

Stung by the Queen

Do you remember the classic movie, *The Sting*? Robert Redford and Paul Newman played the role of con men that tricked a rich, shady businessman and stole his money. The guy was totally fooled. He was “stung.”

There is another type of sting operation going on now. Wasps are getting aggressive. Their populations are rising and they are looking for food. These pests—and their stingers—are creating fear and pain across the state.

Some of us will respond to this threat by putting up traps. Wasps wander into these baited traps but can't find a way out of them. The pests slowly die in the trap. I used to love watching wasps suffer and die in a trap. I felt smart and powerful!

Actually, I was being a fool. My trap was doing little harm to the nest. I was fooled—“stung”—by the queen.

Traps kill only a small percentage of wasps in autumn. There can be over 200 wasps in one nest. Traps kill some of these wasps, but the queen remains safe in the nest, raising a new generation of queens who will hibernate and create many more armies of wasps next year.

Don't be fooled and don't be stung, literally or figuratively. The wasps want food; don't give it to them. Keep your garbage containers tightly closed. Be careful and tidy when eating outdoors.



Wasp populations are soaring. Traps kill only a small percentage of wasps in autumn. Focus on killing the nest. If it is in a hazardous area, kill it; if not, let frost kill it.

Try to locate the nest and determine if the nest is a hazard or not. If the nest is aboveground (in a tree or wall crevice), you may shoot a wasp-killing, knockdown spray into the hole of the nest. If the nest is in the soil or hidden in a crevice, sprinkle carbaryl (Sevin) dust near or into the entrance.

Kill wasps at night. Wasps are less active when temps are 50s or colder. Wear protective clothing. Left alone, wasp nests will die after a hard frost.

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Cucumber vs. Tree

While walking along a stream last week I saw a tree adorned with delicate, white flowers. A closer look revealed the flowers were from a wild cucumber vine that was growing on top of the tree. The vine's stems were wrapping around the tree's branches and trying to smother the tree.

Warmer than normal temperatures this summer have led to many sightings of wild cucumbers across our state. Its vines grow quickly—over 25 feet long in one summer! In some cases, the vines will climb over trees and weaken them.

Its spiny fruits are absolutely fascinating. Don't eat them—they may be toxic—but how could anyone eat a prickly fruit like this anyhow? Instead, the fruits are often used in floral arrangements.

Wild cucumber (*Echinocystis lobata*) is native to North Dakota and usually found in moist areas such as along streams, lakes and in ditches.



Wild cucumber has aggressive vines, delicate flowers and fascinating fruits.

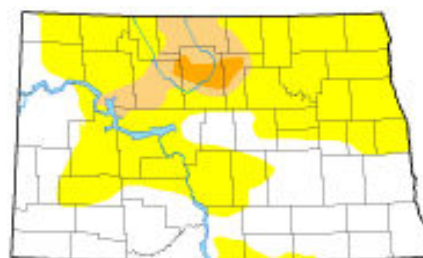
The vines are aggressive but easy to control. Cut the plant at its base before its fruits ripen and drop their

seeds to the ground. If you can't wait for frost to kill this annual vine, dicamba or glyphosate will kill it.

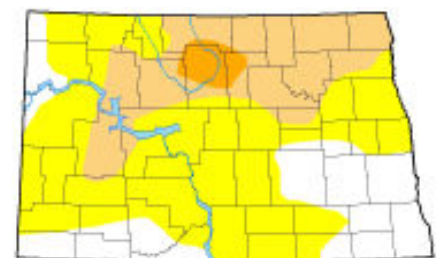
It Has Been Dry, But There is Hope

Soils in most of the state have been dry over the past week and many of the driest areas in the north received zero to minimal rainfall until last night. Bottineau, Langdon, Minot and Rugby received much needed rains last night, but Carrington, Crosby and Hazen are still looking for relief. Conditions are better in the southeast.

The National Weather Service predicts “above normal” amounts of precipitation over the next 14 days. As we enter fall, let's hope these rains can refresh our lawns and gardens. See the Weather Almanac on page 5 for details.



August 14, 2018



August 21, 2018

- Moderately dry (crop growth slowed); 78% of state.
- Moderate drought (crop damage, voluntary water use restrictions); 26% of state.
- Severe drought (crop losses likely, water use restrictions); 3% of state.
- Extreme drought (major crop losses, widespread water use restrictions); 0% of state.
- Exceptional drought (widespread crop losses, water emergencies); 0% of state.

Plant Health Care

Fruits and Vegetables



Harvesting Rhubarb in Fall

Harvest usually stops around July 4, but a few stalks from vigorous plants can be harvested now. These stalks may be a little tough. Don't harvest stalks if they have suffered frost damage.



Harvesting Watermelon

Watermelons are ripe when the tendril next to the fruit dries (shown). The rind of a ripe melon is faded, not glossy. Mature melons feel heavy. The spot on the underside of fruit will be white or yellow and not greenish.



Harvesting Cantaloupe

A ripe fruit slips off with a gentle tug. The entire stem comes out (*full-slip stage*) as shown. Rind is yellowish. Fresh-market melons may be harvested with a firmer tug. Half of the stem attachment will remain in this case (*half-slip stage*).



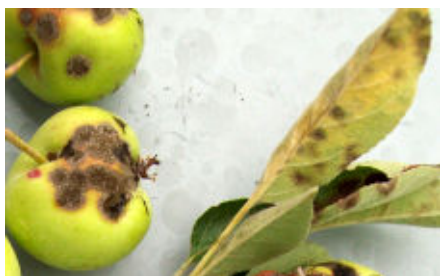
Scorch on Tomato

Tissues directly exposed to sun will turn white and may wrinkle. This most often occurs with fruits growing on spindly vines. Promote healthy vine growth through fertilization and irrigation.



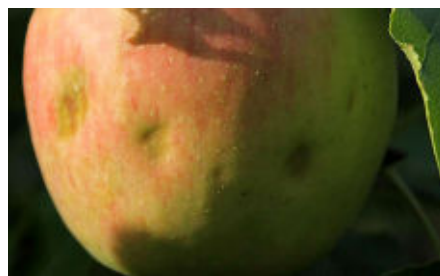
Scab on Potato

Peel off scabs. In the future, keep soil evenly moist while tubers grow (4–6 weeks after flowers appear). Use resistant cultivars and certified disease-free seed. Avoid using fresh manure.



Apple Scab

Olive to brown spots appear on leaves; the leaves drop early. Corky scabs develop on fruits. Rake fallen leaves and fruits. Prune the tree in March to improve air circulation. Apply fungicides when leaves appear in spring.



Hail on Apple

Dented fruit may be kept on the tree to ripen. These apples will not store long and are best used in sauces and pies. Remove bruises before eating/cooking. Discard the fruit if its skin has broken open.



Spotted Wing Drosophila

White maggots develop in fruits. Keep fruit refrigerated to slow maggot development. Harvest regularly. Keep soil clean of overripe fruit. Spray with insecticides with short residuals such as pyrethrin, spinosad or malathion.

Plant Health Care

Flowers



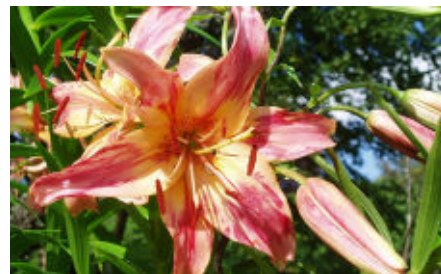
Harvesting Gladiolus

Harvest when the lower third of blooms are fully open and the middle third are beginning to open. Morning is best. Place in a pail of clean, lukewarm water. Keep at least 4 leaves on the plant to produce new corms. Place blooms in a cool, dark place for a few hours. Make a fresh cut of the stem, place in water and display in indirect light.



Aster Yellows Virus

Leaves and flowers are small, narrow and distorted. Affects numerous annuals and perennials (coneflower is shown). Remove entire plant to prevent the disease from spreading via leafhoppers.



Tulip Breaking Virus on Lily

Lily leaves become streaked, mottled and distorted. Flower petals develop colorful streaks. Remove entire plant, including roots as soon as possible to prevent the virus from spreading via aphids.

Lawns



Fertilize Now?

Early September is a good time to fertilize since autumn is when turf roots grow. The boost of potash in winterizer fertilizers increases hardiness.



Spray Weeds Now?

Let's wait until mid to late September when weeds move nutrients (and herbicide) down to their roots to prepare for winter. Products with dicamba or triclopyr are most effective.

Trees



Leaf Scorch

Notice the brown edges. Newly planted trees are especially sensitive. Irrigate deeply when needed. Rock mulches generate heat and should be avoided; shredded bark or wood chips are better.



Lacebug on Oak

Stippling dots appear. Look for black fecal pellets and batches of eggs on leaf undersides. Damage to established trees is usually minimal especially this late in season. No treatment is needed.



Bronze Birch Borer

Attacks heat-stressed birches. If two-thirds of the tree is healthy, its vascular system can move insecticide throughout the tree. Apply a soil drench of imidacloprid. Mulch with bark; irrigate when dry.

Weather Almanac for August 19–26, 2018

Site	TEMPERATURE ¹				RAINFALL ^{1,4}				GROWING DEGREE DAYS ^{1,5}			
	August 19–26				Aug 19–26		2018		Aug 19–26		2018	
	Avg	Norm	Max	Min	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm	Total	Norm
Bottineau	60	66	86	37	0.51	0.47	8.65	11.52	100	112	1854	1704
Bowman	63	67	87	43	0.28	0.23	10.15	9.87	101	124	1797	1754
Carrington	63	67	83	42	0.09	0.61	8.72	13.04	106	118	1998	1840
Crosby	61	65	89	40	0.09	0.38	7.59	10.09	97	105	1852	1573
Dickinson	64	67	89	45	0.02	0.36	9.81	11.16	104	117	1955	1731
Fargo	69	68	84	53	2.88	0.77	13.66	12.96	136	127	2283	1976
Grafton	66	66	86	47	0.62	0.84	10.75	12.74	117	109	1988	1711
Grand Forks	66	66	83	50	1.07	0.77	11.62	12.75	115	113	2078	1762
Hazen	62	68	85	39	0.00	0.42	6.60	11.35	101	128	1926	1907
Hillsboro	66	67	83	46	2.59	0.68	11.62	13.10	114	121	2074	1868
Jamestown	63	67	78	49	3.71	0.61	16.83	12.31	96	117	1945	1833
Langdon	63	64	84	46	0.64	0.65	7.99	13.00	100	95	1776	1466
Mandan	64	68	83	47	0.81	0.49	12.55	12.25	106	122	2040	1832
Minot	63	66	85	40	0.63	0.51	7.75	11.56	105	113	1974	1677
Mott	64	68	88	39	0.03	0.38	7.99	10.56	105	121	1918	1807
Rugby	63	66	84	41	0.57	0.52	8.86	12.84	100	108	1910	1699
Wahpeton	67	69	80	49	2.24	0.70	13.85	13.37	121	134	2198	2056
Watford City	62	66	89	44	0.00	0.34	8.14	9.86	92	114	1950	1754
Williston	62	70	89	44	0.20	0.41	9.47	9.61	92	135	1962	1974
Wishek	63	66	79	45	1.36	0.51	12.35	11.17	99	111	1914	1662

DAYLENGTH (Aug 27, McClusky, center of ND)²

Sunrise: 6:53 AM Daylength: 13h 40m
 Sunset: 8:34 PM Change since Aug 20: -23m

LONG-TERM OUTLOOKS³

Sep 1–5: Temp.: Above Normal; Precip.: Above Normal
 Sep 3–9: Temp.: Above Normal; Precip.: Above Normal

^{1,2,3} Sources: North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network, www.sunrisesunset.com, and National Weather Service, respectively.

^{4,5} Rain data begin April 1. GDDs for garden vegetables are not available. GDD data in this table are for corn, which responds to temperature as most vegetables grown in gardens. Data begin May 1 with base minimum and maximum temperatures of 50 and 86°F, respectively.

Credits

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and Katy Chayka, www.minnesotawildflowers.info/flower/; Jan Samanek, Phytosanitary Administration, Bugwood.org; Drought Monitor, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. **Page 3:** Hans via Pixabay; Forest and Kim Starr, www.flickr.com/photos/starr-environmental/25072142102/; University of Missouri Extension, Missouri Botanical Garden; Andy Robinson, NDSU; Shuhrataxmedov via Wikimedia Commons; I. Sacek, senior via Wikimedia Commons; Hannah Burrack, North Carolina State University. **Page 4:** valipatov via Pixabay; Tom Kalb, NDSU; Sofia Hedell, www.sofistikera.se/; Liljor_problem.html; Tom Kalb, NDSU; Casaba Deli; Tom Kalb, NDSU; Alicia Harstad, NDSU; Tom Kalb, NDSU; Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org.

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