Food for Thought by John Cotenas, Grassland Specialist

It has been a chilly winter but the time to start spraying weeds and brush and re-seeding your pastures and fields is upon us, not to mention all those spring projects. As always, we recommend you contact the Baxter County Cooperative Extension Office to get an updated soil test. A soil test can tell you what nutrients are lacking and help save money by recommending only the nutrients you need. You can improve the soil quality of acidic soils by liming to adjust pH to the levels needed. Benefits of liming include increased nutrient availability, improved soil structure and increased rates of infiltration.

For you beekeepers it is time to start thinking about swarms and swarm traps. Hopefully, you spent the winter getting your hives and equipment ready. Nucs and packages should start to be available from local beekeepers. Check on food stores and feed. It is also time to start thinking about medicating for Varroa so treatments are completed before the honey flows.

We currently have some funds left for the current Bull Shoals/White River 319 project area. If you would like to participate in the current cost share program, please contact me. Time is running out, as the current project wraps up in late July. We have applied for a new project area and it is currently in the planning stages. The new program will begin in October, 2024. There will be more information in the June Newsletter.

The Baxter County Conservation District has two pull type 300-gallon sprayers, an 8' ground roller and two 10' no-till drills for rent. If you are interested in renting any of the above equipment, give us a call at (870) 425-3527, Extension 3.

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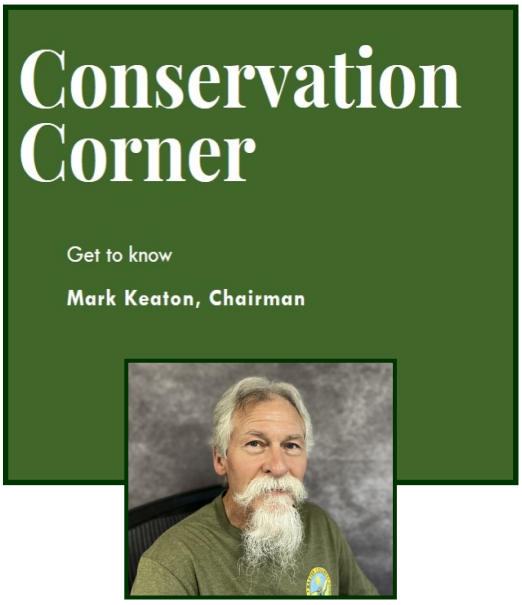
Bees are the most common and efficient pollinators. They contribute to crop and plant cultivation. We celebrate World Bee Day to express gratitude to our pollinator friends.

It is incredible to think that insects as small as bees are crucial in our fight to end world hunger and poverty. We celebrate World Bee Day to raise awareness of the importance of bee conservation.

World Bee Day is also a campaign to save the bee population. Recent research shows that the bee population is in danger, and immediate action is required to prevent further declines in the bee population. WORLD BEE DAY - May 20, 2024 - National Today



Mark Keaton is Chairman of the Baxter County Conservation District Board. He has served on the Board since 2019. Mark and his wife Donya have lived in Baxter County Since 1989. He has a master's degree from the University of Arkansas and retired from the UofA Cooperative Extension Service where he was a County Agriculture Agent.

Mark and Donya have a son, Brett who is married to Emily. Brett and Emily have two children. Mark enjoys hiking, traveling and Razorback baseball, football and basketball.

Mark grew up on a farm raising cattle and poultry as well as growing a garden. This, combined with the influence of his mother, father and brother, impacted Mark's decision to become an Agriculture Agent.

Mark decided to join BCCD to assist landowners in improving their land and because he enjoys contributing to the agricultural community.

True or False? A garbage truck's worth of plastic is dumped into the ocean every day?

False. An estimated 5 million to 13 million metric tons of plastic flows from the land and enters the ocean each year. This is equivalent to emptying a garbage truck into the ocean every MINUTE. 9 Startling Facts About Plastics in the Ocean | The Pew Charitable Trusts (pewtrusts.org)

We are looking for input from our readers. If you have a question you would like answered, suggestions for ways we can improve our newsletter, events, etc., topics you would like us to provide additional information on, feedback on our services or anything else you would like to share with us, please email baxtercountycd@gmail.com.

Thank you to everyone who placed tree and shrub orders. Orders should arrive in late March or early April.

Wildlife is beautiful and essential to the health of local ecosystems. But some animals, deer in particular, can wreak havoc on your trees. There are effective methods for deterring deer without harming them.

One is a simple, homemade spray.

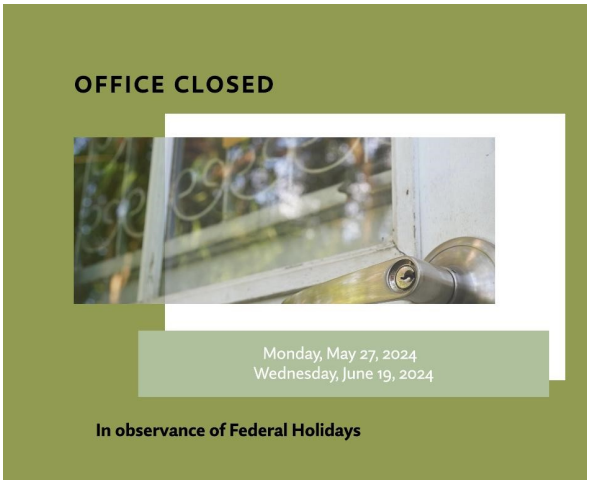
1. Mix eight (8) ounces of white vinegar, six (6) drops of peppermint essential oil, and four (4) drops of rosemary essential oil.
2. Pour the contents into a spray bottle, mix, and spray the mixture on or near the plants you want to protect. Commercial - Forrest Keeling Nursery (fknursery.com)

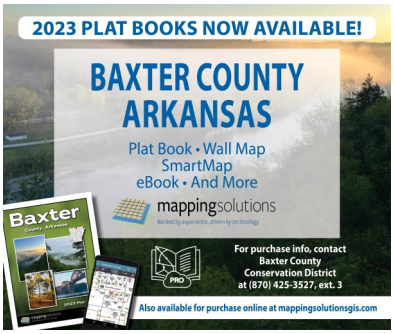
The winner of the $500.00 Baxter County Conservation District Scholarship Essay Contest is **Haylee Silzell**. Haylee's essay will also be submitted to the Area President for an opportunity to win additional scholarship awards. Congratulations Haylee and we wish you the best of luck in the Area contest!

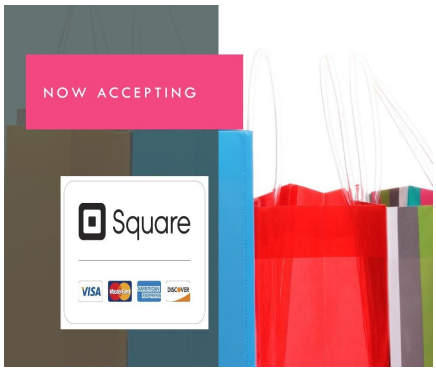
BCCD is sponsoring a Coloring Contest/Poster Contest for 2nd and 5th Graders attending Mountain Home Schools, Cotter Schools and Norfork Schools. Details for the contests can be obtained through each school. Cash prizes will be awarded to 1st, 2nd & 3rd place winners at each school.

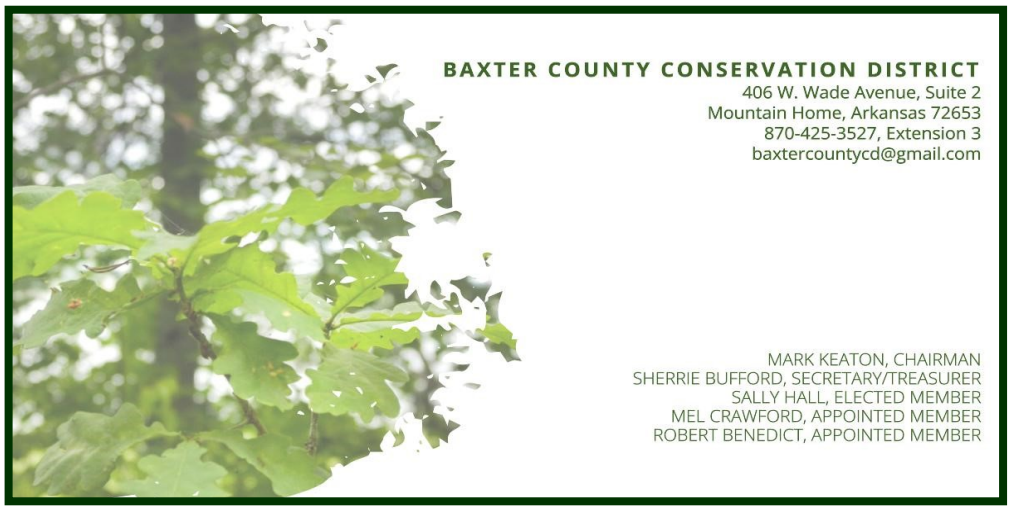
We humans have become so dependent on plastics for a range of uses, from packaging to products. Reducing our use of plastic bags is an easy place to start getting our addiction out of control." – David Suzuki, Canadian scientist, author and environmental activist

Looking Forward









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