

AG NOTES
By John Teague
UT/TSU Extension
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WHAT IS THIS?

I had a couple bring in a limb and a fruit off of a plant in their pasture for me to identify. The fruit's skin looked like the skin of an apple in a way. This thing was about the size of a big golf ball. I can't smell anymore due to sinus surgery, but I thought I had seen this before and that one smelled like an orange.

The limb was flat, a shiney deep green color, hard and covered with spikes. I accidentally tapped one the wrong way and the finger prick was painful. The leaves were in sets of three, sort of oblong and circular. The spikes made me think of a Callery pear, the terrible hybrid we are finding all over the area in fields and it seems they are taking over.

The leaves kept me thinking this was not a Callery pear, though. And I've not seen a pear fruit on one of these trees. So, I took images of the limb and the fruit and emailed them to the lab in Nashville for identification. I was glad to get a reply almost immediately.

This one is a hardy orange. Oddly, I've been trying to think of this name for some time, remembering back to when I first saw this weed plant and remembering the smell. The fruit does have a somewhat pleasant odor to it at early stages. It is very full of seeds.

Here's what North Carolina State University's plant ID website said about it. Trifoliate Orange or Hardy Orange is a deciduous thorny shrub or small tree that prefers well drained, acidic soil in a sunny location and grows up to nearly 20' tall. This plant blooms in mid-spring and fruit ripens in early fall. Spines are sharp and numerous and are not for high traffic areas. This plant may be pruned into a thick, impenetrable hedge. This plant is an excellent winter character as specimen planting. This plant prefers well-drained, acid soil and full sun. It is intolerant of shady siting, is easily transplanted, and has no serious pest or disease problems.

The lemon-like fruit is exceedingly sour and full of seeds. If eaten in large quantities, the high acidity can cause severe stomach pain and nausea. Some people experience minor skin irritation with prolonged contact. While the peel and the pulp can be used to make marmalade, the fruit is often left on the tree to provide beauty well into winter. It makes an excellent hedge, its thorns deterring entry. However, it can be somewhat invasive.

I've attached a picture.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

The National Women in Agriculture will be meeting virtually via zoom this year. We will have speakers from Tennessee State University and USDA on programs and services. Topic will include Bee Keeping, Animal, Fruit and Vegetable Production, How to start a business, Risk Management, Entomology and more.

These are opportunities for women in agriculture to receive training on several topics in an outreach online workshop sponsored by Tennessee State University and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The dates are November 3 and 4, from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm each day, and men are welcome also.

For information and registration for these free programs, contact Ms. Sherry Crudup at shpatterson@tnstate.edu or Mrs. Anonya Amenyonu at aakuley@tnstate.edu Registration for this Zoom meeting is free but required to participate. Contact these TSU staff members for registration links.

FROST DATES

Our average first frost dates are generally around October 19, depending on the data. We are well into the range of dates, and there has already been cold weather and snow out west. We've actually been getting really close to frost conditions, and I suspect we've had some select areas with frost.

So, it is a matter of when we get the cold temperatures wide-spread. I've already discussed the dangers of prussic acid/cyanide in frostbitten Johnsongrass and sudangrass hybrids. It is wise to have a game plan and be prepared to protect your herds with a safe place to avoid grazing these damaged plants. Remember, this affects all species, not just cattle.

FIELD DAY

Flat Creek Farms, 400 New Herman Road, Shelbyville, is hosting a field day at the farm on Saturday, October 30. The time is 11:00AM - 2:00PM. The program will include a presentation by Dr. Justin Rhinehart, UT Associate Professor who specializes in beef cattle production on "Making a long-range plan for reproductive management and economic success". Larry Morehead, Moore County Extension Agent will share his dedication and expertise that earned him the title of "The Hay Whisperer" and "The Tennessee Hay Man".

Lunch is free, but please RSVP ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 23RD FOR LUNCH by calling 931.695.5575 or sending an email to flatcreekfarmstn@gmail.com

