

**DECEMBER, 2011  
HAPPY  
HOLIDAYS!**



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## Next Year's Home Garden Starts Now!

# By The Yard...

HORTICULTURE



You may be delighted to put gardening behind you for the season, but fall is the time to manage and prevent disease in next year's garden. Summer crops may still be standing, even after being killed by heavy frosts and cold temperatures. At this time, you can take

preemptive measures to help ensure a successful and bountiful garden next season.

Cleaning things up in the fall can help cut back on disease in the following harvest season. Many pathogens responsible for diseases commonly seen in home gardens can overwinter or survive between crops on equipment and plant residue. Here are tips to prevent the spread of disease and be ready for the next growing season:

- ◆ Remove old plant debris and trash from the garden or greenhouse and burn or bury it. Thoroughly clean tools and equipment and sanitize with disinfectant. (This is also a good time to oil shovels and other blades to prevent rust.)
- ◆ Turn dead plant matter under as soon as you are finished with the garden. Several plant pathogens can survive in these residues during the winter, and they can threaten next year's crops. Plowing them under now allows more time for plant matter to break down and the pathogens to die.

◆ Rotation is another powerful tool that should be implemented to prevent disease. Rotation slows the buildup of pathogens in the vegetable garden, preventing problems in the long run. For best results, avoid planting the same or closely related crop species in the same place more than once every three years.

◆ Even though spring is months away, start thinking about what you'll grow and where it will go in the garden. Making notes of variety, placement and yield from the past season while it is fresh in your mind is especially useful, since it is easy to forget the details over the long winter months.

◆ Start mulling over the varieties you are likely to plant. Resistant varieties can significantly reduce or eliminate damage from disease and can allow a gardener to lower (or possibly eliminate) use of fungicide for a particular crop. Do keep in mind that resistant varieties do not eliminate disease. Consult your seed supplier or catalog for more information.

A garden does take planning and careful consideration, but successful disease management begins with the few simple steps outlined above. If you start now, you'll have built a strong foundation for a successful disease management program in your home garden.

For more information, please contact the Fayette County Cooperative Extension Service.

*Source: Kenny Seebold, University of Kentucky, Extension Plant Pathologist*

**Fayette  
County**

## Quick Tips for December

✿ Broadleaf evergreens will benefit from an application of Wilt-pruf or other anti-desiccant this month. Make sure evergreens are well watered.

✿ Outdoor pond inhabitants may encounter problems if the pond freezes over and gases cannot escape. A basketball floated on the surface will often keep a small spot from freezing.



✿ If you haven't already, empty and store flower pots for the season. Many pots, particularly clay and ceramic, will be damaged by moisture and freezing temperatures.

✿ Plan gardens and place seed orders. Many popular items and new offerings will sell out first.



✿ Use fallen leaves to mulch your vegetable garden. These can be tilled in next spring to add valuable organic matter. They will also protect the soil by preventing erosion, compaction, and to a

degree, inhibit cool season weeds from germinating. Water is often as limited a resource for birds as food. If you enjoy feeding and watching birds try a bird bath de-icer or electric pet bowl. See if you don't attract more feathered friends than before.

✿ Plant Paper White Narcissus bulbs. They may not bloom in time for the holidays but will be a welcome sight and scent in the dreary days of January.



✿ Your landscape can be a great source of materials for holiday decorating. Light pruning will generally not harm your plants in the winter and you may be surprised at the variety in your own yard. Don't just consider evergreens, use ornamental grasses, pine cones, fruits, berries, even mosses in your decorating,



## Can you help?



When thinking of donations at this time of year please consider donating your new or gently used Khaki Pants to the William Wells Brown Elementary School and The Lexington Day Treatment Center. Many of the student's families from both these schools have a limited income and any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

The Fayette County Cooperative Extension Office is collecting these donations beginning December 1, 2011 and will be continued year round. We are accepting all sizes from Children through Adult. The office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, with staff available through lunch hours as well.

Happy Holidays to you and your family and thank you on behalf of William Wells Elementary, Lexington Day Treatment and Fayette County Cooperative Extension Service.

## Black Walnut and Fruit Salad

1 small head of cauliflower  
1 medium Granny Smith apple, cored and cubed  
1 medium Red Delicious apple, cored and cubed  
2 cups seedless red grapes

1 cup black walnuts, chopped  
1 cup fat free plain yogurt or mayonnaise  
2 tsp. lemon juice



Crumble cauliflower florets into small bite-size pieces in a large bowl. Core and cube both apples, add to bowl. Add two cups whole seedless red grapes. Add 1 cup black walnuts. Combine yogurt (or mayonnaise) and lemon juice. Pour over cauliflower, fruit, and walnuts. Toss until well coated. Serve immediately or chill until ready to serve.

## Keep Trees Fresh for the Holidays



Memories of Christmases past are often wrapped in the scent of a freshly cut pine tree. It's the aroma that welcomes you when you walk in the door at the end of a long winter's day or

mingles with the scent of coffee to wake you on a chilly morning.

Some have traded in those scent-wrapped memories for the perceived convenience of an artificial tree, thinking there's less mess, as well as fewer hazards with the plastic tree. In reality, a real tree is easy to care for and will stay fresh in your home if a few simple steps are taken to care for it properly.

One thing to remember is that, being a crop plant, a real Christmas tree is a renewable resource. For every tree that is harvested, another is planted in its place. And at the end of the holidays, it can be recycled. An artificial tree made from non-biodegradable plastics and, in some cases, hazardous metals such as lead, will end up lying in a landfill for a very long time.

There are a variety of specimens and sizes available in real trees. In Kentucky, Christmas tree farmers typically plant white pine and Scots (or Scotch) pine. The white pine retains its needles, which have a soft, flexible texture. The trees are often sheared into a pyramidal shape, though this often makes the tree very dense, which makes it difficult to hang large ornaments.

The Scots pine's needles are shorter than those of the white pine and the color can vary from bright green to dark green to some trees that exhibit more bluish tones. The species retains its needles well and resists drying.

Douglas and Fraser firs are also popular choices at local tree lots. The Douglas has dark green or blue green needles that are shorter and softer than pine needles. Shearing gives it a denser form than the Fraser, which is a naturally pyramid-shaped tree, with even shorter needles than the Douglas. Both trees have good needle retention and a pleasant scent.

For the freshest tree, the ideal choice is one you cut

yourself from a tree farm. The Kentucky Christmas Tree Association has a list of member tree farms on their Web site, <http://www.kychristmastrees.com>. (See enclosed article for local tree farms included in this month's newsletter.)

If buying a tree from a tree lot, there are two simple tests to check for freshness. Bend one of the tree's green needles. If the needle snaps rather than bends, the tree is dry. If the tree is a reasonable size, lift it a foot or so and thump the base of the trunk on the ground. If green needles fall out, the tree is too dry. If you see brown needles fall out, don't worry. Those are last year's needles and are naturally shed by the tree.

If you plan to cut your own tree from a local tree farm, don't be in a rush to do it early in the season. Cutting it later rather than earlier will insure that the tree stays fresh throughout the entire holiday season. However, if you plan to purchase a tree from a tree lot, it might be better to purchase that tree early for the purpose of getting it in water and out of drying weather conditions as soon as possible.

Transporting a tree from either farm or lot can expose it to drying conditions. Ask to have the tree tied with twine or placed in a sleeve of plastic netting. This will allow less surface area to be exposed to the elements during the trip.

Once you get your lot-purchased tree home, it's a good idea to cut off one or two inches from the bottom of the trunk. Place the tree in a bucket of warm water and store it away from drying sun or wind, preferably in a garage or enclosed sun porch. Gradually move the tree into the house, to minimize shock from a drastic change in temperature.

In the house, be careful to place your tree away from sources of heat such as fireplaces, stoves, heat registers or radiators. Keeping the thermostat set at a lower temperature will help to prevent the tree from drying out too quickly. Keep the tree well-watered. A fresh tree can easily drink a gallon or more of water each day, so using a tree-stand that holds at least that much water will make your job easier. family's Christmas.

*Continue on page 7*

## Keep Trees Fresh for the Holidays (continued)



After the holiday season, remember to recycle your cut Christmas tree. Recycled trees can have many uses. Placed in an outside sheltered location with peanut buttered pine cones, and strings of popcorn and cranberries, your tree can serve as a good winter habitat for wildlife. They can also be used in some areas of the state as fish habitat in lakes. Check with your

local city government office to find out if your town has a recycling service that chips trees into mulch (See insert for LFUCG policy). Putting the tree into the trash should always be the last resort.

The picture of a real tree swathed in strands of lights and treasured ornaments is often the quintessential image of Christmas. With a little care and forethought, it can add to your family's memories of a joyous Christmas.

Contact your Fayette County Extension office for more information on using live or cut trees for your family's Christmas.

### Christmas Tree Recycling

#### Christmas Tree Recycling - Urban County Government Collection:

Christmas trees can be recycled with yard waste. Put trees on the curb for normal collection day. Make sure all ornaments and tinsel are removed from the tree. Contact LexCall 3-1-1, or 425-2255 if Christmas Tree is not collected on your normal collection day.

Apartment and businesses should call LexCall for information on Christmas tree pickup.

#### Christmas Tree Recycling - Private Collection:

The Division of Streets & Roads will pick up Christmas Trees from those residents who do not have UCG Waste Management garbage collection.

## Local Christmas Tree Farms

### Baldwin Farms:

#### Directions:

From Main St. in Richmond, travel 3 1/2 miles on Tates Creek Rd. Then turn left at Baldwin Farm Sign.

#### Contact:

Margery Baldwin  
1113 Tates Creek Rd.  
Richmond, KY 40475  
(859) 582-5785

[Baldwinfarmsky.com](http://Baldwinfarmsky.com)

#### Dates Open:

Pumpkin Festival Sept. 24 - Oct. 31  
Every day after Thanksgiving until December 23rd from 10:00am until dark.

#### Additional Info:

\*Norway Spruce, Blue Spruce, White Spruce, and White Pine available for choose and cut (saws provided)  
\*Norway Spruce, Blue Spruce,



White Spruce, White Pine and Hemlock trees available as live, replantable trees

\*All trees (except Fraser Fir) up to 8 ft. are \$40; trees 8 ft. and taller are \$40 plus \$10 per foot over 8 ft.

\*Precut Fraser Fir and White Pine available (priced individually)

\*We will have a number of smaller, table-top Fraser Fir available for \$25 ea.. \*Also available are leafing trees (Oaks, Maples, Red Bud, Mimosa, Ash, etc.) which are live and replantable

\*Please visit our gift shop for some free hot chocolate and candy canes, or purchase a wreath, some garland, swags, tree stand, and other products to make managing your tree easy. Also in the gift shop are Ky Gift Baskets, featuring Baldwin Farm salsa, honey, and other gift items

### Barker's Christmas Tree Farm

**Directions:** From the intersection of Man O War and Polo Club Blvd., turn into Glenegales Subdiviion on Polo Club Blvd. Follow it to the end. Turn left on Deer Haven. The farm is 1/2 mile the right.

Or:

From the Intersection of Man O War and Todds Rd., take Todds Road (away from town). Stay on Todds Road for 1.8 miles. As soon as you cross over the I-75 bridge, take an immediate left onto Deer Haven. Travel down Deer Haven approx. 3/4 mile, the farm is on the right.

*Barker's Farm and other farms continue on page 8*

**Barker's Christmas Tree Farm, Continued:**



**Contact:**  
Dale Barker  
1470 Deer Haven Lane  
Lexington, KY 40515  
(859) 223-4354 or (859) 263-7661  
**Email:** [dalebarker@insightbb.com](mailto:dalebarker@insightbb.com)  
**Webpage:**  
[www.barkerschristmastreefarm.com](http://www.barkerschristmastreefarm.com)

**Dates Open:**  
Friday after Thanksgiving through December 18th  
Friday after Thanksgiving 9am - 6pm  
Monday - Friday 3pm - 6pm  
Saturday 9am - 6pm  
Sunday 10am - 6pm

**Additional Info:**  
We offer Choose and Cut Scotch and White Pine. We also have a limited number of Douglas Fir and Canaan Fir for choose and cut. Wreaths are made fresh from the farm in 3 sizes. The freshest pre-cut Fraser Fir are also available, as well as the best tree stands on the market. Saws are available. Trees are shaken to remove loose needles. We'll take your picture with your tree and help you load it.

**Christmas Memories Tree Farm**

**Directions:**  
The farm is located at 4890 Keene Road on the Northwest side of Firebrook subdivision, 1.7 miles from Man O War/Harrodsburg Road intersection. Turn off Harrodsburg Road onto Military Road at the South Elkhorn light near the bridge. At the top of the hill, bear to the left on Keene Road (Highway 1267). Travel .4 of a mile and the trees will be on the left. Remember, we are still in Fayette County, slightly less than a mile from Harrodsburg Road.

**Contact:**  
Bill & Fredda Moody



4890 Keene Rd.  
Lexington, KY 40513  
(859) 223-1140  
[wgfsmoody@aol.com](mailto:wgfsmoody@aol.com)  
**Dates Open:**  
Open weekends only December 3rd & 4th, December 10th & 11th, December 17th & 18th  
Saturdays 9:00am until dark; Sundays 2:00pm until dark  
**Additional Info:**  
Christmas Memories Tree Farm offers White Pine, Scotch Pine, and Douglas Fir (limited number) and Canaan Fir. We have several tall White Pines and Canaan Firs (8-12 ft.). Our farm is small (approx. 2 acres) but we pride ourselves on having quality trees. We are family owned and operated and have been in business since 1986 and have sold trees since 1992. We can provide you with a saw, twine, and help you load your tree.

**Kovalic's Christmas Tree Farms**

**Directions:**  
From Lexington - I 64 exit 96 bear right on 627, to left at first stop light (Veterans Memorial Parkway, Bypass 1958). Travel one mile to highway 1960 or Ecton Rd, turn right. Go 1/4 mile to tree farm on left.

**Contact:**  
Peter P. Kovalic  
487 Ecton Rd.  
Winchester, KY 40391  
(859) 744-2930  
[jacqkov1@aol.com](mailto:jacqkov1@aol.com)



**Dates Open:**  
Friday after Thanksgiving through December 23rd.  
Weekdays 10:00am - 7:00pm  
Sunday 1:00pm - 6:00pm  
**Additional Info:**  
**Choose and Cut:** White Pine, Scots Pine, Canaan Fir and Norway Spruce .

**Live (replantable):** White Pine, Norway Spruce, White Spruce, Blue

Spruce, Canaan Fir, Concolor Fir, Red Pine .

**Precut Trees:** White Pine, Scots Pine, Fraser Fir, Canaan Fir. Wreaths, Garland and other greenery for sale. Saws Provided  
Trees shaken to remove loose needles. Trees Bales Restrooms available, Gift Shop , Cider, cookies & candy

**Yuletide Tree Farm**

**Location:**  
3925 Old Boonesboro Rd.  
859.744-9068  
Farm Owners: Jim & Michael Fehr  
**Directions:**  
I-64 to exit 94, Winchester Bypass go to Hwy 627 South, turn right at the 1st stop light (Old Boonesboro Rd) - 1.3 miles to the farm.

**Contact:**  
James & Michael Fehr  
(859) 744-9068  
51 Skylark Dr.  
Winchester, KY 40391  
Email: [yuletidetreefarm@yahoo.com](mailto:yuletidetreefarm@yahoo.com)



**Dates of Operation:**  
November 25th - December 20th  
Sunday - Friday 1:00pm - 5:30pm  
Saturday 9:00am - 5:30pm  
**Additional Information:**  
**Choose and Cut Trees:** White Pine, Douglas Fir  
**Live Replantable Trees:** Blue Spruce, Norway Spruce, White Pine.  
**Precut Trees:** White Pine and Douglas Fir.  
Wreaths, Garland and Greens for sale. Saws and tree shaking available. Also restrooms and a gift shop are available. Free candy canes .

For a Christmas tree farms near you, visit : <http://www.kychristmastreefarms.com/> or call KTCA at (606) 876-3423, or contact the Fayette County Extension at (859) 257-5582.

## Holiday Plant Care

Floral symbols of the upcoming holiday season are appearing all over town. Poinsettias, cacti, ornamental peppers and other seasonal plants are putting on a spectacular show in stores and garden centers.

You can maintain beautiful plants long after the holidays by selecting high-quality specimens and properly caring for them.



**Poinsettias** are the most popular potted plant with annual sales exceeding 70 million. These plants are available in many colors. In addition to the traditional reds, poinsettias come in white, pink, yellow, marbled and speckled. These spectacular plant colors are not flowers; instead, they are modified leaves, often called "bracts." Actual flowers are the small, yellow blossoms in the center of the bracts.

There is an advantage to the fact that the attractive part isn't a true flower because most flowers are short-lived. However, poinsettia bracts are very long-lasting, providing a nice decorative plant for the ever-extending holiday season.

When buying poinsettias, select plants with abundant dark green foliage all the way down the stems. Remember that varieties with lighter-colored or mottled bracts typically also have lighter green foliage. Bracts should be well developed with little pollen on the flowers. Look for durable plants with stiff stems, good bract and leaf retention and absence of wilting, breaking or drooping. Plants should be attractive and balanced from all sides.

Plants with pale green, yellow or fallen leaves generally have a root disease, were over-watered, had an excessive dry period, or received insufficient fertilizer.

Low temperatures, even for a brief period, can damage leaves and bracts. So if you're transporting when outside temperatures are below 35 degrees Fahrenheit, be sure the plant is well wrapped when transporting it. When you get home, promptly remove the protective sleeve to prevent a downward bending of leaf stems.

Since poinsettias thrive in at least six hours of indirect, natural light daily, put plants in a southern, eastern or western facing window when you get home. Don't let any part touch the cold windowpane because this might injure the plant part. Keep plants out of cold drafts and away from excessive heat or dry air to

prolong vibrant colors and prevent premature leaf drop.

An ideal daytime temperature is between 67 and 70 degrees F. One of the best things you can do for a poinsettia is to drop the temperature by about 10 degrees at night.

Always remove damaged or diseased leaves.

Poinsettias require moderately moist soil, but should not be over-watered as this can make plants quickly succumb to several soil-borne diseases. Check plant water needs daily by putting your finger into the soil down to the middle knuckle. If you feel moisture, wait another day to check again before watering.

Never let the plant stand in water. Pour off water that accumulates in the saucer or dish under the pot and remove the pot from the cellophane cover when watering.

Fertilize the poinsettia every couple of weeks with an ordinary houseplant food.



**The Christmas cactus** makes a wonderful gift because it's easy to grow and is an attractive plant even when not flowering. It prefers rich, well-drained soil and requires bright sunlight, a south window is excellent, and moderate moisture levels. To ensure flowering, keep the plant quite dry, unfertilized and at cooler temperatures (about 55 degrees F) if possible. Once flower buds are evident, return to normal watering, but not fertilizer.

Your cactus will reward you at Christmastime with blossoms up to two-inches long in colors ranging from a deep purple to pale salmon.

Remove the spent cactus booms as they fade and apply a houseplant fertilizer when blooming is complete.



**Ornamental (Christmas) peppers** are a relative newcomer to the holiday plant gift list and are becoming a popular home and office decoration. Their fruits are a colorful holiday red that will remain at peak color for one to two months. The fruit will be brighter and last longer if you provide bright light, mild temperatures (65 to 70 degrees F) and moist soil. Use a soluble

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# Holiday Plant Care (continues)

fertilizer weekly.

Beware that Christmas peppers sometimes are extremely hot and can cause burning, redness and skin irritation. The extent of irritation depends on how much capsaicin, an irritating compound that provides the pungent odor, is in the pepper and how long it contacted the skin.

To prevent possible skin problems, wear gloves when working with Christmas peppers. If you develop skin irritation, wash your hands well in warm water and soap. However, some capsaicin might remain on your hands for several hours. Washing your hands in

alcohol or soaking them in vegetable oil might help remove some of the capsaicin., but the best approach is to prevent exposure by wearing gloves.

Since the Christmas pepper is an annual, it won't bloom again next year so it's best to discard the plant after fruit drop.

For more information on holiday plant care, contact your Fayette County Cooperative Extension Service.

*Sources: Richard Durham and University of Kentucky and land grant horticulture departments*

## Mistletoe: Tree Thief, Holiday Tradition



Once autumn leaves have fallen, mistletoe becomes highly visible on large trees throughout Kentucky. Phoradendron, the scientific name for this parasitic plant, means tree thief. You can commonly find these small leafy plants on twigs and branches of many hardwood species in the southern two-thirds of the United States. Mistletoes extract water, mineral elements and food from their host tree by way of a parasite nutrient-uptake organ; hence the name, tree thief.

Mistletoes' use in holiday traditions has roots in pagan times. Its parasitic nature and the fact that it appears to be alive while the host tree appears dead, led some to believe mistletoe mysteriously held the life of the tree during winter. Druids harvested mistletoe in a special rite, never letting the plant touch the ground, then hung it in their homes for good luck.

Our modern-day mistletoe holiday tradition likely originates with a mythological Norse goddess of love and beauty. Frigga, whose son was restored from possible death by mistletoe, was thought to bestow a kiss on anyone walking beneath one. Today, when two people meet under the mistletoe, tradition suggests they must exchange a kiss for good luck.

Phoradendron, the most common mistletoe growing in Kentucky, resembles another species that grows in Europe. It has simple, fleshy green leaves arranged oppositely on the stem. Stems are short and more

branched than the host tree, so mistletoe often appears as a spherical bunch of dense vegetation. These bunches may be a foot or two in diameter and are located high in the tree for better sunlight exposure. Mistletoe berries range from white to straw-colored to light red. Birds eat the fruits, reportedly toxic to human and animals, then deposit the seeds onto branches where they germinate and penetrate the host tree.

Since birds tend to roost in open-grown trees, mistletoes do not appear as frequently in forest trees. Generally, they do not cause much damage, although they can be harmful to a tree already under stress. If mistletoe appears on landscape trees or other trees in the urban forest, you can control it through pruning.

For more information about tree parasites and diseases, contact the Fayette County Cooperative Extension Service.

*Source Source: John Hartman, University of Kentucky Plant Pathology Professor*

**Fayette County Extension Office will be closed  
on Monday, December 26th, 2011  
through Monday, January 2nd, 2012,  
in observance of the season.  
We wish you and your families and safe and  
Happy Holiday!**