

BY THE YARD

HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER

 Cooperative
Extension Service

Fayette County Extension
1140 Harry Sykes Way
Lexington, KY 40504
(859) 257-5582
fayette.ext@uky.edu
<http://fayette.ca.uky.edu/>

February

2025

Inside this issue:

- Perennial of the Year: Mountain Mint!
- State Apiarist Office Hours
- What to Plant Now?
- Planning Your Spring Garden
- Recipe of the Month
- New! Kentucky Garden Trail
- Winter Pruning
- Upcoming Events
- Quick Tips
- Composting Workshop

Avoid the Rush Test Your Soil Now!

The Fayette County Conservation District will cover the full cost of basic soil sample testing for Fayette County residents and landowners, up to 10 samples per year. Information on collecting and submitting soil samples can be found on our website:

<https://fayette.ca.uky.edu/soilsampling>

 Follow us on
Facebook
[@fayettecohort](https://www.facebook.com/fayettecohort)

Brrrrrrrrrrrr! I don't know about you but January has left me more chilled than expected. We are greatly looking forward to the slow thaw that February brings. A joy to gardeners that spring is coming! With that comes the hours of garden planning, seed purchasing and landscape visioning as we eagerly wait to get outside again. This month we are sharing some of our common planning questions particularly when it comes to vegetable gardening.

For the perennial lovers out there, we are pleased to see one of our favorites awarded Perennial of the Year® by the Perennial Plant Association. If you don't have mountain mint on your list of pollinator perennials to love, we encourage you to add it this year.

It's also pruning month! Many woody plants benefit from some type of pruning before a new season of growth. While we will provide a general overview of pruning tactics and techniques, please reach out if you have any unanswered questions. Those of you who grow fruit trees may have a few extra considerations than what we have shared here.

When not in your garden or when cabin fever becomes too unbearable, consider visiting one of the 12 gardens that are a part of the new Kentucky Garden Trail. The Arboretum made the list! Can you visit them all? If so, you can receive a prize for your garden trekking accomplishment.

It's soon to be time for the bees to start buzzing again. Beekeepers note, we have a new state apiarist. She's offering office hours! Be sure to take note in this newsletter for those details.

In appreciation,

Reena Martin, Fayette County Horticulture Assistant

Reena.martin@uky.edu

Jamie Dockery, Fayette County Extension Agent for Horticulture

Jamie.dockery@uky.edu

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

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English.
University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.
Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

Perennial of the Year: Mountain Mint!

The Perennial Plant Association has announced the Perennial Plant of the Year®, and we couldn't be more delighted. This late blooming workhorse attracts hundreds of pollinators to our Extension Demo Garden each year.

Clustered mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*) is a tough and adaptable perennial native to meadows and open woodlands across much of the eastern United States. It is not a true mint but belongs to the same family and has similarly scented leaves. A must-have for pollinator gardens, heads of tiny white to light pink blooms attract butterflies, wasps, and bees from July to September. The inconspicuous flowers are upstaged by surrounding silver bracts, which give the illusion of frost in summer and persist for months. Clustered mountain mint has no serious disease issues, and its aromatic foliage is unpalatable to deer and rabbits.

Branched, vertical stems grow 2-3 feet tall and form a dense, weed-suppressing clump. Clustered mountain mint spreads by underground rhizomes and can be aggressive in moist conditions, though it is not invasive to the degree of true mints.

Clustered mountain mint prefers full sun to part shade. It tolerates clay soils but is less tolerant of drought than most other mountain mints.



Clustered Mountain Mint,
Chicago Botanic Garden

Source: Perennial Plant Association,
"The 2025 Perennial Plant of the Year®", 2025



Clustered Mountain Mint,
Chicago Botanic Garden

State Apiarist Office Hours

To help connect beekeepers across the state, State Apiarist Amanda Skidmore will be hosting monthly meetings via Zoom for beekeepers and those interested in beekeeping. The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 25th at 12pm. If you are unable to attend at this time, but would like a recording of the meeting, please feel free to reach out. Moving forward we will plan to meet at the same time on the 4th Tuesday of every month, so feel free to mark your calendars. If you would like to participate, please fill out the google form at this link:

<https://forms.gle/Vkqb8x1zdEEsDAoW7> and you will be added to the email list where you will be able to sign up for the meetings. You can contact the state apiarist if you have any additional questions at Amanda.Skidmore@ky.gov.

What to Plant Now?

Earliest Safe Planting Date*	Planting Method	Vegetables
FEBRUARY 8	Start seeds outdoors	Brussel sprouts
FEBRUARY 23	Start seeds outdoors	Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi, lettuce

*Dates are approximate for the Central Kentucky region

Planning Your Spring Garden

Winter is an excellent time for planning next year's garden. Take advantage of the shorter days and cooler weather to create a vision for the upcoming growing season.

Look back on the previous growing season. Revisit any photos taken to refresh your memory of the plants that brought joy, utility or challenges. What grew well and what did not perform as expected? If you took any notes or recorded activities in your calendar, review those items. If something was done a little late or too early, think about how you could change your approach.

Evaluate the produce your household consumed last year. Consider if you want to increase the amount grown. Also ask yourself if there are other varieties that you would like to try.

For your garden, list the plants you intend to grow and consider where they will be planted. Even a rough-draft map can help you better understand what is possible. These records can serve as a shopping list and a reference for later.

Once you have a general idea of the plants you want for your home garden, you can more confidently turn your attention to sourcing seeds. Seed companies can be located online, but if you prefer a physical catalog, you can call and request one. Reputable seed sources will identify the variety sold as well as a description, germination rate and lot number. Seeds for popular varieties can sell out quickly, so purchasing things ahead of springtime is a good idea.

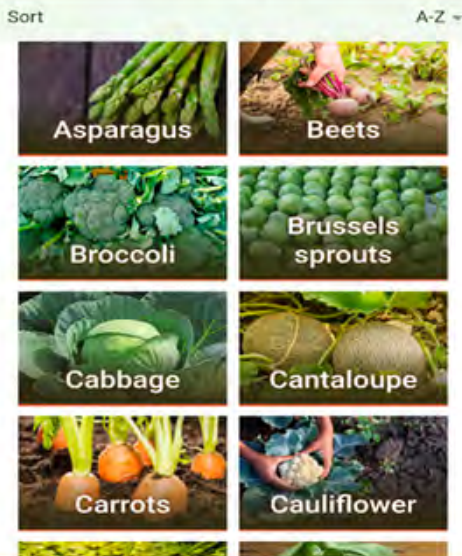
Crop	Weeks from Seeding to Transplanting ⁴	Average Seedling Date
Cool Season¹		
Broccoli ²	5-7	Feb 5, July 1
Brussels Sprouts	5-7	Feb. 5, July 1
Cabbage	5-7	Jan. 20, July 1
Cauliflower ²	5-7	Jan. 25, July 1
Lettuce	5-7	
Onion	10-12	
Warm Season		
Cucumber ³	3-4	April 1
Muskmelon ³	3-4	April 1
Squash ³	3-4	April 1
Watermelon ³ (seeded)	4-6	Mar. 25
Watermelon ³ (seedless)	4-6	Mar. 25
Tomato	4-7	Mar. 15
Eggplant	6-8	Mar. 10
Pepper	6-8	Mar. 10

Transplanting chart in the ID-128 Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky publication.

SOW



All Crops



When your seeds have arrived consider using UK's SOW app to determine when is the best time to plant seeds or move transplants outdoors. This app is available in both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. You can also pick up the Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky publication from the Extension Office. It contains planting dates specific to central Kentucky and a wealth of other valuable gardening information.

Source: Kathryn Pettigrew & Rachel Rudolph, "Planning for your future garden," UK Agricultural Communication Services Exclusive, 2024

Recipe of the Month



Butternut and Acorn Squash Soup

1 butternut squash, halved and seeded	1/2 cup chopped sweet onion	1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 acorn squash, halved and seeded	4 cups chicken broth	1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon olive oil	3 tablespoons peanut butter	1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
	1/2 cup packed brown sugar	Fresh parsley for garnish

Using a vegetable peeler, **remove** the skin from the butternut and acorn squashes and **cut** into 1-inch cubes. In a large soup pot, **heat** the oil on medium high. **Add** the onion, and **cook** 1 to 2 minutes until it starts to become translucent. **Add** cubed squash, and cook 4 to 5 minutes. **Add** chicken broth, and bring to a boil. **Lower** heat, and **simmer** 30 to 35 minutes, until the squash is fork tender. Allow to **cool** slightly, then **blend** until smooth in a food processor or

blender. **Return** mixture to the pot, and **heat** to medium low. **Add** peanut butter, brown sugar, pepper, cinnamon, and nutmeg. **Stir** until well blended. **Garnish** with fresh parsley. **Serve** warm.

Yield: 7, 1-cup servings

Nutritional Analysis:

200 calories, 6 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 600 mg sodium, 36 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 14 g sugar, 10 g added sugar, 4 g protein.



Screenshot of the SOW App available for Apple and Samsung devices.

NEW! Kentucky Garden Trail



The 12 garden locations included in the Kentucky Garden Trail

In September of last year, Team Kentucky rolled out the Kentucky Garden Trail. This new trail invites you to visit and discover twelve of the most beautiful gardens and arboreta across Kentucky. According to its website, “The Kentucky Garden Trail was created to knit together a journey of gardens, forests, and experiences in the Bluegrass... The Kentucky Garden Trail represents the state’s promise to the preservation of natural sites and green spaces providing an experience of discovery to all visitors from casual walkers to green-thumbed enthusiasts.”

The website lets you search participating locations by type, such as arboretum, display garden, research garden, conservatory and more. You can also search based on your desired activities or interests, whether it’s hiking and walking, workshops, birding, guided tours, handicapped accessibility, pet friendliness, children’s activities, etc.

Whichever garden you visit first, be sure to ask for a free Kentucky Garden Trail Passport Journal at the visitor’s center or gift shop. Then at each location, collect a stamp to stick in your journal. The passport journal can also be downloaded from the website.

Once you’ve visited and collected stamps from six gardens, an employee from the sixth location can sign the Kentucky Garden Trail Prize Form in the back of your passport journal and give you a gift to reward you for your progress. Hang on to your passport journal, though! Once you’ve visited and collected stamps from all twelve gardens, an employee from the last location can sign your journal. Upload a photo of the page with both signatures to the website, and you’ll receive a Kentucky Garden Trail grand prize in the mail. For more information visit Kentuckygardentrail.com or visit the Facebook page at [Facebook.com/KentuckyGardenTrail](https://www.facebook.com/KentuckyGardenTrail). Bookmark the website and go back to it as a travel reference whenever you want to visit any one of the best gardens in the state!



Western Kentucky Botanical Garden in Owensboro, Kentucky
Garden Trail

Source: Pam Dorrell, Fayette County Extension Master Gardener Association Newsletter, Winter 2024

Winter Pruning

Now is a great time to prune many landscape trees and shrubs. However, your tree flowers before June 1st, prune it during or shortly after flowering. If it blooms after June 1st though, you can prune it now in late winter before flower buds are visible. It’s never recommended to prune in the late summer or fall. This promotes tender new growth that usually cannot survive the winter. Here are some other helpful tips when pruning:



1. Know where to cut. Always prune back to or just above a growing point (branch or bud) or to the soil line. Never leave a stem or branch stub. It’s also never recommended to top a tree to “rejuvenate” growth. This ruins the plant’s natural shape and greatly increases its susceptibility to diseases, insect pests, and storm damage.
2. Remove dead and problematic branches first. Live and dead branches can be differentiated even during the dormant season. Live branches tend to be more flexible, have a green layer just below the bark, and their buds are green inside. Dead branches are brittle with withered brown buds and no green layer.

Problematic branches include those that will girdle other branches, that are growing toward the center of the plant, that have very narrow angles, any suckers that grow directly from the roots and appear near the base of the tree as well as “water sprouts” that grow straight upward, almost perpendicularly, from dominant branches.

Winter Pruning-continued

3. Thin out dense growth. Ideally, a shrub or tree maintains healthy leaves both in the interior and exterior of the plant. However, overly dense exterior growth prevents light from reaching the interior portion of the plant. When light is only available on the outer surface of the plant, the plant grows a dense outer “shell” without much green growth deeper within. This is particularly common in shrubs, like boxwood, that are continually sheared. By thinning out dense growth, you can improve light, rain, and air penetration to improve your plant’s overall health.
4. Remove no more than 30% of the plant during pruning. Over-pruning can cause permanent damage by removing significant portions of plant carbon and nutrient reserves. Extend major pruning projects over the course of a few years if necessary.
5. Sharp pruners or loppers should be used to ensure clean cuts. Sanitize the tool blades between each cut with rubbing alcohol or a 10% bleach solution so as not to spread any disease that may be present.

Source: “Pruning Landscape Shrubs” by R.E. McNiel, W.L. Mesner, W.M. Fountain, and W.D. Dunwell, and “Pruning Landscape Trees” by M.L. Witt, R.E. McNiel, and W.M. Fountain.



Leave the branch collar to ensure proper healing. S. Cory Tanner, ©2019, Clemson Extension

Upcoming Events

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

- Saturdays 9am-1pm - The Lexington Farmer’s Market @ Greyline Station
- February 4 – Kid’s Nature Olympics @ McConnell Springs Park
- February 6 – 2025 Forest Health Conference @ Kroger Stadium
- February 7 – First Friday Birding @ Floracliff Nature Sanctuary
- February 6 – Building a Better Monarch Butterfly Garden (Wild Ones Lexington)
- February 8 – Take A Hike @ McConnell Springs Park
- February 8 – Terrarium Workshop @ The Arboretum
- February 14 – Second Friday Bird Walk @ Raven Run Nature Sanctuary
- February 14 – Nature Journaling @ Floracliff Nature Sanctuary
- February 15 – Junior Naturalist: Birds! @ McConnell Springs Park
- February 15 – Outdoor Program Showcase @ Raven Run Nature Sanctuary
- February 15 – Geology Walk @ Raven Run Nature Sanctuary
- February 16 – Birding for Beginners @ Floracliff Nature Sanctuary
- February 17 – Habitat Hike @ Hisle Farm Park
- February 19 – Tiny Tot Naturalist: Feathered Friends @ McConnell Springs Park
- February 21 – Stargazing @ Hisle Farm Park
- February 22 – Phenology Project Training @ The Arboretum
- February 22 – Junior Explorers: Salamanders @ Raven Run Nature Sanctuary
- February 22 – Pruning 101 for Tree Stewards (Trees Lexington)
- February 22 – Volunteer Morning @ McConnell Springs Park
- February 22 – Composting Class @ The Arboretum

February Quick Tips

- The spring window for seeding lawns is mid-February through mid-March.
- Continue to monitor house plants for pest problems.
- Don't forget water for the birds in winter!
- Now is time to start cool-season vegetable seedlings indoors. Wait until late March to start quick crops like tomatoes.
- Have your soil tested now for spring gardens.
- Bring branches of early blooming spring shrubs indoors for forcing. Good candidates are Forsythia, Flowering Quince, Flowering Cherries, and early blooming Magnolias.
- Prune large shade trees now. If late in the month, some bleeding may occur. This is no cause for concern.
- Plan to prune fruit trees this month. A day with temperatures above 40 degrees will allow you to spray them with dormant oil, which will take care of many overwintering insect pests.
- Shop local garden stores now for best selection of seeds. Complete any mail orders for seeds as newer varieties will sell out quickly. Select varieties with disease resistance where possible.
- Plan to rotate crops in this year's vegetable garden. You want to avoid not only growing the same plant in last year's location but any related plant from that family. Ideally try to set up a four-year rotation for each family and plot (for example, grow other unrelated crops for three years before you plant tomatoes in the same location again). This makes a significant difference in the amount of disease pressure.

Don't forget to register for Toolbox Classes.
<https://fayette.ca.uky.edu/classregistration>



UK Cooperative Extension Service
 All classes begin at 6:00pm
 Register online:
<https://fayette.ca.uky.edu/classregistration>

Early Lawn Weeds - The Battle Starts Now January 21st		The Challenges of Growing Tree Fruit in Kentucky January 30th
Growing Vegetable Transplants at Home February 6th		Tips for Gardening in Small Spaces February 20th
Growing Great Zinnias March 11th		The Early Season Vegetable Garden March 20th
Benefits of Pruning Perennials April 3rd		Native Shrubs for Kentucky Landscapes April 15th
Growing Community Vegetable Gardening Event May 3rd		Tomatoes May 6th
Growing Sweet Potatoes May 13th		Managing Lawn Weeds June 3rd
Favorite Native Plants for Pollinators June 17th		

Cooperative Extension Service
 Horticulture and Natural Resources
 Faculty and Cooperative Extension
 4-H Youth Development
 Community and Economic Development

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT
 Educational institution of University of Kentucky. Extension services are all public regardless of country, sex, race, age, and all other characteristics or other basis. Extension programs, services, and materials are available to all persons regardless of race, sex, age, and all other characteristics or other basis. Extension programs, services, and materials are available to all persons regardless of race, sex, age, and all other characteristics or other basis. Extension programs, services, and materials are available to all persons regardless of race, sex, age, and all other characteristics or other basis. Extension programs, services, and materials are available to all persons regardless of race, sex, age, and all other characteristics or other basis.



UK Cooperative Extension Service
 All classes begin at 6:00pm
 Register online:
<https://fayette.ca.uky.edu/classregistration>

Growing Perennials from Seed July 8th		Best Crops for the Fall Vegetable Garden July 22nd
Low Maintenance Lawn Care August 5th		Dividing Perennials August 14th
Honeysuckle, Pears, and Wintercreeper - Techniques for Managing Invasives August 28th		Harvesting and Drying Herbs September 11th
Create a Garden Space for Mental Health September 30th		Growing Amaryllis November 14th
Holiday Cactus December 10th		Native Trees for Kentucky Landscapes October 9th
Composting Methods October 23rd		Epiphytic Plants to Consider November 18th
Holiday Greens from the Garden December 2nd		

Cooperative Extension Service
 Horticulture and Natural Resources
 Faculty and Cooperative Extension
 4-H Youth Development
 Community and Economic Development

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT
 Educational institution of University of Kentucky. Extension services are all public regardless of country, sex, race, age, and all other characteristics or other basis. Extension programs, services, and materials are available to all persons regardless of race, sex, age, and all other characteristics or other basis. Extension programs, services, and materials are available to all persons regardless of race, sex, age, and all other characteristics or other basis. Extension programs, services, and materials are available to all persons regardless of race, sex, age, and all other characteristics or other basis. Extension programs, services, and materials are available to all persons regardless of race, sex, age, and all other characteristics or other basis.



COMPOSTING WORKSHOP

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LFUCG



Join us for this **FREE** workshop where we will discuss several ways to compost kitchen and yard waste.

Participants will receive a kitchen waste collection bucket and a \$50.00 voucher toward the purchase of a composter through LFUCG's online store.

***This program is limited to Fayette County Residents.**

FEBRUARY 18, 2025

6:00PM

Fayette County Extension Office
1140 Harry Sykes Way
Lexington, KY 40504

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED AS SEATS ARE LIMITED. RESERVE YOUR SPOT NOW!

→ REGISTER AT: [HTTPS://WWW.LEXINGTONKY.GOV/COMPOST](https://www.lexingtonky.gov/compost)





Fayette County Cooperative Extension
 1140 Harry Sykes Way
 Lexington, KY 40504-1383

NONPROFIT ORG
 US POSTAGE PAID
 Lexington, KY
 PERMIT 112

Newsletter Enclosed *Fayette County* *“By the Yard”*

The Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment is an Equal Opportunity Organization with respect to education and employment and authorization to provide research, education information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to economic or social status and will not discriminate on the bases of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activities.

Reasonable accommodations of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English.

Inquiries regarding compliance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and other related matter should be directed to Equal Opportunity Office, Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, University of Kentucky, Room S-105, Agriculture Science Building, North Lexington, Kentucky 40546, the UK Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity, 13 Main Building, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506-0032 or US Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.

Jamie Dockery
 County Extension Agent for Horticulture
 Cooperative Extension Service
 Fayette County Extension Service
 1140 Harry Sykes Way
 Lexington, KY 40504-1383
 (859) 257-5582



UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, KENTUCKY STATE
 UNIVERSITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
 AGRICULTURE, AND KENTUCKY COUNTIES,
 COOPERATING

