

GASTON GROWER SPOTLIGHT- AUGUST 2020

Irrigation is a practical way Gaston County growers are preventing the spread and presence of fungal and bacterial diseases on their crops.



A Nandina with fungal leaf spot as opposed to a healthy Nandina shrub

The Usefulness of Drip Irrigation in Disease Control

Drip irrigation is a common practice throughout many different avenues of agriculture. Utilizing drip irrigation helps conserve water, reduces weed pressure and aids in the prevention of diseases. Wet foliage can create an environment favorable for the germination and spread of fungal pathogens. Drip irrigation is not a cure all for fungal and bacterial disease but it is a useful practice with multiple benefits. Preventing fungal and bacterial spotting, mildews and blights plays an important part in the management of local nursery and cut flower operations. When a plant is being sold on aesthetic value a drip line is a useful tool to have in a grower's arsenal.



New drip lines installed at [Hawk and Sparrow Flowers at Raceway Berry Farm](#)



Local Commercial Cut Flower Operation Utilizing Drip Irrigation

Tim & Lis Murray are owners of Hawk and Sparrow Flowers at Raceway Berry Farm and graduates of NC Cooperative Extension's [NC Farm School](#). They have installed drip irrigation on their blueberry bushes and flower beds. Healthy flower crops with reduced leaf spots are crucial for ensuring high quality within their flower arrangements being sold at the Davidson/Charlotte Farmers Markets and also to local florist. [Hawk and Sparrow Flowers at Raceway Berry Farm](#)

Stowe's Nursery Takes Cultural Approach to Combating Shot-hole Disease

Shot-hole is a tough disease to fight being that it is a combination of bacterial infection (*Xanthomonas prunii*) and fungal disease (*Blumeriella gaapi* and/or *Cercospora* sp.). Shot-hole is a common disease found in Otto Luyken Laurels, giving the foliage a holey appearance as if shot with pellets. This disease often is already present on crops brought into nurseries. When Shot-hole is present it becomes tough to eradicate but can be alleviated. Stowe's Nursery utilizes drip emitters to prevent the spread of the disease by splashing and to reduce wetness of foliage that would create the ideal environment for the pathogens to thrive. Disease pressure is also reduced from proper spacing for airflow as well as the removal of infected leaf debris.

Stowe's Nursery



Conserving Water and Reducing Disease at Creekside Nursery

Jerry and Jenny Simpson of Creekside Nursery in Dallas have a unique system in place for growing their shrubs. Most nursery operations opt for overhead watering on a majority of their crops. Creekside is unique in the fact that their main shrub growing bed is set up with elevated drip lines. This practice conserves water, ensures even water distribution and as a result reduces the risk of infection by fungal and bacterial pathogens. Plants during their early stages of growth and rooting often do not recover from disease as well as more mature nursery stock.



Creekside Nursery



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