AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Cooperative Extension Service

Bath County
Ag and Natural Resources

From the Ground Up

Bath County Agricultural Newsletter

March

2024

Robert Amburgey

Bath County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources

PROGRAMS AVAILABLE:

FOR MORE INFORMATION, YOU CAN CONTACT THE BATH COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE AT 674-6121

FREE SOIL TESTING

The Bath County Extension Office is offering free soil testing in 2024

Crop ground, gardens, lawns and fruit plantings

Bring your soil (at least a pint) to the office to have your soil tested and have a recommendation made for your particular crop.

BATH COUNTY CATTLEMAN MEETING

March 19, 6:30 p.m.—Extension Ag Center

2914 E. Hwy 60 | Owingsville, KY 40360 | P: 606-674-6121 | F: 606-674-6687 | bath.ca.uky.edu

Eight Tips To Get Your Home Garden Growing

Source: John Strang, UK Horticulture Extension Specialist

Springtime in Kentucky is a great time to get outside and enjoy the home garden. Every aspiring gardener should do a few things to have a successful season.

1. Plan your garden on paper before you begin. Think about the things you want to grow and when they will be ready to harvest. Draw it out on paper so you can get a visual of what the garden might look like at planting and harvesting times.
2. Select a good gardening site. You need to plan for a site that is in full sun, relatively level, well-drained, close to a water source and dries quickly from morning dew.
3. Prepare the soil. You may need to get a soil test and then add fertilizer as recommended.
4. Plan only as large a garden as you can easily maintain. Beginning gardeners often overplant and then fail because they can't keep up with the required tasks. You have to manage weeds and pests and apply water so your plants will be ready to harvest on time.
5. Grow vegetables that will produce the maximum amount of food in your available space.
6. Plant during the correct season for the crop you want to grow.
7. Choose varieties recommended for Kentucky.
8. Harvest vegetables at their proper stage of maturity. Consider how you will store them if you won't use them right away.

Consult the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Home Vegetable Gardening publication ID-128, available online at http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/id/id128/id128.pdf. For more information about gardening or other horticulture topics, contact the Bath County Cooperative Extension Service. .

Table 14. Earliest and latest planting dates in the garden in Kentucky. (If producing your own transplants, begin two to 12 weeks earlier than these listed dates. See Table 5.)

	Earliest Safe Planting Date			Latest Safe Planting Date[1]		
Crops	**Western**	**Central**	**Eastern**	**Eastern**	**Central**	**Western**
Asparagus (crowns)	Mar 10	Mar 15	Mar 20	(Spring only)		
Beans (snap)	Apr 10	Apr 25	May 1	July 15	July 25	Aug 1
Beans (lima)	Apr 15	May 1	May 10	June 15	June 20	July 1
Beets	Mar 10	Mar 15	Mar 20	Aug 1	Aug 10	Aug 15
Broccoli (plants)	Mar 30	Apr 5	Apr 10	July 15	Aug 1	Aug 15
B. Sprouts (plants)	Mar 30	Apr 5	Apr 10	July 1	July 15	Aug 1
Cabbage	Mar 15	Mar 25	Apr 1	July 1	July 15	Aug 1
Carrots	Mar 10	Mar 20	Apr 1	July 1	July 15	Aug 1
Cauliflower (plants)	Mar 30	Apr 5	Apr 10	July 15	July 20	Aug 5
Celery	Apr 1	Apr 5	Apr 10	June 15	July 1	July 15
Chard	Mar 15	Mar 20	Apr 1	June 15	July 15	Aug 1
Collards	Mar 1	Mar 10	Mar 15	Aug 15	Aug 20	Aug 30
Sweet Corn	Apr 10	Apr 20	May 1	June 15	July 10	July 20
Cucumbers	Apr 20	May 1	May 10	June 15	July 1	July 15
Eggplant (plants)	May 1	May 10	May 15	June 1	June 15	July 1
Kale	Mar 10	Mar 20	Apr 1	July 15	Aug 1	Aug 15
Kohlrabi	Mar 15	Mar 20	Mar 25	July 15	Aug 1	Aug 15
Lettuce (leaf)	Mar 15	Mar 25	Apr 1	Aug 1	Aug 15	Sept 1
Lettuce (bibb plants)	Mar 15	Mar 25	Apr 1	July 15	Aug 1	Aug 15
Lettuce (head plants)	Mar 15	Mar 25	Apr 1	July 1	July 15	Aug 1
Muskmelons	Apr 20	May 10	May 15	June 15	July 1	July 15
Okra	Apr 20	May 10	May 15	July 1	July 15	Aug 1
Onions (sets)	Mar 1	Mar 10	Mar 15	(Spring only)		
Onions (plants)	Mar 15	Mar 25	Apr 1	June 15	July 1	July 15
Onions (seed)	Mar 10	Mar 20	Apr 1	June 1	June 15	July 1
Parsley	Mar 10	Mar 20	Apr 1	July 15	Aug 1	Aug 15
Parsnips	Mar 10	Mar 20	Apr 1	June 1	June 15	July 1
Peas	Feb 20	Mar 1	Mar 15	(Spring only)		
Peppers (plants)	May 1	May 10	May 20	June 15	July 1	July 15
Irish Potatoes	Mar 15	Mar 15	Mar 20	June 15	July 1	July 15
Sweet Potatoes	May 1	May 10	May 20	June 1	June 10	June 15
Pumpkins	Apr 20	May 5	May 10	June 1	June 15	July 1
Radishes	Mar 1	Mar 10	Mar 15	Sept 1	Sept 15	Oct 1
Rhubarb (crowns)	Mar 1	Mar 10	Mar 15	(Spring only)		
Rutabaga	Mar 1	Mar 10	Mar 15	July 1	July 10	July 15
Southern Peas	Apr 20	May 5	May 10	June 15	July 1	July 15
Snow Peas	Feb 20	Mar 1	Mar 15	July 20	Aug 1	Aug 8
Spinach	Feb 15	Mar 1	Mar 10	Aug 15	Sept 1	Sept 15
Summer Squash	Apr 20	May 10	May 15	July 15	Aug 1	Aug 15
Tomatoes (plants)	Apr 20	May 5	May 15	June 1	June 15	July 1
Turnips	Mar 1	Mar 10	Mar 15	Aug 1	Aug 10	Aug 20
Watermelons	Apr 20	May 5	May 15	June 15	July 1	July 15
Winter Squash	Apr 20	May 10	May 15	June 15	July 1	July 15

1 Based on average of early maturing varieties. Mid-season and late-maturing varieties need to be planted 15 to 30 days earlier than latest date.

Table 10. Crops for the spring garden.

Vegetable	**Seeds**	**Transplants**	**Days to Maturity[1]**
Beets	x		55-60
Bibb lettuce	x	x	60-80
Broccoli		x	40-90
Brussels sprouts		x	80-90
Cabbage		x	60-100
Carrots	x		60-80
Cauliflower		x	50-100
Celery		x	100-130
Chinese cabbage	x	x	43-75
Collards	x		75-90
Endive	x	x	60-90
Kale	x	x	50-60
Kohlrabi	x		50-70
Leaf lettuce	x	x	40-50
Mustard greens	x		35-60
Onions[2]	x	x	40-120
Peas	x		60-80
Potatoes[3]			90-140
Radishes	x		20-30
Spinach	x		40-70
Swiss chard	x	x	55-60
Turnips	x		40-60
Turnip greens	x		30-50

TIPS FOR THE SPRING GARDEN

The spring garden contains cool season crops that are planted and harvested from late winter to late spring. The seed of some of these crops can be planted directly in the garden soil, while others will need to be started in a greenhouse or other suitable growing area and then transplanted to the garden.

Spring garden plants grow best with relatively cool air temperatures (50° to 65°F) and are raised either for their leaves, stems or flower buds. Peas are grown for their immature fruits. These crops produce their vegetative growth during spring's short, cool days. If they are planted too late in the spring, summer heat reduces their quality by forcing some to flower and form seeds (bolt), and others to develop off flavors, bitterness, poor texture and low yields.

Avoid these problems by planting spring vegetables as soon as the soil can be worked in the spring since light frost will not injure them. Plant either seeds or transplants, allowing the vegetables to reach edible maturity before hot summer days arrive.

Plant as soon as the soil is workable and dry enough so it does not form wet clods. Do not work the soil when it is wet. Doing so can ruin the texture for several years. Wait for the best conditions no matter how much the planting bug is nibbling at your fingers.

Do not use organic mulches in early spring. Rather, let as much sunlight as possible reach the soil to warm it. After May 1, you can use mulches to conserve soil moisture and help prevent weeds

Plant spring garden crops together so that you can plant fall vegetables in the same area later. When "double cropping," do not plant closely related vegetables in the same rows because of possible disease and insect carryover from the spring crop.

Time for Eastern Tent Caterpillar Egg Hatch

After spending about 9 months as eggs in masses on twigs of wild cherry and related trees, the first few tiny eastern tent caterpillars (ETC) of the season should soon be leaving their eggs. The onset of the single generation that occurs each year varies with the character of the season. Hatch was noted as early as March 14, 2012 during an unseasonably warm spring and as late as April 2, 2014 during one that was slow to develop.

Figure 1. Newly-hatched eastern tent caterpillars on an egg mass (Photo: Lee Townsend, UK)

The small but hardy worms are among the first insects to become active in spring. They are prepared to cope with erratic temperature swings. Egg hatch is relatively random and occurs over an extended period. This increases the chance for survival in case of late freezes. In addition, these resilient caterpillars will remain clustered on egg masses (Figure 1) to "wait-out" temperatures that are too low for feeding and development. ETC grow and develop when the temperature is above 37°F.

While it is possible to predict approximately when to expect tent caterpillar activity, there is no reliable information to track general population trends other than observing local activity and watching for tents to develop from mid-March through mid-April. You can find more information on this topic in the Extension publication, *Checking Eastern Tent Caterpillar Egg Masses* (EntFacts-449) available at the Bath County Extension Office.

By Lee Townsend, Extension Entomologist

Be Ready for the Alfalfa Weevil!

Alfalfa weevil is the key pest of the first cutting. Populations have been above normal some of the last few years, so it is important to be watchful this spring. High populations may last for 2 to 3 years before natural enemies, diseases, and climatic factors begin to take their toll.

Temperature drives insect development, so they may appear early or late, depending on how the spring unfolds. Fortunately, an alfalfa weevil degreeday model can indicate when to start checking fields for tip feeding (Figure 1), the signature damage of this key crop pest.

The table below shows the variation in degreeday accumulation that can occur in consecutive years, along with the predicted values for 2018.

Scouting for Alfalfa Weevil

The accumulation of 190 degreedays (base 48^{o}F) signals the time when early tip damage can appear in fields. Check degreeday accumulations for your area at the UK Ag Weather http://weather.uky.edu/dd.php

The second critical time to check for damage should occur when 225 degreedays have accumulated. At this time, spring-laid eggs should have begun to hatch. Pay particular attention to fields that had significant weevil damage last spring.

Weevil scouting procedure is outlined in *Alfalfa Weevil Sampling Program* (EntFact 127).

Year	East Rowan Co	Central Fayette Co	South Warren Co	West Caldwell Co
2015	7-Apr	9-Apr	1-Apr	2-Apr
2016	15-Mar	14-Mar	12-Mar	3-Mar
2018*	19-Mar	24-Mar	***25-Feb***	12-Mar

Table 1. Historical degreeday accumulations for 2015 and 2016 indicate the potential variation in initial appearance of tip feeding

Timely Tips
Dr. Les Anderson, Beef Extension Professor, University of Kentucky

Spring-Calving Cows

- Observe spring-calving cows closely. Check cows at least twice daily and first-calf heifers more frequently than that. Be ready to assist those not making progress after 1 to 2 hours of hard labor. Chilled calves should be dried and warmed as soon as possible.
- See that each calf gets colostrum within an hour of birth or administer colostrum (or a commercial colostrum replacement) with an esophageal feeder, if needed.
- Identify calves with eartags and/or tattoos while calves are young and easy to handle and record birthdate and Dam ID. Commercial male calves should be castrated and implanted as soon as possible. Registered calves should be weighed in the first 24 hours.
- Separate cows that have calved and ***increase their feed***. Energy supplementation to cows receiving hay is necessary to prepare them for rebreeding. For example, a 1250 lb cow giving 25 lb/day of milk would need about 25 lb of fescue hay and 5 lb of concentrate daily to maintain condition. If you need to go from a condition score of 4 to 5, you will need to add about 2 more lb of concentrate. Cows must be in good condition to conceive early in the upcoming breeding season.
- Watch for calf scours! If scours become a problem, move cows that have not calved to a clean pasture. Be prepared to give fluids to scouring calves that become dehydrated. Consult your veterinarian for advice and send fecal samples to diagnostic lab to determine which drug therapy will be most effective. Try to avoid feeding hay in excessively muddy areas to avoid contamination of the dams' udders.
- Continue grass tetany prevention. Be sure that the mineral mix contains high levels (~15%) of magnesium and that cows consume adequate amounts. You can feed the UK Beef IRM High Magnesium mineral.
- Plan to vaccinate calves for clostridial diseases (Blackleg, Malignant Edema) as soon as possible. You might choose to do this at the prebreeding working in late April or early May.

- Obtain yearling measurements on bulls and heifers this month (weight, height, pelvic area, scrotal circumference, ultrasound data, etc.) if needed for special sales. Heifers should be on target to be cycling by the start of the breeding season.
- Prepare bulls for the breeding season. Increase feed if necessary to have bulls in adequate condition for breeding. Obtain Breeding Soundness Evaluation (BSE) on bulls, even if they were checked last breeding season. Only use bulls that pass the BSE.

Finalize plans for your spring breeding program. Purchase new bulls at least 30 days before the breeding. Order semen now, if using artificial insemination.

Fall-Calving Cows

Bull(s) should be away from the cows now!

Plan to pregnancy check cows soon. You can also blood test for pregnancy as early as 30 days after bull removal.

Creep feed calves with grain, by-products, or high-quality forage. Calves will not make satisfactory gains on the dam's milk alone after about 4 mos. of age – since there isn't much pasture in March, fall calves need supplemental nutrition. Consider creep grazing on wheat pasture, if available. Calves can also be early weaned. Be sure that feed bunks are low enough that calves can eat with the cows.

Calves intended for feeders should be implanted.

Consider adding weight and selling your fall calves as "heavy" feeder calves. Keep them gaining!

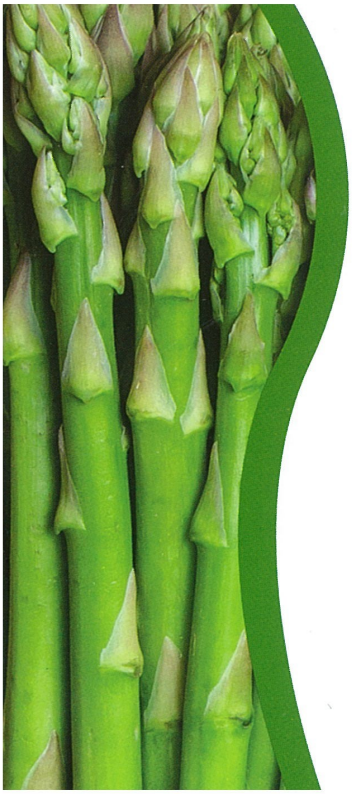
General

Repair fences, equipment, and handling facilities.

If you have a dry, sunny day, use chain-link harrow to spread manure in areas where cattle have overwintered. This may be done in conjunction with renovation.

Renovation and fertilization of pastures should be completed.

Start thistle control. They can be a severe problem in Kentucky pastures. Chemical con-



Asparagus Ham Quiche

1 pound fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into ½ inch pieces
1 cup, finely chopped ham
1 small finely chopped onion
2 (8 inch) unbaked pie shells
1 egg white, slightly beaten
2 cups shredded reduced fat cheddar cheese
4 large eggs
1 container (5.3 ounces) plain Greek yogurt
⅓ cup 1% milk
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper

Preheat oven to 400 F. **Place** asparagus in a steamer over 1 inch of boiling water and **cover**. **Cook** until tender but still firm, about 4-6 minutes. **Drain** and **cool**. **Place** ham and onion in a nonstick skillet and **cook** over medium heat until lightly browned. **Brush** pie shells with beaten egg white. **Spoon** the ham, onion and asparagus into pie shells, dividing evenly between the 2 shells. **Sprinkle** 1 cup shredded cheese over the mixture in each shell. In a separate bowl, **beat** together eggs, yogurt, milk, nutmeg, salt and pepper. **Pour** egg mixture over the top of the cheese, dividing evenly between the 2 shells. **Bake** uncovered in a preheated oven until firm 25-30 minutes. Allow to cool approximately 20 minutes before cutting.

Yield: 16 slices

Nutritional Analysis: 200 calories, 11 g fat, 4.5 g saturated fat, 65 mg cholesterol, 370 mg sodium, 14 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 3 g sugars, 10 g protein.

Plate it up! Kentucky Proud

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers' market, or roadside stand.

Kentucky Asparagus

SEASON: April through May.

NUTRITION FACTS: Asparagus is a good source of vitamin A and folate. One-half cup of fresh, steamed asparagus has 22 calories, 2 grams of protein, and 4 grams of carbohydrate.

SELECTION: Choose bright green stalks with tightly closed tips. The most tender stalks are apple green in color with purple-tinged tips.

STORAGE: Fresh asparagus will keep 1-2 weeks in the refrigerator. Refrigerate upright with cut ends in water or with cut ends wrapped in wet paper towels in a plastic bag.

PREPARATION: One pound of asparagus will yield 4 one-half cup servings, about 6 spears per serving. Wash asparagus thoroughly in cool, running water. Eat asparagus raw or lightly boil, steam, stir-fry, or grill. Overcooked asparagus will be mushy. Try seasoning it with herbs, butter, or Parmesan cheese.

Source: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

KENTUCKY ASPARAGUS
Kentucky Proud Project
County Extension Agents for Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Kentucky, Dietetics and Human Nutrition students
March 2015

Mulch, Mold, & Fungi

by John Strang & Paul Vincelli

Mulch can be beneficial in many ways on plant beds, around foundation shrubs and other gardening locations in your yard, but mold can threaten its benefits.

In landscape beds and gardens, mulch helps control weeds, prevent extreme soil temperature fluctuation, decrease water evaporation and improve drainage. Mulch also reduces mower and string trimmer damage on shrubs and trees by suppressing vegetation near their trunks. As it decomposes, mulch produces organic materials to improve soil and otherwise benefit plants.

You need to periodically re-apply mulch to continually get these benefits.

Nuisance fungi occasionally grow on mulch. They include shotgun fungus, slime molds, stinkhorns, earthstars and toadstools.

The shotgun fungus shoots masses of tiny black spore structures onto adjacent surfaces such as vehicles and home siding.

Slime molds are more unsightly than harmful. They don't cause plant diseases and aren't parasitic. Slime mold spores usually appear from late spring to fall. Abundant wet weather stimulates above-ground appearance of these fungi that initially appear slimy but quickly become dry and powdery when converting into spore masses. You'll often see slime molds quickly appear and usually disappear in one to two weeks. They tend to reproduce in the same location every year.

Fungicide use isn't recommended because slime molds aren't harmful.

When mulch hasn't been composted, it might contain fungi that cause plant diseases. This situation is rare, however, and only occurs in non-composted mulch. Plant material fertility problems can arise when fungi in decomposing mulch remove nitrogen from the soil.

Insufficient moisture problems can develop when fungi permeate thick layers of dry mulch creating a surface that's difficult for water to penetrate.

To gain the most benefit, you should use composted mulch with a high bark content and little wood material. Avoid finely ground, woody products that haven't been composted.

If you buy fresh wood chips from a tree-maintenance firm, add water to the chips and allow them to partially compost for about six weeks. If this material doesn't have fresh leaves, you can add some nitrogen to speed up the process. Avoid using fresh or partially composted wood chips near the house foundation because they can provide a food source for termites.

Immediately after you put mulch around plants or trees, soak it with water to enhance bacterial activity to initiate decomposition. Periodically wet mulch during the growing season.

Avoid soured mulch because it tends to injure plants. You can spot sour mulch by its acrid odor.