

## FIELD DODDER

Field dodder (*Cuscuta campestris*) is a unique parasitic annual plant that also is known as strangleweed or devil's hair. It is composed of golden yellow "threads" that twine over other plants and attach themselves with short, suction-cup-like suckers that arise from the bottom of the dodder stems. These suckers penetrate the stems of host plants to obtain nourishment. Though dodder has leaves, they are so small and scalelike the plant appears leafless. Flowers are small, whitish, and 1/4 inch in diameter. They are produced from April to October and will produce a seedpod that is two-celled and four-seeded.

Because dodder is an annual, it must reproduce from seed. Plants present now will be killed by the first frost this fall. Seed may sprout in the spring or lie dormant for a number of years. Germination takes place in the soil, but roots die as soon as the plant finds an acceptable host.

After attachment, dodder lives completely off the host plant. A single dodder plant can spread by branching and attacking additional host plants.

Destroying the host plants can control dodder, but this may not be an acceptable solution for many people. Dodder cannot be destroyed by pulling it off the host plants because remaining stem pieces will continue to grow. Dacthal (DCPA) is a preemergence herbicide that can be used to kill the germinating seed if used at the highest rate for your soil type. Two applications are needed, with the second following six weeks after the first. Dacthal is packaged for commercial use only. Also, glyphosate (Round-up, Kleen-up, Killzall, etc.) is effective on dodder. However, glyphosate is nonselective and will kill whatever it hits, including the host plants.

## COOL COMPROMISE REACHED... SUPPOSEDLY

Cattle producers will likely still be left pondering the specific details of compliance, but a compromise by the U.S. Agriculture Committee last week will apparently ensure implementation of mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL) a year from September.

While it won't repair all shortcomings in the COOL law, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) says the compromise measure makes the law more livable for cattlemen.

For one thing, presumably the revision will simplify record-keeping and allow producers to self-certify the origin of their products. As well, this new version of COOL will distinguish beef of cattle exclusively of U.S. origin from imported beef, as well as from domestic beef that is blended with imported product and beef from cattle born in another country but fed and processed in the U.S.

NCBA has contended for many years that a poorly written COOL law will be harmful to the U.S. cattle industry. Our top priority from the beginning has been that the benefits of COOL must outweigh the costs for cattle producers.

Though improved, NCBA cautions that this version of COOL still exempts poultry from all requirements imposed on beef, pork and lamb.

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# AG NEWS

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## WHEAT VARIETY TRIAL RESULTS AND FREE SOIL TEST PROGRAM

Dr Hailin Zhang, Director of the Soil, Water and Forage Analytical laboratory at Oklahoma State University, has announced a free soil testing program. Details of the program include:

- Five free samples per producer
- Each sample includes both top soil (0-6 inch depth) and sub soil (6-18 inch depth)
- Soil samples must be collected and returned by August 15, 2007.
- Take soil samples to your County Extension Office for delivery to soils testing lab.

To receive soil test results, producers must attend an educational meeting on Thursday, August 23rd at 12:00 noon at the Midwest Crop Protection Building at Gate or at the Red Barn at Bryan's Corner at 6:30pm. Roger Gribble, Area Extension Agronomist, will discuss the results of the wheat trials across the state and Rick Kochenower, Area Extension Agronomist, will present findings from planting date and seeding rate study at OPREC at Gate. Rick Kockenower will discuss the 2007 Balko Wheat Variety Plot results and fertility issues, and Curtis Bensch will discuss Musk thistle control and early season identification at Bryan's Corner. Must RSVP by Monday, August 20th.

Soil samples in this program are intended for wheat production. Sample bags area available at the Beaver County OSU Extension Office.

## THE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF LAWNS AND GARDENS

Gardening provides a physical, emotional and spiritual outlet. Numerous academic studies detail the therapeutic

benefits that people gain by spending time outdoors gardening and tending to their yards.

The benefits of healthy turf are just as compelling – and often overlooked. As indicated in scientific studies conducted at Cornell University, Pennsylvania State University, Michigan State University, the Ohio State University, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M, healthy lawns:


- Reduce noise by serving as a natural filter;
- Cool the environment;
- Provide better air quality by converting greenhouse gas carbon dioxide into oxygen;
- Act as a natural air cleaner, trapping an estimated 12 million tons of dust and dirt from the air annually; and
- Stabilize the earth by knitting the soil together with grass roots and stems to prevent erosion and polluted runoff.

The positive effects of healthy lawns and gardens are abundant, and we need to be committed to create and enjoy the outdoor environment.

## EXPLAINING THE DOLLAR

The weakness of the dollar, while a boon to U.S. wheat exports, is a favorite target of many politicians who want to blame Chinese economic policies. Efforts continue to "force" China to revalue the yen, and there is much hand-wringing about how much of the U.S. debt is held in Asian countries' foreign reserves.

The dollar has been in a freefall since December 2005, with the U.S. Dollar Index dropping to 80.150 in mid July, about where it was trading at the end of 2004, be-

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fore climbing by the end of 2005 to near 92.

Some economists argue that the dollar has weakened as Asian countries rebalance their accounts, selling the U.S. dollar to buy euros, for example.

But it isn't just Asia that's behind the fall, according to Stephen Jen, Managing Director and Chief Currency Economist at Morgan Stanley.

In a piece on Morgan Stanley's website, (www.morganstanley.com/), Jen says the dollar has weakened against world currencies as U.S. "real money managers" have diversified clients' holdings. "Controlling assets that are four times the size of the total global official foreign reserves, U.S. real money managers have been steadily diversifying out of the U.S. since 2003.

"My calculations show that cumulative outflows may have totaled US\$1.16 trillion in the past four years. This may help explain the downward drift in the dollar in recent years, and why the dollar is so weak now," Jen wrote.

If Jen is right, politicians have their guns aimed in the wrong direction.

How much the strength of the dollar really matters to U.S. exports is another question open to some debate. In research I've done for DTN in the past, I've found a few analysts who believe the weaker dollar is a benefit to **wheat**, since wheat is available from many countries. But many say it doesn't matter for corn since the U.S. is the principal source for corn, so international buyers will have to come to us regardless of the strength of our currency. For soybeans, the dollar/real exchange rate is the crucial one.

Whichever you believe, it's worth tracking the dollar as a measure of the relative strength of the U.S. economy. Pat Hill, DTN July 20, 2007

## LEAVES FALLING FROM TREES

There has been a number of calls regarding leaves falling from trees. Leaves are most often yellow with no discernible disease spots. The falling leaves are well distributed throughout the tree resulting in a general thinning.

Trees will often set more leaves in the spring than they can support during the summer. Heat and drought stress will cause the tree to lose leaves that it cannot support with the available soil moisture. In severe cases we are seeing virtually all of the leaves drop and the tree entering summer dormancy. Trees that are summer dormant should have supple twigs and healthy buds. In both cases, the effect on the health of the tree should be very minor and the tree should leaf out normally next spring.

### Pinch off old flower blooms

Keep your annual flowers blooming by pinching or pruning off the old, spent blooms. This not only tidies up the plants but promotes more laterals to produce flowering stems. Do this on container gardens, too.

## APHIS RELEASES RR ALFALFA EQUIPMENT CLEANING RULES

All equipment used for the production and transportation of Roundup Ready alfalfa must be cleaned before it's used for conventional alfalfa, and the transgenic hay or silage must be segregated and clearly labeled. Those are among the Roundup Ready alfalfa production requirements outlined in a July 12 administrative order issued by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The order was mandated in the May 3 permanent injunction that outlawed the planting of Roundup Ready alfalfa until USDA completes an environmental impact statement. The judge in the case ruled that existing Roundup Ready alfalfa fields can continue to be grown, harvested and sold, provided safeguards are implemented to minimize commingling of Roundup Ready and conventional alfalfa.

Before moving mowing, raking, merging, baling or stacking equipment from a Roundup Ready to a non-Roundup Ready field, growers and custom harvesters must "sweep, blow with forced air, or wash exterior parts clean," the order says. The same procedure is sufficient for choppers; no internal cleaning is needed. For square balers, the first three bales made in a non-Roundup Ready field must be removed and stored with Roundup Ready alfalfa from the previous field. Wagons and trucks used to haul the crop must be swept clean after they're unloaded, and buyers must be notified if the hay or silage they're buying contains Roundup Ready alfalfa.

2007 Oklahoma Wheat Variety Trial Summary

Variety	Aha	Balho	Buffalo	Cherokee	Cimarron County	Elk City	El Reno Conv Till DP	El Reno Conv Till GO	El Reno No-Till DP	El Reno No-Till GO	Frederick	Gage	Goodwell Irrigated	Goodwell Non-irr.	Hooker	Kingfisher	Marshall DP	Marshall GO	Olustee
2174	30	82	55	36	-	45	11	16	14	15	35	38	61	70	-	39	11	23	47
Avalanche (W)	-	81	-	-	70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	64	67	59	-	-	-	-
Centerfield	36	83	56	34	-	46	15	12	12	13	44	40	66	58	-	33	9	25	47
Cutter	23	86	48	19	-	36	12	21	14	23	41	37	64	76	-	42	14	21	48
Danby (W)	29	98	57	26	81	48	20	23	17	20	41	53	73	73	62	47	15	23	46
Deliver	36	84	64	34	-	63	19	22	17	20	44	49	66	72	-	40	20	32	48
Doans	34	84	62	28	-	58	23	21	30	28	53	42	66	64	-	40	20	36	51
Duster	35	93	65	28	78	44	19	27	18	26	47	50	69	84	72	52	22	32	48
Endurance	34	94	65	40	75	53	19	25	20	25	45	52	68	77	70	45	20	29	50
Fannin	31	85	57	30	-	54	7	19	8	21	49	37	66	75	-	42	14	32	51
Fuller	32	88	65	35	-	61	17	26	20	30	54	55	76	78	-	52	19	40	60
Guymon (W)	-	89	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67	68	-	-	-	-	-
Iice	-	78	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	71	-	-	-	-	-
Intrada (W)	-	91	-	-	65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	65	73	60	-	-	-	-
Jagalene	19	87	49	18	73	35	8	18	12	20	34	40	69	75	58	42	11	21	50
Jagger	21	84	51	20	67	40	8	19	11	22	39	38	68	67	61	40	9	22	54
JEI 110	29	87	57	27	-	50	12	22	12	15	51	44	64	73	-	47	12	31	55
Lakin (W)	-	94	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	66	68	-	-	-	-	-
Neosho	-	-	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OK Bullet	33	92	63	29	77	59	17	22	19	28	45	49	73	78	67	50	21	37	59
Olfield	25	83	54	32	-	38	16	16	13	15	40	43	62	65	-	43	12	24	44
Overley	35	92	62	31	-	55	15	32	19	32	53	43	72	77	-	50	16	28	64
ProtectionCL	19	80	50	22	-	37	7	19	9	20	42	36	68	71	-	44	13	26	56
Santa Fe	33	92	64	33	-	56	14	22	14	28	47	43	77	71	-	49	20	32	59
Shocker	34	80	58	34	-	56	15	22	13	24	45	38	64	67	-	46	21	29	54
Stanton	-	83	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62	78	-	-	-	-	-
TAM 110	-	89	-	-	72	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	68	58	-	-	-	-
TAM 111	28	98	60	-	72	43	13	24	14	18	40	49	74	75	65	48	18	28	45
TAM 112	-	97	-	-	76	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	73	72	75	-	-	-	-
Trego (W)	-	91	-	-	76	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	61	70	60	-	-	-	-
OK Bullet 06ERU	30	89	61	29	-	55	13	-	-	-	45	49	67	71	-	51	20	37	56
OK00611W	32	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	64	76	-	-	-	-	-
OK02125	28	-	-	29	-	-	16	-	-	-	48	-	65	-	-	44	17	31	-
OK02522W	31	91	62	30	-	63	18	-	-	-	51	47	66	75	-	51	19	37	58
OK03305	-	-	-	-	-	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	61
OK03522	-	-	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	51	-	-	-
OK04505	29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
OK05737W	-	92	63	32	-	61	15	-	-	-	44	-	71	70	-	53	20	33	-
OK05905C	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	33	41	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mean	30	88	59	29	74	51	15	21	15	22	44	44	67	72	64	46	16	30	53
LSD (0.05)	3	9	9	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	7	6	10	14	6	6	4	4	3