

STILLWATER COUNTY AG & HORTICULTURE EXTENSION NEWSLETTER

Drought Management Workshop: May 6th 6:00 PM– 8:00 PM

Join us at the Ace Civic Center to hear from experts on the following topics:

- **Drought Mitigation Practices** | Associate Extension Specialist: Lee Schmelzer
- **Grazing Decisions During and After Drought** | MSU Extension Range Management Specialist: Jeff Mosley

RSVP to sarahjane.french@montana.edu

Spring Ag Pest Management Series May 14th | 4-H Building in Billings

Join us at the 4-H Building at Metrapark (308 6th Ave) in Billings for an all-day workshop covering pest management topics! **Potentially up to 6 pesticide credits will be offered**

- **Control of Prairie Dogs on Large Acreages**
 - MDA Vertebrate Specialist: Stephen Vantassel
- **Herbicide and Soil Interactions**
 - MSU Extension Stillwater County Agent: Sarah-Jane French
- **Spring 2026 Weed Management Update**
 - MSU Cropland Weed Extension Specialist: Tim Siepel
- **Herbicide Modes of Action and Application Timing**
 - MSU Extension Carbon County Agent: Amber Elliott
- **Pigweed and Invasive Annual Grass Update**
 - MDA Early Detection Rapid Response Coordinator: Josh Wagoner
- **Weed Management Round Table**
 - Commercial Pesticide Applicator Discussion and interaction with attendees

**LUNCH WILL
BE PROVIDED!**

Questions? Reach out to Sarah-Jane | sarahjane.french@montana.edu | 406-322-8035

RSVP: Please contact the MSU Yellowstone County Extension Office at 406-256-2828



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406-322-8035

OUR OFFICE IS MOVING THIS MONTH– April 15th

New Location: 431 Quarry St, Columbus, MT 59019

We will have signage on the door of our old office location to help you get to our new location

Planning on Planting Early?

With warmer temperatures and an unusual winter season, many producers are considering planting nearly a month earlier than normal. Given current dry conditions, early planting may offer an opportunity to take advantage of limited spring moisture—especially as drought concerns are already being discussed across the region. However, as with any decision in farming and ranching, early planting comes with inherent risks. While conditions may seem favorable now, factors such as frost and increased disease pressure can negatively impact crop establishment and yield potential.

Key Considerations for Early Planting: Before moving up your planting date, take time to evaluate the following:

- **Soil Temperature:** Ensure soil temperatures meet the minimum germination requirements for your specific crop. Planting into cold soils can delay germination and reduce uniform emergence.
- **Soil Moisture:** While early planting may help capture spring moisture, uneven or insufficient moisture can still limit germination and early growth.
- **Frost Risk:** Earlier planting increases the likelihood of exposure to late spring frosts, which can damage or kill young seedlings.
- **Emergence Rate:** Cooler soils slow down germination and seedling development, leaving plants vulnerable for a longer period.
- **Increased Pest Pressure:**
 - Early-planted crops may face greater exposure to early-season insect pests, including:
 - Wireworms
 - Cutworms
 - Flea beetles
- **Disease Concerns:**
 - Cool, damp soil conditions can also favor seedling diseases such as:
 - Pythium
 - Rhizoctonia

Bottom Line

Planting earlier than usual can be a strategic way to utilize available moisture in a dry year, but it requires careful consideration and risk management. Balancing soil conditions, weather outlook, and pest pressures will be key to making the most of an early planting window.

Source: Navigating Early Planting This Spring: What Montana Producers Need to Know; IPM Ag Alert



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3 W's Workshop June 18th | 4:00 PM- 6:00 PM | Fishtail Community Center



The Stillwater Valley Watershed Council will be hosting their 3 W's Workshop and Annual Meeting at the Fishtail Community Center starting at 4 PM on June 18th. Join the SVWC and guest speakers as they dive into the current topics surrounding invasive weeds, water, wildfire, and soil.

For more information:

Contact: Lindsey Clark; svwc2010@hotmail.com

Waste Pesticide Disposal Program

The Montana Department of Agriculture is hosting a fall pesticide disposal event.

The first 200 lbs of material are free; amounts over 200 lbs are assessed at \$1/lb.

Visit the Montana Waste Pesticide Disposal Program website to register

Location: Red Lodge, MT
When: September 25th



Forest Stewardship Workshop

September 10-11 & 18

Learn about forest ecology, fire risk management, wildlife habitat enhancement, overstory and understory of trees, range management and forest health assessment

Registration Cost: \$200

To register



Stillwater Community Garden



**Garden Plot Rental \$30/year.
Plots available on a first come first serve basis**

**2026 Garden Contracts available
Contact our office if interested: 406-322-8035**



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How the Stillwater County Extension Office Can Help You

We are your resource for:

- Livestock and Cropping Questions
- Noxious Weed ID and Recommendations
- Plant ID and Disease Diagnosis
- Pest/Rodent Questions
- Drought Management

Items available for check out:

- Water Quality Test Kits
- Forage testing hay probe
- Portable livestock chute and scale

Services we provide:

- Private Pesticide Applicator Licensing and Training
- Forage Nitrate and Analysis Testing
 - For feed analysis, samples are sent to Midew
- Soil Testing
 - The Extension Office uses Midwest Laboratories for soil analysis. Results generally take about 10 days and are sent via email unless requested otherwise
- Ration Balancing for Livestock
- Farm and Ranch Financial Management
- On-Site Consultations
- Conservation Trees (ordered through Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery)
- Water Testing