



# BARREN COUNTY'S AVID HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER

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**HORTICULTURE**

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*Kristin's Comments:*



**Hello Horticulturists!** Let's be honest. You probably don't consider fall clean-up to be one of your favorite garden activities. In fact, cleaning up the yard is one of those things that's very easy to "let slide."

Maybe that's because the benefits aren't as obvious or immediate as, say, planting or even pulling weeds. But believe it or not, cleaning up your garden can be just as valuable as planning or maintaining it.

By spending a few weekends this month putting your garden to bed, you'll actually be making a big investment in next year's garden. After all, we all want next year's garden to be bigger and better than this year's!

Right now, your property has a wealth of compostables—leaves, grass clippings, and spent plants are yours for the raking. Shredded leaves also make an excellent winter mulch! You can use these abundant, though messy, resources to your advantage.

What's more, removing spent plants and fallen fruit from the garden does much more than make your property look tidy—it goes a long way toward preventing disease and insect problems each year. In this newsletter, I have provided information on ways you can clean up your garden this fall, pointed out tips on how to care for poinsettias during the holiday season, and also provided a truly "sweet" recipe that will make a great addition to any holiday meal!

*Kristin Goodin*

**Kristin Goodin**  
 County Extension Agent for Horticulture

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**Quote:**  
 Autumn the bringer of fruit, has poured out her riches, and soon sluggish winter returns.  
 —Horace (65-8)

**\*\*Note:** If you or a friend would like to receive our horticulture newsletter, please contact our office so that we can add your name to our mailing list.

## Fall Clean-Up for an Early Green-Up



In preparing your soil for winter, first pull up all dead and unproductive plants and place them on top of the soil to be tilled under, or in the compost heap. Remove any diseased or insect-infested

plant material that may shelter overwintering stages of disease and insect pests. Leaving this plant material in the garden provides an inoculum of diseases and insects which will become active in the spring and add to garden pest problems.

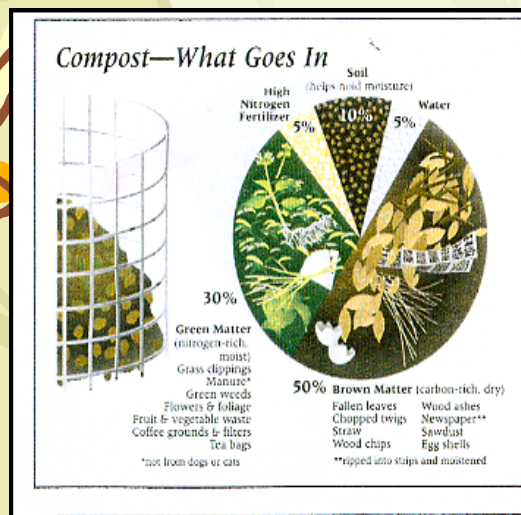
After clean-up, add **compost** to the garden. Compost contains highly nutritious, decomposed plant material and beneficial organisms, and is an excellent soil-builder. By spreading compost and other wastes on the soil and plowing them in, you are adding nutrients or "organic matter" to the soil for next year's crop. The beneficial insects and microorganisms in the compost will help integrate the compost into the soil, and the humus will improve soil structure.

Don't overlook other excellent sources of organic material available during the fall. Leaves are abundant, and neighbors will usually be glad to give their leaves to you. Put some on the garden now and store some for next year's mulch. Leaves will mat if applied

too thickly and will not decompose quickly. You can help spread the breakdown of leaves by running a lawn mower back and forth over the pile. Put the shredded leaves directly onto the garden or compost them.

If you wait until spring to add organic material to the garden, it may not have time to decompose and add its valuable nutrients to the soil by the time you are ready to plant and you may have to delay planting to a later date. Hot, or very fresh, manure can also burn young seedlings. By adding these materials in the fall, you give them plenty of time to decompose and blend into the soil before planting time. If you don't have enough organic material for the entire garden, try to cover those areas that you want especially rich for next summer's crop.

Clean-up of tools and equipment is another important practice related to the garden which should not be ignored in the fall. Proper clean-up of tools now will leave them in top shape and ready to use when spring arrives. Clean, oil, and mend all hand tools. Repaint handles or identification marks that have faded over the summer. Sharpen all blades and remove any rust. Power tools should be cleaned of all plant material and dirt. Replace worn spark plugs, oil all necessary parts, and sharpen blades. Store all tools in their proper place indoors, never outdoors where they will rust over the winter.



### COMPOST—WHAT DOESN'T GO IN

<b>Meat scraps, bones or fat</b>	Attracts rodents and other pests.
<b>Diseased plant debris</b>	Can spread garden diseases.
<b>Pesticide-treated plants or wood</b>	May kill beneficial organisms.
<b>Noxious weeds or weeds that have set seed</b>	Can spread into garden.
<b>Charcoal ashes</b>	Much too alkaline.
<b>Pet droppings</b>	Often contain parasites.

# Christmas Wreath Program

Just in time for the Holidays

November 19th  
6 - 8:00pm  
Barren County Extension Office

or

November 20th  
10 - Noon  
Warren County Extension Office

**Hurry! We still  
have 3 spots  
open! Call and  
reserve your spot  
before it's too late!  
Tons of fun!**

Class Fee: \$20  
(limit one wreath per person)

**SPACE IS LIMITED RSVP before November 5th**  
651-3818 ~ 842-1681

Join us in learning how to make your own Christmas Wreath from fresh greenery and your own professional looking bow. Your spot will be held at the time your class fee is paid. Please make checks payable to the Warren County Soil Test.

**For More Information Contact:**

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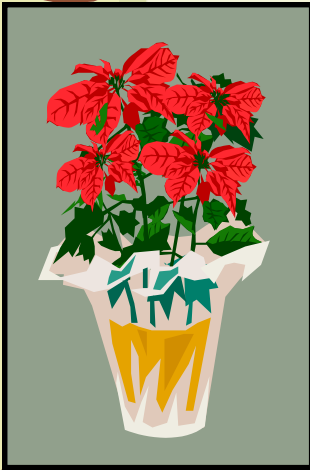
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## Tips on How to Care for Poinsettias during the Holidays



- When purchasing your poinsettia, look for a plant with plenty of green leaves down the bottom of the stems.
- Select a plant that has flower bracts and leaves that look fresh, not wrinkled, withered, curled, or yellow. Lack of color means the plant was sold too early or not grown correctly.
- The true flowers – the green parts in the center of the bracts – should be tightly clustered into a bud - called *cyathia*. Plants showing yellow pollen and sap will have the least amount of display life and will not last long indoors. Avoid a plant where these have dropped and all that is left are the colorful bracts.
- Be sure to have the plant wrapped before you take it outside to your car. Plants exposed to rapid temperature changes drop their leaves, especially in cold windy weather. Handle the plants carefully in transit - it is very easy to break stems and leaves if care is not used.
- Poinsettias need bright light to keep them looking good, but it doesn't have to be direct sunlight. Avoid dark locations - Poinsettias stay freshest in a cool room. If kept too hot, the leaves may suddenly drop. Night temperatures of 60-65°F and day temperatures of 70-75 °F are ideal. Water the plant when the top of the soil feels dry, and don't let it sit in water constantly.

Source: University of Florida Extension

### **HORT SHORTS:**

November 19- Christmas Wreath Program @ Barren County Extension Office (6:00-8:00 pm)

November 21- Barren County Extension Homemakers' Annual Holiday Bazaar- Extension Office (8:00-2:00pm)

November 26-27- Thanksgiving Holiday – Office Closed

December 8 – Commercial Vegetable Marketing Meeting @ Warren County Extension Office (1:00 pm)

December 24-31- Christmas Holiday – Office Closed

January 1- New Year's Day – Office Closed

January 4-5 – Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference to be held @ the Embassy Suites in Lexington, KY

# Gardening Calendar

## November

- Finish cleanup—gather leaves for the compost pile or for winter mulch on beds.
- *Don't* miss your last chance to plant spring-blooming bulbs, such as daffodils and tulips.
- Continue to thin lettuce and spinach.
- Mulch crops you want to overwinter with a thick layer of straw.
- Harvest frost-sweetened brussels sprouts, carrots, parsnips, cabbage, and kale.
- *Don't* cut back ornamental grasses; they add beauty to the landscape and provide shelter for overwintering beneficials and wildlife.
- Cut back other perennials (except spring bloomers, roses, and mums) to a few inches above soil level.

## December

- Keep straw struggled around any crops still in the garden.
- If using a coldframe to grow greens through winter, rig a plastic tunnel over the frame for extra warmth.
- After the holidays, remove the branches from your cut Christmas tree and lay them over perennials and fall-planted pansies.
- Divide overgrown Boston ferns: Cut the rootball in half with a sharp knife, then repot.
- Refill Bird feeders as needed.

## Recipe Corner: Kentucky Sweet Potato Pie

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup baking mix (reduced fat, if available)
- 1/4 cup cornmeal mix
- 1/3 cup water
- 2 cups sweet potato, mashed (1 large baked potato or 18 oz. can, drained)
- 1 can (14 oz.) sweetened condensed milk (skim, if available)
- 2 eggs
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a small bowl, combine baking mix, cornmeal mix, and water. Beat with spoon 20 times. Coat hands with oil or vegetable spray and pat dough with hands into a greased pie pan to form crust. Set aside. In a medium bowl, stir together sweet potato, sweetened condensed milk, eggs, and cinnamon. Pour filling into crust. Bake pie in preheated oven for 45 minutes. Yield: 8 servings.

*Nutritional Analysis: 275 calories, 2 g fiber, 3 g fat, 56 mg cholesterol, 182 mg calcium, 270 mg sodium.*



*Source: UK Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program  
Kentucky Recipe Cards*