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December 2022

Volume 18

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Washington County Cooperative Extension Service

# The Hoe Truth Newsletter

## Helping You Grow



HORTICULTURE

# Wreath Making Workshop



Thursday December 8, 2022  
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM  
Washington County Extension Office  
245 Corporate Drive, Springfield KY  
Call 859-336-7741 To Register

Come make your own wreath with live greenery!  
Participants can stop by anytime during the day.

Cost \$15.00 Bow Included



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LEXINGTON, KY 40546




Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.

## December To Do's

Cover your rose bud unions as soon as the temperatures reach the upper teens and low twenties with 8 inches of mulch or soil. You can go ahead and do this anytime now.

Keep fresh Christmas trees away from direct heat, they will dry out much faster.

Cut your Christmas Tree yourself it will last the longest.

Cut your lawn one last time if you haven't lately. It will keep it looking nice this winter and reduce disease problems this winter and spring.



After Christmas mulch your Christmas tree by running it through a chipper shredder. It will decompose and make great compost.

If you find some time between the holidays and shopping December is a really good time to apply a layer of compost or manure to the garden. It protects the soil and provides nutrients for spring plantings.

Now is still a good time to make a compost pile!

December is a good time to apply fertilizer to lawns and landscapes

Spray liquid lime sulfur or a fungicide containing chlorothalonil on peach trees to stop peach tree leaf curl next year.

## Plant of The Month - Leucothoe "Curly Red"

Though *Leucothoe axillaris* is a North American native, 'Curly Red' is a cute little selection that came from the Netherlands and is prized for its unusual and adorable curly leaves and dwarf mounding habit. The new leaves emerge purple-red transitioning to green and then to an intense red in fall deepening to burgundy-purple through winter. At only 18 to 24 inches tall and wide when all grown up, Curly Red is a great fit for small garden spaces and containers or in groupings or as a border in larger spaces. An excellent evergreen companion to other shade-loving plants such as Aucuba, Mahonia, Rhododendron and Illiciums (Anise), along with shade loving perennial ferns, Hosta and Heuchera. Sure to be a conversation piece in the garden!

<https://www.wilsonbrosgardens.com/leucothoe-axillaris-curly-red-dog-hobble-1g.html>

WilsonBrosGardens.com



# Make Winter Green-Thumb Friendly With An Indoor

Gardening is often thought of as a spring and summer pastime, but you don't have to give up your gardening hobby just because winter is approaching. Continue working your green thumb this winter with an indoor container garden.

Container gardening refers to planting in containers rather than a traditionally tilled plot of land. Container gardening is a great way to bring your plants in from the cold and utilize small spaces such as windowsills and tabletops.

While the variety of crops you can plant in container gardens isn't as vast as traditional gardens, there are still a variety of planting options. Here are some easy plants to grow indoors this winter:

**Scallions:** For scallions, also known as green onions, you can cut off the tip with the roots and place it in a glass with about an inch of water. When the roots are 2-3 inches long, plant them in potting soil in a shallow container. You can either harvest the green tops and let the plant continue to grow or use the entire green onion.

**Garlic greens:** Plant a garlic clove in a few inches of potting soil mix for garlic greens. You won't be able to grow bulbs, but the green portion tastes garlicky and serves as a good substitute, either raw or sauteed.

**Microgreens:** Microgreens refer to small edible greens grown from the seeds of vegetables and herbs such as broccoli and beets. Make sure the seeds you use are labeled for use as microgreens so there is no coating that may contaminate the plant. Sow the seeds thickly in new, clean potting soil in shallow containers like disposable aluminum pans with one to two inches of

potting soil. Microgreens typically mature after 12-14 days or closer to 21 days for larger seeds and reach an average height of 4-5 inches tall. These can be used in salads, wraps or garnishes once fully grown.

**Carrots:** Small carrots are easy to grow in potting soil.

Sprinkle the seeds on top of the soil in a pot or long window box, lightly cover with damp peat moss and water well. And don't throw away those carrot tops. They're edible and nutritious and can be used in soups and sauces and even smoothies.

**Herbs:** Basil, chives and parsley are extremely easy to grow indoors. Parsley demands more humidity, so misting the plants will help them flourish. Use organic fertilizer to help your herbs reach their full potential.

One of the biggest challenges with indoor gardening is the lighting limitations. While you should utilize as much natural light from windows as possible, some plants may need

additional light from grow lights. Grow lights come in all price ranges and styles, from full-spectrum fluorescent lights to LED plant lights that are a bit more expensive but use less electricity than fluorescent lights. Incandescent bulbs do not emit the right spectrum of light for plant growth.

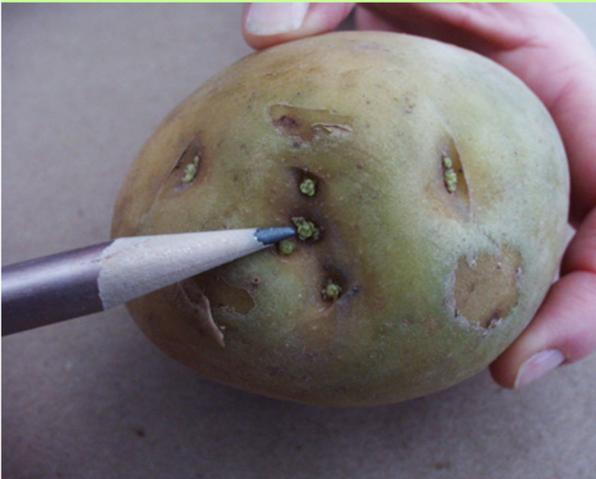
Another issue you may come across is ensuring your containers have proper drainage. You should use potting soil, which has better drainage, rather than garden soil. Be sure your containers have a hole for drainage and are placed atop a detachable saucer or in a tray to catch extra water. After the water has drained into this catching device, empty excess water to lower the risk of root rot.

Even though you are using clean, presumably "sterile" potting soil, you should wash any plant parts thoroughly before consuming, especially if you are using them raw.

Source: Rick Durham, UK extension horticulture professor



# Shining A Light On Why Potatoes Turn Green



*Potato tubers turn green when exposed to light.*

Whether store-bought or homegrown, potatoes will turn green when they are exposed to light. Most folks know that they shouldn't eat potatoes that have turned green, or should at least cut away the affected portion. But it's not actually the green color that is the problem.

The green color comes from the pigment chlorophyll, produced as a response to light. The potato tuber that we eat is actually a modified stem structure that grows underground. The "eyes" of the potato tuber are buds, which will sprout into shoots.

Potatoes will turn green when growing too close to the soil surface as well as when stored under even low-light conditions. Mulching potato plants in the garden and storing harvested potatoes in complete darkness will prevent them from greening.

Chlorophyll is not toxic. However, another response of the potato tuber to light exposure is increased production of a colorless alkaloid called solanine. The amount of solanine increases with the length of exposure and the intensity of light.

Consuming a large quantity of solanine can cause illness or even death in extreme cases. However, most people are not likely to eat enough of the affected tissue to cause illness because of solanine's bitter taste.

The highest concentration of solanine is in the skin of the potato; removing the green portion will also remove most of the toxin. Sprouts of the eyes are also high in solanine and should be removed before cooking.

The next time you see a green potato, be thankful for that color change because it is warning you of the presence of toxic solanine. Source Rosie Lerner Purdue University.



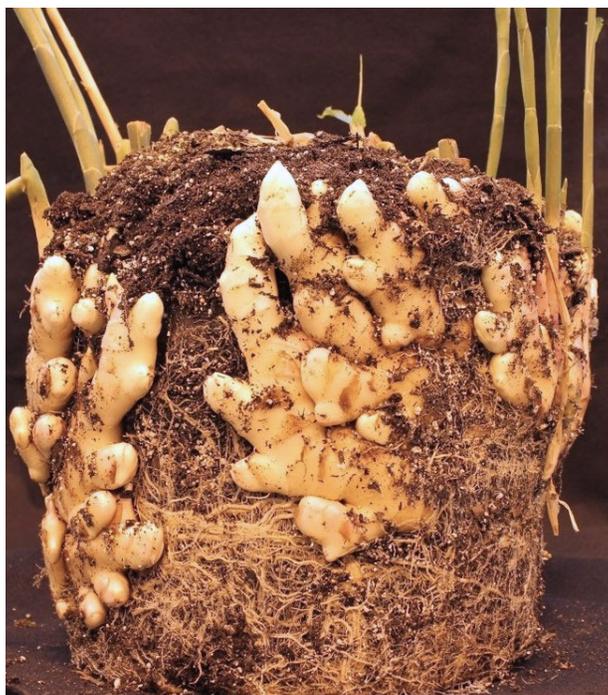
*Potato tubers buds sprout into shoots.*

## Christmas Tree Water Recipe

**1 Cup of Corn Syrup**  
**3 Tablespoons of Liquid Bleach**  
**1 Gallon Of Water**



## Spice Up Your Holidays



Some of the most popular spices used this time of year are harvested from various parts of exotic tropical plants, lending a special flavor to holiday recipes.

Ginger is harvested from the rhizomes (underground stems) of a tropical/sub-tropical herbaceous plant, *Zingiber officinale*. Ginger is native to tropical Asia and is grown commercially in Hawaii and many other countries, including China, India, Thailand and Brazil. The rhizomes are harvested after the first year of the plant's growth. The rhizomes can be washed and used fresh, dried whole or ground, pickled, crystallized or boiled and stored in syrup.

It is possible to grow ginger as a houseplant, though a typical home is not the best environment to keep this plant happy, especially in winter. The plant thrives in warm, humid air and well-drained moist soil. Select healthy fresh rhizomes from the market, and look for the small "eyes" or buds to plant eyes facing upward, about 2-3 inches deep. Once the leaves emerge, set the plant near a bright window where it will get at least a half day of direct sun.

The popular spice of cinnamon is derived from several closely related species. Ceylon cinnamon comes from the bark of the semi-tropical evergreen tree *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*, native to Ceylon and southwest India and hardy in the U.S. Gulf states. For the best quality cinnamon, the bark is cut in strips from two-year-old branches, just as the new foliage leaves out and the bark slips easily from the wood. The bark is then dried and either ground or sold in the curled strips called "quills." The quills of Ceylon cinnamon are light brown, and their interior consists of several thin layers.

The cinnamon found in most grocery stores is more likely to be the cassia cinnamon, harvested from the related *Cinnamomum aromaticum*. This type of cinnamon has a darker, thicker bark, and its quills are hollow. This form is less expensive, so it is more commonly found and is stronger in flavor than the true cinnamon.

Cloves are native to the Moluccas (Spice Islands) and are the dried, unopened flowers of the tropical evergreen tree *Syzygium aromaticum*. The name clove is derived from the Latin *clavus*, meaning "nail," as the dried flowers do rather resemble their namesake.

Nutmeg and mace are both harvested from the fruits of yet another tropical evergreen tree, *Myristica fragrans*, also native to the Moluccas. These fruits have a fleshy outer husk that splits upon ripening to reveal the seed with a red, leathery covering. Nutmeg is made from the ground seed kernel, while mace is made from the leathery seed cover. Source Rosie Lerner Purdue University.



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## December Recipe of The Month



### Blueberry French Toast Bake

<b>¼ cup</b> whole wheat flour	<b>3</b> eggs	<b>1 cup</b> fresh blueberries
<b>¼ cup</b> all-purpose flour	<b>6</b> egg whites	<b>½ cup</b> chopped almonds
<b>1½ cups</b> skim milk	<b>1 loaf</b> (12 ounces) French bread, cut into 1 inch cubes	Honey, if desired
<b>1 tablespoon</b> sugar	<b>3 ounces</b> fat free cream cheese, cut into ½ inch cubes	
<b>½ teaspoon</b> vanilla		
<b>¼ teaspoon</b> salt		

Generously **grease** a 13x9x2-inch baking dish. **Beat** flours, milk, sugar, vanilla, salt, eggs and egg whites in a large mixing bowl with a hand mixer until smooth. **Stir** in bread cubes until they are coated. **Pour** bread mixture into baking dish. **Top** evenly with cream cheese, blueberries and almonds. **Cover** and **refrigerate** for at least 1 hour, but no longer than 24

hours. **Heat** oven to 400 degrees F. **Uncover** and **bake** 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. **Sprinkle** with honey, if desired.

**Yield:** 8, 1 cup servings

**Nutritional Analysis:** 420 calories, 6 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 70 mg cholesterol, 860 mg sodium, 69 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 9 g sugar.



Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers' market, or roadside stand.