

# BY THE YARD

## HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER

 Cooperative  
Extension Service

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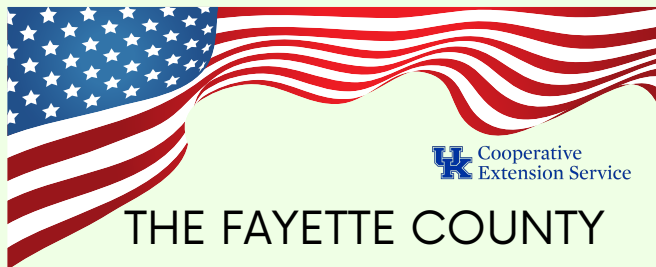
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## September Gardener's Toolbox Classes

**Viburnums** ~ Tuesday, September 19th at 6:00pm: The humble viburnum is one of the most adaptable and utilized shrubs in the garden. With such a broad range of size, form, and appearance there is a viburnum suitable for almost any garden. We will touch on some of the garden classics and hopefully introduce you to some of the more unusual species that can be found on the market. There will be a selection of sizeable plants as door prizes. *Cost: \$5.00 must register in advance to reserve a seat.*

**The Wacky World of Carnivorous Plants** ~ Thursday, September 28th at 6:00pm: Often thought of as aliens from another planet or rare treasures from deep in a tropical jungle, carnivorous plants are one of the most unique groups of plants that have evolved on Earth. In this class we will talk about the diverse types of carnivorous plants, where they grow, and how you can grow them yourself. We will also provide a small plant for each attendant to take home. *Cost: \$10.00 must register in advance to reserve a seat.*



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THE FAYETTE COUNTY  
EXTENSION OFFICE WILL  
BE CLOSED MONDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 4, 2023

★★★  
HAPPY  
LABOR  
DAY



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Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification

## Fall Invaders

**Boxelder bugs** are common insects that feed on sap from leaves, twigs, and seeds of boxelders, as well other members of the maple family. These harmless accidental invaders may be a temporary nuisance as they move into and out of sheltered overwintering sites in the fall and spring.



Adult boxelder bugs are elongate, 1/2 inch long insects with sucking mouthparts. They are mostly black with some red markings. There are three narrow red lines on the segment behind the head, one down the center and one on either side and a thin red inverted "V" about the middle of the back. The wingless immature or nymphal stage has a black head, antennae, and legs. The red abdomen has an orange-yellow stripe and spot down the center of the back.

Boxelder bugs feed on plants during the summer. They move to sheltered areas (including nearby houses and buildings) in the fall and remain there during the winter. Sweep or vacuum up and discard those found inside. They will not multiply nor will they infest any household articles. These insects are only a nuisance or accidental invader; however, they may leave an odor and stain when crushed.

Exclusion is important in reducing numbers that get indoors. Check door sweeps and places outside the house that may allow them to get inside. If large numbers are present every year, removal of female boxelder plants should be considered because this is the major host plant for them. Other alternatives include controlling insects while they are on the boxelder plant or direct sprays of congregations of the insects on outside walls. Insecticidal soap provides a safe control alternative but it must be sprayed directly on the insects to be effective.

Adult **Asian lady beetles** are oval, convex, and about 1/4 inch long. Their color can vary widely from tan to orange to red. They often have several black spots on the wing covers. Multi-spotted individuals tend to be females while those with few or no spots tend to be males. Most beetles have a small, dark "M" or "W"-shaped marking on the whitish area behind the head.



At present, Asian lady beetles appear to have few natural enemies. A small percentage of beetles are parasitized by tiny wasps and flies, while up to 80% are infected by a fungus in central Kentucky, which is only occasionally lethal. As a defense against predators, the beetles secrete a foul smelling yellowish fluid from their leg joints when disturbed. Some mortality occurs at subfreezing temperatures, although survival is enhanced within buildings and other protected locations if adequate moisture or humidity is available.

As autumn approaches, the adult beetles leave their summer feeding sites in yards, fields and forests for protected places to spend the winter. Unfortunately, homes and buildings are one such location. Swarms of lady beetles typically fly to buildings in September though November depending on locale and weather conditions. In Kentucky, most migration to buildings occurs in October. Beetle flights are heaviest on sunny days following a period of cooler weather, when temperatures return to at least the mid-60s.

Consequently, most flight activity occurs in the afternoon and may vary in intensity from one day to the next. Seal cracks and openings to prevent entry. Once the beetles are inside, the best way to get rid of them is to simply vacuum them up.



Brown marmorated stinkbug



Cluster fly



Western conifer seed bug

## Fall Webworm

The fall webworm is a pest that is distributed throughout most of the United States and Canada. It will feed on almost all shade, fruit and ornamental trees except for evergreens. In Kentucky some of the preferred trees include American elm, maples, hickory, and sweetgum.



The fall webworm differs from the eastern tent caterpillar and the forest tent caterpillar in that fall webworms always place their tent on the end of branches and there is usually more than one generation each year.

The fall webworm caterpillar is about one inch long, is very hairy and is pale green or yellow. They may have either a red or black head. The blackheaded larvae have black spots along the back while the redheaded have orange to reddish spots. The blackheaded larvae will create a flimsy web while the redheaded larvae make a larger, more dense web.

The caterpillars overwinter as pupae in cocoons that are hidden either in the bark of trees or in the soil. The moths emerge from mid-March to mid-late April. They are satin white with brown wing spots.

After mating, the female moth lays her eggs on the underside of leaves in masses of 200-500 eggs. In most years, the moths of the blackheaded webworms will lay their eggs about a month before the moths of the redheaded webworms.

The first generation of caterpillars start to feed sometime in mid-spring to early summer. After feeding, they pupate in the soil and a second generation of webworms will be observed during August or September. The second generation of webworms usually causes more defoliation than the first generation.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Although unsightly, fall webworm damage is usually more cosmetic than damaging to the host plant. By September the leaves have essentially served their purpose for the season so control is not absolutely necessary unless plants are weak or newly planted. If you feel control is necessary you may utilize one of the methods outlined below.

**CONTROL** of all three of these pests is essentially the same. Destroying the tents, especially when the tents are small, is an effective way of getting rid of the caterpillars. The best time to do this is around dusk or early morning when the larvae are in the tent. Burning the tents should be avoided because the fire and intense heat may damage the tree. On smaller trees, egg masses may be pruned off and destroyed. For larger trees or trees that have several nests, a spray may be needed. *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) and a number of chemical insecticides are effective against these caterpillars. If an insecticide application is made, it should be made when the larvae are small and easiest to control, not when they are full grown and have already done their damage. The insecticide should be applied in the evening or early morning when the insects are in the nest. A high pressure spray may be needed in order to get the insecticide into the tents.

**CAUTION!** Pesticide recommendations in this publication are registered for use in Kentucky, USA ONLY! The use of some products may not be legal in your state or country. Please check with your local county agent or regulatory official before using any pesticide mentioned in this publication. Of course, ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS FOR SAFE USE OF ANY PESTICIDE!

Source: Joe Collins, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Nursery Inspector

## Dividing Perennials

If your perennials did not put on their usual show this spring, it may be time to dig and divide. Perennials need space, and once they become crowded, blooms can become smaller and infrequent. Dividing the plants to create more room usually restores their vigor.

Late summer is a good time to divide many perennials. If you are unsure about the timing, here is a good rule of thumb. If the plant blooms in the spring, divide it after it blooms or in the fall. If the plant blooms in the summer or fall, divide it in the spring.

Perennials grow from underground structures like fleshy roots, rhizomes or bulbs. This is the part of the plant that needs to be divided. Dig up the plant, remove old leaves and shake off loose dirt to expose the underground parts. Gently pull or cut the plant apart into several sections making sure each section has some recent growth at the top. Use one section to replace the original plant and set it in so that the crown is just at soil level. You can use the remaining “new” plants created from your divisions to expand your landscaping or share with gardening friends and relatives.

A fun way to get the most from your extra perennials is to organize a plant exchange in your neighborhood, civic organization, workplace or school. Encourage participants to label their contributions and provide information such as whether the plants prefer full sun or partial shade. Not only will you get new acquisitions for your home landscape, but you may even make a new gardening friend.

For more information on horticultural topics, contact the Fayette Cooperative Extension Service.

Source: Rick Durham, University of Kentucky, Extension Specialist, Consumer Horticulture



## Harvesting and Storing Gourds

Despite what your older brother told you, "gourd head" is not a compliment. When gourds are mature, they are hard skinned with a few seeds rattling around inside. Certainly no compliment there. However, gourds are attractive to use as decorations throughout autumn. By caring for gourds properly and purchasing mature gourds, they can last several months.

Two commonly grown gourd groups are ornamental gourds and utility gourds. Ornamental gourds have extremely variable shapes, textures and colors of orange, yellow, white and green. Ornamentals include nest egg, crown-of-thorns and Turk's turban gourds.

Utility gourds have a hard thick shell and include dipper, bottle and trumpet gourds. Utility gourds are very durable and have been used throughout history for bowls, dippers, birdhouses and musical instruments.

Gourds will last longer if they are mature when harvested and kept dry. If you grow gourds in your own garden, pay attention to the days to harvest listed on the seed packet. Gourds can be left in the garden to dry or dried in a well-ventilated warm place. Handle gourds as carefully as possible. Bruises, scratches and punctures can result in deterioration.

The brightly colored ornamental gourds can be harvested once their stem turns brown and the tendrils next to the stem dry. Ornamental gourds will develop a hard, glossy, brightly colored shell. To preserve the color of ornamental gourds, they can be washed in a solution of one-cup borax with three cups water. After curing, ornamental gourds can be rubbed with a water base wax.

Utility gourds take longer to mature needing 120 to 140 frost-free days to mature. The large gourds may take longer. Gourds should be left on the vine as long as possible or until frost kills the vine.

Utility gourds develop hard shells and may begin to change from green to lighter, slightly yellow shades. The stem should be very tough and brown. The necks on long handled types should be stiff. Harvest with at least one to two inches of stem attached. After harvest, utility gourds can be washed in a one-quart water to a half-cup bleach solution.

Utility gourds may take four to six weeks of curing and even up to a year in order to dry completely. The curing process can be hastened by scraping off the thin green epidermis of utility gourds. Select only fully mature gourds to scrape. Hard-shelled utility gourds dried indoors with the skin intact tend to develop a mold over the surface.

Source: Sandra Mason, University of Illinois, Master Gardener Coordinator



Turks Turban Gourd

Source: North Carolina Cooperative Extension/Jackson County Center.



Utility Gourd

Source: North Carolina Cooperative Extension/Jackson County Center.



Source: Jamie Dockery, Fayette County Agent for Horticulture, University of Kentucky

## Fall Landscape Care

So often we hear that fall or winter is a particularly good time to do certain things in the landscape. This is usually due to the fact that plants have entered into winter dormancy.

You can compare dormancy to an extended period of "rest" for plants, when they are relatively inactive in terms of metabolic processes (photosynthesis, respiration and transpiration, for example). I say relatively inactive, because although these processes slow during dormancy, they do not cease altogether. Most temperate perennial plants will enter dormancy in autumn as daylight shortens, temperatures (including soil temperatures) become cooler, terminal buds are set, and perhaps as a result of drier conditions during late summer and fall.

Going dormant is the way these plants survive the cold of winter. It is important that landscape maintenance activities not interfere with the plant's natural process of becoming dormant. Let's use pruning and fertilization practices as examples.

Fall is considered a poor time to prune most woody perennials. Pruning will remove terminal buds that help to maintain dormancy in many species. The presence of the terminal bud, even in a seemingly inactive state, suppresses the growth of lower buds through a process called apical dominance, a type of dormancy imposed on the lateral buds. If you remove the apical bud, it may encourage lateral buds to initiate growth in a plant that has not yet fully entered a dormant state. Once lateral bud growth is initiated, dormancy will be hard to achieve, even with the advent of shortening day length and cooler temperatures. So pruning in the fall may trigger new growth that delays dormancy and predisposes the plant to winter injury.

It is better to prune plants in late winter, around mid-February to mid-March. This also allows you to evaluate and remove winter damaged limbs. Pruning in late winter will occur just before one of the most active times of plant growth, bud break, when the plant is redirecting stored nutrients from the root system out to the branches. This would be the most rapid time for the plant to heal wounds (in our case the pruned surface), while fall would be the slowest time for wound healing. An exception is if you are removing dead or severely damaged limbs due to breakage, insects or disease. In that case, it is best for you to remove them as soon as possible at any time of the year. If the plant you are pruning is spring-blooming (generally flowering before early June), it would be better from a flowering display perspective to wait until after flowering to prune since the pruning process will remove preexisting flower buds.

What about fertilization of woody plants? Fall and winter are considered the best times to apply fertilizer, but you should only do this once woody plants are fully dormant. Otherwise, applying fertilizer might trigger new growth and predispose the plant to winter injury.

How can you tell if plant is dormant? If leaves are falling, the plant has probably entered dormancy sufficiently to allow fertilization. To be doubly safe, wait until temperatures are unlikely to climb into the 70-degree range. In Kentucky this could occur anytime from mid-October to mid-November, so to be absolutely safe this probably means mid-November or later. It's best to get the fertilizer down before the soil has frozen so it won't remain on the soil surface and won't be subject to runoff with any additional precipitation.

If you don't fertilize between Thanksgiving and Christmas, wait until the ground thaws in late February or early March to apply fertilizer. However, you must realize that February and March are not the best times for applying fertilizer to lawns composed of cool-season grasses (fescues, bluegrass and perennial ryegrass). If you are regularly applying fertilizer to your lawn, woody plants growing nearby are likely getting sufficient nutrients from these applications and probably don't need additional fertilizer.

For more information on fall landscape care or other gardening topics, contact the Fayette County Extension Office. Source: Rick Durham, University of Kentucky, Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist

## September Quick Tips

- Many post-bloom perennial flowers can be found at discounted prices late in the season, and most are suitable for planting now. Avoid late planting for common fall flowering favorites that need a long establishment time. Fall flowers that are best with spring planting include, mums, asters, and Japanese anemone. Most others work great for September planting but try to plant with six weeks' time to establish before freezing weather in late November and December.
- Continue to seed and renovate lawns this month. Good seed to soil contact is critical. Consider renting a power seeder if you are working with a large area.
- Order spring flowering bulbs now or shop garden centers for the best selection. Bulbs may be planted right away or stored in a cool place for later planting.
- Plant cover crops in the vegetable garden after plants have been harvested. These can be tilled in next spring to add valuable organic matter. Or consider killing the plants and rolling flat to serve as an effective mulch you can plant through excellent organic weed control. For more information on varieties go to: <http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/id/id113/id113.pdf>
- Begin early garden cleanup with the removal of diseased plant materials. This will help prevent problems next year. Healthy plants can be left for late fall or early spring clean up.
- Plant fall vegetables. You still have time to direct sow radishes, turnips, spinach and lettuces. You can still succeed with transplants of broccoli, and fast maturing cabbage varieties if planted right away.
- Plant trees and shrubs. Fall is a wonderful time to plant woody ornamentals. Try to allow plants time to establish before the onset of severe weather.
- Divide peonies, iris, and daylilies through the middle of this month.
- Visit a local orchard or farmer's market for apples, pears, fall raspberries and other seasonal treats.

## Recipe of the Month



### Pumpkin Apple Muffins


1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour	½ teaspoon ground ginger	1 ½ cups fresh pureed pumpkin
1 ¼ cups whole-wheat flour	½ teaspoon ground nutmeg	½ cup canola oil
1 ¼ teaspoons baking soda	1 ¼ cups honey	2 cups Granny Smith apples, finely chopped
½ teaspoon salt	2 large eggs	
1 ½ 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.



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