

# Pay Dirt

**HORTICULTURE**  
**April 2025**



Cooperative Extension Service  
Madison County  
230 Duncannon Lane  
Richmond, KY 40475  
(859) 623-4072  
Fax: (859) 624-9510  
<http://extension.ca.uky.edu>

## Hello Horticulturalists!

I want to wish a Happy Retirement to Shari Shanks! Shari has been with the Madison County Extension Office for over 26 years and has not only been a great co-worker but an even greater cheerleader. She would often remind me of the Extension Worker’s Creed which begins with the words, “ I believe in people and their hopes...”

Shari, thanks for everything!

Sincerely,

Amanda Sears

County Extension Agent for Horticulture

[amanda.sears@uky.edu](mailto:amanda.sears@uky.edu)

Visit <https://madison.ca.uky.edu/> and click on “Program Areas” and then “Horticulture”



## What Do the Three Numbers on a Fertilizer Bag Mean?



When you shop for fertilizer, whether it is synthetic or organic, you will see three numbers on the bag. The first number is the amount of nitrogen (N) in the bag, the second is the amount phosphorous (P), and the third is the amount potassium (K). These three compounds are nutrients that are important to the growth and health of plants. The numbers tell you the percentage of that nutrient in the bag.

So, quiz time! If you have a 5-10-5 bag of fertilizer that weights 50 pounds, how much actual nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium do you have?

5% nitrogen X 50 lbs = 2 ½ lbs of actual nitrogen

10% phosphorous X 50 lbs = 5 lbs of actual phosphorous

5% potassium X 50 lbs = 2 ½ lbs of actual potassium

So you may be wondering what is the rest of the material in the bag? The rest is considered filler or carriers; they “carry” the nutrients and keep the fertilizer from becoming lumpy and unmanageable.

(Source: University of New Hampshire Extension and University of Illinois Extension)

### Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
4-H Youth Development  
Community and Economic Development

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University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.  
Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.

# The More You Know the Better You Grow!

## Companion Planting

**Monday, April 14<sup>th</sup> 10 to 11:30 am**

Plants interact with one another, isn't that amazing! Some are beneficial to one another; others can cause harm. This class will focus on the basics of companion planting. Several books on the topic will be given away as door prizes during the class. Everyone will receive seeds for common companion plants!

## Gardening Naturally

**Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup> 10 to 11:30 am or 6 to 7:30 pm**

As a gardener, you play a huge role in the environment and ecosystem! Whether you are a brand-new gardener or your current garden needs to be rejuvenated, this class will give you ideas on how to focus on low input sustainable gardening.

There are several books the Horticulture Agent keeps on her desk as references, copies of those references will be given away during the class!

**All classes held at the Madison County Extension Office at 230 Duncannon Lane in Richmond, KY 40475. If you would like to attend, please let us know by calling 859-623-4072.**

*Amanda Sears*

Amanda Sears, County Extension Agent for Horticulture [amanda.sears@uky.edu](mailto:amanda.sears@uky.edu)  
Visit <https://madison.ca.uky.edu/> click on "Program Areas" and then "Horticulture"



## Get Ready for Hummingbirds!



**Instead of buying premade hummingbird food, try mixing your own...**

1. Mix a solution of one part sugar to four parts water.
2. Boil water and sugar mixture for two minutes. Do not heat in the microwave.
3. Cool the mixture and refrigerate.

There is no need to add red dye. If you are using a red feeder, that should be enough to attract the birds.

Visit online <http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/for/for97/for97.pdf> for the Hummingbird publication or call our office at 859-623-4072, to have a copy mailed to you.

# Below Are Some Tips For Keeping Your Garden Healthy This Year!

1. **Purchase high quality plants and seeds.** When choosing plants, look for healthy looking leaves and strong stems.
2. **Rotate your crops.** Some diseases only effect certain plant families. If you had any disease last year a great way to avoid the same problem this year is to rotate your crops to a different area of the garden. Just remember, you need to rotate plant families not just the species.
3. **Keep the garden clean.** Be sure to remove any of last year's crop debris. Debris can harbor plant diseases and insects.
4. **Do not plant too early.** As tempting as it is to get a head start, if the soils are still cold plant growth will be inhibited. A slow growing plant is more susceptible to plant diseases.



5. **Do not crowd your plants.** You know on plant tags where it says the amount of space recommended between plants? That information is important! If you overcrowd your plants air flow will be decreased. That sets up an environment perfect for diseases.
6. **Mulch.** Whether you use newspaper, straw or grass clippings, using a mulch prevents any diseases lingering in the soil from splashing onto the plants. They also help to keep the soil moist longer and suppress weeds.
7. **Water at the base of the plant, not the leaves.** You will lose less water to evaporation if you irrigate low to the ground. Plus, the longer leaves are wet the more likely they are to get sick.
8. **Scout your plants.** Remove any diseased leaves, flowers, and fruit as soon as they are noticed.
9. **Fertilize correctly.** Fertilizing is important, but if you over fertilize you will end up with a lot of green growth and no fruit.
10. **Keep an eye on insects.** Most insect problems, if caught early, can be easily managed.

 Martin-Gatton  
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## GARDEN PARTY

### FUNDRAISER FOR OVARIAN CANCER SCREENING

Reservations beginning April 1st-May 15th at the Madison County Extension Office or by mail.  
Checks only made out to Madison County Extension Homemakers.

**MADISON COUNTY  
EXTENSION OFFICE  
230 DUNCANNON LANE  
RICHMOND KY 40475**

**June 3rd, 2025  
11 AM- 1 PM  
tickets  
\$20 per person**

**Speakers:**  
Dr. Hope Cottrill Gynecologic Oncology at Baptist Health  
Amanda Sears, Madison County Horticulture Agent: "Moon Gardens"

**Menu**  
**Entree Salads**  
Chicken Pasta Salad with Grapes  
Pasta & Fresh Vegetable Salad with Mustard Vinaigrette

**Additional Salads:**  
Raw Broccoli & Cauliflower  
Corn & Zucchini Salad  
Mixed Greens with Vinaigrette

**Dessert**  
Mixed Fruit Salad and variety of cookies

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## LIVING WITH ALPHA-GAL SYNDROME

JOIN UK EXTENSION FOR A WEBINAR BY ANR, HORT, FCS, & NEP AS WE COVER THE BASICS OF A.G.S., TICK BITE PREVENTION, AND DIET/LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE CONDITION.

**DATE:** 29TH MAY, 2025

**SPEAKER:** UK EXTENSION STAFF

**TIME:** 7Pm Eastern

**WEBINAR :**

Use the QR code or link to register. Those who register for the webinar will be emailed the Zoom login information directly.



For Questions contact:  
hunley.jessica@uky.edu  
(859) 823-4072

ukfcs.net/AgS

# Farmers' Market Updates!

## **Berea Farmers' Market**

The market will be moving back to its summer location at The Chestnut Street Pavilion at 635 Chestnut Street in Berea on April 5<sup>th</sup>. It's hours will be 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. For more information, check their website at <https://www.bereafarmersmarket.org/> or their Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/bereafarmersmarket>

## **Madison County Farmers' Market**

The Market will be joining Tasty Tuesdays this year in Irvine McDowell Park Starting April 1<sup>st</sup>. Opening day for the Market will be Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at White Oak Pond at 1238 Barnes Mill Rd, Richmond, KY 40475. For more info, check out their website at [mc-fm.org](http://mc-fm.org). You can also find them on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/MadisonKYFarmersMarket>

## **Scale Certification**

**Tuesday, April 8th at 4:00 to 6:00 pm**  
**Madison County Cooperative Extension Office**

Representatives from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) will be at the Madison County Cooperative Extension Office testing and certifying scales for anyone who sells at the Farmers' Markets.



Scales must be for legal trade and made for commercial use. A legal-for-trade scale will be marked with a serial number, model number and Class III designation on the identification plate or seal

For more information about scales, check out the Kentucky Farmer's Market Manual at [https://www.kyagr.com/marketing/documents/FM\\_Manual\\_and\\_Resource\\_Guide.pdf](https://www.kyagr.com/marketing/documents/FM_Manual_and_Resource_Guide.pdf)

If you plan on bringing a scale to be certified, call 859-623-4072 to let us know.

## **Produce Best Practices Training**

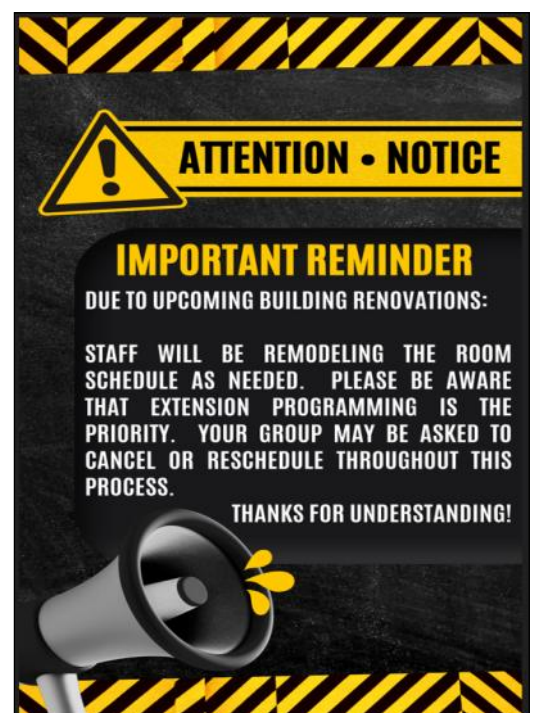
The Produce Best Practices Training (PBPT) covers basic food safety. This training will be offered twice. You need only attend one session. If you have gone through the training before, you don't need to do it again. The training takes about 45 minutes and consists of a video and quiz.

**Tuesday, April 8th at 5:00 pm**  
**Madison County Cooperative Extension Office**

or

**Via ZOOM on Monday, April 14 at 2:00 pm.**

If you plan to attend either session, please contact me and let me know 859-623-4072 or [amanda.sears@uky.edu](mailto:amanda.sears@uky.edu).



**ATTENTION • NOTICE**

**IMPORTANT REMINDER**

**DUE TO UPCOMING BUILDING RENOVATIONS:**

STAFF WILL BE REMODELING THE ROOM SCHEDULE AS NEEDED. PLEASE BE AWARE THAT EXTENSION PROGRAMMING IS THE PRIORITY. YOUR GROUP MAY BE ASKED TO CANCEL OR RESCHEDULE THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS.

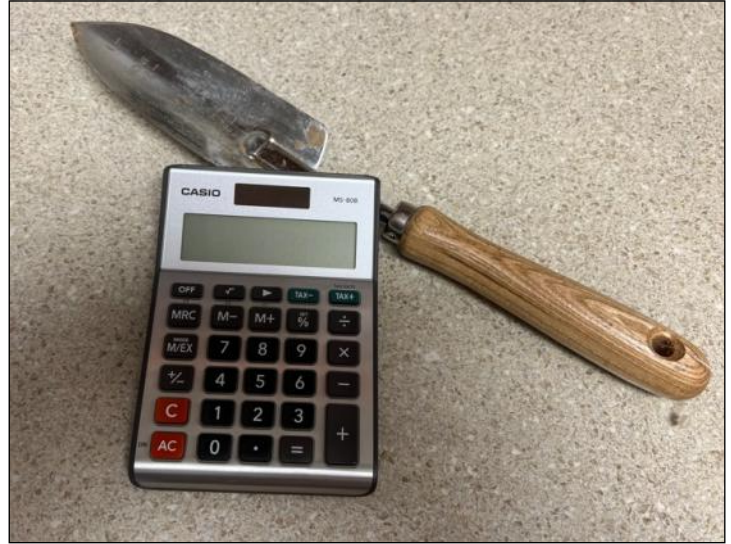
THANKS FOR UNDERSTANDING!

# Garden Math

How big is your garden? Your answer might be small or large. But since size is subjective it is often important to know the actual size of your garden.

Knowing the size of your garden or lawn is important. That information dictates how many plants can be sustained in that area, how much total fertilizer you would need, the amount of mulch to purchase or even how to interpret a soil test report.

When people hear the word math they tend to freeze up. But just knowing a few simple equations will make life so much easier!



## Calculating the size of your garden and lawn

- The size (area) of your garden is calculated by multiplying its length by its width. So if your garden is 20 feet long by 25 feet wide then the total area is 500 square feet
- To calculate the area of a circle, such as around a tree, you first have to determine the radius. The radius is the distance from the center of the circle to any point on its edge. Let's say the radius of the circle around my tree is 3 feet. The next step is to multiply the radius by itself. You would calculate 3 feet by 3 feet which is 9 square feet. Now times that number by 3.14. That number is 28.26. So the area around the tree is 28.26 square feet.
- Sometimes an area isn't a square or a circle. In those cases, try breaking the area into smaller components, then adding them all together.

## Calculating how much mulch you need

- To determine how much mulch is needed for a specific area, you will need to calculate cubic yards. Multiply the area times your depth of inches and divide by 324 square feet, which is one cubic yard, one inch deep. This will tell you how many cubic yards you will need. For example if you have 100 square feet and want to add 3 inches to the depth, multiply 100 by 3, and then divide by 324 to convert to cubic yards. You would need 0.93 yards of compost or round up to 1 yard.

## Determining size without measuring

- An acre is 43,560 square feet. If you know your lot is half of an acre then take 43,560 and divide by 2 which will give you 21,780 square feet. If you live on a quarter of an acre, then divide 43,560 square feet by 4 which will give you 10,890 square feet.
- What if your lot is 0.36 acres? Multiply 0.36 by 43,560 square feet. That tells us your acreage is 15,681.6 square feet.

# Here Today, Gone Tomorrow!

Do you remember the weeds that were growing in the lawn last spring? Probably not, but henbit, chickweed, and hairy bittercress are just a few of the unwanted, early spring surprises that are waiting for gardeners. These weeds are called winter annuals, which means they germinate in the fall and grow throughout the winter until they flower and disperse seeds in the spring. By the time weather warms up, these weeds disappear until cooler weather comes again. So give it time and this is one problem that will go away.

For more information, go to <https://extensiongardener.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/02/weeds-2020-winter-mountain-news/>



**Hairy  
Bittercress**



**Chickweed**



**Deadnettle**



**Henbit**

## Carpenter Bees

This spring you may have noticed very large fat looking bees hovering. These are carpenter bees. These bees are looking for a nesting site made of wood, preferably bare or unpainted redwood, cedar, cypress, or pine. This insect will create tunnels in wood and lay eggs inside. The entrance hole will be a perfect circle. The damage from this insect can be very destructive to a wood structure.

The best way to deter these bees is to paint all exposed wood surfaces. Wood stains and preservatives are less of a deterrent. Once tunnels have been established, puff Sevin dust into the hole. Aerosol sprays labeled for wasp and bee control are also effective. Leave the hole open for several days, and then plug the entrance hole with a piece of wooden dowel coated with carpenter's glue or wood putty.

While the carpenter bee is less aggressive than a wasp, females will sting if threatened. For that reason, it is best to treat for these insects at night or while wearing protective clothing.

For more information about carpenter bees go to <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef611>

