

The Hoe Truth

newsletter

HELPING YOU GROW!



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upcoming wheelbarrow classes

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Growing Ginger

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Overwintering Tropical Plants Indoors

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Fall Flower Arrangements



Garden Club

2025 trip schedule

September 23rd

Whitehall (Louisville)

October 21st

Barker Arboretum and Downing Museum (Bowling Green)

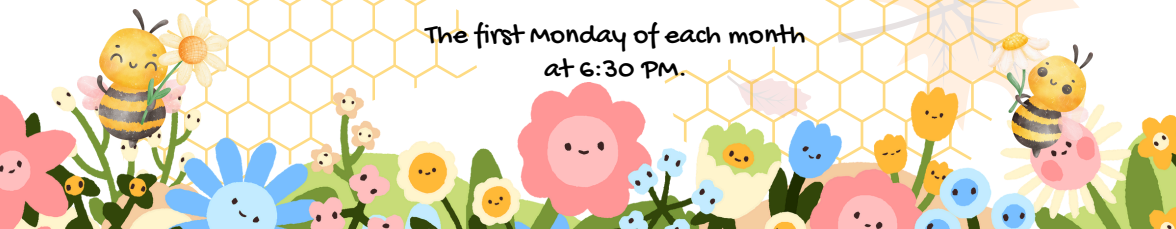
All trips leave the Extension Office at 9:00 AM.

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



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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Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development



Keep watering and fertilizing annuals; they can give you terrific color until frost.

Don't trim trees and shrubs now; wait until the plants go completely dormant. You can trim evergreens in December if you want greenery for the holidays. It is best to trim trees and shrubs in February unless they bloom in the spring, in which case you wait and prune just after they finish blooming.

Remove and destroy all old vegetable plants. These plants harbor insects and diseases ready to infest your garden next year. If you compost this material, make sure that your pile gets hot enough to destroy these organisms.

If you aren't sure your pile is hot enough, make a separate pile for vegetable plants and don't put this compost back in the vegetable garden.

Plant newly purchased trees now but keep them well watered. In September, planted trees have a chance to root well before cold temperatures. Don't prune trees and shrubs now.

Check spruce and arborvitae for spider mites. Place a white sheet of paper under some of the branches and tap it. If you have an infestation, you will be able to see the little creatures on the paper.

Spray spider mites with Avid, insecticidal soap, or horticultural oil. Don't apply the soaps or oils to blue spruce, etc.; they will take the blue off.

Remove and destroy all "mummies" from fruit crops. Mummies are dead dried fruit that doesn't fall from the tree. This material acts as a reservoir for next year's pests.

Do soil tests in areas where you plan to plant fruit crops such as blueberries and strawberries next year. Lime or sulfur takes 3 to 6 months to activate.

Control fruit flies that have been entering your house on the increased fruits and vegetables you have been bringing in lately by simply sucking them up with the vacuum.

Make a fruit fly trap by mixing a quarter cup of apple cider vinegar with a quarter cup of water and one drop of dish soap. The flies are drawn to the vinegar and will land on the surface of the water. Without the soap, they can stand on water, but the soap breaks the tension, and they drown! You can also cut and invert an old plastic bottle, so even if they get in and don't land on the water, they are trapped.

Take a soil test of your lawn before you spot seed or renovate.

Don't fertilize existing lawns now; wait until late October, November, or December.

Keep newly seeded lawns or areas well-watered until they are well-established and have had a couple of mowings.

Don't apply weed killers to newly seeded or sodded areas.

September is a good time to divide and plant perennials. It's still warm enough for growth without too much stress, giving them time to root in before winter.

Go ahead and soil test your flower beds. Most flowers prefer a pH between 5.5 and 6.5. Now is a good time to correct any pH problems so the plants will be ready to grow in spring.

Don't apply Nitrogen to perennials in the fall, which includes September.

Plant Garlic bulbs now for harvest next July. Be sure to plant the root or fat end down.

It's not too late to sow spinach, radish, mustard, lettuce, and other cool-season vegetables.



Fall gardens pop with mums

Mums bring new life to the fall garden and spruce up a front porch. All around Kentucky, garden centers offer many varieties of colorful blooms.

Fewer daylight hours and longer nights trigger flowering, which make mums a popular fall choice. Nurseries often artificially do this by pulling dark cloths over the plants in late summer and early fall, which stimulates blooming. If you have mums growing in the landscape, the natural decrease in day length will do the trick as well.

You have dozens of varieties from which to choose, but mums generally fall into one of two groups: garden or hardy mums and cutting mums or florist mums. Florist mums usually are tender and will not survive winter.

When buying a mum for fall color, look for the plant with tight buds that haven't flowered yet to make the plant last longer. Choose the variety you want based on the ones close to it that have already bloomed.

Water is another key to making your mum last longer. Place the mum in a larger pot when you bring it home to help it retain more water. If you leave it in its original container, check the soil at least every other day by simply putting a finger into the soil, at least to the first knuckle. If the soil is dry, your mum needs water.

Make sure water gets good contact with plant roots and the soil. Either water from the bottom up in a pan or pail of water, or from the sides of the pot with a watering can or garden hose. Watering overhead on the leaves or buds may cause them to quickly deteriorate. To avoid root rot, don't allow mums to stand in water long.

Once flowers begin to fade, "deadhead" or pick off the fading blooms, which will promote new growth and make the plant look healthier. If you want to enjoy garden mums inside, find a good location near a south-facing window, out of direct sunlight. Keep it away from heating or air conditioning vents that tend to dry the flowers. Keep the soil moist, but not soggy.

Mums prefer moderate night temperatures, about 60 degrees Fahrenheit. If you expect frost, protect outdoor mums by moving them under cover overnight.

Once the plants have finished blooming, they will stop growing. You can either add them to your compost pile or plant them in your garden. Be aware, however, even the best gardeners find that mums planted in the fall often fail to establish in our climate.



Late Season Oak Symptoms

Oaks are mighty trees that we love to have in the landscape. Due to the fact that they are mostly native, and they are long-lived and sturdy, we can find many different kinds of insects and mites feeding on them. Overall, these oak feeders rarely cause significant harm, but they can create interesting and distressing symptoms that might frighten the average tree owner. Here are just a few of the critters that bug our oaks and the symptoms they leave behind.

Oak Lace Bug

Lace bugs are true bugs, and they feed using their needle-like mouthpart to suck juices from the leaves of plants. One species, the oak lace bug, feeds specifically on oak leaves. Our colleagues with the Kentucky Division of Forestry have noted that in 2021, we have seen high numbers of these insects and noticeable damage to oaks across the state. Oak lace bugs are beautiful looking insects as adults; they resemble lace doilies that just happen to have six legs. As they feed, they cause stippling to leaves. With enough feeding activity, the whole leaf may eventually become bronzed. Lace bugs also have distinctive feces; their frass looks like black motor oil has been splattered on the leaf's surface.



Figure 1: Adult lace bugs have a distinctive doily-like appearance while immatures are dark in color with small spikes. Lace bugs create speckling as they feed, and they also leave behind black, motor oil-like, frass as seen in the upper left of the image. (Photo: Ansel Oommen, Bugwood.org)



Oak Shothole Leafminer

Leafminers are usually small insects that as immatures will live and feed between the top and bottom layers of a leaf. Oaks can host several species of leafminer but one is more noticeable than others—the oak shothole leafminer. These leaf mining flies spend their maggot stage in leaves feeding; their activity creates a blotch mine that can be mistaken for anthracnose. The mines are most obvious in May. However, as adults, they create damage that can be seen throughout the season. The females of these small flies will stab at new leaves and then drink the sap that is produced by this damage. As the leaf grows, these punctures will also expand creating a Swiss cheese-like appearance. This can be seen from summer to fall.

Figure 2: Oak shothole leafminer can create two kinds of distinct damage; one is a blotch like leaf mine produced by the larvae; the other is the almost symmetrical holes left behind by females. They pierce young buds and as the leaf expands, these holes expand and become apparent. (Photo: Steven Katovich bugwood.org)

Oak Leaf Skeletonizer

These small caterpillars can be hard to notice, but their damage is hard to miss. Reaching only about a quarter inch in length before they pupate, the caterpillar is also pale yellow-green. As they develop, they produce silken pods that they will hide in as they molt. The caterpillars will feed on leaves until there is only the upper layer of leaf left. This makes paper thin, brown leaves or brown patches. There are two generations, one in April and May and one that develops between August and the end of September.



Figure 3: Oak leaf skeletonizers create thin, papery, oak leaves that are almost translucent. The immature form of this pest has fed on all layers of the leaf except for the top, creating their distinctive symptoms. (Photo: Ryan Armbrust, Kansas Forest Service, Bugwood.org)

Oak Bullet Galls

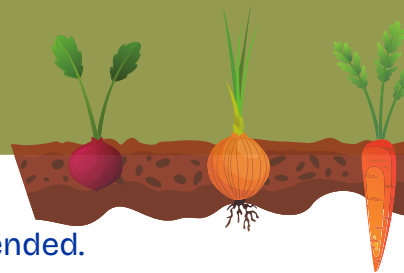
Oaks can be home to many different species of galls, including apple galls, jumping galls, horned oak galls, and midrib galls. Most galls are mere curiosities; they tend to pose little to no hazard to a tree. Insects that live in galls have adapted to trick trees into providing them a free house that protects them and provides them food. This is done with secretions from the mother insect or from the saliva of immatures causing the plant to form a tumor like growth around them. The bullet gall is no different. The wasp that induces these galls have a complex life cycle, but in the fall many noticeable round-to-acorn-shaped galls can be found on oak. Inside, an immature wasp is feeding and developing. As they feed, they excrete out honeydew, a sugary fecal material that other insects love to devour. Yellowjackets, paper wasps, bees, ants, and many other hungry insects will visit galls to drink up. These congregations of stinging insects are often what people notice before they find the galls.



Figure 4: Oak bullet galls are usually green, brown, and in some cases slightly red. They can be easy to miss as they appear outwardly like a natural part of the plant's anatomy. They do drip honeydew, though, which recruits other insects to the tree. (Photo: Steven Katovich, Bugwood.org)

Cover crops are good for vegetable gardens too

Traditional farmers routinely plant a cover crop at the end of a growing season. This is not something usually done by vegetable growers but is highly recommended.



A cover crop is intentionally seeding a crop if your garden is going to be sitting idle for a period of time, instead of letting the land sit fallow. It will put nutrients back into the soil to improve fertility and erosion control. The type of cover crop you choose to plant depends on your equipment and level of interest.

There are two types of cover crops, legumes and non-legumes. Legumes will add nitrogen to the soil and non-legumes, a type of grass, establishes better than legumes. In a vegetable garden a mixture of the two is common, but you can choose one or the other. Cover crops are typically planted in the fall after all crops have been harvested.

Examples of cover crops include:

- Cereal rye – non-legume – planted September to November
- Wheat – non-legume – planted September to November
- Hairy vetch – legume – adds nitrogen – planted August to September
- Crimson clover – legume – adds nitrogen – planted August to September
- Grasses are easier to remove in the spring, before planting, because they have a shallow root system. Crimson clover is recommended as a legume with its shallow root system and is a good pollinator.



Preventing Postharvest Disease Losses in Fruit Crops

Fruits are often soft, perishable, and particularly susceptible to a range of damage during harvest and storage. Growers can experience postharvest crop losses from 25 to 50%. A significant percentage of postharvest losses are caused by plant diseases. Infection by disease-causing pathogens can occur in the field and/or through wounds during harvest. Under moist conditions or high humidity, these infections can develop into molds, rots, or other decay. Even produce destined for fresh market can develop postharvest diseases during short-term storage.



Bitter rot can begin in the field and advance in storage.
(Photo: Nicole Gauthier, UK)

Infection in the Field

Plant diseases such as fruit rots, leaf spots, and root rots can occur while plants are growing or while fruit are maturing (Figure 1). Infections can remain latent (dormant) until produce reaches a particular stage of maturity or until certain environmental conditions are reached.

Management

Maintain a disease management program all season.

Discard diseased and damaged produce as soon as it is visible.

Avoid mixing diseased produce with healthy produce (e.g., in storage bins).

Infection During Harvest & Handling

Wounds, bruising, desiccation, and exposure to temperature extremes can weaken produce and allow pathogen entry, resulting in disease. Many of the same plant pathogens that infect crops in the field can also infect wounded or damaged produce during harvest. Disease may appear soon after produce is moved to the cooler or storage, or there may be a delay in disease development.

Management

Minimize wounds and bruises during harvest, handling, and packaging.

Raise bins and buckets off the ground during harvest.

Cool produce as soon as possible.

Avoid leaving harvested produce in the heat or sun.

Wash dirty or muddy produce and dry thoroughly before storage.

Wash and sanitize bins and equipment before each harvest.



Disease in Storage

Improper storage conditions can provide ideal environments for disease-causing organisms to infect (Figure 2). Healthy produce can become diseased in storage when moisture is too high, temperatures are too warm, and pathogens are present.

Management

Separate produce by type, harvest date, and field origin.

Cool produce as soon as possible while remaining within the safe range for the specific produce.

Monitor storage temperature and humidity.

Increase ventilation.

Raise produce off the floor.

Reduce surface wetness by maintaining equipment and keeping produce dry.

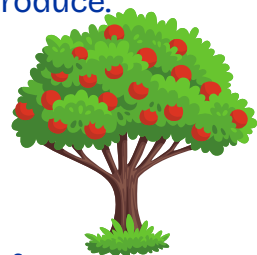
Follow a strict sanitation program, which is critical.

If fruits and vegetables must be washed before storage, they should be completely dry before storage.

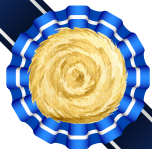
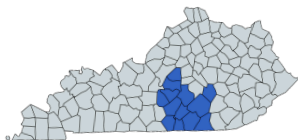
Keep all surfaces clean; sanitize regularly.

Wash and sanitize all bins, tools, and harvest materials before bringing them into coolers or storage units.

Inspect stored produce regularly and discard damaged and diseased material immediately.



SOUTH-CENTRAL KY Hay Contest



Entries are due September 30th, 2025 to the Washington County Extension Office.

Hay & Silage Classes:

- Alfalfa
- Alfalfa/Grass: Samples in this class must contain 20-80% grass.
- Mixed: Samples in this class must contain 10-80% legume.
- Grass: Samples in this class must contain less than 10% legume.
- Small Grain: Winter wheat, winter rye and oat.
- Summer Annual: Sorghum/sudangrass, millet, teff, annual lespedeza, and soybean.

Each producer may submit as many samples as they wish in as many categories as they wish. However, only their best sample in each category will be considered for awards.

NEW THIS YEAR: Samples will be sent to Ward by the Extension Office for FREE. Results take 1-2 weeks to return.

Washington County scored very well in several categories last year and placed in the top three in four different categories! We hope to have a repeat of this again this year!



KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY

THIRD THURSDAY THING

Horticulture & Urban Agriculture

September 18, 2025 10:00 AM

Harold R. Benson Research and Demonstration Farm
1525 Mills Lane Frankfort, KY 40601

THIS INSTITUTION IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER

STEP INTO FALL

WALKTOBER AND SCARECROW SHOWDOWN

WALKTOBER

Track your steps through October and submit the total for a free camo cooling towel!



Sign Up - Complete the QR code or call the WC Extension Office at (859) 336-7741 to register. All ages are welcome to participate - this could be a fun family competition.

Walk & Log Your Steps - log steps on paper, use an app, smart watch, tracker - whatever works for you.

Turn In Your Steps & Claim Your Prize - Turn in your total number of steps during the first week of November & pick up your free camo cooling towel! Steps can be submitted at the Extension Office, by phone, or email to cabrina.buckman@uky.edu.



SCARECROW SHOWDOWN

SEPT 19TH Registration Due

Complete the QR Code or Call the WC Extension Office at (859) 336-7741

SEPT 24-26 Set Up - Set up your Scarecrow at Idle Hour Park.

NOV 1ST Tear Down - Collect your Scarecrow from Idle Hour Park.

Entry Categories:

1. Business
2. Family/Individual
3. Club/Organization

Awards: Awards will be given in each entry category. Additionally, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd overall People's Choice awards will be presented, based on votes from the community.

Scarecrows will be set up from September 24th to 26th and will remain in place until voting is concluded on November 1st. The Washington County Extension Office will provide each entry with one bale of straw to use in their display.



Washington County Cooperative Extension Service

245 Corporate Drive, Springfield, Kentucky 40069

Dennis Morgeson, Horticulture Agent

859-336-7741 * dennis.morgeson@uky.edu

around the office

2nd - Homemaker Meeting

3rd - Sewing Group

4th - Teen Leadership AG day

5th - Wits Workout

5th - Memorial Lunch for
JoAnn Lehr

8th - BQCA Training

8th - Rinse and Return

8th - Bee Club

11th - Wheelbarrow

15th - Young Riders

18th - Wheelbarrow

19th - Wits Workout

20th - Quilting Club

22nd - Homemaker Lesson

23rd - Garden Club Trip

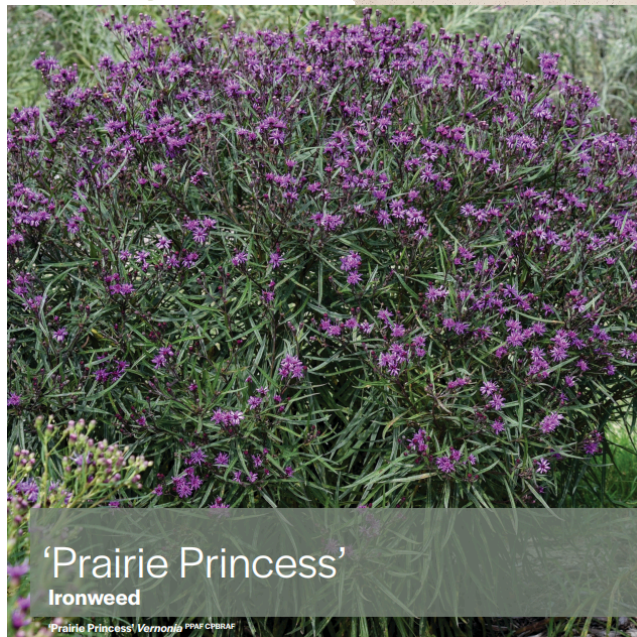
25th - Wits Workout

30th - Livestock



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

plant of the month



'Prairie Princess'
Ironweed

'Prairie Princess'® Vernonia, MO © 2010

Perennial

Hardy in USDA Zones 4A - 9B



- Height: 26-30 in
- Space: 30-36 in
- More than 6 Hours of Daily Sun
- Light to Medium Moisture
- Blooms Late Summer
- Deer and Rabbit Resistant

- North American native perennial and late season pollinator favorite
- Rosy purple flowers over dark, mildew resistant foliage
- Easy to grow
- Prefers well-drained soil
- Too much shade can cause stretching of the stems
- Provide good airflow to reduce chance of mildew
- Pair with Tall Garden Phlox, Rudbeckia, Coneflower

Farmers Market Squash Sauté

2 cups whole grain rotini pasta
3 boneless chicken breasts
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 medium zucchini, diced
4 medium carrots, peeled and diced

2 medium yellow squash, diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons fresh chopped basil
¾ cup light Alfredo sauce
2 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese

Cook pasta according to package directions. **Roast** chicken breasts at 400 degrees F to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F, about 25-35 minutes. **Dice** chicken into bite sized pieces. In a large sauté pan, **add** olive oil, zucchini and carrots. **Sauté** until slightly cooked. **Add** yellow squash and garlic and **sauté** until all vegetables are tender. **Remove** from heat and **stir** in basil, diced chicken and pasta. **Add** Alfredo

sauce and **toss** until ingredients are evenly coated. **Reheat** by **tossing** the ingredients in the sauté pan for 3-5 minutes over medium heat. **Sprinkle** with Parmesan cheese and **serve**.

Yield: 8, 1 cup servings

Nutritional Analysis: 230 calories, 7 g fat, 2.5 g saturated fat, 40 mg cholesterol, 210 mg sodium, 27 g carbohydrate, 4 g sugars, 18 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!

