

Pay Dirt



HORTICULTURE
July 2024

Hello Horticulturalists!

It is hard to believe it is nearly time for the Madison County Fair! If you have never entered any items to be judged in the fair, you should consider doing so! There are several categories to enter, including things from the garden, honey, sewing, and art to name a few. For a full listing of categories and more information check out this link:

<https://madison.ca.uky.edu/sites/madison.ca.uky.edu/files/2024%20Fair-Exhibit%20Hall%20Open%20Division.pdf>.

Or go to our website, <https://madison.ca.uky.edu/>, scroll down to find a printable catalog. You may also come by our office for a hard copy.



Nonperishable items (handiwork, heritage skills, visual arts) can be dropped off at the Madison County Extension Office at 230 Duncannon Lane in Richmond on Monday July 22 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Perishable items (garden, horticulture, canning, honey, eggs, foods) can be brought to the Madison County Fairgrounds at 3237 Old Irvine Road in Richmond from 2:00 to 6:00 pm. They will be judged and displayed during the fair. Entries should be picked up on Saturday August 3, 2024.



New category at the fair this year! Eggs!

Eggs should be exhibited in a carton or container furnished by exhibitor and be a product of their farm. Please wipe off eggs, but **DO NOT RINSE**, as the bloom needs to remain intact for room temperature exhibition. There are a few different categories. Under poultry eggs there are three categories: white, brown and other colors. There is also a category for eggs other than chicken. We also have a category for children eight and under to enter. In each category we ask you bring half a dozen eggs. (see complete details at link above)

You might be wondering how a person judges something like vegetables. For each category you are asked to bring a certain number of items. For instance, you will need twelve green beans or three cucumbers or three squash. We ask for several examples to be entered so we can look at uniformity, which means all pieces should be the same level of ripeness, size and color. Within each category of vegetable there are things to look for. For example, green beans should have pods that are filled with small seeds that are 1/3 to 1/2 their mature size. For more information on what to look for when judging vegetables,

go to <https://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/4AH/4AH16PA/4AH16PA.pdf>

Sincerely,

Amanda Sears
Amanda Sears

County Extension Agent for Horticulture

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



Farmers' Markets Times and Locations

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 at the Carter Building on EKU'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>

HEAT EXHAUSTION OR **HEAT STROKE**

Faint or dizzy	Throbbing headache
Excessive sweating	No sweating
Cool, pale, clammy skin	Body temperature above 103° Red, hot, dry skin
Nausea or vomiting	Nausea or vomiting
Rapid, weak pulse	Rapid, strong pulse
Muscle cramps	May lose consciousness

CALL 9-1-1

- Get to a cooler, air conditioned place
- Drink water if fully conscious
- Take a cool shower or use cold compresses

- Take immediate action to cool the person until help arrives

Weather.gov/socialmedia
Weather.gov/heat

@SacramentoOES
SacramentoReady.org

Save the Date
August 13th @ 5Pm
FOOD PRESERVATION WORKSHOP
PRESSURE CANNING
WATER BATH
FREEZING & DEHYDRATING
more info coming soon!

Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
University of Kentucky

Slime Molds Look Weird But Are Harmless



No your neighbor's dog didn't puke in your landscaping. That is a slime mold, with the gross but accurate name of dog vomit slime mold. A slime mold is a fungus-like organism that thrives in a wet damp environment. They are very common on mulch. And although they look alarming, they are completely harmless. It will go away on its own, or you can break it up with a shovel or hoe or scoop it out and remove it from the area. For more information on slime molds, check out:

<https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/files/2015/12/DogVomitSlimeMold.pdf>

UK Launches New "Weather Alert" Smartphone App



In a move to boost weather-related awareness and agricultural decision-making, the University of Kentucky Ag Weather Center, in partnership with the UK Department of Biosystems and Ag Engineering, UK Center for Computational Sciences and the Southeastern Center for Agricultural Health and Injury Prevention (SCAHIP), has announced the launch of "Weather Alert." The smartphone application aims to serve both Kentucky's farming community and other residents by providing critical weather updates and forecasts.



"We know how tough it can be to keep up with the weather," said Matt Dixon, UK senior meteorologist with the Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. "That's why we made Weather Alert as simple and straightforward as possible. It doesn't have any frills, just the info you need."

The app's first phase, now complete, offers a user-friendly design with access to current and forecasted weather data, high-resolution radar and timely warning and watch alerts. Users can receive alerts tailored to their specific GPS location or other designated areas, enhancing their ability to make informed management and production decisions.

"As we move into the next phases, the app will incorporate advanced tools from the Ag Weather Center to provide a GPS-enabled, county-by-county agricultural weather product tailored to the needs of the Bluegrass State and beyond," Dixon said. "The focus will then shift towards enhancing disaster readiness capabilities in its subsequent phase, maintaining a county-centric approach." Weather Alert is available at no cost and free from advertisements, ensuring a seamless and efficient user experience.

"The Weather Alert app has provided real-time weather information for our extension agents, producers, families and communities to make decisions and be proactive with weather-related events," said Laura Stephenson, associate dean and director of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. "We encourage everyone, especially those in agricultural sectors, to download this free app to stay prepared and informed about weather conditions."

While primarily designed for Kentucky, Weather Alert can be used nationwide.

Weather Alert is available for download on iOS and Android, with plans to expand to other platforms.

To download via iOS, visit:
<https://apple.co/3wN3645>

A promotional poster for the 'Farm, Home, & Garden Expo'. The poster has a green background with a yellow circular graphic element. It features three circular inset photos: a farmer in a cap, a man and a child with a tray of tomatoes, and hands preparing food. The text reads: 'SAVE THE DATE! Madison County Extension Presents: FARM, HOME, & GARDEN EXPO Saturday, September 28th, 2024 from 10-2 at the Madison County Fairgrounds Food and Horticulture demonstrations, activities for children, opportunities to meet local farmers, and so much more!'. Logos for the University of Kentucky and the Extension Service are visible at the bottom.

Earwigs: The Bug With a Weird Butt

I have gone several years without seeing any earwigs. Then suddenly in the last two weeks they seem to be popping up everywhere! A few have been brought in for identification here at the office.

Earwigs are odd-looking insects. The name earwig refers to a small order of insects that have the scientific name of "Dermaptera," which translates to "skin wing." Earwigs tend to be about half an inch long and flattened, dark in color, and are most famous for their pincher-like organs at the rear of their body. Male earwigs have curved pinchers, whereas females have straighter pinchers. Their wings are covered with a leathery membrane and they are not strong flyers.

These insects are omnivores and scavengers which means they feed on a variety of things including living and dead plants, animal material and even insects such as aphids.

There are several myths surrounding these insects. Rumor has it they want to bore into your ear and brain. That luckily is false. In reality, earwigs are more of a problem when in the garden, rather than digging through your earwax. There are always some earwigs around; they can be in tree hollows, under paving stones, hiding under potted plants, and in wood piles.

Though rare, they can cause issues in the garden by eating and making holes in your plants. Opening up an ornamental area to allow for more air and sunlight can scare away earwig populations. Similarly, using a thinner layer of mulch in gardens and flower beds reduces harborage for them. Garden sanitation may also remove hiding spots.

Earwigs are attracted to excess moisture. So be sure to your landscape and garden have good drainage. As the season progresses and you irrigate, be sure to water more thoroughly and deeply but less often so the surface of the soil remains drier.

Some gardeners use traps to confirm the presence of earwigs and to suppress them. Traps can be as simple as loose newspapers or cardboard laid in the garden. Earwigs will hide in these during the day and then the whole paper or cardboard can be picked up and disposed of. Alternatively, using a sour cream container or tuna can, a baited trap can be constructed. In the evening, place the cans in the ground near damaged plants and fill the bottom with fish oil or vegetable oil with bacon grease to lure earwigs in. Some may drown but the traps can also be emptied into soapy water to kill any surviving earwigs.

I doubt earwigs will be a major issue. Like many insects, their population seems cyclical. While there seem to be an abundance this year, we may not see them again for a while.



Top photo is a male earwig, bottom is the female. (Photo: Whitney Cranshaw, Bugwood.org)

Hot Weather and Plants

Tomatoes, peppers, melons, squash, pumpkins, cucumbers and beans often drop their blossoms without setting fruit when day temperatures are above 90 F. There's not much you can do but wait for cooler temperatures to prevail. As more favorable conditions return, the plants will resume normal fruit set. Also, extremes in temperature and soil moisture often bring on blossom-end rot, a dry, leathery scarring of the blossom end of the fruit on crops, such as tomatoes, peppers and squash. Irrigating during dry periods and mulching to conserve soil moisture will help minimize this problem.

