EVENTS ON THE HORIZON

SEPTEMBER 8: Onslow County Beekeepers Assoc. Monthly Meeting:
Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy., Jacksonville. 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

SEPTEMBER 11: Onslow County Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting:
Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy., Jacksonville. 9:00 - 11:00 am.

SEPTEMBER 12: Farmer’s Day: Richlands, NC 10:00 am - 5:00 pm.

OCTOBER 5-10: Onslow County Fair: Jacksonville, NC.

OCTOBER 9: Onslow County Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting: Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy., Jacksonville. 9:00 - 11:00 am.

OCTOBER 13: Onslow County Beekeepers Assoc. Monthly Meeting: Onslow County Complex, 4024 Richlands Hwy. Jacksonville, 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

OCTOBER 15-25: North Carolina State Fair: Raleigh, NC.

NOVEMBER 7: Onslow County Camellia Flower Show & Sale: Onslow County Complex, Jacksonville, NC. 9:00 am - 2:00 pm. In conjunction with Onslow County Farmers’ Market Fall Festival.

LOOKING BACK

The Onslow County Farmers’ Market continues to experience positive growth under the capable direction of its manager, Larry Kent, with the support of the Farmers’ Market Association Board of Directors. Both vendor and public support remains strong. Two very significant milestones were achieved this year. First, a second location opened on Thursdays from noon to 6:00 pm behind Dick’s Sporting Goods store on Western Blvd. in order to increase accessibility to folks on the east side of town. The location has done very well. Secondly, by the end of September, the Multipurpose Complex site on Hwy 24/258 will be equipped as the result of a grant to receive Food Stamps in addition to Farmers’ Market Nutrition Vouchers by EBT (Electronic Billing Transfer). Finally, the second annual
Camellia Flower Show and Sale will be held at the Multipurpose Complex in conjunction with the Farmers’ Market Fall Festival on Saturday, November 7th, which is the last day the market will be open this season. Be sure to come out and have a good time with the kids and see some absolutely beautiful flowers.

DIGGING UP THE DIRT

RHIZOCTONIA LARGE PATCH DISEASE IN WARM-SEASON TURFGRASSES

As warm-season turfgrasses begin to green-up in the spring, symptoms of a disease called large patch often become evident. This is a common disease of centipedegrass, St. Augustinegrass, zoysiagrass, and bermudagrass grown for lawns, landscapes, golf turf, and athletic fields. Centipedegrass and St. Augustinegrass are particularly susceptible to large patch.

**Symptoms:** Rhizoctonia large patch disease occurs in the fall and spring as circular, discolored patches that expand over time. The disease is favored by cool temperatures and wet conditions and may be especially severe in poorly drained and over fertilized turf. Generally, patches begin to appear in early to mid-October as temperatures cool and warm season grasses slow growth before going into winter dormancy.

Patches start as circular, discolored areas, At times the borders of the patches will be orange, which indicates that the disease is active. The orange border consists of newly infected plants where the lower leaves are just starting to die as the fungus invades and kills the leaf sheath below the blades.

Summer grasses and the disease are dormant during the winter, but diseased areas are more sensitive to cold injury. As the grass begins growth in the spring during March or April, the patches become very visible against a background of healthy green grass, and they may increase in size if conditions are favorable for disease. The dead-looking centers of the patches will appear thin and sunken and may be invaded by weeds. Patches vary in size and shape, but tend to be circular and may reach 20 feet in diameter. Disease progress slows as temperatures rise during the spring, and the patches gradually become filled in by new growth during the summer. If not controlled, patches will tend to return each fall and spring in the same places.

**Disease Cycle:** Rhizoctonia large patch disease is caused by a fungus similar to the Rhizoctonia fungus that causes brown patch disease of cool-season grasses (bentgrass, tall fescue, etc.) However, the fungus that attacks warm season grasses grows best at cooler temperatures and thus is more active in the fall, winter and spring than the brown patch fungus.

The large patch fungus survives hot weather in infected nodes where leaf sheaths have rotted off, in infested thatch and as specialized survival structures called bulbils. The fungus becomes active in the early fall as temperatures cool and warm season grasses slow growth in preparation for winter dormancy. Infection and disease development probably starts from mid-September to early October depending on location, and continues for as long as temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees. F. and conditions are moist. The disease resumes rapid development in the spring when conditions become favorable again, but slows when temperatures consistently reach the mid-80’s, usually in May.

The disease progresses outward in all directions from the initial point of infection, killing leaf sheaths and leaves and creating a roughly circular patch. Depending on conditions, some leaves within the patch may survive, and the disease is not known to kill stolons or roots. Once the disease is suppressed by high temperatures, stolons will form new shoots and the patch will start to recover and eventually disappear during the summer. Because the fungus survives during the summer in thatch and grass, anything that moves this material will scatter the fungus around. Mowing, aerating and sod transplanting all move the fungus to new areas.

**Disease Control:** Rhizoctonia large patch disease is made worse by very close mowing, over-watering and early or late season nitrogen applications. Any successful control program will have to address these issues.
Control practices include:
- Improve drainage to avoid soil saturation.
- Do not overwater the grass, especially in the fall or spring.
- Mow as tall as proper guidelines allow.
- Bag and remove clippings from patch areas because they may spread the disease.
- Do not mow when grass is wet.
- Do not core aerate or vertislice during the spring when large patch is active because this spreads the disease. These practices should only be done to reduce thatch and stimulate the turf during the summer months when large patch disease is inactive.
- Do not apply nitrogen fertilizer too early in the spring. Wait until warm weather has slowed large patch development (usually May).
- Follow recommended fertilization rates for summer grasses.
- Use slow-release N source, like urea, as the first N application in May to speed patch re-growth in early summer.
- Discontinue nitrogen applications after August 15.

Fungicide Applications:
Fungicides are available for large patch control, but they are most effective when applied preventatively. The first application should be made in the late summer or early fall when soil temperatures decline to 70 degrees F., (usually in late September to early October). One application will control minor cases of the disease, but two to three applications on a 4 to 6 week interval may be needed to control severe cases.

For difficult situations, apply a fungicide to suppress spring symptoms again between March 10 and April 10 just as summer grasses start growth. Fungicides are not very effective once the symptoms of large patch appear. Curative applications will help to reduce further spread of the disease, but the affected turf will be very slow to recover. Read and follow all fungicide labels.

Fungicides containing the active ingredient triadimefon (Bayleton), are very effective for large patch control and are available in garden centers and home improvement stores. Sprayable formulations of triadimefon are more effective than spreader-applied granular products. Products containing azoxystrobin (Heritage) or flutolanil (ProStar) are also very effective but are generally only available to professional landscape managers. For additional information see www.turffiles.

TALES FROM THE CLINIC

HICKORY HORNED DEVIL CATERPILLAR

A couple recently brought in the most ferocious, frightful looking enormous caterpillar that you will usually ever seen in these parts. Measuring 5-6 inches in length, ¾” in diameter, bright green with long, curving horn-like structures over its body, it makes a lasting impression indeed. Despite its appearance, it is harmless to handle and makes a wonderful science project for kids. It feeds for 37-42 days on hickory, walnut, pecan, ash, persimmon, sycamore, sumac and sweet gum. Maturing in late summer, it pupates and overwinters in the soil, emerging the next summer as the beautiful Royal Walnut Moth or Regal Moth.

SLUG CATERPILLARS

On the other extreme is another unusual group of caterpillars known as slug caterpillars. This is a very diverse group with individuals that are very colorful with lobes, angles and spines while others are ordinary, rounded and slug-like. Instead of prolegs they have suckers that allows them to glide along instead of crawling. They prefer to feed on smooth-leaved trees such as, beech, cherry, maple and oak. Several species do possess stinging spines or hairs that impart a sting similar to a stinging nettle. The two most common species seen in our area are the Saddleback Caterpillar and the Puss Caterpillar. Recently we received a photo of a species we have never seen before called the Pin-Striped Vermillion Slug and it is very colorful indeed.
Designing the New Kitchen

SPOTLIGHT

The Onslow County Fair is Coming to Town

The Onslow County Fair will be here October 5th, 2009, through Saturday October 10th, 2009. Crafts, sewing items, baked goods, home canned goods are all needed to be judged. Young and old can enter. Entries to be judged can be entered on October 5th from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm. Some flowers entries may be entered the next morning.

Fair books are available at all branches of the county's public library or at the Onslow County Extension Office. All entries into the fair for judging have to have been completed within the last year and all participants with items to be entered have to be a resident of Onslow County. A complete listing of all the rules can be found in the fair book. There's a category for everyone from agricultural exhibits to arts and crafts, to canning and baked goods.

Please join in the fun by entering an item or items into the fair. The money awards are not large but the ribbons are special.

Tuesday, October 6th, a talent show will be held with youth from all parts of the county. Talent goes on parade at 7:00 pm. We need everyone to get involved with the fair to show those that attend all the talent we have in our county.

The price to get in the fair this year will be $5.00. Children under the age of three get in free as well as seniors age 65 and older get in free. Ride tickets will be sold separately on the midway. The fair opens on October 5th, at 6:00 pm. Tuesday, October 6th, through Friday October 9th, at 4:00 pm and Saturday, October 10th, at 12 noon. If you have any questions regarding the entries to the fair or a fair booth, please call us at 455-5873.