children six weeks to five years of age. Our goal is to ensure that your child is well prepared and ready to succeed in school.

**Your child may be eligible for Migrant & Seasonal Head Start if:**

- S/he is six weeks to five years of age
- Your family meets federal poverty guidelines and the majority of your income comes from work in agriculture

### We Offer:

- Full Day Child Care Services
- Diapers and Formula
- Health Services
- Individualized Education
- Nutritious Meals
- Services for Children with disabilities
- Social Services
- Transportation

## CALL TODAY FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Unicoi Head Start Center

Serving families who live in Unicoi, Carter, and Washington Counties

551 Mocking Bird Court

Unicoi, TN 37692

Phone: (423) 743-2028



EARLY CHILDHOOD  
& FAMILY SUPPORT



Head Start programs are funded Services,  
Administration for Children & Families

## The Trusty Trowel-June 2020

### Six Week 4-H Challenge begins June 8<sup>th</sup>.

Please email Connie, Barbara, or Juanita to register.



## Take the "4-H Challenge"



4<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade Washington County students

Join us in completing a 6 week 4-H Challenge using items you have at home.

#### Week 1

June 8 - 14 **RECYCLABLE** - Make an item using only recycled materials. (Example: bird feeder from soda bottle)

#### Week 2

June 15 - 21 **NATURE** - Make something using only items found outside. (Example: stick holiday tree ornament, etc.)

#### Week 3

June 22 - 28 **PATRIOTIC** - Make any item with a patriotic theme. (Example: Clothespin wreath painted red, white & blue, etc.)

#### Week 4

June 29 - July 5 **MUSIC** - Make a musical instrument. (Example: Rain Stick, horn, drum, etc.)

#### Week 5

July 6 - 12 **STEAM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) – Use your engineering skills to make something with household items. (Example: tower with marshmallows and spaghetti, etc.)

#### Week 6

July 13 - 19 **ART** - Make a picture using different mediums (chalk, acrylic, oil, watercolor, paper) (Example: make a picture using acrylic paint, sand and seashells, etc.)

Each week you will need to complete the challenge, take a picture of your work and email it to one of the 4-H Ladies Connie Sharp ([cgsharp3@utk.edu](mailto:cgsharp3@utk.edu)), Barbara Nuckols ([bnuckols@utk.edu](mailto:bnuckols@utk.edu)) or Juanita Miles ([jmiles8@utk.edu](mailto:jmiles8@utk.edu)) with your NAME, ADDRESS, GRADE, SCHOOL for a chance to win a 1<sup>st</sup> Place 4-H Ribbon and 4-H Item. Pictures must be emailed by midnight on Sunday of each week. Winners will be posted on the UT Extension Washington County Facebook page. Good luck!

**We will have a weekly zoom workshop on each category. Please email one of the 4-H Ladies to register for these workshops. A supply list and zoom link will be emailed to you for each workshop. Have Fun!!!**

For questions about your home and garden please feel free to contact me, Adam Watson, Agriculture Extension Agent [watson@utk.edu](mailto:watson@utk.edu) or by cell 423-430-6711. Emailing pictures is a great way to get questions answered while travel is currently curtailed.

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