

BY THE YARD

HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER

 Cooperative
Extension Service

October

2024

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Don't forget you can plant garlic now through the beginning of November!

Oh boy, do I love October. Now that the garden is being put to rest, there is still time for lots of outdoor activities before the hibernation season officially starts. Not only do I have more time to adventure into the outdoors beyond my garden, but I can do so without breaking a sweat – most of the time.

Speaking of outdoor activities, this month is once again featuring Lexington's Tree Week! There are tons of things happening around town to celebrate trees. Check out Tree Week Lexington online and on Facebook to see what's happening in your neck of the woods. (Pun intended!)

Now don't get me wrong, the season's outdoor work is not over. There are still a few things we should be thinking about for our own landscapes. We will discuss preparing your evergreens and gardens for winter. There are a few things that should go in the ground this month – like bulbs, trees and garlic! And don't forget October is the prime time to fertilize your cool season lawns.

Otherwise, take a breath, walk the land and jot down what went well this year. How did your space cope with the heat of this year's summer? What changes might you consider for next year? What do you want to learn to do differently? For example, I hope to finally install a more automated irrigation system. There were many hours spent standing behind a hose this summer!

In appreciation,

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The Dark Ones

There is something so striking when you see the bold contrast of bright green to deep purple, almost black, in the landscape. What better time of year to think of some plants that might make your space a little more broody and moody. Here are some options that will do just that:

- Royal Purple Smoketree (*Cotinus coggygria*)
- Black Lace Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*)
- Diablo Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)
- First Knight Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum* hybrid)
- Midnight Lace Sweet Potato Vine (*Ipomoea batatas*)
- Cranberry Hibiscus (*Hibiscus acetosella*)
- New Zealand Purple Castor Bean (*Ricinus communis*)



'First Knight' Fountain Grass,
Brian's Botanicals



'Black Lace®' Elderberry,
Proven Winners Direct

Remember to research a plant's preferred growing conditions before purchasing. It's always easier to match the plant to your location!

Source: *Susan Mahr, "The Dark Side: Plants with Black or Purple Foliage."*
Wisconsin Master Gardener, University of Wisconsin – Madison, 2015



'New Zealand Purple' Caster Bean, Select Seeds

Yellowjacket Bonanza

You may have heard that yellowjacket populations have been extremely high in Appalachia this year. These wasps have been reported in "clouds" appearing to hover in large numbers.



Adult Yellowjacket, Jim
Kalisch, UNL Entomology

Yellowjackets are predatory wasps for most of the summer. They capture and kill pest caterpillars and insects as well as consume roadkill and may even visit your picnic sandwiches. As summer winds down and food supplies dwindle, these wasps will switch to consuming sugary foods. As a result, yellowjackets tend to frequent human spaces more often at this time of year.

Possible explanations for our surge in yellowjackets this year include more queens surviving the mild winter of 2023-2024. More queens mean more nests could have been established and all-around higher populations. There could also be high populations of other insects, which provide ample food for yellowjackets.

There are many yellowjacket trap designs that can help you keep populations under control. The one pictured here is easy to make at home with readily available materials. All you need is an empty two-liter bottle, a box cutter or knife, liquid soap, and bait. Using your sharp object, cut the top 1/4 or 1/3 of the bottle off the two-liter. Flip the cut off section over so that the spout points down, creating a funnel. Insert this funnel into the other bottle section. Yellowjackets can enter the funnel but not easily leave. Fill the bottom portion of the bottle with about an inch of a sweet liquid like fruit juice, soda, etc. Add 2-3 drops of liquid dish soap. Now the wasps will fall into the liquid and drown. Set the trap in an area with many wasps and after a few evenings it will fill with dead yellowjackets.



Source: Jonathan L. Larson, "Strange Tales of Yellowjackets in Appalachia."
Kentucky Pest News, University of Kentucky, 2024

Homemade Yellowjacket Trap

Clean Freak or Not?

End of season garden cleanup can be a touchy subject. There are so many different landscapes to consider. Rural Fayette County residents have many acres of property to maintain while others battle the regulations of their neighborhood HOA. The rest of us probably fall somewhere in between. However, there are practices to consider that can reduce harmful garden pests and diseases while favoring beneficial insects. Here are some of our go-to guidelines:

1. If a plant exhibited symptoms of disease this year, pull it up entirely (annuals) or remove all fallen leaves and debris (perennials). This plant material should be placed in your yard waste bin and not composted.
2. Do the same with any plant debris that experienced critical pest damage. We don't want these pests overwintering. You may consider removing and replacing mulch used in these areas as well.
3. All other healthy plants can be left alone until late winter/early spring. This can be the hardest thing to do, as it may not be the aesthetic you prefer. However, there are benefits.
 - This allows all energy reserves to be fully captured in the roots of perennials.
 - Any decomposed plant parts provide beneficial organic matter to the soil.
 - Leftover seed heads provide excellent food sources for birds and wildlife. (You may want to remove seed heads from aggressively spreading perennials though.)
 - Pollinators and other beneficial organisms seek shelter within and underneath plant debris.
 - If you can mind the "mess" until spring, you will be greatly contributing to the natural ecosystem. And if you really can't take it, maybe cut down everything except a back corner that no one sees!
4. Healthy tree leaves do not need to be bagged (unless your HOA requests otherwise). Instead, these leaves can be mulch mowed into the lawn, which provides a great nitrogen boost for our cool-season grasses. Leaves can also provide a great mulch layer for trees and garden beds. If you still have leaves leftover, you can always store them in closed containers (trash bins, etc.) for use in compost piles throughout the winter.
5. Autumn is a perfect time to empty, clean and properly store garden pots and tools. Cleaning with soap and water followed by sterilizing spray of a bleach or vinegar solution will protect next year's plants from any lingering diseases and pathogens.

Recipe of the Month

Pumpkin Apple Muffins

1¼ cups all-purpose flour	½ teaspoon ground ginger	1½ cups fresh pureed pumpkin
1¼ cups whole-wheat flour	½ teaspoon ground nutmeg	½ cup canola oil
1¼ teaspoons baking soda	1¼ cups honey	2 cups Granny Smith apples, finely chopped
½ teaspoon salt	2 large eggs	
1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon		

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. In a large bowl, **combine** flours, baking soda, salt and spices. In a small bowl, **combine** honey, eggs, pumpkin and oil; **stir** into dry ingredients just until moistened. **Fold** in apples. **Fill** greased or paper lined muffin cups, two-thirds full. **Bake** for 25 to 30 minutes or until muffins test done. **Cool** for 10 minutes before removing from pan.

Note: Can substitute two cups granulated sugar for honey, decrease baking soda by ¼ teaspoon and increase oven temperature to 350 degrees F.

Yield: 18 muffins

Nutritional Analysis: 200 calories, 7 g fat, 0.5 g saturated fat, 35 mg cholesterol, 160 mg sodium, 35 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 20 g sugar, 3 g protein



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



Protect the Broadleaf Evergreens

Evergreen shrubs, unlike other plants, hold on to their foliage in winter, and it takes a lot of moisture to stay green. Evergreen shrubs common to Kentucky landscapes include boxwood, arborvitae and holly. Anytime bright sun or harsh wind is in the forecast, the needles or leaves will lose moisture, and when the ground is frozen, plant roots can't take up enough water from the soil to replace that lost moisture. Eventually, the needles or leaves get too dry and cause winter burn.

Here are four things you can do to prevent evergreen winter burn:

1. Keep watering your shrubs until the ground freezes. Hydrated plants have a much better chance at dodging winter burn. Consider watering during any breaks in cold weather as well.
2. Once the ground starts to freeze, usually in early December, apply 3-4 inches of mulch to the ground beneath your shrubs and trees. That'll seal in the moisture you're giving them when you water. Do not let mulch touch the woody base of the plant.
3. At this time, you might also consider wrapping your plant for protection. Some reasons to wrap an evergreen shrub over winter include:
 - Being weak for any reason.
 - Is fully exposed to heavy wind.
 - Didn't get much water this fall.
 - Is newly planted.
4. Try an anti-desiccant spray. It's a wax-like coating that helps evergreens avoid moisture loss in winter. It can help retain the moisture in the leaf/needle for up to 4 months. However, you must be precise on how and when to apply. You do not want to apply this product to any plant that has not been adequately hydrated beforehand.



Burlap Wrapped Arborvitae,
University of Minnesota
Extension

Source: *How to Help Evergreen Shrubs with Winter Burn*, Davey Blog, 2019

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!**

- October 2 – Nature Olympics @ McConnell Springs Park
- October 5 – Raven Run Volunteer Morning
- October 5 – Trees Lexington! Fall Tree Giveaway
- October 6 – Bird Walk @ The Arboretum
- October 10 – Native Seed Collection & Propagation @ The Arboretum
- October 11-20 – Lexington Tree Week! View all events at Treeweeklexington.com/events
- October 11 – Bird Walks @ Raven Run Nature Sanctuary
- October 12 – Junior Naturalist: Trekking to Trees @ McConnell Springs Park
- October 13 – Tree ID Walk @ McConnell Springs Park
- October 15 – Grasses & Sedges @ The Arboretum
- October 19 – Fall Plant Exchange @ The Arboretum
- October 19 – Arbor Day Celebration @ The Arboretum
- October 20 – Tree ID Walk @ Hisle Farm Park
- October 25 – Take A Hike @ Raven Run Nature Sanctuary
- October 26 – Coldstream Park Tree Planting Party
- October 26 – Junior Explorers: Wiggly Worms @ Raven Run Nature Sanctuary

October Quick Tips

- October is prime bulb planting time. Plant tulips, daffodils, crocus and other spring favorites now for a beautiful early display.
- Feeding lawns is best done in the late fall. The end of this month and all of November are great times to fertilize your turf.
- House plants should be treated as necessary for insects before coming indoors for the winter.
- Store any pots or containers that may be damaged by freezing temperatures.
- October is an excellent time to plant most trees and shrubs. Make sure to plant at the proper depth. The root flare of trees (the point where the roots branch off the trunk) should be at soil level.
- Avoid planting broadleaf evergreens in the late fall as winter injury may result. Hollies, Boxwoods, Magnolias and others are best planted in the spring.
- Needled evergreens drop their old needles in the fall. Yellowing, browning, and subsequent needle fall is normal if it is only occurring in the interior of the plant.
- Many insects find their way indoors in the fall. Most are not harmful, just annoying. Your vacuum cleaner is an easy way to get rid of an occasional insect.
- Clean up around fruit trees by raking leaves and removing dried fruit. This will help control several diseases and insects.
- Remove and burn bagworm cases from evergreens. The cases contain eggs which will hatch in spring to produce next year's population.
- Check tree twigs for egg cases of eastern tent caterpillar. The egg cases are dark and shiny, they look like someone has dabbed lacquer around the stem. They usually occur on branches that are about pencil size in diameter. They will break off the branch easily if rubbed with the hand or fingers.
- Although normally not necessary, fall is the best time to apply fertilizer to woody plants. It is best to wait until the plants are dormant so don't apply fertilizer before late October. Dividing the fertilizer application into two or three parts is a good idea. Apply 1/3 in late October, 1/3 in November, and the final 1/3 in December. Altogether you should apply 0.2-0.3 pounds of Nitrogen per 1000 square feet.
- Don't Forget! Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday, November 3, 2024, turn your clock back one hour!
- Register and pay online for Gardener's Toolbox Classes:
<https://fayette.ca.uky.edu/classregistration>



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