

# BY THE YARD

## HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER



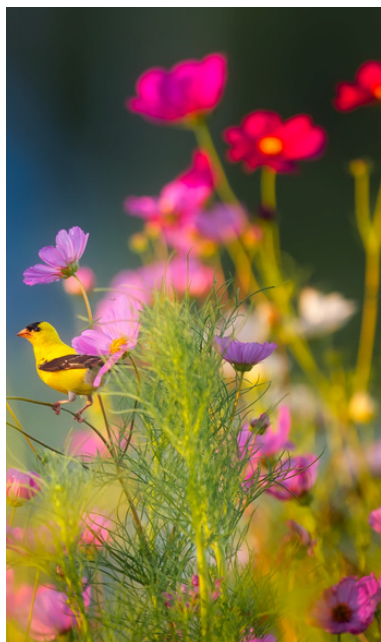
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Happy May Everyone,

Spring is coming to a close as we impatiently wait for this (hopefully) last cool spell to pass. Our gardens allure us with the promise of ripe fruits and vegetables, and I can't wait to fill my patio containers with summer annuals. These past few months have certainly had their challenges with strong storms, unusual temperatures, and winter damage. I've got my fingers crossed that the upcoming growing season will be a good one.

This month's newsletter discusses some tricks on how to make the most out of your garden in a small space. We also have an article on how to scout for and manage some troublesome stinging insects before they can become a problem. Additionally, we've included some information on Boxwood Volutella Blight, which might be more prevalent this year due to the large amount of winter damage.

We also have a good number of Toolbox classes this month with the first being a sold-out Blackberries class on Thursday May 4. Up next, we have our ever-popular Growing Great Tomatoes class on Thursday, May 11 at 6pm. The following class will be Truly Hardy Fall Mums on Tuesday, May 16 at 6pm, if you're a fan of mums and fall color you certainly won't want to miss this one! Finally, we end the month with our Elephant Ears class on Thursday, May 25 at 6pm. Remember, registration is required to attend the classes.

As always, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to stop by with your samples, email us your pictures, or call us with your questions.

Thank you,  
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**Quick Tip:** Our average frost-free date is May 5th in Lexington. Wait until then to plant summer vegetables like tomatoes. Other warm season vegetables like peppers and sweet potatoes need warmer temperatures and shouldn't be planted until May 10th.



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## Intensive Gardening

When you measure your gardening experience in decades rather than years, you've adopted new techniques and eliminated some old ones. Over the seasons, one of the traditions I've changed is the long single rows of vegetables with wide spaces between rows. Due to easier maintenance and increased yield, I've changed to more intensive gardening. Intensive gardening reduces wasted space to a minimum; however, it isn't just for people who lack land resources. An intensive vegetable garden concentrates work efforts to create an ideal plant environment, giving higher yields with less labor. This idea isn't new as "Square Foot Gardening" has advocated these ideals for decades. Don't get the idea there isn't still work involved, as weeding by hand or with hand tools is still required, although due to closer plant spacing fewer weeds should be present. Mulching with an organic material between plants is an integral part of the intensive system.

A good intensive garden requires early, thorough planning to make the best use of time and space. The interrelationships of plants must be considered before planting, including nutrient needs, shade tolerance, above-and below-ground growth patterns, and preferred growing seasons. Using the techniques described below, anyone can develop a high-yielding intensive garden.

The raised bed or growing bed is the basic unit of an intensive garden. A system of beds allows the gardener to concentrate soil preparation in small areas, resulting in efficient use of soil amendments and an ideal environment for vegetable growth. Beds are generally 4' wide and as long as desired. The gardener works from either side of the bed, reducing the incidence of compaction caused by walking on the soil.

### Suggested final spacing of commonly planted vegetables in raised beds and containers

Vegetable type	Typical spacing (inches)	Plants per square foot
Radishes, Leaf lettuce (quick crop)	2 x 2	36
Carrots, Onions (green from seed), Spinach, Leaf lettuce, Mustard	3 x 3	16
Beets, Turnips, Garlic, Onions (from slips or bulbs), Peas (provide trellis or support)	4 x 4	9
Most herbs (Basil, Cilantro, Dill, Fennel**, Mint**, Parsley*, Oregano**, Thyme), Bok Choy, Head Lettuce, Chard, Beans, Garlic, Edible Soybean (Edamame), Corn (not recommended in small plantings)	6 x 6	4
Broccoli, Cauliflower, Kale, Collards, Cabbage, Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Horseradish, Summer squash, Eggplant (dwarf types), Cucumber (trellised), Okra, Peppers	12 x 12	1
Tomatoes, Cucumbers (not trellised), Eggplant, Pumpkins, Rhubarb**, Winter squash, Cantaloupe, Watermelon	18 x 18 to 18 x 24	<1 (actually .33–.44 plants per square ft)

\*Biennial but usually grown as an annual      \*\*Perennial, some perennial herbs can be aggressive, such as mint

Source: ID-248: Gardening in Small Spaces by Rick Durham, Horticulture; Brad Lee, Plant and Soil Science; and Ashley Osborne, 4-H Youth Development

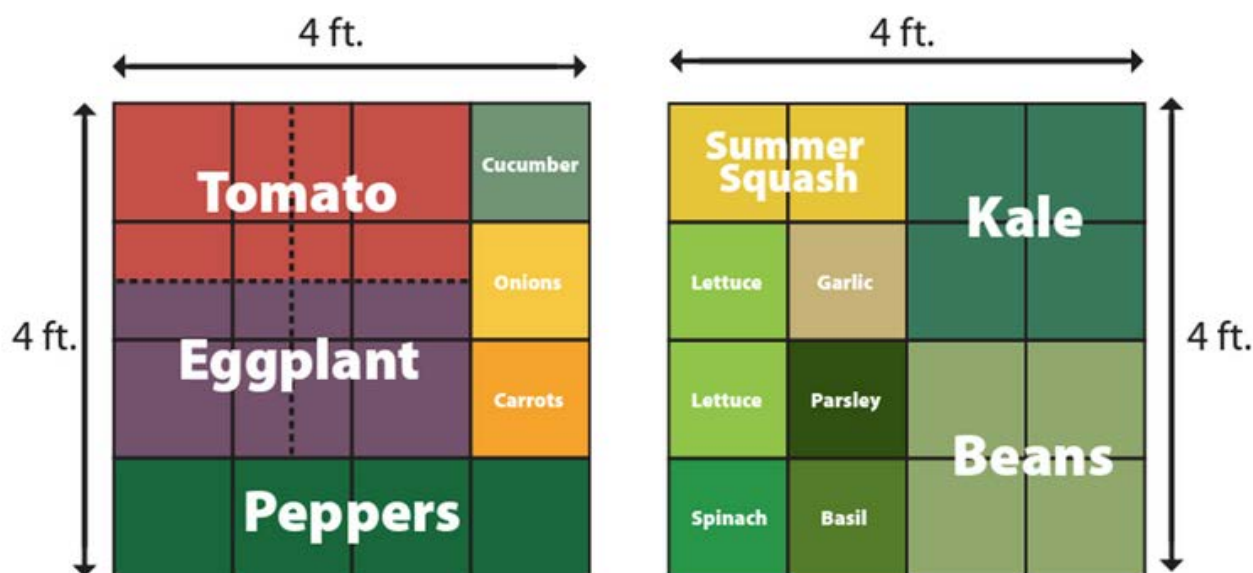
## Intensive Gardening (continued)

Soil preparation is the key to successful intensive gardening. Plants compete for available water and nutrients, and an adequate supply must be provided for more closely spaced plantings. Applying extra synthetic fertilizers and irrigation will help, but there is no substitute for deep, fertile soil high in organic matter. Humus-rich soil will hold extra nutrients, and existing elements that are locked up in the soil are released by the actions of earthworms, microorganisms and acids present in a life-filled soil, making them more available for plant use.

If your prepared soil is not deep, double-dig the beds for best results. Remove the top twelve inches of soil from the bed. Insert a spade or spading fork into the next 10"-12" of soil and wiggle the handle back and forth to break up compacted layers. Do this every 6"-8" in the bed. Mix the topsoil with a generous amount of compost or manure and return the mixture to the bed. It should be somewhat fluffy and may be raised a bit. To create a true raised bed, take topsoil from the neighboring pathways and mix it in as well.

This type of soil preparation is a lot of work. Try it in one or two beds for some of your more valuable plants; if you like the results, you can proceed to other beds as you have time. One nice thing about raised-bed gardening is that it breaks the work into units. Instead of gazing desperately at a garden full of weeds, thinking you'll never have time to clean it up, you can look at each bed and say, "I can do that in half an hour today!" Other chores are accomplished with the same ease.

Source: David Koester, Boone County Extension Agent for Horticulture, UK Horticulture Newsletter



**Figure 1.** Example of vegetable spacing in a raised bed garden\*

\* As you plan from year to year, remember to move plants around if possible. In this example, each year the plants grown in the first bed (e.g., tomatoes, eggplant, peppers) can be moved to the second bed and plants grown in the second bed (e.g., summer squash, kale, lettuce) can be moved to first bed to prevent build up of certain pests.

\*\* Early plants are grouped together for crop succession and smaller plants are placed on the outer areas of the garden to avoid shading.

## Pest Patrol: Paper Wasps—Watch for “Eaves of Construction”

Having survived the winter in protected sites, fertile female paper wasps are beginning to construct their familiar open-faced nests. Eaves and other protected sites on and around structures provide ideal sites, and the resources they need are often nearby (Figures 1 & 2).



Figure 1. Common paper wasp collecting wood fibers for nest construction from a deck rail. (Photo: Lee Townsend, UK)



Figure 2. Red paper wasp collecting wood fibers for nest construction from a firewood pile. (Photo: Lee Townsend, UK)



Figure 3. European paper wasp workers will soon emerge from the capped cells in this nest (Photo: Lee Townsend, UK).

The European paper wasp, which closely resembles a yellowjacket (Figure 3), is a relatively new arrival to Kentucky. It has the long dangling legs of a paper wasp and a slimmer body than the ground nesting yellowjacket. The European paper wasp (EPW) appears to attack those who venture near its nest more readily than the other species. EPW builds the characteristic open-faced nest but prefers to locate in a protected void instead of a more open site.

The three species of paper wasps capture insects and chew them into “bug burgers” to feed their larvae. Common and red paper wasps prefer to hunt and capture caterpillars, while the European paper wasp uses a variety of insects.

### Management

Watch now for nest construction (Figure 3) in or near doorways, mailboxes, or other places that could lead to contact with people. It will be easy to deal with the situation now when only the queen is present. Use a swatter or wasp and hornet spray, ideally when the founding wasp is present. Remove the nest completely so it will not attract another resident. Nest establishment can continue through May.

*Source: Lee Townsend, University of Kentucky Extension Entomologist*

### Quick Tip:

Treat hornet nests at night when most insects are within the nest and less active.

## Volutella Blight of Boxwood

Volutella blight is the most common disease of boxwood in the landscape. Volutella blight is caused by an opportunistic fungal pathogen that attacks leaves and stems of damaged or stressed plants. Winter injury, poor vigor, and wounds increase risk for Volutella blight.

### Volutella Blight Facts

- Leaves begin to turn red or bronze, eventually becoming straw-yellow (Figure 1). Branches die back from tips and girdling may occur lower on stems (Figure 2). Bark may also be loose on infected branches.
- In moist, humid weather, salmon-to-pink fruiting structures may be visible (Figure 3).
- American and English boxwood are susceptible.
- Disease development is favored by high humidity and temperatures between 65° and 75°F.
- The pathogen survives winter on affected branches and leaves from the previous season.
- Caused by the fungus *Pseudonectria buxi* (asexual stage – *Volutella buxi*).

### Management Options

Maintaining a sanitation program and promoting plant vigor are critical for disease management.

- Prune diseased branches.
- Prevent wounding, including improper pruning cuts.
- Maintain plant health with proper nutrition and irrigation practices. Avoid excess water.
- Maintain good air circulation by sufficiently spacing plants or by pruning dense growth.
- Gather and destroy plant debris.
- If disease continues to be a problem after following other management practices, fungicides may be used preventatively beginning in spring. Homeowners may use fungicides that contain mancozeb or copper. Always follow label directions when utilizing fungicides. Do not apply fungicides if Volutella blight has not been an issue on your plants.

*Source: Kim Leonberger, Plant Pathology Extension Associate and Nicole Gauthier, Plant Pathology Extension Specialist*



Figure 1: Infected leaves turn from red/bronze to a straw-yellow color. (Photo: Adam Leonberger, UK)



Figure 2: Girdling or loose back may be present on lower stems. (Photo: Adam Leonberger, UK)



Figure 3: Salmon or pink fruiting structures may be visible in periods of moist, humid weather. (Photo: Paul Bachi, UK)



**Pollinator WEEK**  
June 19 - 25, 2023



**Pollinator Week is an annual celebration in support of pollinator health!**



It is a time to raise awareness for pollinators and spread the word about what we can do to protect them. The great thing about Pollinator Week is that you can celebrate and get involved any way you like.

For a list activities visit:  
<https://www.pollinatorlex.com/>



## May Quick Tips

- Mulch beds for weed control and moisture retention. Make sure to keep mulch away from tree trunks and the bases of shrubs.
- Use liquid products for lawn weed control. Most granular weed control products contain fertilizer which should not be applied to lawns this time of year.
- Monitor evergreens for bagworms. Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) is an effective chemical control if you catch the larvae while they are small. Do not wait for the large “bags” to appear, as control will be difficult on older insects.
- Plant and seed vegetable gardens. Most warm season vegetables can be planted early this month and heat-lovers like peppers, squash, and sweet potatoes can go in later in the month.
- Replace pansies and other cool season plants with appropriate summer choices.
- Plant flowers. We should be frost free and good to go, although vinca will appreciate warmer temperatures later in the month.
- Divide and fertilize pond plants that have become overgrown.
- Move house plants outdoors later this month. Make sure you place them in a shady spot, or they are likely to sunburn.
- Prune evergreens now through August.
- Register and pay online for 2023 Gardeners Toolbox classes by visiting: <https://fayette.ca.uky.edu/classregistration>

## Recipe of the Month



### Strawberry Green Tea

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| <b>13 cups</b> water                   | <b>1 cup</b> honey       |
| <b>13</b> green tea bags, regular size | <b>1</b> lemon, optional |
| <b>1 pound</b> fresh strawberries      |                          |

- 1. Wash** strawberries and remove the tops.
  - 2. Chop** the berries with a hand chopper in a large pot.
  - 3. Add** water to the chopped berries and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally.
  - 4. Remove** from heat and let mixture cool for 5 minutes.
  - 5. Add** tea bags and submerge. Steep tea for 2 to 3 minutes.
  - 6. Strain** the tea through a mesh strainer or cheesecloth lined colander into a 1 gallon pitcher.
  - 7. Add** honey and stir until dissolved.
  - 8. Chill** and serve.
  - 9. Garnish** with a lemon slice or a fresh strawberry if desired.
- Yield:** 16, 8 ounce servings.
- Nutrition Analysis:** 70 calories, 0 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 5 mg sodium, 19 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 17 g sugar, 0 g protein. 30% Daily Value for vitamin C.

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