AG NOTES

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July 6, 2021

FARMERS MARKET

We had a good start last week. We had nine vendors, with a limited supply of produce but a great supply of canned goods, baked goods, jams and jellies and honey. And of course, kettle corn.

We have had some indication that the produce is coming in now, and some vendors have been waiting to get enough stuff together to bring. We expect a good turnout of vendors this year.

The customer crowd was good, and even in the midst of a downpour of rain. But we go on, rain or shine. Come see us this week at the Farmers Market Pavilion on Celebration Drive next to the big blue water tower at the Celebration Grounds. We're open Thursdays at 2:30 pm til the vendors sell out or the customers quit coming.

WHAT IS THIS?

I had a bottle of bugs left on my desk with a note to call. These bugs were eating on a wide variety of ornamentals and leaves on shrubs. I've attached a photo. Here are excerpts from the UT publication The Japanese Beetle and Its Control, PB946.

The adult beetle is a broadly oval insect nearly one-half inch long and one-fourth inch wide. The body is a bright metallic green with the legs a darker shade of green. The wing covers (elytra) are a coppery brown and extend almost to the tip of the abdomen.

There are two small tufts of white hair just behind the elytra on the last abdominal segment and five tufts of white hair along each side of the abdomen. The under surface is covered with short gray hairs. Both sexes have the same coloring and markings, but the males are usually smaller than the females.

The emerging adult beetles crawl or fly onto low-growing plants and begin to feed. On warm, sunny days, the beetles feed and fly vigorously. They are naturally gregarious and tend to aggregate on host plants.

Mating occurs soon after emergence and occurs frequently throughout the 30-60 days of adult life. In the late afternoon, mated females burrow into the soil to a depth of 1 to 4 inches to deposit one to four eggs. The females may come out of the ground the following morning or remain in the soil for three to four days. A female may enter the soil 16 or more times to deposit a total of 40 to 60 eggs during her lifetime.

The eggs hatch in 10 to 14 days and the grub forms a cell in the soil slightly larger than its body. The grub feeds on the rootlets that grow into the cell. In the late fall when the soil temperatures drop to about 60 F, the grubs move downward and remain at a depth of 4 to 6 inches throughout the winter. The grub becomes inactive during this period. As the soil warms in the spring, the grubs move upward to the root zone and resume feeding.

There are several control measures. These are covered well in the publication, and I'll be happy to provide a link to it for reference. Insecticides for the grub phase are available, but these seem to not be widely used. And to control the grubs on your area will not reduce the numbers of feeding adults on your plants.

Applying Sevin dust or spray is very effective, but the appropriate time is in the evening after the honey bees are not active. Avoid applying the Sevin to the blooms for that reason.

Another tip is to not use the traps. These emit a pheromone that attracts the beetles to the trap, and this will only result in more beetles in your area.