

POLK COUNTY GRAZIER

June 15, 2022



*An eNewsletter by the Rich Mountain
Conservation District*

**RICH MOUNTAIN
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT
RECOGNIZES
POLLINATOR WEEK
JUNE 20-26, 2022**



Mena Mayor, Seth Smith, signing a proclamation declaring June 20-26, 2022 as Pollinator Week. Also pictured: Deanna Wright And Lindy Price from the Rich Mountain Conservation District and Steve Swall and Abigail Bell from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Pollinators need you. You need pollinators.

Birds, bats, bees, butterflies, beetles, and other small mammals that pollinate plants are responsible for bringing us one out of every three bites of food. They

also sustain our ecosystems and produce our natural resources by helping plants reproduce. Pollinating animals travel from plant to plant carrying pollen on their bodies in a vital interaction that allows the transfer of genetic material critical to the reproductive system of most flowering plants – the very plants that

- bring us countless fruits, vegetables, and nuts,
- ½ of the world’s oils, fibers, and raw materials
- prevent soil erosion
- and increase carbon sequestration

This nearly invisible ecosystem service is a precious resource that requires attention and support - - and in disturbing evidence found around the globe, is increasingly in jeopardy.

Why are pollinators important?

Somewhere between 75% and 95% of all flowering plants on the earth need help with pollination – they need pollinators. Pollinators provide pollination services to over 180,000 different plant species and more than 1200 crops. If we want to talk dollars and cents, pollinators add 217 billion dollars to the global economy, and honeybees alone are responsible for between 1.2 and 5.4 billion dollars in agricultural productivity in the United States. In addition to the food that we eat, pollinators support healthy ecosystems that clean the air, stabilize soils, protect from severe weather, and support other wildlife.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THEIR STATUS?

Pollinator populations are changing. Many pollinator populations are in decline and this decline is attributed most severely to a loss in feeding and nesting habitats [8, 9]. Pollution, the misuse of chemicals, disease, and changes in climatic patterns are all contributing to shrinking and shifting pollinator populations. In some cases, there isn’t enough data to gauge a response, and this is even more worrisome.

How can you help?

Pollinator Partnership scientists and research partners that have been studying pollinators for over three decades have been able to show that conservation techniques work. If everyone – homeowners, local governments, national governments, and private industry – made the effort we could change the future for pollinators and secure our own. Adding natural habitat areas into farm systems works. Farms that are closer to natural habitat produce more crop yield because they attract more pollinators. Adding habitat to farms systems works too – farms that have turned a portion of their fields into green space have gained back more overall yield. Homeowners can help too! Home gardens can and do

attract pollinators, and in many cases suburbs and cities have been shown to have more diverse pollinator communities than nearby wildlands. Pollinators don't seem to be phased by city life if there are plots and patches of flowers they will be visited by hungry bees. Pollinator gardening near community gardens also increases urban agricultural yields. If you build it, they will come and help you get bigger and better crops too! Plant the right plants on highway rights of ways, arms, schools, home gardens, corporate landscapes and on public spaces. It really will matter for all of us.

DON'T STOP THERE!

Spread the word about the importance of pollinators.

Support Farmers and Beekeepers by buying local honey and locally produced organic foods.

Donate to support researchers so that they can help fill in the blanks, the more we know the more we can help the bees!

Join Pollinator Partnership as a member. [Homepage | Pollinator.org](#)

Monarchs at Risk

Each fall millions of monarch butterflies migrate to overwintering sites in Mexico and to a scattering of locations along the coast of California. In the spring monarchs return to breeding areas and the cycle starts again: a two-way migration that is one of the most spectacular on the planet. Yet, this migration appears to be declining. Researchers are working to determine the causes of this decline; some theories include:

- Loss of milkweed
- Drought conditions
- Insecticide and herbicide use
- Habitat loss in overwintering sites



Photo of Monarch Butterfly on Milkweed Flower

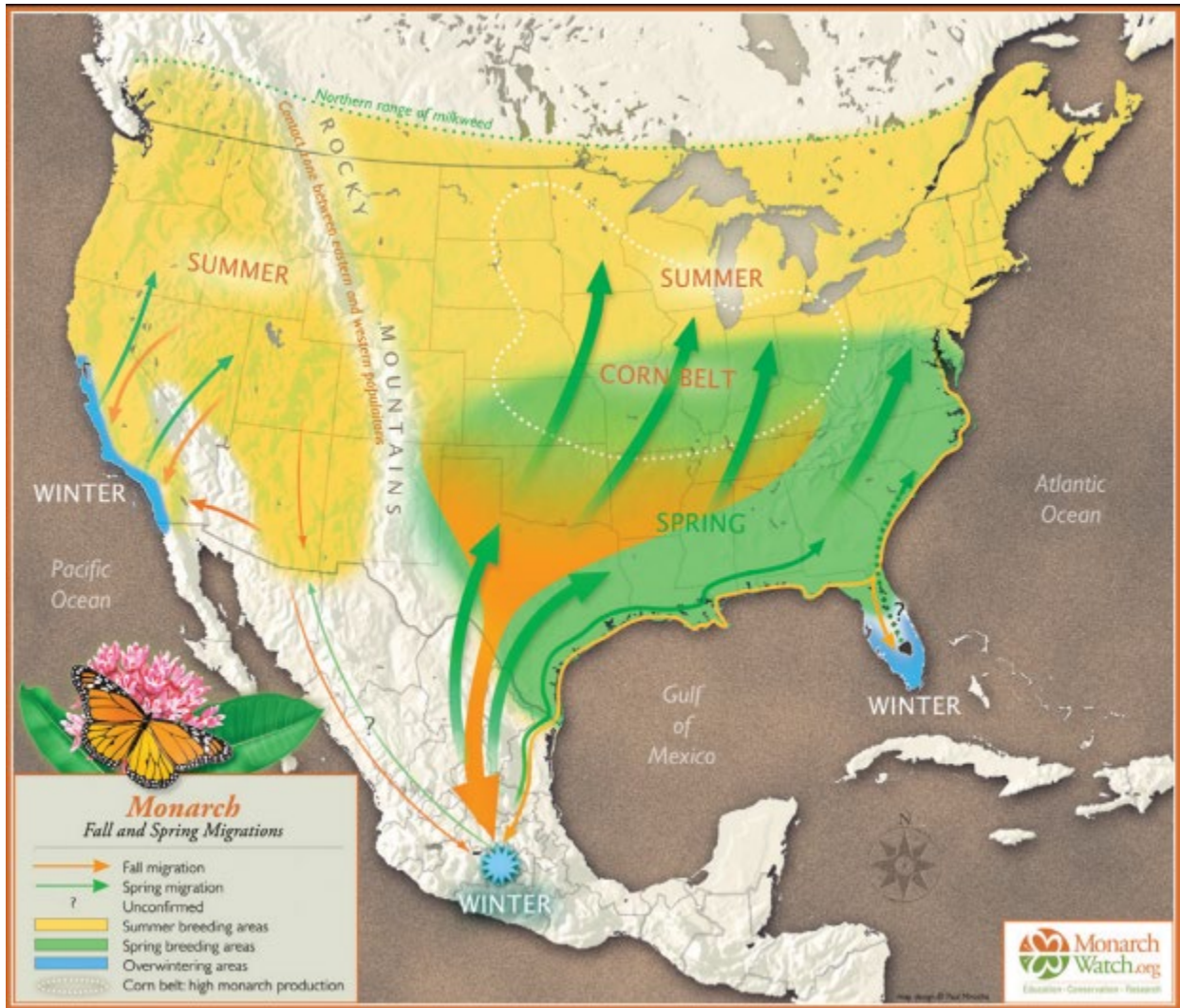
Monarch Facts

- Monarch caterpillars need milkweed plants (in the genus *Asclepias*) to grow and develop into butterflies. They eat and grow rapidly, increasing their weight almost 3,000 times in 10-15 days!
- Milkweed leaves contain toxins that monarch caterpillars accumulate in their bodies. By the time they are adult butterflies, this accumulation of toxins makes them taste quite unpleasant to many predators. Predators learn not to eat them, and this helps monarch butterflies to survive.
- The monarch migration is unique. Successful migrants can navigate more than 1,500 miles to a site unknown to them in the fall, live through an overwintering period of 5 months and then return north to reproduce in the spring for a total life span of 8-9 months.
- To accomplish their great fall migration, monarchs conserve energy during flight. Much like birds, they gain altitude by soaring in "thermals", or updrafts of warm air. Once at the top of each thermal they glide toward their destination. In this way, monarchs make their migration at an average pace of 25-30 miles per day, quite impressive for an insect the weight of a paperclip!
- Most monarchs joining the migration each fall are three or four generations removed from those that made the journey the previous year – yet somehow,

they find the same groves of trees visited by their ancestors! How monarchs navigate to these forest groves remains an unsolved scientific mystery.

The Monarch Migration

There are two populations of monarchs in North America, one centered east of the Rocky Mountains and the other to the west, although there is probably some interchange between these populations across the Rocky Mountains and in Mexico. Butterflies from the eastern population overwinter in Mexico while those from the west overwinter at numerous sites along the California coast. The eastern migration starts in March as butterflies from Mexico travel north into Texas and other southern states, breeding as they move northward. The butterflies produced in these areas move northward in May and June to colonize the northern states and Canada. Two or three additional generations are produced before the southward migration begins. Beginning in mid-August and continuing into fall, hundreds of millions of monarchs migrate south to spend the winter in high-elevation oyamel fir forests in central Mexico. Visit Monarch Watch (www.monarchwatch.org) and Journey North (www.learner.org/jnorth/monarch/) to track the fall migration and monitor the arrival of monarchs in the spring. The western monarch population moves inland from the coast in the spring, breeding in scattered habitats containing milkweeds throughout much of the west but primarily in California. In November, western monarchs begin to return to forested overwintering sites along the California coast, from Baja to Mendocino County. Visit the Xerces Society (www.xerces.org/california-monarchs) to plan a visit to witness these beautiful clusters of overwintering monarchs.



Map of Monarch migration areas

What You Can Do:

- Plant milkweed! Monarch caterpillars need milkweeds to grow and develop. There are over 100 milkweed species that are native to North America, many of which are used by monarchs. To learn which species to plant in your region, and how to plant them, visit the Bring Back the Monarchs Campaign at: www.monarchwatch.org/.
- Plant butterfly nectar plants! Monarchs need nectar to provide energy as they breed, for their migratory journey, and to build reserves for the long winter. Include butterfly plants in your garden, and avoid using pesticides.
- Encourage public land managers to create monarch habitat! Roadsides and parks of all sizes offer great opportunities to create habitat for monarchs and other pollinators.
- Join citizen-science efforts to track monarch populations! The data collected by hundreds of citizen scientists across the country are used by monarch scientists

to decipher monarch population trends, and to learn more about what might be driving their numbers from year to year.

- Support monarch conservation efforts. There are a number of monarch conservation efforts underway doing very good work. Please consider donating to support these monarch conservation programs. Info and pictures by the Pollinator Partnership (www.pollinator.org). Also watch this video for more information about Monarchs: <https://youtu.be/GbE7PeqKyW4>.



Photo:Steven Munafo

Photo of Monarch Caterpillars eating Milkweed Leaf

"Take Care of the Land and the Land will Take Care of You"

Plant of the Week

Butterfly Milkweed



- Butterfly Milkweed is a perennial warm season wildflower native to most of the United States and is also known as Orange Milkweed.
- This plant normally grows 1-3 feet tall and is characterized by its bright orange or yellow flowers in the summer.
- It grows in clumps along roadways and other open areas that are well drained.
- Native Americans and other early American settlers used the plant for medicinal purposes.
- The seed pod fibers were traditionally spun and used to make candle wicks.
- It is considered toxic to humans and livestock due to a toxin called cardiac glycoside.
- The toxic effect of this and other milkweeds is why Monarch Butterflies consume it – protection from predators.
- Monarch Butterflies lay their eggs on the undersides of the leaves and the caterpillars eat the milkweed leaves when they hatch.
- Butterfly Milkweed is easily established by seed or rhizome cuttings and grows well in sunny flower beds or in pots.

You can learn more about plants at the USDA – NRCS PLANTS Database ([USDA Plants Database](#)).

Upcoming Grazing Meetings and Seminars:

⇒ **June 20, 2022 – Wild Turkey and Bobwhite Quail Field Day Tours**

The Arkansas Game & Fish Commission has planned several field day tours around the state with one of those being near Mena on 6/20/2022 at 10 am. A flyer is attached that show the other dates and locations around Arkansas. For more information contact the West Central Arkansas Private Lands Biologist for AGFC, Michelle Furr, at 479-478-1043 or by email at michelle.furr@agfc.ar.gov.

⇒ **June 21, 2022 – Brush Identification in Pastures (1PM—online seminar)**

You are invited to attend the weekly grazing training sessions by Jeremy Huff, the USDA/NRCS state grazing specialist. He offers these training sessions as a Zoom meeting and the instructions for logging in are included in attached flyer. If you have the Zoom app on your phone you can just scan the QR code on the flyer. If you want to watch the presentation on your computer there is a link included in the attachment. The sessions are normally every Tuesday at 1pm so **see the attached flyer**.

⇒ **June 28, 2022 – Herbicide Sprayer Technology (1PM—online seminar)**

Next week's online seminar by Jeremy Huff. The sessions are normally every Tuesday at 1pm so **see the attached flyer**.

⇒ **July 29-30, 2022 – 2022 Arkansas Cattlemen's Association Convention & Trade Show (Hot Springs, AR)**

This 2 day convention will be held at the Hot Springs Convention Center. Click here to register: [2022 ACA Convention & Trade Show | arbeef](https://www.arbeef.com/2022-aca-convention-trade-show)

**Rich Mountain
Conservation
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**Take a picture with your cell phone to
visit the RMCD website —>**



DID YOU KNOW?

Archived copies of the "POLK COUNTY GRAZIER" are now available on the Rich Mtn. Conservation District website at:
[Publications - Rich Mountain Conservation District \(rmcd.org\)](http://Publications - Rich Mountain Conservation District (rmcd.org))

Sent on behalf of the Rich Mtn Conservation District.
Thanks for your interest in grazing management and conservation,

Steve Swall

District Conservationist
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
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BUTTERFLY MILKWEED

Asclepias tuberosa L.
plant symbol = ASTU

Contributed By: USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center



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Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources 1999

Alternative Names

orange milkweed, chigger weed

Use

Warning: Milkweed may be toxic when taken internally, without sufficient preparation.

Ethnobotanic: Milkweed has been used for fiber, food, and medicine by people all over the United States and southern Canada. Fibers from the stems of milkweed have been identified in prehistoric textiles in the Pueblo region. Tewa-speaking people of the Rio Grande still make string and rope from these fibers. At the Zuni Pueblo, the silky seed fibers are spun on a hand-held wooden spindle and made into yarn and woven into fabric, especially for dancers. Pueblo people ate green milkweed pods and uncooked roots from one of the species that forms fleshy tubers underground.

Milkweeds supply tough fibers for making cords and ropes, and for weaving a coarse cloth. Milkweed stems are collected after the stalks senesce in late fall to early winter. The dried stalks are split open to release the fibers. Milkweed fibers are sometimes mixed with fibers of Indian-hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*). The bark is removed and the fibers

released by first rubbing between the hands and then drawing the fibers over a hard surface. The cord is

formed by twisting the fiber opposite each other and twining them together. Often this is accomplished by rolling the fibers on the thigh, while twisting them together.

The young shoots, stems, flower buds, immature fruits, and roots of butterfly milkweed were boiled and eaten as a vegetable by various indigenous groups of eastern and mid-western America.

Butterfly milkweed has many medicinal uses. The Omahas and Poncas ate the raw root of the butterfly milkweed for bronchial and pulmonary troubles. Butterfly milkweed root was also chewed and placed on wounds, or dried, pulverized, and blown into wounds. The Omaha tribe used butterfly milkweed medicine for rites belonging to the Shell Society. The Dakotas used the butterfly milkweed as an emetic. The Menominis considered the butterfly milkweed, which they called the "deceiver," one of their most important medicines.

Generalized medicinal uses for milkweed species include 1) its use in a salve for scrofulous swelling, 2) as a diarrhea medicine, 3) drunk by mothers unable to produce milk, 4) medicine for snow blindness and other forms of blindness, 5) relief of sore throat, 6) applied chewed root for swelling and rashes, 7) to expel tapeworm, 8) to treat colic, 9) to act as contraceptives, and 10) to cure snakebite.

European Americans used *Asclepias tuberosa*, called "pleurisy root", to relieve inflammation of the lining of the lungs and thorax, and to relieve bronchial and pulmonary trouble. Pleurisy root is a stimulant to the vagus nerve, producing perspiration, expectoration, and bronchial dilation. As its name signifies, it is useful for pleurisy and mild pulmonary edema, increasing fluid circulation, cilia function, and lymphatic drainage. The root of the butterfly milkweed, was officially listed in the U.S. Pharmacopoeia from 1820 to 1905 and in the National Formulary from 1916 to 1936.

Milkweed species, as a group, are known to contain cardiac glycosides that are poisonous both to humans and to livestock, as well as other substances that may account for their medicinal effect. Resinoids, glycosides, and a small amount of alkaloids are present in all parts of the plant. Symptoms of

poisoning by the cardiac glycosides include dullness, weakness, bloating, inability to stand or walk, high body temperature, rapid and weak pulse, difficulty breathing, dilated pupils, spasms, and coma.

The cardiac glycoside in milkweed has also been useful as a chemical defense for monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*). Chemicals from the milkweed plant make the monarch caterpillar's flesh distasteful to most predators. Monarch butterflies are specific to milkweed plants. This is the only type of plant on which the eggs are laid and the larvae will feed and mature into a chrysalis. Eggs are laid on the underside of young healthy leaves. Monarch, Queen, and Viceroy butterflies are Müllerian mimics, all are toxic, and have co-evolved similar warning patterns to avoid predation.

Wildlife: Milkweed species are attractive to many insect species, including the large milkweed bug, common milkweed bug, red milkweed beetle, blue milkweed beetle, and bees. Accordingly, this is a wonderful horticultural plant for landscaping to attract butterflies (particularly monarchs), whose numbers are declining and migratory routes changing due to lack of appropriate habitat. Butterfly milkweed also has strikingly beautiful flowers.

Caution: At one time, milkweed was classified as a noxious weed due to reported toxic effects on livestock, and efforts were made to eradicate it. Milkweeds are thought to be poisonous to cows and sheep. Milkweed also can have invasive characteristics in disturbed areas.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values.

Description

General: Milkweed Family (Asclepiadaceae). *Asclepias tuberosa* is a perennial herb 3-9 dm tall with woody rootstocks. According to Kelly Kindscher (1992), "Asclepias comes from the name of the Greek god of medicine, Asklepios. The species name, *tuberosa*, means full of swellings or knobs, referring to the enlarged root system." Butterfly milkweed stems are hairy, erect, and grow in numerous clumps. There is a watery sap within the stems and leaves. The leaves are alternate, simple, crowded, lance-shaped, 5-10 cm long, shiny green, smooth above and velvety beneath. The flowers are in showy, rounded to flat-topped groups near the ends of branches. Each flower has 5 petals,

bent downward, orange to red or sometimes yellow, topped by a crown of 5 erect hoods, each one containing a short horn. Fruits are hairy, spindle-shaped pods 8-15 cm long. The numerous seeds each have a tuft of long white hairs at the tip.

Distribution

Milkweeds grow in clumps beside roadways, on abandoned farmlands, and in other open areas throughout the United States. Butterfly milkweed grows on sandy, loamy, or rocky limestone soils of prairies, open woodlands, roadsides, and disturbed areas similar to other milkweed species. For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Establishment

Butterfly milkweed is easily propagated by both seed and rhizome cuttings. Both seedlings and cuttings will usually bloom in their second year, although cuttings will occasionally bloom during their first year. Seeds and plants of selected cultivars are available from many nurseries. When the roots of the butterfly milkweed were more commonly harvested for their medicinal use, the plants were dug when dormant in the late fall. Butterfly milkweed increases by underground shoots and can be invasive. It is ideal in semi-dry places where it can spread without presenting problems for other ornamental species.

Seed Collections

Asclepias tuberosa is easily propagated from seed. Collect seeds after the pods have ripened, but before they have split open. The seeds are wind dispersed, so be careful when gathering to place in a paper or burlap bag to avoid losing them. Butterfly milkweed seeds should be cold-treated for three months. Seeds can be directly sown into the ground in the fall. The seed is very viable. It is not certain how long you can store the seeds.

Whole Plant Collections

Propagation by cuttings of the tuberous rhizome is also easy and reliable. The cuttings should be made when the plant is dormant. Each piece of the rhizome should have at least one bud (they are about two inches apart). Timing of propagation is important. Harvest or divide plants and get the plants in the ground by late fall so they can develop enough root growth to survive the winter. Irrigation the first year will improve survival, and by the second year the root system should be well enough established so plants will survive on their own.

Both seedlings and cuttings will usually bloom in their second year, although cuttings will occasionally bloom during their first year (Kindscher 1992).

Management

Both milkweed and dogbane are burned in the fall to eliminate dead stalks and stimulate new growth. Burning causes new growth to have taller, straighter stems (with longer fibers). It also stimulates flower and seed production.

When used for fiber, milkweed is collected in the autumn after the leaves have begun to fall off, the stalks turn gray or tan, and the plant dries up. If the milkweed stems will break off at the ground it's time to harvest. Breaking off as many stalks as possible encourages resprouting in the spring. The dried stalks are then split open and the fibers are twisted into string.

Vast quantities of fiber plants are required for nets, regalia, and cordage. Blackburn and Anderson (1993) quote Craig Bates of the Yosemite Museum that it takes approximately five stalks of milkweed or Indian hemp to manufacture one foot of cordage. A Sierra Miwok feather skirt or cape contained about 100 feet of cordage made from approximately 500 plant stalks, while a deer net 40 feet in length (Barrett and Gifford 1933:178) contained some 7,000 feet of cordage, which would have required the harvesting of a staggering 35,000 plant stalks.

Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

ASTU is readily available through native plant nurseries within its range. Please check the Vendor Database, expected to be on-line through the PLANTS Web site in 2001 by clicking on Plant Materials. Seeds and plants of selected *Asclepias* cultivars are available from many nurseries. It is best to plant species from your local area, adapted to the specific site conditions where the plants are to be grown.

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Edited 17jan01 jsp

For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.

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The Tuesday Pasture Talk

Learn about Pasture
Topics with us



Anyone is
welcome to join



June 7, 2022 1:00pm CST	June 14, 2022 1:00pm CST	June 21, 2022 1:00pm CST	June 28, 2022 1:00pm CST
Woven Wire: Knots Matter	Pasture Productivity Considerations with Current Fertilizer Prices	Brush Identification in Pastures	Herbicide Sprayer Technology
Presenter: Matthew Bean, NE Area Grassland Specialist, Arkansas NRCS	Presenter: Jeremy Huff, State Grazing Lands Specialist, Arkansas NRCS	Presenter: Greg Watkins, NW Area Grazing Lands Specialist, Arkansas NRCS	Presenter: Jason Davis, Application Technologist, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service

Expect to Learn:



Learn how simple details can save livestock producers time, money, and stress when establishing woven wire.



Get back to basics with animal/forage balance, adjustments, and management tips with high fertilizer prices.



What brush species are most present in Arkansas and how to accurately identify each species.



We know herbicide sprayer calibration is important. Do you want to know further details that will improve herbicide efficacy on plants? Tune-in!

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