

Pay Dirt

HORTICULTURE
May 2021



Cooperative Extension Service

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Hello Horticulturalists!

My garden offered me a place of refuge last year. One reason I enjoyed it more than other years is because I experimented with growing new types plants. My favorite was a variety of sunflower. It was fun to watch it grow until it was eventually taller than me!

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The Earth laughs in flowers." Experiment this year! Add something new and make your garden a place that you look forward to visiting.

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Leaves of Three, Let it Be!

Ugh, poison ivy. Few plants are hated as much as poison ivy. The thing to do is to avoid it altogether. Be on the lookout! This plant has three leaflets on each stem, usually two to four inches in length. The center leaflet is longer than the two on each side. Each leaf has a pointed tip. The leaves are usually glossy or dull green but can also have a reddish look to them. Poison ivy can take on several forms. It can grow as either a vine or a shrub. The vine form will grow up almost any vertical surface and can take on the appearance of a hairy rope due to aerial roots all along the stem. It is commonly found under trees, in fencerows, and on buildings.



Poison ivy has a compound leaf made of three leaflets. The top leaflet has a long stalk. Photo by B. Rosie Lerner

An oily resin, called urushiol, is found on all parts of the plant. It is this resin that causes the allergic reaction. It is insoluble in water. That means the oil can persist on anything that has been in contact with it, such as garden tools, pets, clothing, shoes, etc.,. Studies have shown that urushiol can remain on your clothes for years if not properly laundered.

After encountering poison ivy, remove your clothing and wash your skin with soap and water. To clean off, opt for a cool shower instead of a bath. Water in a bathtub will become tainted with the uroshiol, causing your reaction to be worst. Wash your clothes using a strong detergent.

For more information, check out:

<https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/ho/ho-218-w.pdf>

<https://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/files/0612-health-bulletin-parent.pdf>



Farmers' Markets Updates

Both markets are operating under COVID guidelines.

For updates, be sure to like the markets on Facebook!

The **Berea Farmers' Market** is open Saturdays at Fee Park on Chestnut Street next to People's Bank from 9 am to 1 pm. If you are interested in becoming a vendor, you can request an application here:

- <https://www.bereafarmersmarket.org/become-a-vendor>
- <https://www.facebook.com/bereafarmersmarket>
- <https://www.bereafarmersmarket.org/>

The **Madison County Farmers' Market** is open Saturdays from 9 am to 1 pm in the parking lot of White Oak Pond Christian Church next to Meijer.

- <https://www.facebook.com/MadisonKYFarmersMarket/>

Two Classes Added to Madison County Horticulture Website

The presentations can be found on my website: <https://madison.ca.uky.edu/content/horticulture>. If you are unable to watch the videos, we can send you a copy of the PowerPoint presentation. Just call our office at 859-623-4072 and let us know.

The added classes are:

- The Good, the Bad, and the Not Really Bothering Anything: Garden Insects:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8miGI56LGSA&t=5s>
- Diseases in the Garden:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzGYYQTjmr4>

Caring For Hanging Baskets

Is your hanging basket starting to look a bit depressed? You may be able to rejuvenate it with a little maintenance.

Most hanging baskets need to be fertilized every one to two weeks during the peak growing season. Use a houseplant fertilizer and follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

Hanging baskets also need to be frequently watered. How often depends on how much shade and rainfall they receive. Some baskets need water every day or every other day, while others might need to be watered only every three to four days. To check the moisture level in the pot, stick your finger in the soil down at least an inch. If it is dry then water thoroughly until you see water dripping from drainage holes on the bottom of the pot.

If your plants look kind of tall and scraggly, some plants may benefit from being cut back. Pruning one-third to one-half the stem length will force new growth, causing plants to branch out more and flower again. Adequate fertility is critical in this situation because removing stems eliminates nutrients stored in plant tissues.



Are My Seeds Too Old?

Most vegetable seeds will remain viable for several years when stored in a cool, dry location. Storage life of seeds varies widely. Here is a guide:

Short-lived Seeds (1–2 years)

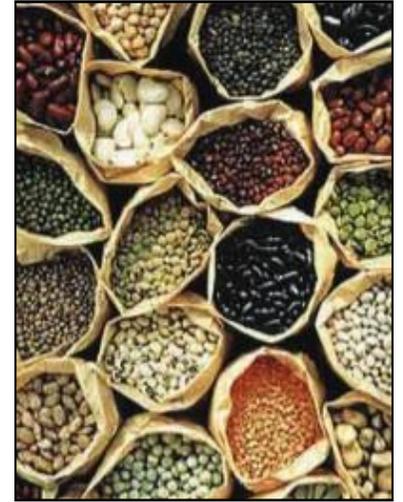
Corn, Onion, Parsley, Parsnip, Pepper

Intermediate Seeds (3–4 years)

Bean, Broccoli, Carrot, Celery, Pea, Spinach

Long-lived Seeds (4–5 years)

Beet, Chard, Cabbage family (Brussels sprouts, Cauliflower), Turnip, Radish, Cucumber, Eggplant, Muskmelon, Lettuce, Pumpkins, Squash, Tomato, Watermelon



There is a test you can do to see how viable your seeds are:

1. Moisten two or three layers of paper towels.
2. Place 10 to 15 seeds on the towels and roll the towels loosely. Place them in a plastic bag.
3. Keep the towels in a warm place such as on the top of your fridge or on top of a water heater.
4. Some seed, such as radish, germinates in 2 or 3 days. Peppers can take 10 to 14 days. Observe the seed at 2-day intervals to determine the degree of germination.

What's Eating Your Evergreens?

Is something devouring your evergreens? Look closely, the culprit may be camouflaged and right in front of you! Bagworms are caterpillars that make distinctive spindle-shaped bags on a variety of trees and shrubs throughout Kentucky. They attack both deciduous trees and evergreens, but are especially damaging to juniper, arborvitae, spruce, pine and cedar. Large populations of bagworms can strip plants of their foliage and eventually cause them to die. This insect is most easily recognized by the case or bag that the caterpillar forms and suspends from the plant on which it is feeding. The bag is made of silk and bits of host foliage. These materials are interwoven to disguise and add strength to the case. Because the bag blends in, infestations often go unnoticed until it is too late.



Mature bagworms

If there are only a few bagworms on your trees or shrubs, picking the bags off by hand and disposing of them may afford satisfactory control. This approach is most effective during fall, winter or early spring before the eggs hatch in May.

When there is a high number bagworms infesting a tree or shrub, an insecticide may be needed to prevent serious damage. The best time to apply an insecticide is while the larvae are still small (less than 1/2-inch long). In Kentucky, this is usually in June. Small larvae are more vulnerable to insecticides because they have not fully made their bag yet. Once the caterpillar is wrapped entirely in its bag, insecticides will not be effective.



Immature bagworm; notice it has the appearance of an upside down ice cream cone.

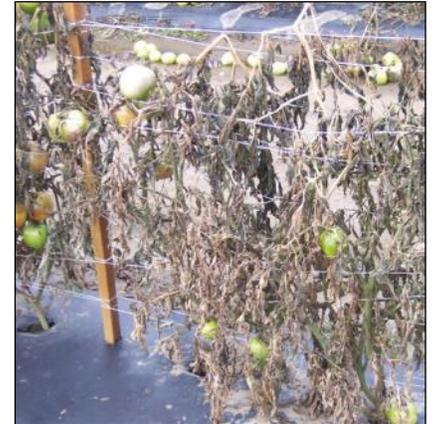
For more information on bagworms, check out <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef440>.

Disease Control in the Garden

In The Art of War, Sun Tzu writes, “The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.” Beyond the range of human sight, armies of fungi, bacteria and viruses are waiting to attack our vegetable gardens. But don’t worry, there are things you can do to be victorious! Below are a few ways to stay ahead of plant diseases.

Before Planting

- Select a site that is sunny and well-drained.
- Avoid areas with poor air movement.
- Remove or plow under old crop debris well before planting.
- Select disease-resistant varieties.
- Purchase healthy transplants.
- Practice crop rotation.



At Planting Time

- Plant seeds into warm soils.
- Space plants to assure air movement between plants.
- Fertilize properly. Do not use lime without getting a soil test first!
- Use raised beds to improve drainage.
- Apply a mulch around plants, such as newspaper, straw or grass clippings.



Mulch around tomato plants

During the Growing Season

- Regularly scout/inspect plants for disease.
- Remove and destroy plants that are diseased.

- Control weeds, which harbor insects and disease organisms, in and near the garden.
- Control insects which feed on vegetable plants and can vector disease.
- Water at the soil line or irrigate early in the day so foliage can dry before dark.
- Avoid working in the vegetable garden when leaves are wet to reduce spread of bacterial blights.
- Use labeled fungicides only for control as a last resort. If you are using a product, please read the label and do so safely.



Page from Integrated Pest Management Guide for Solanaceous Crops

The University of Kentucky has a lot of publications that are helpful.

Check out their website at <https://plantpathology.ca.uky.edu/extension/publications>.

One series of publications that you may find particularly interesting are called Integrated Pest Management Guides. These have color photos of different diseases and insects for several different vegetables including: cole crops (kale, cabbage), legumes (beans), sweet corn, cucurbits (squash, watermelon, cucumber) and solanaceous (tomatoes, Irish potato, pepper).

Another very helpful resource is the Home Vegetable Gardening Guide: <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/ID/ID128/ID128.pdf>