

Pay Dirt

HORTICULTURE

February 2017



Cooperative Extension Service
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Hello Horticulturalists!

If you are interested in the weather, you should check out UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Weather Center. Here are a few things you will find on the website:

- Weather forecast
- Disease and insect prediction models
- Growing degree days
- Livestock stress indicators

For more information, go to
<http://www.wagwx.ca.uky.edu/>.

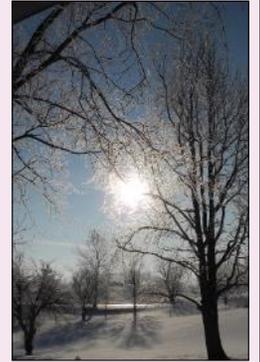
Sincerely,

Amanda Sears

County Extension Agent for Horticulture

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<https://madison.ca.uky.edu/content/horticulture>



Black Knot of Plum

Is your plum tree looking odd? Does it have a thick, black, irregular looking growth on the stem? This growth has probably been there for quite a while, but went unnoticed due to the presence of leaves. Unfortunately, what is growing on your plum tree is called Black Knot. It is a fungus that disrupts the normal growth of twigs. Infection may have occurred over a year before the characteristic tumor develops. Often, the tree has been infected for two years when the problem is finally noticed.

This fungus effects American, Japanese or European varieties of cultivated plums and prunes, cultivated and wild sweet and sour cherries, and flowering species of plums, cherries, peaches, apricots, and almonds.

The disease overwinters in the knots on the tree. Once the tree begins to bud out in the spring, the fungal spores are released during warm, wet weather. New green shoots and wounds on the tree are the most susceptible to this infection. These knots continue to grow slowly and may appear as small galls by the end of the first summer. The small young galls appear as olive green with a velvety surface. By the second summer, the gall changes into a hard, coal-black structure. Once the tree is infected, the fungus can spread to other parts of the tree and new galls will form. Knots will continue to expand until they girdle the branch and it dies.

So, what can you do? The best thing to do is always check on your trees. If you don't, you may be surprised to find something that has been going on for quite a while. Since the leaves are off this time of year, it is a great time to check on your tree. If you find the growth, prune it out. Cut the stem at least six to eight inches below the knot. Discard and destroy all the effected wood.



For more information go to: <http://plantpathology.ca.uky.edu/files/ppfs-fr-t-04.pdf>



Classes and Programs

***All classes are at the Madison County Extension Office,
230 Duncannon Lane, Richmond, unless otherwise noted***

Snow Policy: If Madison County Schools are closed due to inclement weather, Horticulture classes and meetings will be cancelled, except where otherwise noted. In some cases, they may be rescheduled.

I Love Fruit! Easy To Grow Fruits for Your Backyard

Tuesday, February 14th, 10:00 am to 11:30 am

Wish you could grow fruit at home? Certain types of fruit are easier to grow than others here in Kentucky. This class will focus on basics of growing fruit with an emphasis on what I have found to be the easiest and most satisfying to grow. **Please call 859-623-4072 to register.**

The Gardeners of Madison County - Monday, February, 20th, at 6:30 pm

This meeting will be dedicated to reviewing the changes made to the garden at Fort Boonesborough and proposed changes made by several outside consultants. Everyone is invited and refreshments will be available. For more information call Jerry Cook at 859 200 7884.

Madison County Beekeepers Association - Monday February 27, 6:00 pm

For details call Randy, 859-376-0332 or Debbie, 859-200-0090.

Seed Swap - Thursday, March 16th, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

The group will watch a webinar produced by Seed Saver's Exchange about pollinating squash by hand followed by a seed swap. Please bring seeds to share or swap. Acceptable seeds are those you have saved from open pollinated varieties of plants or any unused seed from packets. If you do not have seeds to share, come on anyway! **Please call 859-623-4072 if you plan to attend so we will know how many handouts to prepare.** Everyone is welcome!

I Dig Potatoes! - This class will be held twice on Thursday, March 30th, at 12:00 noon, and again at 6:00 pm

If you thought there was nothing special about the potato, think again! Did you know potatoes come in wide arrange of colors, even blue? Come learn more about growing this versatile vegetable. Every participant will be given a few seed potatoes! Gina Noe, Family and Consumer Science Agent, will discuss nutrition and cooking with potatoes. There will even be samples of recipes. Limit 25 participants in each class. **Please call 859-623-4072 to register.**



Clark/Madison Vegetable Growers Meeting

Tuesday, April 4, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Please note: this meeting will be held at Tates Creek Baptist Church, 1255 Boonesboro Road, Richmond, Kentucky 40475 (near exit 95 on I-75)

This meeting features two speakers. Dr. Bessin, University of Kentucky Entomologist, will discuss insect control in vegetables using conventional and organic methods. David Davis, Clark County Cooperative Extension Agent for Agriculture, will discuss marketing strategies. This meeting is geared toward commercial growers and farmers' market producers, but all are welcome. We need at least 15 participants in order to conduct this class. There will be snacks provided. **Call 859-623-4072 to sign up!**

Landscape Design Basics - Thursday, April 20th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

This class will be taught by Cody Domenghini, ECU Assistant Professor of Horticulture. Transform your landscape into a personal paradise by designing your space for better outdoor living. This class will cover the design principles to incorporate in a landscape design and basic steps to follow to produce a master plan for your yard. **Class size is limited to 40, so be sure to call 859-623-4072 to register!**

Great Backyard Bird Count

Scott Darst, Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Development



Everyone is invited to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count. Your family has the opportunity to help out scientists in studying migration patterns of birds. This is also a great way to spend some quality time together while also experiencing nature during the winter months. This can be done from the comfort of your home, in the car (with the heat on), or even go outside if it's nice. I will say that the last two years it seems like the first day is great for birding then we get slammed with Snowmageddon. If the weather does allow you to go outside, you can make observations from your backyard, nature trails, Lake Reba, Battlefield Memorial Park, or anywhere!!!!



The way the Great Backyard Bird Count works is to count birds in any of the places mentioned above for at least 15 minutes in the same location. Fill out a different checklist for each day and record how many minutes you made observations. It's that simple!!

You don't have to know a lot about birds. If you see any species you can't identify, consult a field guide or look at the ID tips on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site. If you're still unsure what you're seeing, you don't have to report that species. Just report the ones you do know. When you go online to enter your counts, just check off the box that says you are not reporting all the species you saw.

The dates for the Great Backyard Bird Count is February 17-20. To find the checklist specific for Berea or Richmond go to <http://gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/checklist> and type in your zip code. Checklists will be available at the Madison County Cooperative Extension Office as well. Once you have completed your checklist please return them to the office or email them to Scott Darst at bsdars2@uky.edu and he will enter them all as a Madison County 4-H Group. You do not have to be of 4-H age, this is for anyone who wants to participate. I find that it is a great way to beat those "Winter Blues" and getting out in the fresh air and spending time with family.

Farmers' Market News...

Downtown Richmond Farmers' Market

The organizational meeting for the Downtown Richmond Farmer's Market is Thursday, Feb. 9th at 6:00 pm at Richmond City Hall. For more information about the Downtown Richmond Farmers' Market, go to their website at <http://www.downtownrichmondfarmersmarket.com/> or check their Facebook page.

Madison County Farmers' Market

The organizational meeting for the group will be held on February 27th from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the Madison County Cooperative Extension Service Office. For more information, email Myra Isbell at myraisbell@msn.com. For more information about this market, go to <http://www.madisoncountymarket.com/>. If you plan to attend, please call the Madison County Cooperative Extension Service at 859-623-4072 in case meeting plans change due to inclement weather.



Berea Farmers' Market

The market is open for winter. It is at its winter location, Berea United Methodist Parish Hall at 101 Fee Street in Berea, on Saturdays from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. A meeting for new members will be held on March 11th. For more information, contact Margie Stelzer at mstelzer1468@gmail.com or go to <http://bereafarmersmarket.org/>

Scale Certification

Representatives from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) will be testing and certifying scales for anyone who sells produce. Come by the Madison County Cooperative Extension Office on Tuesday, April 11th from 4 pm to 6 pm. For more information, check out the Kentucky Department of Agriculture Farmers Market Manual: www.kyagr.com/marketing/documents/FM_KDAFarmersMarketManual.pdf. Or if you have questions about scales, contact representatives from the KDA, Jason Glass at (502) 782-9215 or Heath Higdon at 502-573-0282 Option 2. **Please call the Madison County Extension Office at 859-623-4072 if you plan to attend the scale certification, in case we have to reschedule.**

Earthworms: Nature's Rototillers!

Earthworms. To many, they are an icky organism that crawls onto our carports after a heavy rain. But these creatures should not be thought of as a nuisance; in fact they should be considered nature's rototillers.

As earthworms crawl through the soil, they aerate and loosen it by digging tunnels up to seven feet deep. This brings up the mineral rich subsoil and also allows oxygen to penetrate deeper, which improves beneficial soil bacteria and can help with the health of plants in the area.

Earthworms consume on a daily basis their weight in fallen leaves and other organic material. As they tunnel, they ingest soil and organic matter, which produces castings (worm poop). They grind large particles into smaller ones and soil microorganisms break these down into even smaller pieces.

Earthworm's activities in many ways mimic a miniature composter, in that it mixes and conditions plant wastes into fertilizer for new plants.

These creatures are active from spring until fall. During the day, worms lie in their burrows near the surface. At night they go in search of food.

Adding organic matter such as compost and mulch will attract earthworms to an area. Not only is this food for the worms, but it also creates a cool, moist environment. They will not tolerate soggy soil; that is why they seek dry places (like a sidewalk or carport) after a heavy rain.



Facts about earthworms:

- Under favorable conditions, one acre of land can contain more than a million earthworms.
- The largest earthworm on record was found in South Africa and it was 22 feet long!
- Earthworms are hermaphroditic which means each individual possesses both male and female reproductive organs.
- There are approximately 2,700 species of the earthworm.
- Worms do not have eyes.
- Worms are not insects. People often use this term to refer to caterpillars as well. It is caterpillars that are eating the plants in your garden, not a worm.

Starting Plants Indoors from Seeds

Are you thinking of starting your own transplants this year? Be sure to know the right time to start them! Because the growth rate varies among annuals, they require seeding at different times indoors to obtain the best plants for setting out in the garden at the proper time. Often times seed catalogs and seed packets will tell you how many weeks it takes after planting the seed to have a plant big enough to transplant. Sowing dates are based upon the average date of the last frost. In general, it is fairly safe to set out warm season plants here in central Kentucky around May 10.

Most annuals require approximately four to ten weeks to produce a usable transplant. This means counting back from the time plants are needed. For example, dwarf marigolds need six to eight weeks of growing time to produce a transplant. If you plan on setting them out in the garden on May 10, the seed needs to be sown indoors between the 15th and the 29th of March. Many gardeners don't take the time to make this simple calculation and end up starting their seeds much too soon. This usually results in seedlings that are very tall and not of good quality.



For more information on when to plant seeds to transplant, check out [Starting Plants Indoors From Seeds](http://extension.missouri.edu/p/G6570):

<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/G6570>