



Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture E-Newsletter

E-Field Notes
July 2015

Summer is heating up - and so is the schedule of educational workshops at the Kerr Center.

Feral hog management will be the topic of an August 27 workshop, combining expertise from the Noble Foundation with insights from the Kerr Center's own experiences.

The following month, on September 26, take advantage of a lineup of elderberry experts from around the region to learn how to get started with this booming native perennial crop.

In other Kerr Center news, the center's work with pollinators and their habitat was featured on television news earlier this month. The report is still viewable online.

Also, if you missed our recent workshops on pasture plant I.D. and livestock water supplies, check out the recaps in this issue.

As always, if you value our work, please also consider supporting it!

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Feral Hog Management: Workshop August 27



More than 1.6 million feral hogs make their home in Oklahoma, causing over a billion dollars in crop and livestock damage every year. Farmers and ranchers want them gone - but wild hogs are now a sporting industry in their own right, worth millions of dollars annually. ODAFF's recent proposal for new rules to improve feral hog control drew fire from both groups.

One thing that can benefit all sides of the feral hog issue is better knowledge of how to manage feral hogs on their land. A workshop in Poteau on August 27 will deliver that knowledge.

Running from 6 to 9 in the evening, the workshop will focus on the basics: preventing feral hog infestations where possible, and managing them where populations already exist. It will also review rules and regulations governing the management of feral hogs.

Specific topics include agricultural issues, wildlife habitat destruction, population dynamics, disease issues, and population control.

The presenters' roster features a trio experienced both in managing feral hogs, and in educating others about their management.

Russell Stevens literally wrote the book on feral hogs in Oklahoma - the Noble Foundation's "The Feral Hog in Oklahoma." He is a Strategic Consultation Manager for the Noble Foundation.

Another Noble Foundation employee, Wildlife & Range Consultant Josh Gaskamp, will second Stevens. His speciality is trapping methods.

Kerr Center Vice President David Redhage will take a turn at the lectern, describing the center's experience with feral hogs on the 4,000-acre Kerr Ranch.

Workshop registration is due by August 13 and costs \$15. (The fee is refundable for cancellations through the due date.)

For more information or to [register](#), visit the events calendar at www.kerrcenter.com, call 918.647.9123, or send an email to mailbox@kerrcenter.com.

Elderberries: Workshop September 26



Elderberry planting in bloom on the Cannon Horticulture Plots, June 2015

Meet elderberry, the new wonder plant. It grows wild through a wide swath of the U.S. Its flowers and berries can be turned into syrups, juices, and wines, with reputed health benefits ranging from burn treatment to flu prevention. Its leaves are even supposed to repel mice.

With so much going for it, elderberry has drawn attention from a handful of growers and researchers in neighboring states, who are working to turn it into a profitable new crop.

The leaders among that group are coming to Oklahoma to share that knowledge. Interested growers can gather in Poteau for a workshop on September 26, to get a big head start on diversifying into this promising crop.

The workshop will cover variety selection, propagation, establishment, production, harvest, marketing, and uses for this perennial native plant. It includes both classroom presentations

and a tour of the Kerr Center's elderberry plantings.



Mulched row of elderberry plants in the Cannon Hort Plots, June 2015

Presenters include:

Terry Durham

Durham is an elderberry grower, marketer and promoter from Missouri. He founded the River Hills Harvest Elderberry Producers, a grower-supported group. He and his partner produce American-made elderberry jams, jellies, juices, and medicinal products.

Patrick Byers

Byers is Associate Extension Professional and Horticulture Specialist, serving a 17-county region in Southwestern Missouri. His areas of work include both commercial and home horticulture, and both Master Naturalists and Master Gardeners of Missouri. He co-authored the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry's "Growing and Marketing Elderberries in Missouri."

Bob McCord

McCord is an experienced commercial elderberry grower from Mt. Ida, Arkansas

Jacob Wilson

Wilson is IPM Extension Technician with Lincoln University Cooperative Extension in Jefferson City, Missouri.

George Kuepper

Kuepper is Horticulture Manager at the Kerr Center.

Workshop registration is due by September 18 and costs \$50 per person (\$25 for additional family member), which includes lunch. (Refunds are available for cancellations made before the due date.)

For more information or to [register](#), visit the events calendar at www.kerrcenter.com, call 918.647.9123, or send an email to mailbox@kerrcenter.com.

Bees on TV



Earlier this month, **Tulsa's News on 6** aired a report by **Scott Thompson** about **Oklahoma's loss of honey bees - and what people can do about it.**

The **Emmy award-winning reporter and news anchor** had attended a **Kerr Center pollinator workshop** back in the spring, where he interviewed center Vice President David Redhage and Xerces Society specialist Anne Stein, as well as workshop participants.

The report was triggered by alarming facts from the ongoing pollinator crisis. Commercial beekeepers say they need to lose fewer than 20% of their hives each year in order to remain economically sustainable. But the national average loss is more than double that – around 40% at latest count.

In Oklahoma, the rate of honey bee hive loss is worse still - over 60%, the "greatest dieoff of commercial honey bees in all the nation," as Thompson put it.

Thompson's report ticked off the combined **causes of honey bees' woes. Indiscriminate use of pesticides**, both in landscaping and agriculture, does much of the damage. **Loss of habitat, including the native plants on which honey bees and many other pollinators depend**, is another major culprit.

"When we lose our pollinators we lose the link that makes it possible for us to feed ourselves," Thompson said.

He then turned from the gloomy description of honey bees' current status to a forward-looking survey of the "simple, beautiful steps" that individuals can take to help reverse the decline. If habitat loss is contributing to pollinator loss, then planting more habitat should help to stem it.

That's where the Kerr Center comes in. **Preserving habitat for native bees will also benefit honey bees.** The Kerr Center has been protecting native plants wherever it can, and has established an office landscape of largely native plants, grasses, shrubs and trees.

In the broadcast, Redhage explained how **making similar plantings at a flower-bed scale can help in a big way.** "You may say, well, I've only got a little flower bed in front of my house. But you **get everybody on the block doing that, and all of a sudden you've got a tremendous addition to the landscape.**"

"We have a native resource here. All we have to do is plant the right plants, and they thrive. **These plants are adapted to everything that Oklahoma can throw at them.**"

The report aired Thursday, July 9, during the 10 p.m. newscast on Channel 6, and also during the 9 p.m. newscast on KOTV's sister station, Tulsa's CW (Channel 19). If you missed it then, you can still **catch it online** [here](#).

To **learn more about how to create pollinator habitat right in your own front yard** - or farm, or pasture - please visit the Kerr Center's [pollinator pages](#).

Clear, Cool Water: Bringing Clean Water to Your Livestock



Cattle Manager Will Lathrop shows off the great water pressure through the downhill siphon watering system.

If the average human should drink 8 glasses of water (about $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon) per day, and even more in hot weather, how much does the average cow need to drink?

It depends. At 50 degrees a cow may consume 5-10 gallons per day, but at 95 degrees, that same cow will drink 24 gallons per day.

The importance of making [adequate, clean water available to cattle year-round](#) was the focus of the Kerr Center's Water and Livestock Workshop on Saturday, June 11.

Folks from both Oklahoma and Arkansas listened to experts from the center and OSU

Cooperative Extension explore water quality and ways to keep water clean on a working ranch.

Also discussed were water sources, ways to bring water to the herd, and various types of watering tanks.

Kerr Center vice-president David Redhage kicked off the event with a slide show overview of the topics to be covered.

Le Flore County extension educator Amber Reece shared the results of a year-long study she made comparing water quality from a pond and in different tanks on the Kerr Ranch.

Why manage livestock water quality? "Clean water consumption is essential for cattle health," said Reece. "Water is the MOST important nutrient for cattle."

[Read more](#)

Pasture Plant I.D. Workshop Recap



Over a dozen folks attended the pasture plant I.D. workshop on Thursday evening, June 25. Kerr staff including David Redhage, Simon Billy, Daryl Davis and Will Lathrop worked with participants to identify common (and not-so-common) grasses and plants.

Coming Events: Hear It First Here

JUL 14 Tue	Tour the Kerr Center @ Kerr Center Jul 14 <small>all-day</small>	+
AUG 11 Tue	Tour the Kerr Center @ Kerr Center Aug 11 <small>all-day</small>	+
AUG 27 Thu	Feral Hog Management Workshop @ Kerr Center Aug 27 @ 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm	+
SEP 8 Tue	Tour the Kerr Center @ Kerr Center Sep 8 <small>all-day</small>	+
SEP 26 Sat	Elderberry Workshop @ Kerr Center Sep 26 <small>all-day</small>	+
OCT 10 Sat	Grazing Workshop @ Kerr Center Oct 10 @ 9:00 am – 5:00 pm	+
OCT 13 Tue	Tour the Kerr Center @ Kerr Center Oct 13 <small>all-day</small>	+

Download our workshop brochure



On top of the two workshops highlighted above, the Kerr Center's slate of fall [events](#) is bringing a [grazing workshop](#) to the ranch on October 10.

This [brochure](#) lists, all in one place, the rest of the educational events that the Kerr Center is offering this summer and fall.

In addition, [tours](#) are available every 2nd Tuesday by appointment.

The Kerr Center [events calendar](#) offers **online registration** for all events that require it. Pay electronically there with a credit card or PayPal, or [download a registration form](#) and send a check in the mail.

Don't forget that you can also use our online calendar to **keep yourself and your friends up to date** on these and other upcoming events, including our our tours:

- **Subscribe to our feed** and receive **updates to your personal calendar** (Outlook, Google+, etc.) as they are made.
- **Share events on the calendar** via a number of **different social media sites**, including Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

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Contact Information

The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture
24456 Kerr Road
Poteau, OK 74953
Phone: 918.647.9123
Fax: 918.647.8712
mailbox@kerrcenter.com

