

October 2011



Fayette County Cooperative Extension Service  
1140 Red Mile Place  
Lexington, KY 40504-1172  
(859) 257-5582  
Fax: (859) 254-3697  
ces.ca.uky.edu/fayette

# By The Yard...

HORTICULTURE

Fayette  
County

## Growing Garlic Garlic, it's not just for keeping away vampires!

Garlic is actually a wonderful addition to your garden and can be used in a variety of dishes. Planting garlic now will lead to a summer harvest of bulbs to use in cooking.



Garlic is a biennial which belongs to the lily family. It is usually divided into two groups, hardneck or top set garlic and softneck garlic. Hardneck garlic produces flower stalks and bulbils (or small bulbs) at the top of the stalk. The stalk is also located in the center of the cloves. Softneck garlic usually does not produce bulbils but develops larger bulbs with more cloves per bulb. The cloves which make up the mature garlic bulb are used for propagation. Hardneck garlic cultivars usually do better in colder climates and produce larger cloves that are easier to peel. Softneck garlic keeps longer in storage than hardneck garlic. They are also softer and easier to braid. Elephant garlic is not a true garlic but more of a pungent leek which has a milder flavor compared to garlic. This leek bulb resembles garlic with very large cloves.

In Kentucky, it is best to plant garlic in October and early November. Planting and care of garlic is similar to onions, but many gardeners believe garlic is more exacting in its requirements. An open, sunny location with a fertile, well-drained soil that is high in organic matter is desirable. Add good air circulation and garlic is relatively carefree in this type of site.

Thrips (very small winged insects) and onion maggots are insects to watch for while the bulbs are growing. Bulb rots may be a problem if the soil is not well-drained.

Plant individual cloves from a bulb, root end

down, and cover with 2 to 3 inches of well-drained soil. Allow 6 inches between sets. Once planted, apply a mulch such as straw to provide winter protection. This also will conserve moisture in the summer. Just be sure that the straw is not keeping the area too moist during periods of wet, cool weather. If it is, then pull the mulch back to let the soil dry and warm as long as the temperatures are not predicted to be near freezing.

Fertilizer is usually applied beginning in the spring as sidedressing every two weeks until bulbs begin to form. Garlic is day length sensitive and begins to bulb around the summer solstice.

During the growing season garlic needs 1 inch of water per week. Stop watering about two weeks before harvest. With hardneck garlic, remove any flowering stalks that form to increase bulb size.

For using and harvesting, many gardeners enjoy eating the green shoots and leaves of garlic plants. However, cutting them continuously inhibits bulb formation. By early June, flower stalks may appear and should be cut back and discarded so the plant's energies can be directed toward root and bulb formation. Bulbs begin to mature or ripen in mid-July and early August, and the leaves become yellow and the leaf tips turn brown. When the leaves have yellowed, lift the plants and dry the bulbs in a partly shaded storage area for about two weeks. After drying, the tops may be removed, braided, or tied and then hung in a cool, well-ventilated spot. Dampness invites rotting. Properly dried garlic should last for 6-7 months.

Source: Annette Heisdorffer, Daviess County



## October Featured Plant: Dallas Blues Switch Grass



For many years the ornamental grass scene was dominated by varieties of Miscanthus. In recent years some of the more unusual varieties have found favor. Switch grass (*Panicum*) is actually a North American native and once covered thousands of acres of prairie including parts of Kentucky. Of course selections have been made over the years for

showy attributes and this has resulted in many garden worthy selections. My favorite of the Switch grasses (I love them all) is 'Dallas Blues'.

Dallas blues is very upright and has beautiful frosty blue foliage the color of blue spruces. The leaf blades are slightly wider than most of the panicums and make a magnificent display long before the actual show that occurs in late summer. The growth habit is upright

and not as arching as many ornamental grasses. In August the flower stalks emerge and are beautiful with an airy yet dense football shape. Initially silvery tan the heads grow larger and larger until they are nearly 18" in length. The color changes to a darker, almost charcoal, smoky color. The show continues to improve as cool temperatures begin to change the blue foliage to shades of plum and maroon in the late autumn. The plant remains an attractive straw color throughout much of the winter until it finally begins to lose its tidy appearance to winter snow and ice storms. This grass could not be easier to grow. Give it full sun in most any soil and it will thrive.

The plant is very drought tolerant once established and should be cut to the ground in spring like most grasses. Mature height is 5-6'.

If you want a striking ornamental grass reminiscent of our once majestic prairies consider *Panicum* 'Dallas Blues'. You won't be disappointed.

## Composting Puts Fall Leaves to Good Use



As we begin to approach the fall season, many folks obtain large amounts of leaves and other yard wastes that need to be removed from their property.

Composting is a practice that is beneficial to the environment and at the same time allows property owners to get rid of these different yard wastes in an effective manner.

When you compost leaves, other yard debris and kitchen waste, a microbial process converts these items into a more usable organic amendment. You can use finished compost to improve soil structure in gardens and landscape beds. Compost also helps the soil hold nutrients and reduces erosion and water runoff.

You also can use finished compost as a mulch to help reduce weed problems, moderate soil temperatures

and conserve soil moisture.

Composting yard and kitchen wastes also reduces the volume of material going into landfills. Yard and kitchen wastes comprise more than 20 percent of the waste generated each year. By composting these wastes, you help reduce disposal costs and extend the usefulness of landfills. This increases the return on your tax dollars.

Weeds free of seed heads and residues like vines and pruned limbs make a good addition to a compost pile. It is not necessary to remove grass clippings if you follow proper lawn management practices. If you decide to compost grass clippings, mix them with other materials like leaves or brush.

You also can compost many kitchen scraps such as fruit and vegetable peelings and cores, coffee grounds, tea bags and crushed eggshells. However, avoid cooked foods, meat, bones, fat or dairy products because they attract animals.

*(continue on page 3)*

## Composting Puts Fall Leaves to Good Use (con't.)

Put your compost pile on a well-drained site that will benefit from nutrients running off the pile. If you are just starting to compost, prepare the pile in layers of materials. This will ensure the proper mixing of materials to aid decomposition. It is best to alternate layers of green leafy material with brush or other woody material. If your compost material contains no soil, sprinkle a little soil or a compost starter in each layer to inoculate the pile with microorganisms.

Ideally, the pile should be one cubic yard (three by three by three feet).

If you are only going to compost tree leaves, layering might not be necessary; simply add leaves as you collect them. When leaves are dry, add moisture.

Since dead leaves do not have adequate nitrogen for rapid decomposition, mix them with grass clippings or add high-nitrogen fertilizer to speed up breakdown. For example, add five ounces (one-half cup) of fertilizer containing 10 percent nitrogen analysis for each 20 gallons of compressed leaves.

To ensure good aeration and drainage, occasionally put down a three-inch layer of coarse plant material like small twigs or chopped corn stalks, or use a wooden pallet.

The composting process can be completed in one to two months if materials are shredded, turned to provide good aeration, kept moist and supplied with nitrogen and other materials that cater to compost-promoting microorganisms. Otherwise, it may require 12 months.

Periodically turn the compost pile, say once a month or when the center of the pile is noticeably hot. This will help microbes more efficiently break down wastes. The more often you aerate, the more quickly you will have useable compost. Compost is useable when it fails to heat up after turning.

Adequate moisture is essential for microbial activity.

Water the pile so it is damp but does not remain soggy. Your compost pile should have the moisture content of a well-squeezed sponge, so you can squeeze a few drops of water from a handful of material. It is especially important to supply water during dry periods and when you add leaves and other dry materials to the compost pile.

If the pile emits an ammonia smell, it is too wet or packed too tightly for oxygen circulation. Turn the heap and add some coarse material such as small twigs to increase air space.



Compost needs a balanced diet of carbon and nitrogen to break down effectively. Microbes that break down waste need a certain amount of nitrogen for metabolism and growth. Although tree leaves are relatively high in nitrogen, adding nitrogen fertilizer or high-nitrogen components will accent decomposition. Grass clippings generally are high in nitrogen and will enhance decomposition when mixed properly with leaves. Other organic sources of nitrogen are poultry litter, manure and blood meal.

Compost is one of nature's best mulches and soil amendments, and you can use it instead of

commercial fertilizers. Best of all, compost is cheap. You can make it without spending a cent. Using compost improves soil structure, texture, and aeration and increases the soil's water-holding capacity. Composting improves both your property as well as environment.

For more information on composting and other environmental topics, contact the Fayette County Cooperative Extension Service.

*Source: Rick Durham, University of Kentucky, Horticulture*

## Storing Tender Bulbs

Dig tender bulbs in the fall before the soil freezes. There are basically two ways to store bulbs over winter. Some bulbs, like gladiolus and ismenes, can be cured as you would onions and stored dry. To do this, dig bulbs and remove excess soil and foliage. Spread bulbs out in a dry area that has plenty of air circulation, and allow bulbs to cure. After curing, remove dried foliage or excess stems. Dusting with a fungicide is not absolutely necessary but can be done at this time. Store bulbs in a container that allows adequate air circulation (potato sack, paper bag with holes punched in it). Place the container in an area with good air circulation and where the temperature will not drop below freezing.



Other tender bulbs, such as dahlias, do not tolerate dry storage because the tubers desiccate. Dig these plants before the first expected killing frost, and remove all excess foliage and soil. You can hose off the tubers to remove soil as long as you allow them to dry adequately before storing them. Generally, division is not necessary at this time. Cover tubers with dry peat moss, vermiculite, or any other material that allows some air circulation. This covering reduces desiccation. Boxes or paper bags are possible containers. These containers should also be stored where temperatures will not drop below freezing. Both storage methods require periodic inspections throughout the winter to make sure none of the bulbs have begun to rot. Discard bulbs that show signs of rotting.

*Source: Sharon S. Bale, University of Kentucky, Extension Floriculture Specialist*

## Fall Pansies Give Profusion of Colors Next Spring



Fall-planted pansies have larger, more abundant blooms than spring-planted pansies. One reason is that pansies grown as winter annuals have time to develop a good root system in the fall and early winter.

Set plants out in early October, generally before the 15th, so root systems will become established before winter temperatures freeze plants to the ground.

University of Kentucky variety trials demonstrate the superior performance of fall-planted pansies compared to those set out in the spring.

Although fall-planted pansies have some blooms in the fall and winter, they put on a real show in the spring. Plants emerge with multiple stems and usually are at least twice as large as those planted in the spring.

Fall-planted pansies normally begin to flower in March or earlier, depending on late winter weather. It's not unusual for plants to have 35 to 50 flowers blooming at one time throughout May.

Spring-planted pansies do tolerate summer heat better than those planted in the fall. However, they grow vigorously for only a short time and their floral

display, size and number of blooms are mediocre when compared to fall-planted pansies.

Another advantage of fall-planted pansies is that they give us a profusion of color when few plants produce a colorful floral display in the spring garden.

The early spring floral display is usually limited to flowering bulbs, such as tulips, daffodils and crocus. Pansies put on an equally spectacular display, providing color and combinations of color not found in other spring flowers. Pansies are well adapted to cool spring weather and remain attractive the entire spring season.

Following these gardening tips will ensure that you have a bountiful supply of colorful pansy blooms next spring.

- Plant pansies in full sun, either a southern exposure or out in the open.
- Use a tilled bed rich in organic matter with a mulch of wood or bark chips.
- Apply a general purpose, liquid fertilizer when plants begin to emerge in the spring. Use a black plastic mulch or plant pansies against a southern wall for earlier blooms.

For more information, contact your County Cooperative Extension Service.

*Source: Amy Aldenderfer, County Extension Agent for Horticulture*

## October Quick Tips

- Make it a point to be thorough in cleaning up any diseased plants. Many diseases overwinter in plant debris. Diseased perennials and annuals should be removed from the garden in the fall. Similarly, any trees that have had disease problems should have all the leaves raked and removed



from the garden to lessen the chance of infection next year.

- October is prime bulb planting time. Plant tulips, daffodils, crocus and other spring favorites now for a beautiful early display.

- Feeding lawns is best done in the late fall. The end of this month and all of November are great times to fertilize your turf.

- House plants should be treated as necessary for insects before coming indoors for the winter.

- Store any pots or containers that may be damaged by freezing temperatures.

- October is an excellent time to plant most trees and shrubs. Make sure to plant at the proper depth. The root flare of trees (the point where the roots branch off the trunk) should be at soil level.

- Avoid planting broadleaf evergreens in the late fall as winter injury may result. Hollies, Boxwoods, Magnolias and others are best planted in the spring.

- Needled evergreens drop their old needles in the fall.

Yellowing, browning, and subsequent needle fall is normal if it is only occurring in the interior of the plant.



- Many insects find their way indoors in the fall. Most are not harmful, just annoying. Your vacuum cleaner is an easy way to get rid of an occasional insect.

- Make notes of your gardening successes and failures for reference next year. It is never too early to start planning next year's garden.

- After the first hard freeze, remove non-hardy annuals and cut back perennials to near ground level. The removed plant material can be placed in the compost bin.

- Clean up around fruit trees by raking leaves and removing dried fruit. This will help control several

diseases and insects.

- Remove and burn bagworm cases from evergreens. The cases contain eggs which will hatch in spring to produce next year's population.

- Check tree twigs for egg cases of eastern tent caterpillar. The egg cases are dark and shiny, they look like



someone has dabbed lacquer around the stem. They usually occur on branches that are about pencil size in diameter. They will break off the branch easily if rubbed with the hand or fingers.

- Many insects can also be found in dead leaves in and around the garden and landscape. Getting rid of those dead tomato vines, bean bushes, and squash vines and fruit will lessen the chance that these pests will be able to overwinter in the garden and so will lessen the incidence of pest problems in the spring.

- Fall is the best time to apply fertilizer to woody plants. It is best to wait until the plants are dormant so don't apply fertilizer before late October. Dividing the fertilizer application into two or three parts is a good idea. Apply 1/3 in late October, 1/3 in November, and the final 1/3 in December. Altogether you should apply 2-3 pound of Nitrogen per 1000 square feet.

- Don't forget to water trees and shrubs during fall and winter. Continue watering (in the absence of adequate rainfall) until the soil freezes. This is particularly true for evergreens since they continue to lose water through their leaves in winter. Keep the soil under your woody plants moist, not wet.

- A layer of mulch applied at this time of year can have many beneficial effects in the home landscape. Mulch moderates the normal freeze/thaw cycle than can force many herbaceous perennial plants out of the ground. Mulch will also help conserve soil moisture and will serve as an insulating agent during severely cold temperatures.

- **Upcoming "Gardener's Toolbox" Classes:**  
**Tuesday, October 11th ~ Compost: Black Gold,** cost \$10.00 and **Tuesday, October 25th ~ Create Your Own Terrarium** cost \$25.00. Both classes will be held at the Fayette County Extension Office, 1140 Red Mile Place at 6:30 p.m. (See enclosed registration form enclosed for more information)

*Gardeners' Lecture Series  
Brought to you by:  
Fayette County  
Master Gardeners/  
Friends of The Arboretum  
"Secrets of the Garden  
Revealed"  
The Myths, Mysteries and  
Miracles of our Garden  
Favorites  
Thursday,  
October 27, 2011  
7 P.M.*

**LOCATION:**

Fayette County Extension Office  
1140 Red Mile Road  
Lexington, KY 40504

**ADMISSION:** Master Gardeners/Arboretum  
Friends \$10

General Public \$12  
Students with I.D. \$5

Inquiries: The Arboretum, 859-257-6955  
Fayette County Extension Service, 859-257-5582

[www.ca.uky.edu/arboretum](http://www.ca.uky.edu/arboretum)  
[ces.ca.uky.edu/Fayette](http://ces.ca.uky.edu/Fayette)

Ky. Landscape Architect Board awards one hour  
of continuing education credit

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9  
2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY**  
**& the  
SEDENTARY  
PARADE!**  
**FUN FOR THE  
WHOLE FAMILY!**  
Join us on Sunday,  
October 9 | 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
for a day of family fun activities,  
music, food, and the Sedentary  
Parade!  
Parade line up begins at  
1:30 p.m. in Centerpointe Park.  
For more information visit  
[getthehealthylexington.org](http://getthehealthylexington.org) or  
call 859.244.1944.

- 2nd Sunday Bike Ride
- Live Music
- Kids' City
- Great Food
- Non-Profit Village
- Merchant Booths

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UNIVERSITY OF  
KENTUCKY  
School of Human Environmental Sciences  
Family & Consumer Sciences Extension

**2S**  
2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY

Let's show the Nation  
we are **NOT** the most sedentary city  
in the United States!

Like Us On

## Recipe: Broccoli Salad with Creamy Feta Dressing

1/2 cup reduced-fat feta cheese, crumbled  
1/2 cup non-fat plain yogurt  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

3 cups broccoli, chopped  
1 can (7 ounces) chick peas, drained and rinsed  
1/2 cup red bell pepper, chopped  
1/2 cup red onion, chopped

Mix feta, yogurt, lemon juice, garlic and pepper in a medium bowl. Add broccoli, chickpeas, red pepper and onion. Toss to coat. Serve at room temperature or chilled. Yield: 5, 1 cup servings.

Nutritional Analysis: 100 calories, 3 g fat, 7 g protein, 13 g carbohydrate, 5 mg cholesterol, 260 mg sodium.

Source: University of Kentucky, "Plate It Up"



# 2011 Gardener's Toolbox Classes

Fayette County Cooperative Extension Service  
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**Sign up now for the remaining Gardener's Toolbox classes now.**



**Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> Compost: Black Gold!** - Demonstration of how to make a one, two or three-partition compost bin using free pallets and minimal tools and materials. Learn how to start and maintain a compost pile, and use compost in your garden. Master Gardener, Linda Corridoni, will bring materials to start a compost pile. She will provide handouts with bin instructions and sources for free pallets. Composting information based on HO-75--Home Composting: A Guide to Managing Organic Waste. Cost \$10.00 Fayette County Extension Office at 6:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup> ~ Create Your Own Terrarium** - Terrariums have become popular once again and Master Gardener, Christine Parsons, will lead this workshop to help you create one. Since terrariums are enclosed systems they do not require the routine watering associated with other houseplants. Why not have your own lazy man's indoor garden? We will provide information and tips about how to ensure success. We will also have all the supplies needed so everyone can assemble their own. Cost **\$25.00** Fayette County Extension Office at 6:30 p.m. **Class is limited to 30.**



**Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup> ~ Plant Propagation** - This "hands on class" will cover the various methods of making new plants. Master Gardeners, Clark Edwards and Smith Mitchell, will discuss seeds, division, layering, grafting, and vegetative cuttings. Each class member will construct a simple windowsill propagation chamber for rooting cuttings. We will provide a variety of materials you can use to take cuttings for rooting at home, both woody landscape plants and tropical houseplants. Cost **\$15.00** Fayette County Extension Office at 6:30 p.m.

**Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> ~ Holiday Greenery from the Home Landscape** - You can create beautiful holiday wreaths, garlands, swags and centerpieces using materials from your own yard. Jamie Dockery will demonstrate several items and everyone will prepare a door swag to take home with fresh greens from common plants. We will share many tips and tricks along the way. Cost **\$20.00** Fayette County Extension Office at 6:30 p.m. **Class is limited to 30.**



Oct. 11th: Compost: Black Gold, \$10.00	Oct. 25th: Create Your Own Terrarium, \$25.00
Nov. 8th: Plant Propagation, \$15.00	Dec. 8th: Holiday Greenery, \$20.00

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Total # \_\_\_\_\_ (Six Class or more: 20% discount) Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please remember that many of the classes are limited, please register early to assure a spot in the class.

May we suggest that you call the Fayette County Extension, (859) 257-5582, to inquire about the status of classes before registering.

**Many classes are limited in size and we can not allow "un-paid guests" to attend.**

Please make check payable to:  
 Fayette County Master Gardener Association  
 and mail:  
 Gardeners Toolbox/Fayette County Extension Center  
 1140 Red Mile Place  
 Lexington, KY 40504-1172

**Fayette GARDENER'S TOOLBOX 2011**

**HORTICULTURE**