

Gaston Grower Spotlight- November 2023



Giving Thanks to Local Farms Working With Us

November is typically a good reminder for folks to take pause and reflect on the year thus far. I think about how life this year has seemed to be more expensive than years past. Farmers are not immune to these high costs and we at Gaston County Cooperative Extension realize this. We have partnered with farms and nurseries this year to set up trials to help maximize the profitability of farms across the county. These trials are not possible without these growers giving time and land to these efforts. This spotlight is dedicated to thanking those growers who have worked with us this year, and their commitment to improving profits for Gaston County farms.

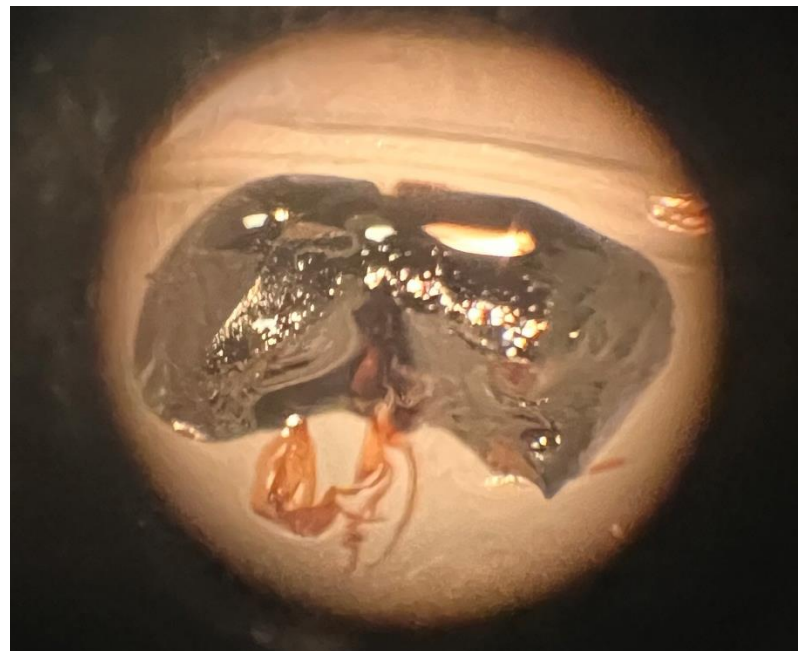


Hay Trials

JJ Teague's farm showcased that when fertilizer input costs are steep, hay production can remain profitable with the more affordable half rate of nitrogen. The fields saw greater yields with full rates of the recommended fertilizer. However, sacrificing yield by not purchasing balanced fertilizer and opting to optimize input costs into nitrogen in years like 2022 (high market values) was more profitable. Thanks to JJ we can now be more confident in management recommendations for hay producers if the fertilizer market is subject to similar conditions in the future. We thank JJ for his time and commitment to this trial.

Camphor Shot Monitoring

Long Pond Nursery hosted a monitoring site for granulate ambrosia beetle and camphor shot borer activity. We essentially lured these insects with ethanol traps set at 4 and 8 foot high. The good news is that populations remained low outside of the typical peaks in Spring. These traps allow for better timing of insecticides to prevent damage from these boring insects. Understanding population levels not only helps to protect the crop, but also limits pesticide use. Limiting the use of chemical inputs has benefits for the environment, and the grower's wallet. Without Lee's Suddreth of Long Pond's help we would have been uncertain of the risks Gaston County nurseries have with camphor shot borer, a relatively new invasive pest.





Fall Nursery Trials

Recently we have partnered with Stowe's Nursery to monitor preemergent herbicide efficacy in the fall, fall fertilization impacts, and fall weed management practices. This series of trials will give insight on how to gain the highest return on investment from fertilizer and herbicide inputs. We will also look at labor efficiency to reduce costs. These results will be showcased at a field day for Extension agents, and growers in Spring of 2024. Jeff and his team have welcomed Extension trials with hopes to improve upon their practices.

Thank you!

Despite the hefty price tags these days we have so much to be thankful for. We are thankful for community members like those mentioned above, and yourself. Without the support of our community we could not work to address any of the many issues growers face in Gaston County. If there are practices, products, or issues you wish to explore further let us know. We wish to make the work we do relevant to the needs of our growers.



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