Avoid Soil Compaction In The Garden

Eric Baker
Estill County Extension
Agent for Agriculture
& Natural Resources

After this cool, rainy weather pattern lifts, our gardening season will be in full force. It's a good time to think about your soil. Soil compaction creates an unfriendly growing environment for plants and is a serious problem for many home gardeners. However, it is relatively easy to prevent.

Compaction transforms soil into a difficult environment for plant growth by making it harder for roots, water and soil to penetrate the ground. Major causes are working the soil when it is too wet, foot traffic and excessive rototiller use.

To reduce this problem, it is best to avoid working in the garden or walking in it when the soil is too wet. Squeeze a handful of soil and if it forms a muddy ball, rather than crumbling when you open your hand, stay out of the garden area.

Walk between plants and rows in the garden area to reduce compaction in primary plant growth areas. Excessive rototiller use destroys soil structure and promotes compaction. When compaction takes place in a dense soil structure, it also makes root growth more difficult.

A little hand hoeing, rather than a rototiller, may be all you need to do to eliminate a few weeds. It usually causes less soil damage than repeated rototilling and is less harmful to the earthworms that help aerate the soil.

You also can use mulch to control weeds instead of tilling. A 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch relieves the pressure of walking on the soil, reducing the degree of compaction. Organic mulches are materials such as lawn clippings or straw. Do not use lawn clippings that come from a lawn recently treated with herbicides.

One excellent way to spread mulch materials more thinly is to first lay about six sheets of newspaper on the soil then cover the paper with organic matter. In this case the newspaper is really the mulch, and the organic matter holds the paper in place and improves appearances. Soils will remain cool longer in the spring under organic mulches, because the sun does not strike the soil. If you want your garden to grow rapidly in the spring, do not scatter the mulch until the soil warms. One precaution needed if you use straw is to be sure it is weed seed free. Otherwise, it will be a source of weeds for the growing season.

Most organic mulches will compact and start to decompose by fall. They can be tilled under easily, adding valuable organic matter to the soil. Some gardeners prefer to maintain a permanent mulch, adding organic material as it becomes available. In the spring, they simply pull back the mulch in spots for transplants or in rows for direct seeded vegetables. This method is a good way to build a rich garden soil.

Contact me at the Estill County Cooperative Extension Service for more gardening information. Our telephone number is 723-4557.

Educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability or national origin.

Estill County
4-H Youth Development

Isaac L. Hollon
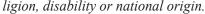Estill County Extension Office

June 6-10

4-H Summer Camp

There is still time to sign up for 4-H Summer Camp. Camp will be earlier than usual this year. Estill County youth (ages 9 – 14) will be camping June 6th-10th at J.M. Feltner 4-H Camp in London, Kentucky. Scholarships are still available for this camp. Scholarship application deadline is May 13th.
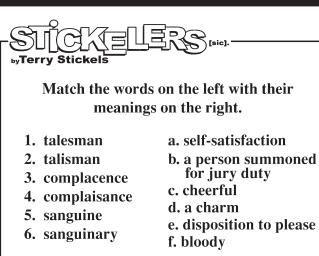
Cloverbud Camp will be June 18th – 20th at J. M. Feltner 4-H Camp in London, Kentucky. This 3-day camp is for youth ages 6 – 8.

Stop by the Extension office to pick up an application for either of these camps or call 723-4557 for more details.

Educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin.

Stickeler's Puzzle

by Terry Stickels

Match the words on the left with their meanings on the right.

1. talesman
2. talisman
3. complacence
4. complaisance
5. sanguine
6. sanguinary

a. self-satisfaction
b. a person summoned for jury duty
c. cheerful
d. a charm
e. disposition to please
f. bloody

©2016 King Features Syndicate

Stickeler's Answer on Page 11

Dandelion

All parts of the dandelion are edible and healthful. Its roots contain inulin and levulin (which balance blood sugar) and taraxacin (which helps digestion) and can be eaten raw or cooked. Its leaves are rich in potassium, antioxidants, and vitamins A and C, and can be eaten raw, steamed, boiled, sautéed or braised. The flowers can be added to salads, made into jellies or used to make wine.
- Brenda Weaver
Source: www.motherearthnews.com

© 2016 by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

Wishing Well®

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

©2016 King Features Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved.

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: **C** equals **Y**

GWEPQ CWE VJC GJMU'V

DOWRKHO BJURHQ RW VJC MU

RKH SJQHU WN HQHU NWO JV

PWUS JV KH BJV JDHP?

© 2016 King Features Synd., Inc.

CryptoQuip puzzles $3.50 • 24 Volumes • Order at: rbmamall.com

---

CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

YAE OAWYT SABQ EGVY EGQ

VIQBVTQ WR UGVE ZQQDR

EGQ VIQBVTQ OAUY.

— UWNNWVS UWYVYR

©2016 King Features Synd., Inc.

New! CryptoQuote puzzles $3.50 • 6 Volumes • Order at: rbmamall.com

---

Puzzle Answers
May 18, 2016

Puzzles4Kids
Answer

FEAR KNOT
answer

Letter Box
Solution

ANNUAL RAINFALL OF MORE THAN 50 INCHES

Even Exchange
answers

1. Angel, Anger
2. Pouch, Couch
3. Slump, Stump
4. Banker, Barker
5. Jiggle, Jingle
6. White, Whine
7. Collar, Cellar
8. Tiber, Tiger
9. Invest, Invent
10. Chord, Chore

Weekly SUDOKU
Answer

King Crossword
Answers
Solution time: 21 mins.

CryptoQuip
answer
Could you say Cain's brother wanted to stay in the Garden of Eden for as long as he was Abel?

CryptoQuote
answer
Not doing more than the average is what keeps the average down.
— William Winans