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PLANT PEST Newsletter

MINNESOTA EXTENSION SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

PPST24

December 16, 1994

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MISCELLANEOUS

Fourth Annual Agricultural Professional Update— January 1995

January 10	St. Cloud — Americanna Inn, South Hwy. 10 (12:30 p.m.)
January 11	Lamberton — SW Experiment Station, Administration Bldg. (12:30 p.m.)
January 11	Morris — West Central Experiment Station (8:30 p.m.)
January 12	Crookston — Northwest Experiment Station, Ag. Res. Bldg. (8:30 p.m.)
January 12	Mankato — Best Western Motel, Hwy 169 N. (8:30 p.m.)
January 13	Rochester — Best Western Apache, 1517 16th St. SW (8:30 p.m.)

The Agricultural Professional Update is designed for agricultural dealers, crop consultants, agency personnel, Vo-Tech instructors, farm management instructors, and others involved with crop management decisions. This three and one half hour program will update agricultural professionals on the latest research and crop production recommendations from the University of Minnesota Experiment Stations and Extension Service.

Speakers will include state extension specialists, experiment station researchers, and area extension agents. Speakers will provide educational materials. Appropriate reference materials will also be available. Come prepared to ask questions and discuss your concerns.

Early registration is strongly recommended to ensure your place at the workshop. Preregistration per person is \$15.00 (see registration form on page 133), and at the door registration is \$25.00. On-site registration will be accepted at the door on a space available basis. Registration begins 1/2 hour before each session, so please arrive on time so as not to delay the meeting. The registration fee includes coffee, refreshment breaks, and handout materials. **NOTE:** There will be a \$10.00 service fee assessed for changing workshop registration from one location to another after January 6, 1995.

To request disability accommodations please contact Kelly Fisher at the Educational Development Systems, (612) 625-8215 or (800) 367-5363, FAX at (612) 625-2207 or by E-MAIL at klf@esp.mes.umn.edu on or before December 27, 1994

**For more information regarding the Plant Pest Newsletter
contact Extension Plant Pathology at 612-625-6290**

DIAL U

Real Christmas trees can be a fire hazard as they dry, but there's no proven benefit to using "fire-proofing" material, either on the tree or in the water. An ample supply of fresh water is the best fire-proofing agent available.

The most important safety aspects include choosing a fresh tree, then cutting off several inches of trunk immediately prior to setting it in a deep container of water. Keep the container constantly filled; your tree will take up lots of water.

Other safety considerations: place the tree away from radiators or hot air ducts; turn tree lights off when it's unattended; and take it down before it's dry and brittle.

Cut the boughs off the trunk when you take the tree outside. They make excellent mulching material to lay over bulb beds and perennials. They can also be used as screening between young evergreens and prevailing winds or bright sunlight that can cause browning.

Houseplants are struggling to get by in these extra short days. It's not likely that they'll need fertilizer until days grow longer, towards the end of February, and new growth resumes.

To help your houseplants, wash off any dust that may have accumulated on the leaves. It filters light and can provide a friendly habitat for unwanted insects and mites. Just use lukewarm water with a few drops of mild dishwashing liquid added to make it more "slippery." You may like the looks of leaf shine products, but the highly polished surface they leave behind can reflect light off the leaves.

Seasonal plants:

Poinsettias are a snap to keep looking good. Just find a bright window for your plant and water it thoroughly whenever the soil surface feels dry to the touch. After you've had the plant six weeks, fertilize it with houseplant food mixed half-strength. Repeat the fertilizer every six to eight weeks. You'll probably be sick and tired of the plant long before it looks too tatty. (Somehow those bright red flowers are easier to appreciate in the dead of winter than in May, when all the softly colored spring blooms are out.)

Christmas cacti are spectacular while in bloom, but pretty ho-hum the rest of the year. Once you've pinched the last faded flower off of yours, try to find a cooler, yet still bright place for it. Allow the plant to become quite dry between thorough waterings. By late February or March, you can move it into a sunnier, warmer location and resume mild, infrequent fertilizing as the plant adds new growth.

These plants do quite well outdoors after night temperatures warm. Just be sure to put them in a place that's protected from harsh midday sun.

Order Gardening Calendar for 1995: Order a copy of *Minnesota Gardening, 1995*, for a year-long supply of handy garden tips by horticulturists, entomologists, and plant pathologists. While other gardening calendars have a national, or at best, mid-western approach, the information in *Minnesota Gardening* was written specifically for our challenging climate.

This year's calendar features a one-page guide to pruning trees, along with a USDA climate zone map and a map of average last frost dates in Minnesota.

The calendar makes a great last-minute holiday gift for your gardening friends and family. You can buy it from any county extension office or directly from the MES Distribution Center, room 20 Coffey Hall, 1420 Eckles Ave, U of MN, St. Paul, 55108. It's also available at bookstores, gift shops, and garden centers throughout the state.

If you order from the Distribution Center enclose a check (payable to the University of Minnesota) for \$7.00 per calendar, (\$6.50 each, if you buy five or more), plus 7% state sales tax and a shipping and handling fee of \$1.50 per order (**not** per calendar) sent to the same address.

Cluster flies—We have recently received several calls about these flies which are a bit larger than house flies and can be found indoors in either fall, winter or spring. They usually cluster around windows.

Cluster fly larvae feed on earthworms and are in the soil for most of the summer. Adults emerge from the soil in late summer and soon begin to look for hibernating areas. They cluster on the sunny exposure areas of the house and enter into wall voids through cracks and gaps. They may come all the way through into the home's interior and thus be seen in the fall. Often they remain in the wall voids to hibernate and then emerge into the house as the weather warms in spring or even on sunny winter days.

Once they have gotten into the wall voids, control is limited. Simply vacuum up the flies that emerge indoors. This can frustrate homeowners as more flies may emerge a short time later, but it is impractical to kill the flies in the wall. These flies will not reproduce in the house and live only a short time after waking from hibernation. Prevention for the following year involves sealing gaps and cracks in the exterior. Supplement this by treating the exterior with the insecticide permethrin. For more information, see the Dial U Brief *Cluster Flies*.

Other common calls include pantry pests, carpenter and pavement ants, and fruit flies.

Deborah Brown
Horticulture

Kevin Stroom
Entomology

The information given in this publication is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Minnesota Extension Service is implied.

The University of Minnesota, including the Minnesota Extension Service, is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

REGISTRATION FORM

95-9404

Agricultural Professional Update

January 1995

(Use separate forms or copies for additional registrants)

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Indicate Your Workshop Choice:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> January 10 | St. Cloud (12:30 p.m.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> January 11 | Lamberton (12:30 p.m.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> January 11 | Morris (8:30 p.m.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> January 12 | Crookston (8:30 p.m.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> January 12 | Mankato (8:30 p.m.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> January 13 | Rochester (8:30 p.m.) |

NOTE: There will be a \$10.00 service fee assessed for changing workshop registration from one location to another after January 6, 1995.

FEE: Preregistration per person \$15.00
At the door per person \$25.00

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Make checks payable to: UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Return to: EDS/Registrar
University of Minnesota
P. O. Box 64780
St. Paul, MN 55164-0780

Registration begins 1/2 hour prior to the beginning of each session.

MINNESOTA EXTENSION SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
AGRICULTURE

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