

The Hoe Truth

newsletter

HELPING YOU GROW!



upcoming wheelbarrow classes

August 7

Growing Wine Cap Mushrooms

August 14

Fall Garden Square Footage

August 21

Fall Cover & Green Manure Crops



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2025 trip schedule

August 12th

Mulberry Orchard and Gallrein Farms (Shelby County)

September 23rd

Whitehall (Louisville)

October 21st

Barker Arboretum and Downing Museum (Bowling Green)

All trips leave the Extension Office at 9:00 AM.

Van space is limited to 12 passengers, so call today to reserve your spot!



Garden Club

We'd BEE delighted if you'd join us for Bee Keepers meetings.

The first Monday of each month
at 6:30 PM.



Washington County Cooperative Extension Service

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification

August
2025



Cooperative
Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

Flowers

To control powdery mildew on begonia, phlox, rose, or zinnia, try not to wet the foliage. Instead, use a fungicide spray such as Cleary's or Immunox.

Continue to deadhead annuals and perennials unless you want to save the seeds. Most of our annuals will continue to bloom until frost if kept dead-headed, watered, and fertilized. Many perennials will re-flower if deadheaded as well.

Divide perennial phlox, day lily, iris, and spring-flowering bulbs such as tulip and daffodil in August.

Trees And Shrubs

Water trees and shrubs once a week, especially spring-flowering ones. They set next year's flower buds in late summer and fall.

Don't prune trees and shrubs now. This will force new tender growth that will get killed this winter.

Apply a new layer of mulch if you haven't already. This will buffer the soil temperature this winter and will hold in much-needed moisture during the late summer and fall, which is generally dry.

Lawns

If you have dead-looking spots in your yard, don't be alarmed; it may just be dormant. When and if we have wetter, cooler conditions, many of these "dead spots" may green up.

Sharpen your lawn mower blade.

Mid-August is the time to control grub larvae. Mow your lawn and rake any grass clippings or thatch before applying any chemical. This will allow the chemicals to get into the soil faster. Apply Dylox or Bayer Advanced 24-hour grub control.

Don't fertilize turf until October-December. Fertilizing now will only stress the turf even more.

Get a soil test done now on your lawn. The results will be available later this fall when the recommended one and only fertilizer application for low maintenance turf is needed.

Fruit

Keep mulch at least 2-3 inches deep around bush and vine fruits to control weeds and conserve moisture.

Prune out old canes that have fruited from June-bearing raspberries. This will reduce disease spread. When the raspberry and blackberry harvest is over spray the plants well with sevin. This will kill the Japanese beetles and the cane borers.

Now is a good time to thin out strawberry plants. For a good harvest next year, it is best to leave 5-7 plants per square foot.

Make a mental note of the apple and pear trees that have had or have fire blight. Next spring, those are the trees that will have the most cankers. By pruning those out, you will greatly reduce the amount of inoculum available for the disease to spread.

If your apples are maturing late, continue sprays for apple scab. Also, any leaves that fall should be raked up and disposed of because they harbor spores for future disease outbreaks. It is a good idea to clean up fallen fruit from under any fruit trees instead of letting it decompose in place. This debris will also harbor disease organisms for next year's outbreak.

Welcome Garden Spiders

Source: Ric Bessin, extension professor, Department of Entomology

For some of us, the thought of a spider makes us run for a big shoe. Stop before you do that. Most spiders in Kentucky will not harm you, and in fact, spiders play an important role in a healthy ecosystem, controlling insect pests that raid our gardens.

You may notice the large, intricate webs of orb weavers in your garden, particularly in late summer. There are many species of orb weaver spiders in Kentucky. No other common Kentucky spider makes organized, circular, grid-like webs like orb weavers. These spiders are almost always encountered inside their webs.

Orb weavers range in size from the size of a pencil eraser to a little larger, with their legs outstretched, than a U.S. silver dollar. Their coloring ranges from solid tan or brown to colorful, vivid patterns. Seeing one of Kentucky's largest spiders, a yellow and black *Argiope* in the center of its web in the morning, when dew droplets turn their work into garden jewelry is a real treat. By the way, their bites are harmless to humans, unless you're allergic.

When their legs are outstretched, grass spiders are about the size of a U.S. quarter. They are brown with noticeable gray or tan stripes that run the length of their body. They can be distinguished by their prominent hind spinnerets, which are two, finger-like projections on the end of its abdomen that are used to spin the web. Many other spiders have spinnerets, but they are particularly noticeable in grass spiders.

Wolf spiders come in a range of species and sizes, from the size of a pencil eraser to a U.S. silver dollar. Most are dark or light brown, usually with contrasting spots or stripes. They can move fast and are often seen running on the ground. They don't build webs to catch their prey. Instead they use their sight to pinpoint their prey, mostly at night, and chase them down like their namesakes, wolves.

You may see wolf spiders in your home, but unless you're allergic, their bite is harmless.

Grass spiders are very common in Kentucky lawns, where they build large, funnel-shaped webs. They also occasionally wander into homes. They can be mistaken for brown recluse spider, because they are brown and similar in size. They are, however, harmless to humans unless an individual is allergic.

Speaking of brown recluses, they are one of two Kentucky spiders that can harm humans, the other being a black widow. Tan to dark brown, a brown recluse's abdomen and legs are uniformly colored with no stripes, bands, or mottling. The legs are long and thin and lack conspicuous spines. They have a dark violin-shaped mark on their back, with the neck of the violin pointing toward the rear of the spider. This feature is consistent in adult brown recluses, but is less obvious in younger spiders. Also, brown recluses only have six eyes: most Kentucky spiders have eight, but let's be honest. Are you really going to get close enough to count?

Their bites are serious and require immediate medical attention, but brown recluses are timid and unlikely to bite unless handled. These spiders are common in all areas of Kentucky. They tend to occur in hidden locations indoors and outdoors, such as piles of cardboard or paper, stacks of cut wood and wall-voids of buildings.

Black widow spiders are also common throughout the state. The female black widow is about a half-inch long and is glossy black with a variable number of red markings on the top and/or bottom of her abdomen. Adult males smaller and are similar in color, but with a few added white markings. Juveniles are highly variable. Their bites are very serious and require immediate medical attention, but the spider is timid and unlikely to bite unless handled. They tend to hide out in concealed outdoor locations such as piles of rocks or firewood and dark corners of garages and out-buildings. Females are common; males are very rarely encountered.

Mulch Mushrooms and other Fascinating Organisms

Source: Nicole Gauthier, extension specialist, Department of Plant Pathology

Mulches provide numerous benefits in our landscapes, including conserving soil moisture and suppressing weeds, as well as providing a pleasing background to highlight landscape plantings. However, mulch can also provide a perfect growing medium for a diverse group of fungi and slime molds. While gardeners may be alarmed when they see an abundance of mushrooms or a yellow slime mold suddenly spread across their mulch, these organisms often do not infect plants or cause plant diseases. In fact, there's good in that unusual slime mold or odorous stinkhorn.

Saprophytic fungi and slime molds get their nutrients from nonliving organic materials, such as wood mulch and plant residue, and in the process contribute to their decomposition, releasing nutrients back into the soil and improving soil fertility. A variety of saprobes are needed to completely recycle nutrients, so it is advantageous to have a diversity of beneficial saprobes present and growing in your garden. Slime molds, in particular, are indicators of healthy soils with high organic matter.

Mushrooms are the visible reproductive structures of Agaricomycetes fungi, most of which are beneficial (though not always edible). These fungal bodies survive within mulch or soil and go unnoticed for most of the year. The mushroom phase of their lifecycle usually appears after prolonged periods of rain. Common mulch fungi include tiny *Mycena* mushrooms as well as larger mushrooms. Other fungi have different above-ground reproductive structures that emerge after rainy weather. Some of the most interesting fungi include stinkhorns, puffballs, bird's nest fungi, and artillery fungi.

While most saprobes do not cause damage, the tiny artillery fungi, which often goes unnoticed in mulch, eject masses of sticky spores up to 20 feet away. The tar-like specks cling to house siding, cars and other nearby structures and can be extremely difficult to remove, because they often leave a stain.

Slime molds may initially appear bright yellow but darken with maturity. They are harmless and, like fungal saprobes, emerge temporarily during wet weather. Dry weather will halt their growth and dry them out. You can remove them with a rake, but they may reappear when rains return. Managing moisture or improving drainage may help limit or discourage their emergence if their presence is problematic such as on sidewalks.

Even if you don't mind their appearance, there still might be a few other reasons to remove fungal fruiting bodies. Some mushroom species are poisonous, and you may want to remove them to prevent children or pets from eating them. Wear gloves when removing poisonous mushrooms by hand. Because of the damage artillery fungi spores can do, you may want to remove the mulch that contains these fungi.



Fusarium Wilt of Vegetables

Fusarium wilts are common in vegetables grown in commercial fields, greenhouses, high tunnels, and backyard gardens. Tomato, peppers, eggplant, cucumber, watermelon, cantaloupe are susceptible to disease. Fusarium wilt symptoms develop when the fungus obstructs openings in vascular tissue (xylem), limiting the plant's ability to move water and nutrients. Infections ultimately result in plant death. Preventative practices and fungicides can reduce damage and limit yield loss.

Fusarium Wilt Facts

- Symptoms first appear as a complete or partial wilting of plants. During the early stages of infection, plants may recover during the evening or after watering, but over time, wilting becomes permanent. Affected plants become yellow and then necrotic (brown/dead tissue) (Figure 1). Discoloration of the vascular system may be present and can be observed by cutting the stem open length wise (Figure 2). Diseased plants eventually die.
- The fungal pathogen may be introduced via infected crop debris, seeds, transplants, weeds or infested soil.
- Fusarium wilt is soilborne and is spread by water, such as irrigation or rain, or by movement of infested soil.
- Warm temperatures, periods of rain or high humidity, and acidic soils favor disease development.
- Fusarium wilts are caused by the fungal pathogen *Fusarium oxysporum*. This fungus has many host-specific strains called "formae speciales" that each target different crops.



Figure 1: Fusarium wilt symptoms begin as wilting, followed by yellowing and necrosis.

(Photo: Gerald Holmes, Strawberry Center, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Bugwood.org)



Figure 2: Vascular discoloration is characteristic of Fusarium wilt. (Photo: Clemson-USDA CES Slide Series, Bugwood.org)

Management

- Purchase certified disease-free seeds or transplants.
- Select cultivars with resistance.
- Utilize soil solarization.
- Manage weeds in or near plantings.
- Rotate crops away from susceptible crops for a minimum of 5 years.
- Increase soil pH to near neutral (pH 7), depending on crop.
- Remove and destroy infected plants.
- Clean and sanitize tools, pots, and equipment.
- Remove and destroy plant debris at the end of the season.

Commercial growers can find information on fungicides in the [Vegetable Production Guide for Commercial Growers \(ID-36\)](#), and the [Southeastern U.S. Vegetable Crop Handbook](#). Organic growers should consult the [Organic Commercial Spray Schedules for Field Production](#) series of publications available on the Plant Pathology Extension Publications website for fungicide recommendations. Homeowners should consult the [Small Acreage & Backyard IPM Guides](#) series for fungicide information or contact a county Extension agent for additional information and recommendations regarding fungicides.

Now is the time to plant a fall garden

Source: Rick Durham, extension professor, UK Department of Horticulture

The end of summer doesn't have to mean the end of the growing season. Now is the time to plant a fall vegetable garden and fill your pantry with cool-season crops well into late autumn. Some of the best quality vegetables are produced during fall's warm days and cool nights. These environmental conditions add sugar to late-season sweet corn and cole crops, such as cauliflower and cabbage and crispness to carrots.

Fall vegetables are harvested after early September. They consist of two types: the last succession plantings of warm-season crops, such as corn and bush beans and cool-season crops that grow well during the cool fall days and withstand frost.

When planting a fall garden, group crops in the same way you would in the spring; plant so taller plants don't shade out shorter ones. To encourage good germination, fill each seed furrow with water and let it soak in. Keep the soil moist until seeds have germinated. Cool nights slow growth, so plants take longer to mature in the fall than in the summer.

Polyethylene row covers are a useful way to extend the growing season of frost-sensitive crops, such as tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers. The objective of using a row cover is to trap heat from the soil and protect the crop from cold night temperatures. Often in Kentucky, a period of mild weather will follow the first killing frost. If you protect frost-sensitive vegetables at critical times in the fall you could extend the harvest season by several weeks. Once these vegetables die due to lower temperatures, you may be able to plant cool-season crops in their place. Leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach may grow into November or December under polyethylene row covers if outside temperatures do not drop below the teens. Be sure to allow for ventilation on sunny days to prevent overheating.

The following vegetables can be successfully seeded or transplanted now for fall harvest: beets, Bibb lettuce, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, endive, leaf lettuce, kale, mustard greens, spinach, snow peas and turnips.

For more information about planting a fall garden, contact the Washington County office of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.





Thousands of workers become sick every year from overexposure to heat. Some workers have even died from heat-related illnesses.

To protect yourself and your coworkers, it is important that you recognize the symptoms of heat-related illnesses.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THE SYMPTOMS OF HEAT EXHAUSTION AND HEAT STROKE

Heat Exhaustion

- Headaches, dizziness, or fainting
- Extreme sweating, wet skin
- Irritability, confusion
- Nausea or vomiting
- Weakness or fatigue
- Fast and shallow breathing
 - Immediately get to a cool, shaded area
 - Remove or loosen clothing and drink cool water

Heat Stroke

- Hot, dry, clammy skin
- Elevated body temperature
- Hallucinations
- Slurred speech
- Unconsciousness
- Throbbing headache
- **Heat stroke is a medical emergency! Call 9-911 or 911 if you witness anyone suffering these symptoms!**
- While waiting for help:
 - Move the worker to a cool, shaded area
 - Spray, sponge, or shower with water and then fan them
 - Only administer water if conscious and alert

RISK FACTORS FOR HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

Environmental Factors:

- Hot temperature
- High humidity
- Sunlight
- Air movement

Personal Factors:

- Hydration level
- Level of activity
- Type and amount of clothing worn
- Conditioning, acclimation
- Pre-existing personal conditions

HOW TO CONTROL RISK FACTORS

- Air conditioning
- Fans and blowers for air movement
- Block out direct sunlight
- Incorporate frequent recovery breaks
- Providing cool break areas
- Recognizing the symptoms of heat-related illnesses
- Hydration:
 - Water is best, drink water every 15 minutes
 - If you're thirsty, then you may already be slightly dehydrated

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM HEAT- RELATED ILLNESSES:

1. Drink fluids regularly and frequently.
2. Avoid drinking alcohol, caffeine, or other diuretics.
3. Wear natural-fiber fabrics, such as cotton.
4. Avoid wearing synthetic fabrics such as nylon.
5. When working outdoors: cover skin with loose-fitting, light-colored clothes.
6. Avoid wearing hats when working indoors.
7. Take regular rest breaks in a shaded or cool area.

HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES ARE PREVENTABLE

Do not over stress your body in hot environments

Listen to your body and stop working if you feel any symptoms of heat-related illnesses!

Washington County Cooperative Extension Service

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around the office

1st - Wits Workout
4th - Bee Club
6th - POP UP Driver's License
7th - Wheelbarrow
7th - AG Development Board
7th - Greeting Card workshop
9th - Memorial Lunch for JoAnn Lehr

9th - Willisburg Horse Show
11th - WC Cattlemen's Meeting
12th - Country Ham Cleaning
12th - Garden Club Trip
14th - Wheelbarrow
15th - Wits Workout
16th - Quilting Club

18th - Young Riders
20th - Teen Leadership
21st - Wheelbarrow



Tune in to 100.0 WLSK every Tuesday morning at 8:30 for extension updates and daily farm tips!

plant of the month



'Watermelon Ruffles'
Rose Mallow

Perennial

Hardy in USDA Zones 4A - 9B

- Height: 4½ ft
- Space: 4½ ft
- More than 4 Hours of Daily Sun
- Medium to Heavy Moisture
- Blooms Midsummer to Early Fall
- Deer Resistant

- 7 inch magenta pink flowers
- Fast grower
- Native perennial
- Best in full sun, moist, well-drained soil
- Emerges in late spring but grows fast
- Cut back in early spring
- Pair with Daylilies, Fountain Grass, Asters

Sweet and Savory Cucumber Salad

2 medium cucumbers
2 tablespoons coarse kosher salt
¼ cup slivered, blanched almonds

1 teaspoon minced garlic
20 seedless grapes
1 cup fresh blueberries
2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon white wine vinegar
Sodium-free seasoning blend, to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. **Wash** the cucumbers. **Cut** the ends off the cucumbers; remove peel if it is tough or bitter. **Slice** the cucumbers lengthwise; use a spoon to **remove** any large seeds; **cut** into ¼ inch slices. **Place** the sliced cucumbers in a colander; **sprinkle** with kosher salt and stir. Let stand for 25 minutes. **Spread** the slivered almonds on a baking sheet and **bake** with the rack in the top position, at 400 degrees F until lightly browned — about 5 minutes (use a timer to prevent overbrowning); **remove** from oven and **cool**. **Slice** grapes in half lengthwise and place in a large bowl.

Add blueberries. **Rinse** the salt from the cucumber slices and turn out onto several paper towels. **Place** a paper towel over the top and **press** dry. **Add** cucumbers to the bowl with the other fresh ingredients. **Drizzle** the olive oil and vinegar over the salad; **add** the garlic and sodium-free seasoning to taste; **toss**. **Sprinkle** the toasted almonds over the top and serve.

Yield: 4, 1 cup servings

Nutritional Analysis: 170 calories, 11 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 580 mg sodium, 16 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 11 g sugars, 4 g protein.

Recipe of the month

We're online! Find us at washington.ca.uky.edu or stop by our facebook page, just search: Washington County Extension Office.

Plate it up!

