

September 2009



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

## The Fall Garden

Gardening doesn't have to end with your summer grown crops since some vegetables are suitable for late summer planting. Plan to follow your spring and summer gardens with a fall garden so that you can have fresh produce well into the winter.

Plant crops according to your planting plan, grouping plants to be sure short ones are not shaded by tall ones. To encourage good germination, fill each seed furrow with water and let it soak in. Keep the soil moist until seeds have germinated.

Fall vegetables are harvested after early September. They consist of two types:

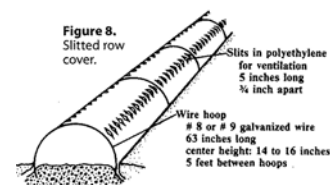
1. the last succession plantings of warm season crops, such as corn and bush beans,
2. cool season crops which grow well during the cool fall days and withstand frost.

Note that cool nights slow growth, so crops take longer to mature in the fall (and spring) than in the summer. Keep this slower pace in mind when you check seed catalogs for the average days to maturity. Some of the best quality vegetables are produced during fall's warm days and cool nights. These environmental conditions add sugar to sweet corn and cole crops, and crispness to carrots.

Vegetables can be successfully seeded or transplanted for fall harvest. Often, you will want several seeding dates to extend the harvest over a longer time. This table gives the latest dates for either seeding or transplanting as indicated.

### Extending the Growing Season

Polyethylene row covers have been used for a long time to help vegetables grow and ripen early in the spring. However, Kentucky's springs are often too warm to benefit much from early season row covers. During the fall, on the other hand, these covers might prove useful to gardeners wishing to extend the harvest of frost sensitive crops (tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers). The row cover's objective is to trap heat and protect the crop from cold night temperatures which might deform fruit or kill the plant. Many times in Kentucky, a period of mild weather will follow the first killing frost. If you protect frost sensitive vegetables at critical times in the fall you could extend the harvest season by several weeks. Gardeners have a choice of self ventilating (slitted or perforated covers) or floating row covers. The slitted and perforated types are available in clear and opaque polyethylene and require wire hoops for support. To construct such tunnels after planting, push hoops (made from no. 9 galvanized wire) into the ground, 3 to 5 feet apart (Figure 8). Then when frost is predicted, cover them with clear polyethylene. Bury the edges of the plastic in the ground.



Source: Home Vegetable Gardening Publication, ID-128

# Pest Patrol - High Activity Time For The Lone Star Tick



The lone star tick is our most troublesome species based upon its frequency of attack on humans and animals; this is the time of year when they are at their peak. Anyone accidentally moving thru

clusters of tiny, hungry seed ticks can face a miserable few days. Female ticks lay hundreds to thousands of eggs in clusters on the ground. The masses of 6-legged larval (or seed) ticks that emerge from these eggs climb vegetation and wait with front legs extended to latch onto a passing human or animal. They will wander on the skin for a time (in some cases up to 24 hours) before attaching to feed. Barbed mouthparts are inserted into the skin and a cement is secreted to hold ticks in place while they engorge, a process that can take from 2 hours to 7 days; then they drop from the host. Ticks inject an anesthetic material that makes the actual bite painless. However, the bite site may be red and painful for 1 to 2 weeks after the tick has fed.

Frequent, careful inspections are essential for those who are in situations that expose themselves to ticks. Here are some tips: 1) Look for movement of very small, freckle-like spots on clothing and skin – they may be seed ticks. The larger nymphs and adults are

much easier to see. Wearing light clothing, especially pants, will make them easier to spot. 2) Avoid overgrown areas along trail edges or woods – ticks are more likely to occur there. 3) Use repellents or clothing treatments with permethrin when in areas where ticks are known to be active.

Ticks usually wander on people for some time before attaching. Regular inspections will help to catch them before this occurs. Also, it appears that infected ticks must feed for 24 to 48 hours before disease transmission occurs. More information on the lone star tick in Kentucky is available in <http://www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/dept/entfacts.asp>.



*Lone star tick larvae (seed ticks) are tiny brown spots on pant leg. (Logan Miller photo).*

*Source: Lee Townsend, Extension Entomologist, University of Kentucky College of*

## Giant Beetles of Summer - Hercules Beetles



*Male Hercules Beetle*

The eastern Hercules beetle (*Dynastes tityus*) has a large (2" to 2-1/2" long) greenish-gray to black body. Males have a large distinctive horn on the head and sometimes are called rhinoceros

beetles; females do not have the horn. The adults are attracted to lights during mid- to late summer and will eat overripe fruit.

Hercules beetle larvae are white grubs that feed on decaying plant material, especially logs, stumps, dead leaves, and rotten fruit. They may spend two years in

this stage. The grubs are a food source for skunks, raccoons, and other mammals.



*Female Eastern Hercules Beetle (B. Wallin, 2003)*

*Source: Lee Townsend, Extension Entomologist, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture*

# September Quick Tips

- Add fall blooming perennials to your garden. Good candidates Include: Japanese anemone, Hardy ageratum, non-invasive Goldenrods, Hardy begonia, Toad lilies, Asters, Montauk daisy, Perennial mums, Joe pye weed, and a wide variety of ornamental grasses. Make sure to keep plants well watered and try to have them planted early enough to allow establishment before freezing weather.



- Continue to seed and renovate lawns this month. Good seed to soil contact is critical. Consider renting a power seeder if you are working with a large area.

- Order spring flowering bulbs now or shop garden centers for the best selection. Bulbs may be planted right away or stored in a cool place for later planting.



- Plant cover crops in the vegetable garden after plants have been harvested. These can be tilled in next spring to add valuable organic matter. Or consider killing the plants and rolling flat to serve as an effective mulch you can plant through- excellent organic weed control. For more information on varieties go to <http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/id/id113/>

[id113.pdf#search=%22fall%20cover%20crops%20ky%22](http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/id/id113/)

- Begin early garden cleanup with the removal of diseased plant materials. This will help prevent problems next year. Healthy plants can be left for late fall or early spring clean up.

- Plant fall vegetables. You still have time to direct sow radishes, turnips, spinach and lettuces. You can still succeed with transplants of broccoli, and fast maturing cabbage varieties if planted right away.



- Plant trees and shrubs. Fall is a wonderful time to plant woody ornamentals. Try to allow plants time to establish before the onset of severe weather.

- Divide peonies, iris, and day-lilies through the middle of this month.



- Visit a local orchard or farmer's market for apples, pears, fall raspberries and other seasonal treats.



## Henkle's Herbs and Heirlooms Stuffed Stuffer Tomatoes

6 Stuffer Tomatoes  
1 Tablespoon Kosher Salt  
1 box of Couscous

1 cup of Feta Cheese  
¼ cup Pine Nuts

Stuffer tomatoes are hollow inside, look similar to bell peppers, and come in a variety of colors. Slice the top off of the stuffer tomato, just as you would a bell pepper. Scoop out the seeds and gel, lightly salt the inside, and set the seeds and gel aside. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cook couscous according to package instructions. Layer the feta cheese (Bluegrass Chevre Feta is a great local choice), gel, and couscous, then sprinkle each layer with pine nuts, firmly packing and repeating until the stuffer tomato is filled. Top with feta cheese and bake at 350 for 20-25 minutes, or until you can see gentle bubbling of juices coming from the top of the tomato. Remove from the oven and enjoy!



Ages 5 and up (3 or 4 30-45 minute sessions to complete)

## Objectives:

To add art to the garden and to introduce children to alternative pest control methods

## Materials:

- Old clothes
- A pillowcase for the head
- Leaves, straw, or hay for stuffing
- Non toxic exterior paint to draw the face
- Hammers and 18 large nails (size depends on the thickness of the wood used)
- (One) 1 x 4 x 72 inch board (for the body)
- (One) 1x 4 x 17 inch boards (for shoulders and arms) **Note:** collecting scrap pieces of wood that are relatively the same size as above will work well.
- String or twine, gloves and safety glasses
- Smocks or clothes that can get dirty
- Staple gun

## Set up:

Cut all the wood pieces, and gather supplies to the garden.

## Part One:

Read some books about scarecrows or show the children pictures of some, to introduce the idea of making one for the garden. Talk about why scarecrows were invented. Talk about what gardeners and farmers do now to keep crows from pulling corn seedlings. See



what ideas the children have to remedy the problem.

Suggest the environmentally friendly technique of feeding the birds cracked corn until the corn seedlings are too strong for the birds to pull as an alternative!

Have children brainstorm on how they would like their scarecrow to look.

## Part Two:

Have the children choose a location in the garden for their scarecrow. Make a cross out of the boards, attaching the 17" board approximately 18" from the top of the 72" board to create a neck. Allow the children to help you nail the parts together. After the pieces are put together, push it in the ground and start the creation of their scarecrow.

**Note:** If pants are used, cut a hole in the crotch large enough for the cross to pass through and put them on the cross before you push it in the ground.

## Part Three:

Paint a face on the pillow case and let dry. Have the children choose clothes. Tie the ends of the pant legs and stuff. Staple the waist to the board. Tie the cuffs of a shirt closed, and stuff them. Put the shirt on the cross, button it up, tie the waist, and stuff it. After the face is dry, Construct the head with a pillowcase stuffed with leaves, hay, or straw. After stuffing to the desired size, tie the end closed over the neck. Hats, ribbons, hair, gloves, shoes, and belts can all be added now for character.

*(Adapted from Garden Crafts for Kids: 50 Great Reasons to Get Your Hands Dirty by Diane Rhoades)*

*Source: University of New Hampshire, Sustainable Horticulture.*

## Fall Webworm Tents



The light gray silk tents of fall webworm caterpillars, recently hatched from masses of 400 or so eggs, are visible at the ends of tree branches. These caterpillars are

covered with long white to yellow-tan hairs. They feed on over 100 species of deciduous trees, including black cherry, walnut, hickory and mulberry.

Fall webworm larvae incorporate the leaves they are eating into their tent. The tent is expanded to include more leaves as needed. They can be numerous

enough to completely defoliate trees but this is not common. Usually, little real damage is done to trees but the ugly webs detract from their aesthetic value. Accessible nests can be pruned out and discarded. But insecticides are effective on small larvae if chemical control is necessary and the sprayer can reach foliage around the nest. There are two generations in Kentucky each year- from mid-June to early July and again in August.

*Source: Lee Townsend, Extension Entomologist, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture*

# Featured Plant - Shrubs and Perennials for Fall Color



White Oak

The changing seasons mean anticipation of cooler weather, clear autumn nights, no mosquitoes and brilliant fall colors. The fall colors reset my internal clock and eternal optimism. Fall color intensity does vary from year to year. It depends on the health of the plant and sunny autumn days with cool nights, but

most of the color variation is just good old genetics. If you want a plant for fall color, buy it in fall when it is showing off on the shrub lot. Even plants with the same name can vary. Red maple, white oak, and sweet gum are just some of the trees known for their magnificent fall color. However we often overlook shrubs and even perennial flowers with spectacular fall



Sweet Gum Leaf



Virginia Sweetspire,

color. Virginia Sweetspire, *Itea virginica*, is finally getting the attention it deserves. It is a native shrub found growing along shady streams. In autumn the glossy leaves turn a combination of red and

purple, which often persist well into December. If that wasn't enough, it has fragrant white flowers in June and July. It grows 3–5 feet tall with a suckering mounded habit. 'Henry's Garnet' is a magnificent cultivar with flowers up to six inches long and a consistent red purple fall color.



Witchhazel

Hybrid Witchhazel, *Hamamelis x intermedia*, offers several attractive cultivars with nice fall color. These witchhazels would prefer a moist, well-drained soil but are pretty adaptable to even partial shade. 'Arnold

Promise' has been around for years and remains one of the best cultivars. It has bright yellow flowers and yellow to orange fall color. 'Arnold Promise' can get to 20 feet tall. 'Jelena' is a nice shrub with horizontal branching,

coppery colored flowers and orange to red fall color. The interesting thing about witchhazel is the flower color matches the fall color. A yellow flowering witchhazel equals yellow fall color. The red varieties give a red fall show. 'Pallida' offers extra early yellow flowers and a smaller shrub size.

Oakleaf hydrangea, *Hydrangea quercifolia*, at four to six feet tall makes a dramatic show with large white flower panicles, large "oak looking" leaves and cinnamon brown bark. In fall the leaves turn a deep



Oakleaf hydrangea

rich burgundy color that persist well into December. Like other sumacs the Flameleaf Sumac, *Rhus copallina*, has great red purple fall color. It also has other sumac properties such as a suckering habit. At 20 to 30 feet tall it requires plenty of space.



Plumbago

Plumbago also known as leadwort, *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*, is a nice perennial flower for sunny spots. It makes a nice groundcover. In late summer it produces cobalt blue flowers and as the cool weather comes the leaves turn reddish often along with the blue

flowers.

Perennials with clear yellow fall color include Blue Stars, *Amsonia tabernaemontana* and *Amsonia hubrechtii* and Balloon Flower, *Platycodon grandiflorus*



Blue Star



Balloon Flower

Source: Sandra Mason, University of Illinois Extension Unit Educator, Horticulture & Environment