

BY THE YARD

HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER



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August already?!

Now that we are entering the dog days of summer, the cold bite of winter can be a faraway thought. That's not the case, though, for our facility manager, Sonny, and many Appalachian families that follow the folklore around foggy August mornings. We'll let him tell it though.

This month's newsletter is also going to dive into common tomato diseases that you might be encountering in your garden. A special look at fireflies and maypop flowers is also included. And while it's not too late to plant many fall garden plants, time is of the essence!

Lastly, we are nearing the end of our Gardener's Toolbox classes. However, there are two this month that might be worth attending – low input lawn care and perennials for late season color (listed for reminder purposes-class is full). Don't forget to register for those at fayette.ca.uky.edu/horticulture/

In appreciation,

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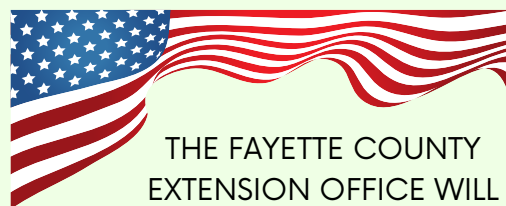


White swamp hibiscus is native to the Southeast US and is a perfect backdrop of any garden as it can grow 6 - 9 feet tall. Plus, pollinators love it!



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THE FAYETTE COUNTY
EXTENSION OFFICE WILL
BE CLOSED MONDAY,
SEPTEMBER 2, 2024

HAPPY
LABOR
DAY

Cooperative
Extension Service

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

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

Foggy August Mornings

By Sonny Saylor

From the early 1900s till the early 1980s mamaw and papaw lived in a “holler” on Indian Creek in Owsley County (Booneville), Kentucky. They were my mom’s parents. This home was a simple 2nd generation, four-room tin roofed house, with a wood cook stove, pot belly coal stove, 3 feather beds, 1 light bulb per room, a tobacco patch in front of the house, a barn and garden behind the house, a smoke house, a chicken coop, the well and of course the outhouse. Can you say blessed?

The Farmer’s Almanac calendar, with its red and black lettering, hung on the wall above the party line telephone. In the mornings during the month of August, my mamaw could be seen drawing circles around the numbers on the calendar. As a growing child I later learned those numbers were the dates of the days in the month. When asked why she was doing that, papaw said she was “counting foggy mornings.” He said that would tell them how many snows they would have in the winter, and they could be prepared with wood and coal.

So, the question is often asked, can the amount of fog we see in August be used to predict the snowfall in winter? Google says, according to the old folklore, it really can. The folklore is, “For every foggy morning in August, it will snow that many days this winter.” Like many old proverbs you hear, it won't work for all times and places, but I have found it a tradition to keep repeating.

And since the early 1990s, I too have circled dates or written the letter “S” on a calendar during August when there was a foggy morning. Regretfully, I haven’t kept my records but still find it fun and amusing to do. So, give me a DRUM ROLL PLEASE... in August 2022, I counted 11. Eleven foggy August mornings in Lexington, KY.

So that means, in theory, we will look for 11 days with some form of snow, from flurries to inches. And let me tell you in Kentucky that can happen at the drop of a hat!

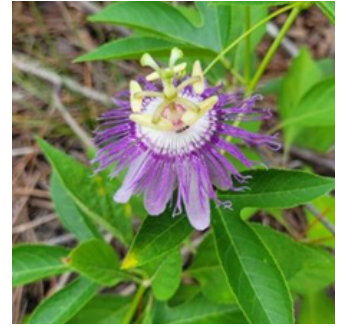
Time will tell if this folklore comes true this winter, but nevertheless in the winter months, keep your toboggan and gloves handy, always carry some water, a warm blanket and a charged cell phone as you travel. Then come next August, grab that ink pen and count your foggy mornings.

(Records indicate that from November 12, 2022 to March 19, 2023 there were 13 occurrences of snow/sleet precipitation.)

Mid-August through mid-September is the best time to sow grass seed in Central Kentucky. Choose one of the many turf-type tall fescues for best performance and maximum pest resistance. Choose a seeding method that plants grass seed ¼” deep. Seed scattered on the top of the soil will dry out rapidly and struggle to establish in this heat. Also, be prepared to water daily if needed for the first month, gradually tapering off after that period into fall. When planted in late summer cool season grasses have three seasons of root growth before facing a hot dry summer.

A Passion for Maypop

Passiflora incarnata, also known as passionflower or maypop, is a native vine, flower and edible fruit to Kentucky and the southeastern United States. It's referred to as "maypop" for the sound made when the fruits are stepped on. They may pop!



It is a woody perennial for many southern states. However, for most of Kentucky, the vine will die back each winter. The fruits won't always ripen on the vine before the first frost and can be harvested early to ripen on a sunny windowsill.

Many Cherokee elders tell stories of gathering Uwaga (maypop), considering them a delectable treat. The Cherokee have historically used the flower and root medicinally.

"Purple Passion Flower used as food and medicine" by Shawna Cain; Cherokee Pheonix, 2009

Maypop grows well in average, medium, well-drained soils and full sun to part shade. This is the hardiest of the passionflower vines, and it does not have to climb to produce flowers. Under optimum growing conditions it spreads by root suckers to cover large areas (meaning it can be aggressive!). If a bushy growth habit is preferred, pinch the vines back after the first growing season.

It is possible for large numbers of butterflies to lay eggs on a single plant, and excessive caterpillar pressures can result in near-complete defoliation and poor or non-existent fruiting. It can also be heavily attacked by Japanese beetles.

Source: North Carolina State Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox

Is the Fire Dying?

A landmark study conducted by the University of Kentucky, Bucknell University, Penn State University, and the USDA has shed light onto the precarious situation facing firefly populations across North America. Key findings from this new study indicate that fireflies, or lightning bugs, are sensitive to various environmental factors.



Photo by Getty images

Fireflies thrive in temperate conditions, with wet and warm summers creating the ideal breeding environment and cold winters supporting the survival of immature stages like eggs, larvae and pupae. However, as global temperatures rise, these conditions become less predictable and, often, less hospitable. Changes in precipitation patterns have also led to reduced larval survival and disrupted life cycles.

Urban growth, such as establishing impervious surfaces such as sidewalks, buildings and roads, poses a significant threat to firefly populations breeding grounds. Light pollution from streetlights and commercial signs can also be disruptive, interfering with the fireflies' bioluminescent communication essential for mating. The study indicates that fireflies are markedly less common in areas with significant nighttime light pollution.

Fireflies play a significant role in the food web, serving as prey for some species and as predators for many invertebrates. Their disappearance could have unforeseen repercussions on local biodiversity.

While further research is needed, there are potential conservation actions that can protect and ideally increase firefly populations. These include reducing light pollution, preserving natural habitats and implementing wildlife-friendly agricultural practices that support fireflies.

Source: Fading Lights: Comprehensive study unveils multiple threats to North America's firefly populations; Jordan Strickler; 2024

Blossom End Rot & Other Tomato Diseases

Sensitive tomato plants might be feeling more than just the heat this summer. Here are a few diseases that are common this time of year.

Blossom end rot is caused by inadequate movement of calcium through the plant during fruit development. Kentucky soils are not typically deficient in calcium due to our limestone bedrock. Rather, inadequate soil moisture inhibits the delivery of calcium to the plant and fruit. Once the condition has developed, it cannot be corrected on affected fruit. Improved irrigation can prevent further loss.



Blossom End Rot on Tomato, UK Vegetable IPM Team

Early blight (*Alternaria* spp.), the most common fungal disease of tomatoes in Kentucky, appears on leaves and stems as dark brown lesions with concentric rings. Older leaves are usually affected first, but the disease spreads upward to newer growth under favorable conditions. Extensive blighting (sudden death) and loss of leaves can result. Lesions may develop near the stem end of fruit during severe outbreaks.



Septoria leaf spot (*Septoria lycopersici*) symptoms are usually first observed in lower plant canopies but can spread upward to newer growth. Circular lesions with darkened borders and tan-brown centers can be numerous. Under favorable conditions, severe blighting (sudden death) occurs. Small, black specks (pycnidia) are often found in the centers of older lesions. Disease is favored by moderate temperatures and high humidity/rainfall.



For both early blight and septoria leaf spot, management is the same. Promptly remove and destroy diseased plant material, manage weeds (potential alternative hosts), avoid wetting leaves when irrigating, apply protectant fungicides, rotate with non-host crops and promptly destroy crop residues after harvest.



Septoria Leaf Spot on Tomato Leaf, UK Vegetable IPM Team

Early Blight on Tomato Leaf, UK Vegetable IPM Team, and Stem, Rebecca A. Melanson, Mississippi State University Extension

Source: UK ID-172: An IPM Scouting Guide for Common Pests of Solanaceous Crops in Kentucky

What to Plant Now?

Latest Safe Planting Date*	Vegetables As we move into autumn, we are now sharing the latest safe planting dates. Plants planted after these dates may be damaged before harvest by frost.
AUGUST 1	Broccoli transplants, Kale, Kohlrabi, Bibb Lettuce Transplants, Parsley, Snow Peas, Summer Squash
AUGUST 10	Beets, Leaf Lettuce, Turnips
AUGUST 20	Collard greens

*Dates are approximate for the Central Kentucky region. Based on early maturing varieties. Mid- to Late-maturing varieties need to be planted 15-30 days earlier than latest date.

Upcoming Events

Look out for these events happening at the Extension Office and across Lexington. Several of these require registration. Be sure to look them up ahead of time!

- ALL MONTH: Lexington Parks & Recreation is hosting “Nature in Your Neighborhood” Visit lexingtonky.gov/calendar/events to see what’s happening in a park near you!
- August 3 – Volunteer Morning @ Raven Run Nature Sanctuary
- August 3 – Bird Walk @ The Arboretum
- August 9 – Bird Walk @ Raven Run Nature Sanctuary
- August 11 – Volunteer Evening @ Raven Run Nature Sanctuary
- August 17 – Living Arts & Science Center Discovery Saturday: Buggin’ Out
- August 17 – Teacher & School Employee Appreciation Day @ The Arboretum’s Children’s Garden
- August 21 – Bluegrass Greensource Rain Garden & Riparian Buffer Workshop
- August 22 – Wild Ones Webinar: Combating the Biodiversity Crisis with Native Plants

August Quick Tips

- Many short season vegetables can be planted now for a fall crop. Look at kale, carrots, radishes, lettuce etc. Keep in mind the shortening days will cause plants to mature more slowly. Allow at least two weeks longer than the predicted days to harvest.
- Finish trimming shrubs and hedges this month to allow time for re-growth to mature before winter.
- Do not spray pesticides in the heat. Wait until late evening or early morning when temperatures are cooler. Always read labels thoroughly for additional precautions.
- Divide crowded perennials now through mid-September. Late flowering perennials, like chrysanthemums and Japanese anemone, are best divided in spring.
- Harvest vegetables as they mature. Allowing fruits and vegetables to ripen seed on the plant will reduce further yields.
- Monitor plants in the squash and pumpkin family for squash bug and squash vine borer. Treat as necessary before a significant problem develops.
- Bagworms are still a problem on evergreens. Monitor plants closely as small bagworms are much easier to control than the more mature larvae.
- Register and pay online for Gardener’s Toolbox Classes: <https://fayette.ca.uky.edu/classregistration>

Recipe of the Month



Summer Corn and Couscous Salad

3 ears sweet corn, shucked and washed	1 cup low-sodium chicken broth	1 cup uncooked couscous	1 cup garbanzo beans (chick peas), drained and rinsed	1 medium cucumber, washed, quartered and diced	1 ½ cups cherry tomatoes, washed and halved	½ cup feta cheese	¼ cup chopped sweet onion	3 tablespoons minced fresh parsley	Dressing: 3 tablespoons olive oil, 3 tablespoons lemon juice, 1 teaspoon dried oregano, ¼ teaspoon ground cumin, ½ teaspoon each, salt and pepper
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Boil corn for 6-9 minutes or until tender. **Drain** corn and immediately place in ice water. **Drain** ice water and **pat** corn dry; using a sharp knife **cut** the corn kernels from the cobs. In a separate saucepan, bring broth to a **boil** and **stir** in couscous. **Remove** couscous from heat, cover and let **stand** 5-10 minutes. **Fluff** couscous with a fork and set aside to cool. In a large bowl, **combine** the beans, cucumber, tomatoes,

cheese, onion and parsley. **Add** couscous and corn to the vegetables. In a small bowl, **whisk** together the dressing ingredients. **Pour** over the couscous mixture; **toss** to coat. **Serve** chilled.
Yield: 9, 1 cup servings
Nutritional Analysis: 200 calories, 7 g fat, 1.5 g saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 250 mg sodium, 28 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 5 g sugar, 7 g protein



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

Plate it up!

For More Plate It Up Recipes, Visit: <http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/plate-it-kentucky-proud>