

# Horticulture Hotline

HORTICULTURE



2008

## SEEDING COOL SEASON GRASSES TIME OF YEAR!

By AJ Powell, Jr. and Charles Dougherty,  
Department of Agronomy, University of Kentucky

It has long been suggested that early fall is the most successful time for seeding cool season grasses. Even with the availability of irrigation, improved cultivars, no-till, seed priming, etc., the success of fall seedings far exceed other seasons. However, because seed establishment is sometimes successful anytime of year, one must evaluate the risks involved when seeding off season.

Consider the following:

### MID AUGUST — MID OCTOBER

This is usually the **best seeding season**. Although this is normally the driest period of the year, most other establishment risks are minimal. Germination is much faster when the soil is warmest, therefore, seedings made in October will take longer to germinate and seedling vigor will be slower than when seeding in August and September. Slow germinating grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass are much more

successful during the early part of this preferred seeding season.

### MID OCTOBER — DECEMBER

Kentucky often has some very mild weather during this season, and some germination and seedling growth may occur. Unfortunately, an occasional sudden freeze can kill succulent seedlings that have not hardened off during cold spells. Even if young grass survives winter freezes, it often heaves out of the ground in late winter/early spring as we get alternating cold and warm periods. One can prevent this by aggressively rolling the surface with a heavy roller, but that is difficult because the soil is often so wet that you risk rutting the surface.

During this period we can encourage germination and growth by using synthetic grow-covers, such as those used on tobacco beds. However this is only practical for relatively small areas. Sometimes these covers may be left on the surface all winter in order to help reduce desiccation during the period when irrigation is not feasible.

### DECEMBER — MID FEBRUARY

Seedings made after December 1 can be considered **dormant seeding**, i.e. the seed should not germinate until early spring. Dormant seedings can be very effective if you do not get surface disturbance by birds, wind, erosion, water runoff, etc. Cold winter weather does not kill ungerminated seed. It is typical for dormant, late winter or early

spring seedings to begin a 'slow' germination process about the last week or two weeks in March. Therefore, seedings made during December through early March all germinate about the same time.

#### MID FEBRUARY AND MARCH

This is usually the **second most successful** time of year to seed. Soil moisture is often good but because soil temperature is usually low, germination is very slow. After germination, however, seedling growth is usually very fast. Conventional seeding on a prepared seedbed is much more successful than slit (no-till) seeding into an undisturbed sod. This is most likely a function of the sod keeping the soil temperature much colder, for a longer period of time.

#### APRIL AND MAY

Mid- to late-spring seeding increase the risk of crabgrass competition, poor root growth prior to hot weather, disease damage, etc. For most spring seasons in Kentucky, it is very difficult to get the soil dry enough to prepare a seedbed. If you must stockpile or move topsoil, prepare the subgrade, replace the topsoil, allow time and moisture cycles for settling of the surface, incorporate fertilizer and prepare final seedbed, it is very difficult to get this accomplished during our typical windy and rainy spring seasons. Moving or working wet soil causes unrepairable damage to the soil structure and tilth. Also, because of potential damage to seedlings, most crabgrass control herbicides cannot be used to prevent weed competition.

#### JUNE TO MID AUGUST

Summer seedings are **seldom successful** because of periods of drought, extreme heat, crabgrass competition, extreme disease pressure, etc. Although proper irrigation may eliminate the risk of drought, irrigation typically increases other 'risks' such as disease, crabgrass invasion, etc.

#### TIME REQUIRED FOR GERMINATION

Under optimum conditions the germination time for cool season grasses is generally

listed as 15 to 21 days for Ky bluegrass, 7-10 days for tall fescue, 5-7 days for perennial ryegrass and 5-7 days for creeping bentgrass. However this time can be greatly extended when:

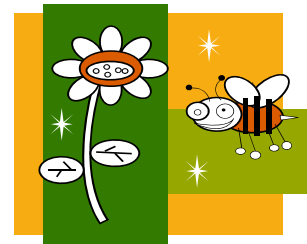
--surface soil moisture is very lacking, or even when there are periods of wet/dry conditions.

--when the surface soil temperature remains cold.

--when old seed or poor quality seed is used.

--when new seed, harvested in the summer, is used for a late summer seeding. This seed may have a short term dormancy factor that will slow down germination for several weeks.

BUG  
BYTES



#### **Late Summer Tree Insects**

Bruce Spangenberg, Horticulture Extension, University of Illinois Extension

As summer moves along, some insects become less common while others start to appear. The Japanese beetle is fading away, for example. Typical late summer insects present now include fall webworm, annual cicada, and katydids.

Cicadas and katydids are heard more than seen. The annual or dog-day cicada makes considerable noise while sitting up in shade trees during the heat of the day. Some refer to them as "sewing bugs." This is not the same insect as the periodical cicada, which is also called either the 13 or 17-year locust. Annual cicadas rarely cause noticeable damage to trees, so control is rarely suggested.

Katydid also make noise while sitting in trees, but at night. Male katydids "sing" through much of the night from the tops of trees. Katydid are green, about 2 to 3 inches long, and have both long antennae and legs. These insects do not cause any significant damage to trees. Depending on your

point of view, their singing may be annoying or just a soothing sound of the summer night.

Of the three, fall webworms are the most visible. Silk tents have been showing up in a variety of shade trees. Close inspection reveals caterpillars inside. As they feed and grow, these caterpillars make the web larger to cover more foliage. When young, the caterpillars will only eat the upper surface of the leaf, but as they get older they will eat the entire leaf except larger veins and the midrib. When full grown, they drop to the ground to pupate.

Don't confuse fall webworm with the eastern tent caterpillar, which is out very early in spring. Likewise, fall webworms should not be mistaken for gypsy moth, which does not make tent-like webs in trees.

It may be unsightly, but fall webworm is rarely a threat to tree health in northern Illinois because it is late in the season. Although still green, trees are actually preparing for dormancy so having some defoliation now is not considered very damaging. If reachable, clip off the web and destroy it. If using insecticides, spray into the web to get control. Insecticides that will control fall webworm include *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Dipel, Caterpillar Attack, etc), carbaryl (Sevin), malathion, and acephate (Orthene).

For more info:

<http://www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/ef424.asp>



Annual cicada

<http://www.indiana.edu/~preserve/research/CicadasPres/slide03a.html>

\*KIDS

CORNER



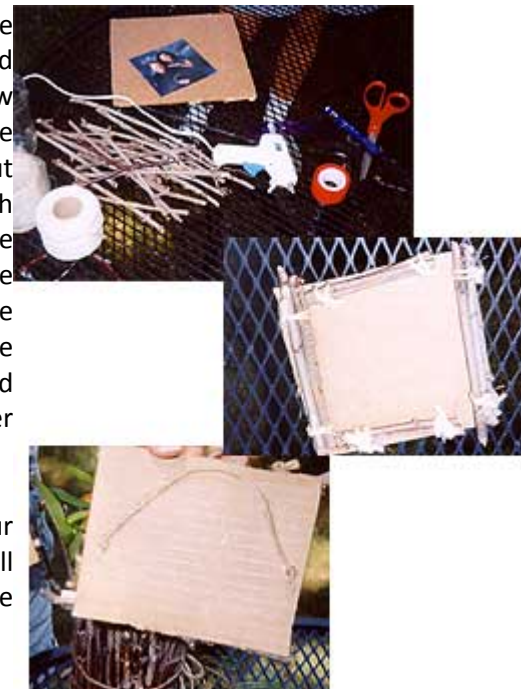
#### Twig Frame and Vase

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eeek/cool/ameliatwigframe.htm>

Looking for something to keep you busy for awhile? Here's a simple way to make decorative frames and vases. This is what you'll need: twigs you've collected from the ground, cardboard for the frame, a mason jar for the vase, white glue, double sided tape, twine or raffia, scissors, a pencil, a ruler, and one of your favorite pictures.

Start with the picture frame. Take your picture and place it on the cardboard. The cardboard should be larger than your picture. Then take your ruler and pencil and draw lines on the cardboard about one-half to one inch away and all the way around the picture. Cut out the cardboard along the pencil lines and save the center piece.

Now break your twigs to fit along all four sides of the



picture. They don't have to be the same size. About three or four twigs per side will do. Make a bundle of twigs for the bottom of the picture frame. Now, repeat that same process for the top and for the sides. Once you've got the four sides ready, assemble the frame.

Take your picture and glue it to the center of the cardboard. Then, put plenty of glue on one bundle of sticks and glue it along one side of the picture. Keep going and finish the frame by gluing the rest of the bundles around the picture.

That's it, you're finished! Now, if you want to hang it, all you have to do is make a string hanger or a cardboard easel.



Once you've finished the twig frame, you might want to try making a twig vase. Here's what you do. Take a mason jar or an old spaghetti sauce jar and wrap double-sided tape around the bottom, middle and top of the jar. Take your twigs and press them onto the taped areas of the jar. The twigs should be at least as tall as the top of the jar and some should be taller. Continue doing this until the jar is completely covered with twigs. The last thing you need to do is squeeze glue into the spaces in between the twigs. This will guarantee that your vase will last for a long time.

Once you're finished and the glue has dried, display your new picture frame and put some flowers in your vase.

## Harvesting Summer Vegetables

Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension Professor, University of Vermont  
[http://buckeyegardening.com/indexarticle\\_0808.htm](http://buckeyegardening.com/indexarticle_0808.htm)

Knowing when to harvest vegetables is just as important as knowing how to grow them. Some have a long time over which you can harvest, others

must be harvested at just the proper stage of ripening. Harvest at the wrong time, and your vegetables may not ripen properly if too young, or be tough and bitter if too old. You can't really go by the calendar, or days to maturity, as this can vary from year to year with such conditions as rain, temperature, and nutrition. The best way to tell when to harvest is traits of each vegetable. Here are some specific clues.

Lima beans are best harvested when the pods are full, but before they start turning yellow. They are more tender when immature, more meaty when mature. The same applies to snap beans. When the seeds inside are half size or larger, the pods will be more fibrous and starchy.

There are three traits which indicate a cantaloupe is ready for harvest—the stem slips easily from the vine, the “netting” on the surface turns light tan, and the blossom end (opposite the stem) is soft (push gently with your thumb) and smells sweet.

Feel the tips of sweet corn ears. When they feel full through the husk they are ready for harvest. You'll see dry silks. Open the top of the ear, peeling back the husks, and kernels should be filled out. Press a kernel with your fingernail, and it should have a milky sap. Use as soon as possible after harvest for the maximum sweetness.

Length of cucumber when mature will vary with variety, but generally they are one and one-half to two and a half inches across, and five to eight inches long. They are best harvested slightly immature when spines are soft and before the seeds become half sized.

Eggplant maturity and size varies with

variety too. In general, harvest when nearly full size and bright and shiny. When they turn a dull color, and seeds turn brown, they are overripe.

If you didn't harvest onions for eating while still small, harvest when one to one and a half inches across for boiling and pickling. Harvest them even larger, when tops fall over and the base of leaves ("necks") shrivel, for storing and general cooking.

Harvest hot peppers as you need

them, the young and green ones being hotter in many cases than the mature and colored ones. Late in the season you can pull the whole plant, and dry in a warm, well-ventilated space. On the other hand, harvest sweet peppers when the fruits are full and firm. You can leave them on the plant if you want them to turn red.

For new potatoes, harvest only a couple weeks after they bloom. For a main crop, harvest tubers when the tops have died down later in the season. Harvest when the soil is dry if possible, and carefully to avoid bruising. Cure potatoes for about two weeks in a cool (45 to 60 degrees F), dark, and well-ventilated area. For sweet potatoes, harvest in fall before frosts and freezes. Handle them carefully to avoid bruising, but unlike regular potatoes cure for about one week dry & warm (80 - 85 degrees F).

Summer squash should be harvested when young, tender, and a fingernail easily nicks the surface. Winter squash should be harvested when mature fruit is hard and can't be scratched with a fingernail. Harvest

winter squash before the first hard frost, with a sharp knife, and leaving an inch or so of stem attached. Without a stem, fruit will begin to decay from the scar.

Dry winter squash for 10 days to two weeks in a dry, warm area (75 to 85 degrees F). Harvest and treat pumpkins similar to winter squash.

Proper time to harvest tomatoes varies with variety, but in general is when the fruit is uniformly red (or colored in the case of yellow or other varieties) and the end is still firm and not soft. Ripe fruit should sink when placed in water. If late in the season and frosts are predicted, you can harvest green tomatoes. They will ripen fine in dark, and in fact light can delay ripening. Keep them warm (55 to 70 degrees F) until ripe, and you should be able to store this way for three to five weeks.

For all your vegetables, regular inspection every few days is the key to the best and longest harvest season. There are several cool season crops such as lettuce, carrots, and cabbage that can be planted out in late summer for fall harvest.



## ~ Notes from Kim~

The dog days of August have been much cooler and more enjoyable than in the past! Remember to keep adequate water on woody plants, flowers and gardens during the dry days we have been experiencing. Lawn renovation and over-seeding time is now thru about the end of September, so add that to your "to do" lists! Be sure to can or freeze some of your favorite veggie and fruits from the Farmers Market before they are gone. Enjoy the final days of summer!  
Happy Gardening- Kim



**Kim Cowherd**  
CES agent for Horticulture

*Goodbyes...Saying goodbye doesn't mean anything. It's the time we spent together that matters, not how we left it.* -Trey Parker

This summer at the Franklin County Extension Office, we have had to say goodbye to several of our Extension family. John Hearn, 4H Agent, left at the end of June. John had been with us for one year and came on as the second 4H agent, which allowed our program to expand into several new areas and serve more youth in the County. He moved on to a wonderful opportunity in the private sector. Jennifer Hudnall, 4H Agent, is leaving in August. Jennifer has been with Franklin County Extension for four years and has been the backbone of the 4H program in the County. Jennifer is moving on to a position with State Government. We will definitely miss Jennifer's expertise, patience and Extension knowledge in the office. Ann Gill, Staff Assistant, left the office at the end of July. Ann brought a sense of fun to the office and will be greatly missed.

### THANK YOU to these wonderful people!

We also want to welcome and thank Kara Phipps, UK student, who has filled in answering the phones and being helpful to all of us in the office. Kara will be with us till the end of August, when she returns to school.

Tamera Thomas, Family Consumer Science Agent; Keenan Bishop, Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent; Wanda Ellis, Staff Assistant, and I will continue to be here to answer your questions and share valuable research-based information with you and the community. Please call the Extension Office at 502-695-9035 if you have any questions about food, health, money matters, livestock, insects, plants or other topics.



### Useful Web Links

<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/vanderburgh/horticulture/weird.htm>

Purdue Extension's The Weird World of Weeds and Other Hilarious Horticultural Hijinks! Fun with plant humor!

<http://ces.ca.uky.edu/owen/anr/Links/edenshale.htm>

Eden Shale Research and Demonstration farm, next door in Owen County

<http://www.gardendigest.com/timetab.htm> History of Gardening Timeline

<http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/smallscalecomposting.htm>

Backyard Composting from Cornell University Extension- Everything you need to know is here!

<http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/PUBS/for/for57/for57.htm> Managing White-tailed deer in Ky, Tom Barnes, University of Kentucky Extension  
<http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/PUBS/for/for57/for57.htm>

# Calendar of Things to Do

## State Fair Hours:

Gates open daily at 7 a.m.

Exhibit Buildings: 9 a.m. - 10 p.m. daily

<http://www.kystatefair.org/>

State Fair Hotline (502) 367-5002



## Going Green: The Frankfort Climate Action Festival

Saturday, September 6; 2PM to 7PM; Old Capitol Lawn; Downtown Frankfort, KY

There will be music, kids activities, presentations and workshops, and information tables focusing on climate change, renewable energy, energy efficiency, recycling, local food, gardening, rainwater collection, transportation alternatives, and more. The Festival is free and open to the public. Organized by the Frankfort Climate Action Network. To learn more or to get involved, contact Connie Lemley at [connie\\_lemley@yahoo.com](mailto:connie_lemley@yahoo.com), 502-223-7936.

## Healthy Food, Local Farms Conference, "The Politics of Food"

September 6, 2008, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; University of Louisville

Featured Speaker Daniel Imhoff, author of Food Fight: The Citizen's Guide to a Food and Farm Bill and of Farming with the Wild: Enhancing Biodiversity on Farms and Ranches. Speakers include Wendell Berry, Christopher Cook, Judy Wick, Dr. George Hegerman. Registration cost \$40 (deadline August 26). Food served will be locally and sustainably grown, antibiotic and hormone-free. Friday night Harvest Festival at Locust Grove, \$30.

Call 231-922-2201 to register now: Registration forms & on line payment at: [www.americanbyways.com/Sierra%20Club/index.php](http://www.americanbyways.com/Sierra%20Club/index.php) Or Send checks made to Sierra Club, with registration forms, to Shelly Campbell, 400 W. Front St., Suite 204, Traverse City, MI 49684

**Franklin County Farmers' Market;** The Franklin County Farmers Market is open Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturdays 7 a.m. to sellout (around 1pm). Wilkinson Blvd, in Riverview Park, across from the Capital Plaza Hotel/YMCA. For information contact Franklin County Farmers Market by email - [franklincountyfarmersmarket@gmail.com](mailto:franklincountyfarmersmarket@gmail.com). Sign up for our E-News letter during the season that lets you know what is available at the Market and the Special Events.

## KSU Sustainable Agriculture Workshop "Third Thursday Thing"

The Third Thursday Workshop; August 21, 2008; Franklin County Farmers Market.

10:30 a.m. to 12:00 Noon Tour Farmers Market, Shop, Ask Questions

11:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon Healthy Cooking Alternatives—Dr. Wang, KSU; Organic Production—Dr. Bomford, KSU

2008 Paw Paw Conference—Dr. Pomper, KSU

12:00 Noon to 1:30 p.m. Lunch, Compliments of KSU (Burgers, Brats, Chips Dessert, Drinks)

**Cove Spring Park/Nature Preserve;** Located on US 127 just off of the Thorn Hill Bypass, Frankfort

Sun. Aug. 17 2:00-3:30 pm "Our Incredible Insects"

Sat. Sept. 27 8:30-10:00 pm "Night Hike and Star Gazing"

Meet at Main Parking Lot, East Side of 127; For more information call 227-3276 or 227-4326

**Salato Wildlife Education Center-** A Bountiful Tree Walk; September 6, 1p.m. - 3p.m.

Take a staff-guided hike as we help you identify trees common to our area. Discover fruit- and nut-bearing trees and talk about the wildlife that depends on them for survival. Wear appropriate shoes. This program takes place on a primitive hiking trail with all associated obstacles. Program may be cancelled due to bad weather. Ages 6 & up. Registration and

COOPERATIVE  
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prepayment required. Contact Kristi Stroud, [Kristi.stroud@ky.gov](mailto:Kristi.stroud@ky.gov), 502-564-7863.

## Quibbles 'n' Bits

**Gardening is a matter of your enthusiasm holding up until your back gets used to it.**  
- Author Unknown

**Live each day as if it were your last, and garden as though you will live forever.**  
- Author Unknown

**We come from the earth, we return to the earth, and in between we garden.**  
- Author Unknown

**A perennial is a plant that would have come back  
year after year if it had survived.**

- Author Unknown

**Love this Earth as if you won't be here tomorrow;  
show reverence for your Garden as if you will be here forever.**

- Scottish proverb

Contact the Extension Office at 695-9035 if you would like to receive our newsletter via email or email requests to [wanda.ellis@uky.edu](mailto:wanda.ellis@uky.edu) or [kim.cowherd@uky.edu](mailto:kim.cowherd@uky.edu)

If you DO NOT want to receive this newsletter, please call the Extension Office, and let us know!