



THE HOE TRUTH NEWSLETTER

HELPING YOU GROW!

INSIDE THIS MAY 2023 ISSUE

- Growing Great Tomatoes
- Plant Of The Month
- May To Do's
- Ready To React Event Flyer
- Washington Co. Garden Club
- Wheelbarrow Series Classes
- Recipe of the Month



GROWING GREAT TOMATOES

The first step in growing great tomatoes is variety and transplant selection. When selecting tomatoes if you aren't partial to heirlooms or particular varieties choose based on disease resistance. The labels or seed packets will have letters on them such as VFFNT, honestly the more letters the better because it simply means that the variety is resistant to more diseases. The University of Kentucky has a list of recommended varieties for Kentucky that includes determinates Early Girl, Big Early, Celebrity, Roma VF, and Mountain Fresh among others. The indeterminates include Big Beef, Better Boy, Pink Girl, Brandywine, Kentucky Beefsteak, Bucks County Hybrid, and Sungold. This doesn't mean these are the only varieties that do well in Kentucky but it is the varieties that have been tested throughout the state and have performed the best. My personal favorites (all indeterminates) are Big Beef, Better Boy, Brandywine, and Kentucky Beefsteak (this one is yellowish orange).

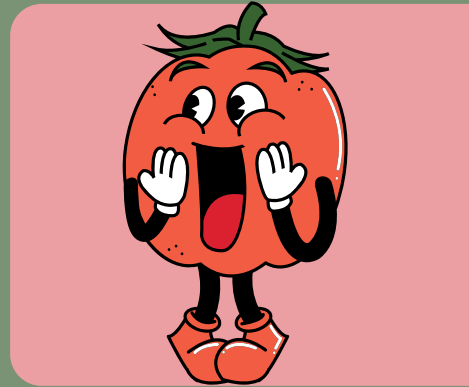
Another issue when determining which tomatoes to grow is whether you want determinate or indeterminate varieties. Determinate varieties are good if you want to can and only want to do it once. These plants will set a lot of fruit at one time, quit growing, and allow the fruit to ripen and die. Indeterminate varieties will grow and produce fruit until something such as drought, frost, or disease kills them.

Tomatoes require full sun (at least 6 hours) and grow best with good airflow.



GROWING GREAT TOMATOES

Tomatoes are self-fertile and are pollinated by wind and to some extent bees. Usually, tomatoes pollinate themselves before pollen from other plants gets to their blooms. This is actually good because this makes saving seeds from heirloom varieties possible. You can reliably and consistently get the same varieties back year after year. You can't do this with hybrids. If you save seeds of hybrids you will not reliably get the same variety back year after year from saved seeds.



If you want to grow your own tomatoes next year start the seeds 4-6 weeks before the last spring frost which is around May 10. Generally, seeds started by April 1 are adequate size for the garden by May 10 if well taken care of. You may need to use grow lights or start them in a cold frame or greenhouse to give them adequate light.

When planting your tomatoes, it is best to get a soil test done prior to planting, however, if you cannot, apply 2 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. or 20 pounds of 10-10-10 fertilizer per 1000 sq. ft. Don't over-fertilize tomatoes. If you do you will have a beautiful large dark green tomato plant with few fruits.

When planting tomatoes space them 3-4 feet apart in rows 3-4 feet apart.

Remember to leave room for harvesting, staking, and spraying. Tomatoes need night temperatures to be at least 60 degrees to set fruit and will often abort flowers if temperatures drop below 50.

After planting tomatoes apply mulch. This mulch can be organic or inorganic. Good mulches for tomatoes include straw, newspaper, leaf mold, hardwood, cedar, cypress, or even plastic or rubber. If you decide to use plastic place soaker hose or drip irrigation under the plastic for watering during extended dry periods. Remember tomatoes need at least 1" of water per week to grow properly.

Be sure to maintain even moisture in your tomatoes. Blossom end rot is a very common tomato disorder that is actually caused by inconsistent moisture or low soil calcium. When moisture is low the tomato plant has trouble taking up calcium which holds cell structures together in plants. When calcium is low the skin on the tomato doesn't develop properly and thus the tomato rots. Lime can add calcium to your garden but don't apply unless your pH is below 6.

When your tomatoes start to grow they need to be staked at an early age, a single gust of wind can lean and even break your tomato plants. Staking can be done easily with a tomato cage either purchased or homemade with fencing, or by driving stakes in the ground, or even with a rope tied tight to an overhead structure like in a greenhouse. Personally, the easiest way to stake is to use cattle panels held up with T-posts driven in the ground. This will cut down on labor. No matter what you use or how you stake your tomatoes remember taller is better and it must be done to get the best tomatoes possible.

GROWING GREAT TOMATOES

The best-tasting tomato is going to be one that is left on the vine until it starts to turn or left on the vine until it is completely ripe. These won't store long but then again vine-ripened tomatoes can also be canned, frozen, or dehydrated.

There are several disease problems that are particularly fierce in Kentucky. These are verticillium and fusarium wilt, early blight, septoria leaf spot, and late blight. Most of them can be somewhat controlled by using a good mulch which will slow or stop the splashing of soil unto the leaves and by maintaining a spray program of mancozeb, maneb, or daconil. Remember when spraying fungicides always cover both sides of the leaves and the stems and follow label instructions. Verticillium and Fusarium wilt can only be controlled by selecting disease-resistant varieties and crop rotation.

There aren't many insect problems with tomatoes. The most common however is flea beetle, aphids, tomato hornworm or tobacco worm, Colorado potato beetle, and spider mites. Sevin will control flea beetles relatively easily and the few tomato and tobacco hornworms can be hand-picked. If Colorado potato beetle becomes a problem simply use the Colorado Potato Beetle Beater Spray on your tomatoes. A good brisk spray with the water hose on the tops and bottoms of the leaves or a spray of insecticidal soap will help slow the damage of spider mites and aphids. Remember spider mites become immune to insecticides and miticides relatively quickly so use them sparingly for mite control. If you want an organic approach you can also purchase predatory mites online which will eat the bad ones.

Plant of The Month

Agapanthus Galaxy Blue

Perennial

Hardy in USDA Zones 6A - 10B

- ↑ Height: 36-40 in
- ↔ Space: 28-30 in
- ☀ More than 6 Hours of Daily Sun
- 🚰 Medium Moisture
- 🕒 Blooms Midsummer to Early Fall

- Globular clusters of dark blue flowers
- Vigorous, rounded clumps of foliage
- Tropical look for hardier zones
- Grow in well-drained, average soil
- Provide winter protection
- Fertilize in spring and fall
- Pair with Hibiscus, Bee Balm, Anemone





May To Do's

If you have been in the habit of bagging your grass clippings, stop unless it is clumping, which would kill the grass. Grass clippings decompose readily and if you never take grass clippings off you will rarely need to fertilize. Grass clippings rarely contribute to thatch and tall fescue doesn't even produce thatch.

If you feel the need to take up grass clippings you can use them as mulch or put them in the compost pile. However, if you have sprayed your lawn for weeds the chemicals can still be in grass clippings and can damage any plants susceptible to 2-4D and other chemicals. If you compost them there is less chance of chemical damage to your plants.

Keep an eye out for aphids, cabbage loopers, and Colorado potato beetles. The aphids can be controlled readily by Orthene, the cabbage loopers by Sevin, and the Colorado potato beetle with Colorado Potato Beetle Beater a natural bacteria. If you don't want to use chemicals you can hand-pick the cabbage loopers and step on them, the Colorado potato beetles can be wrangled by shaking the plants while holding a large tub under them. Dispose of them any way you see fit, I use boiling water. Aphids can be sprayed off with a water hose every few days or with an insecticidal soap.

Plant your summer vegetable garden. The safe frost-free date is May 10th.

Keep an eye out for black spot disease on roses as well as the first signs of spider mites. This disease and this insect are the two toughest to control. "Immunox" is great for black spots and several sprays of insecticidal soap, Orthene, malathion, and Avid will help control spider mites if sprayed early. Be sure to spray the undersides of the leaves as well as the top. Always use a spreader sticker to increase the effectiveness and reduce the amount of spray you will have to use.

Don't use a spreader sticker with Sevin it will cause a chemical reaction and burn the leaves.

If you use Sevin regularly and have a spider mite problem it will get worse with the Sevin. It doesn't kill spider mites but makes them sick which in turn makes them want to reproduce so you end up with an increased infestation of mites!

If you have trouble keeping pond water clear some products can increase the clarity. These usually contain beneficial bacteria. These products can be purchased at most garden centers.

READY TO REACT

Emergency Preparedness Community Event

Washington County

Thursday, May 18th, 2023

3 PM - 7 PM, Washington County Extension Office
245 Corporate Dr., Springfield, KY

Ready to React is an emergency and disaster preparedness community event. The objective is to connect with local resources to prepare for emergency situations.

**FREE INFLATABLES,
FOOD TRUCKS
& GIVEAWAYS**



Topics Include:

- EMS
- Fire Department
- Kentucky Fish and Wildlife
- Creating an Emergency Kit
- Insurance
- Fallen Power Lines
- Flooding
- Winter Prep
- Freezer and Food Pantry Essentials

For more Information:

Washington County Extension Office (859)336-7741

Cooperative Extension Service
Agriculture and Natural Resources
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LEXINGTON, KY 40546



University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

Save The Dates!

Washington County Garden Club 2023 Day Trips

May 17th

August 16th

June 14th

September 13th

July 12th

October 11th

Free To Join! No dues!

Call the Washington County Extension Office at 859-336-7741 to join.

We travel to gardens, arboretums, home gardens, nurseries and greenhouses, and much more!

Fill Out This Registration (Front and Back)

And Return To The Extension Office

Circle If You Will Be Attending The AM or PM Sessions If Applicable And Total At The Bottom.

Attention!!! If An AM Or PM Session Doesn't Have At Least 5 To Register For That Session It May Be Canceled Via One Call

Feb. 16th	AM	PM	Gardening By The Moon Signs		Free	
Feb. 23rd	AM	PM	African Plants In American Gardens		Free	
Mar. 2nd	AM	PM	Easy Annuals From Seed For Cutting		\$5.00	
Mar. 16th	AM	PM	Terrific Tomatoes		Free	
Mar. 23rd	AM	PM	Growing Strawberries And Rhubarb		\$15.00	
Mar. 30th	AM	PM	Proven Winners Perennials		\$50.00	
April 6th	AM	PM	Grateful For Grapes		\$15.00	
April 20th	AM	NA	Horticulture How To: Oyster Mushrooms		\$10.00	
April 27th	AM	PM	Sweet Potatoes		\$5.00	
May 11th	AM	PM	Calla Lilies		\$20.00	
May 25th	AM	NA	Horticulture How To: Hypertufa		\$5.00	
June 8th	AM	PM	Hydrangeas		\$30.00	
June 15th	AM	PM	Introduction To Landscape Design		Free	
June 22nd	AM	NA	Horticulture How To: Kokodama		\$10.00	
June 29th	AM	PM	Perennials For Late Season Color		Free	
July 27th	AM	PM	Petscaping		Free	
Aug. 3rd	AM	NA	Horticulture How To: Lacto Fermenting		Free	
Aug. 17th	AM	PM	Fall Home Insect Invaders		Free	
Sept. 21st	AM	PM	True Lilies		\$20.00	
Sept. 28th	AM	PM	Peonies The Queens Of Spring		\$40.00	
Oct. 12th	AM	PM	Daffodils		\$20.00	
Oct. 26th	AM	PM	Holiday Cactus		Free	
				Basic Registration For Any and All Classes	\$5.00	x
				Total From Above		
				Register And Pay For ALL Classes By February 16th 2023 And Save \$15.00	-\$15.00	
				TOTAL		



We Can Accept Credit And Debit Cards Now!

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University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
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We Are On The Web!!!

washington.ca.uky.edu

<https://www.facebook.com/WashingtonCountyKentucky4H/>



Washington County Extension Updates each Tuesday Morning at 8:30 AM On WLSK 100.9 FM And Extension Tips Daily After Farm Report

Kale and Cauliflower Salad



1 15-ounce can chickpeas, drained and patted dry
1 tablespoon olive oil
4 cups finely chopped kale
4 cups (1 large head) finely chopped cauliflower
2 tablespoons diced red onion
½ cup roasted sunflower seeds
½ cup dried cranberries

Dressing:

1 clove garlic, minced
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons sugar
½ teaspoon ground black pepper

Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees F. **Toss** chickpeas with olive oil and **spread** on baking sheet. **Roast** 20 minutes, **stirring** once and then let **cool**. **Combine** kale, cauliflower, onion, sunflower seeds, cranberries, and cooled chickpeas in a large bowl. In a small bowl **whisk** together dressing ingredients until combined.

Pour dressing over salad ingredients and **toss** to combine.

Yield: 10, 1-cup servings

Nutritional Analysis: 200 calories, 11g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 200mg sodium, 22g total carbohydrate, 5g fiber, 9g total sugars, 1g added sugars, 6g protein