

Pay Dirt

HORTICULTURE
June 2024



Hello Horticulturalists!

Just a year ago this month parts of the county were hit with a terrible hail storm. My own garden and landscape (not to mention house) took a hit. As I planted my garden this spring I couldn't help but reflect on the past year and the good and bad that came with it. But think of this season as a time of renewal and a chance to start again!

Sincerely,

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Visit <https://madison.ca.uky.edu/> and click on

“Program Areas” and then “Horticulture”

Blossom End Rot of Tomato

Nothing can ruin a mouth watering tomato more than reaching for one on the vine only to find an ugly, rotten spot on it. If the bad spot is located on the fruit opposite the stem end, it is likely blossom end rot, a physiological disease caused by a lack of calcium that commonly occurs in tomatoes but can also affect eggplant, peppers and many members of the cucumber family.



Calcium is an essential part of the chemical “glue” that binds cells together within the fruit. When fruits are enlarging rapidly, if sufficient amounts of

calcium do not reach the ends of the fruit then the cells will come apart, resulting in a rot or decay in that area. Calcium does not move easily from other plant parts, so any disruption in the plant’s uptake of this nutrient and can result in a deficiency.



Soils in Kentucky are rarely deficient in calcium, but water plays a critical role in the plant’s uptake and distribution of calcium. So maintaining an even supply of moisture is important in controlling blossom end rot.

Irrigate plants as needed. Plants need an inch of water a week. If we don’t have rain, you will need to irrigate. Trickle or drip irrigation is an excellent way of getting water to plants without the risk of wetting the foliage or splashing soil onto the

foliage which can also lead to disease problems. The longer foliage is wet, the more likely it is for the plant to get sick.

Another way to keep the soil evenly moist is to use a mulch around the plants. A good example of mulch is using newspapers or straw.

Finally, do not overfertilize your plants. Not only does this lead to less fruit in general, but it can effect how the plant takes up calcium. Avoid using urea or fertilizers high in ammonium. Instead, choose fertilizers high in nitrate. Calcium nitrate is an excellent nitrogen fertilizer, although it is more expensive than other nitrogen sources.



Farmers' Markets Have Expanded the Days They Are Open!

Madison County Farmers' Market

Open Saturdays from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm White Oak Pond Christian Church located at 1238 Barnes Mill Road in Richmond and Thursdays beginning June 6th at the Carter Building on ECU's campus from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm <https://www.facebook.com/MadisonKYFarmersMarket>

Berea Farmers' Market

Open on Saturdays from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and Tuesdays from 3:00 to 6:00 pm at the Chestnut Street Pavilion, located at 635 Chestnut Street.

<https://www.facebook.com/bereafarmersmarket>

Invasion of the Springtails

Because of the moisture brought on from heavy rains and humidity, insects called springtails are showing up in houses and pools. But what is a springtail?

Springtails are a minute (about 1 mm) insect that usually occurs in moist soil. Like all insects, they have six legs, but they also have an extra set of appendages that resemble a lever. These are called furcula and are usually held down by a clasp like device on their bodies. When disturbed, the clasp releases the furcula, which then strikes the ground causing the insect to spring in to the air. But don't worry, these insects will more than likely not be jumping on you, they max out at around 4 inches when they jump. It is because of this jumping that they earned their name.

Most springtails live in rich soil or leaf litter, under bark or decaying wood, or associated with fungi. Many are scavengers, feeding on decaying plants, fungi, molds, or algae. They are also attracted to light.

Springtails actually cause no problems in a home, other than their presence (since most people have zero tolerance for insects in their homes). There will more than likely not be just one or two, but instead hundreds invading at a time. They are so small; it can be difficult to sweep up into a dustpan. But, one way to kill them is to mist the area with water containing a minute amount of dishwashing soap.



Close-up image of a springtail.
Photo by Susan Ellis, Bugwood.org



Lots of springtails

But how did these bugs get in your home? Well they could have ridden in on a houseplant. Check out the soil before bringing a plant into your house. If there appear to be springtails living in the soil, it could be a sign that the plant is overwatered, so allow it to dry out. They can also enter the house through small cracks and crevices around windows and doors. Consider caulking these areas to seal off the entrance points. Also, since these insects thrive in areas of moisture, make sure you do not have any leaks in your home that may be attracting them.

Springtails will often show up in swimming pools. They can be found living in soil in the landscape, which can be ideal breeding sites if it remains wet. They often jump into the pool and drown. To avoid these insects diving into your pool, keep the area surrounding the pool from becoming overly moist and try reducing the acidity by liming the area. Remember, improper use of lime can adversely affect plants in the area. Also, if you have lights around your pool, they may be attracted to them.

The Business of Blooms Short Course

FLORAL DESIGN & NEW
MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR
CUT FLOWER GROWERS

July 8th, 2024 | Hardin Co. Extension

Registration: 9am | Sessions: 10am-3:45pm
Post-Conference Workshop: 4-6pm



The Business of Blooms Short Course

This course will be held on July 8th at the **Hardin County Extension Office** in Elizabethtown, KY. General sessions will be held from 10:00 am to 3:45 pm EST with the optional post-conference workshop following at 4 pm until 6 pm.

For more info and registration, visit:

<https://kentuckyhorticulturecouncil.ticketspic.com/the-business-of-blooms-short-course>

What's Wrong with My Plant?

Have you ever seen a plant that looked like it may be on steroids or the stalk appears squashed or splayed out? Does it look like two stems have fused together? This type of distortion is called “fasciation”. The term refers to a flattened or ribbon like appearance in a plant which is normally rounded. Woody plants, annuals, and even cacti can be effected. Stems, fruits, flowers, and roots can become fasciated.



Fasciated asparagus

But what causes this phenomenon? Scientists think it is caused by a hormonal imbalance. In some cases, this imbalance could be a random genetic mutation, although it may be brought on bacteria, fungi, virus, insects, frost, or physical damage to the growing point of the plant.



Fasciated dandelion

Fasciation is not contagious to surrounding plants. And just because a plant shows signs of fasciation this year, it may not have it again in the future. There are no sprays or chemicals to cure this disorder.

What is that Beetle Eating My Asparagus?

The asparagus beetle is 1/4 an inch long and black with yellow markings. The larva is olive green and 1/3 of an inch long. Both the adults and larva feed on asparagus foliage and can also disfigure spears.



This insect overwinters as an adult. It first appears when spears are ready to be cut. They feed and lay eggs on the spears.

To control this insect, in the fall remove and burn old fronds (the frilly looking growth of asparagus). This will eliminate the most common place the beetle overwinters.

For more information on this insect and others, go to:

<https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-insects/asparagus-beetles>

The part of the broccoli plant we eat is the undeveloped flower. It is called the floret.



2024 Madison County Fair Exhibits

***** Important - This page covers only information for the Garden and Horticulture entries. For the full fair catalog go to <https://madison.ca.uky.edu/>**

All perishable items (Garden, Horticulture, Canning, Honey, Food and Eggs) must be dropped off at the Madison County Fairgrounds on Wednesday, July 24th from 2:00 to 6:00 pm. Non perishables (Handiwork, Heritage Skills, and Visual Arts) need to be dropped off on Monday, July 22nd at the Madison County Extension Office from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Entries will be on display in a climate-controlled facility from day of entry through Saturday, August 3, 2024, day of pickup.

GARDEN DEPARTMENT (Open to Madison County Residents Only)

Produce exhibits must be displayed on a heavy disposable plate and enclosed in a large zip lock bag.

- Plate of 12 beans, bush, pole
- Plate of 3 carrots, tops included
- Plate of 3 onions
- Plate of 3 cucumbers
- Plate of 3 peppers, green and other
- Plate of 3 potatoes
- Plate of 3 crooked neck or straight neck yellow squash
- Plate of 3 zucchinis
- Plate of 3 tomatoes, any variety
- Plate of 3 cherry tomatoes, any variety
- Plate of 3 vegetables, other than listed
- Best vegetable exhibit (5 or more different types of vegetables grown by exhibitor, container will also be judged)
- Largest tomato, determined by weight
- Plate of any ripe fruit – 3
- Decorated vegetable – be creative!
- Vase or glass bottle of fresh herbs (single herb or multiple herbs, grown by exhibitor)
- Kiddie Corner (age 8 & under) any fruit or vegetable in the above-described Division.

HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENT (Open to Madison County Residents Only)

Flower Specimen - A single plant bloom, spike or spray with foliage in a glass bottle or vase. We are not responsible for vase or bottle. Keep in mind exhibits will NOT be judged the same day they are entered.

- Gladiolus, any variety
- Rose, any variety
- Marigold, any variety
- Zinnia, dwarf under 2 ½ in.
- Zinnia, giant over 2 ½ in.
- Biggest sunflower head
- Flower, other than listed
- Kiddie Corner (age 8 & under) any flower in the above-described Division.

Pot and vase/containers are considered in overall judging. Arrangement height limit does not include the vase/container itself. For flower arrangements, majority of flowers must be harvested or grown by exhibitor.

- Best hanging basket
- Best potted plant, any variety
- Best high arrangement of garden flowers over 12"
- Best low arrangement of garden flowers under 12"
- Best miniature arrangement of fresh flowers, not over 4" high
- Best fairy garden
- Best terrarium (enclosed container)
- Best dish garden (mini landscape in open container)
- Kiddie Corner (age 8 & under) any exhibit in the above-described Division.