



# *Yards in Bloom*

Spring 2011

*Fulton County Lawn & Garden News*

## **Garden Planning**

With the start of a new year, now is a great time to plan ahead for the gardening season. During these cold winter days, begin sketching your garden layout on paper. Remember, Kentucky's spring garden contains cool season crops such as broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, radishes, and cauliflower that thrive in cool air temperatures between 50 to 65 F. Some note-worthy information to include in your garden plan is vegetable cultivar selections, plant spacing between both plants and rows, row orientation, planting dates, and number of plants needed.

A few simple steps to insuring a fantastic garden include:

1. Plan your garden on paper before you begin.
2. Select a good gardening site that has full of sun for at least eight hours each day, relatively level, well-drained, close to a water source and not shaded.
3. Prepare the soil properly and add fertilizer and lime according to soil-test recommendations.
4. Plan only as large a garden as you can easily maintain. Beginning gardeners often overplant, and then they fail because they cannot keep up with the tasks required. You'll have to control weeds and pests, apply water when needed and harvest on time. Vegetables harvested at their peak are tasty, but when left on the

plants too long, the flavor is simply the best.

5. Grow vegetables that will produce the maximum amount of food in the space available.
6. Plant during the correct season for the crop. Choose varieties recommended for your area.
7. Harvest vegetables at their proper stage of maturity. Store them promptly and properly if you do not use them immediately

I recommend that you keep a garden journal to log important information from this gardening season. Useful information like weather patterns, crop rotation practices, cultivar selections, and harvest yields can be a very helpful tool in determining the success in your garden. Plus, you don't have to rely solely on your memory!

For more information on gardening, you can stop by the office for a complimentary copy of ID 128 "Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky."

## **Crop Rotation**

This is a practice that is often overlooked, but it can really affect production in a garden. So, why is it a good idea to implement crop rotation practices in my garden?

Well, many soil-borne pests can be effectively managed using crop rotation. This means that the same or closely related vegetables are not planted in the same site

year after year. By rotating crops, the pests inhabiting the soil are not able to increase in numbers to the point where they cause significant damage to the crop. For crop rotation to be effective, a given crop must be rotated every two to three years and replaced with a crop that is unrelated. For example, members of the Nightshade family, including tomato, potato, eggplant, and pepper, are all very susceptible to certain soil-borne fungi. It is a good idea to move these species around every few year. But one should not replace tomatoes with potato, pepper, or eggplant, since these crops are closely related and may be susceptible to many of the same pests. Rather, replace tomatoes with plants from a different family such as the Legume family (peas and beans), the Brassica family (cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, collards, brussels sprouts), or the Grass family (corn). Crop rotation works best in a relative large garden. Many people will divide the garden in to quadrants of three or four sections, and rotate crops between these quadrants each year. A plant does not return to the same location for three or four years. In smaller gardens, there may be little benefit to moving plants only a few feet from their location during the previous growing season. For small gardens it is a better practice to rotate crops in time. For example, one might choose to grow tomatoes one year, followed by squash, cucumbers or melons the second year, and beans the third year. The fourth year one would return to tomatoes. This doesn't mean, however, that you must do without tomatoes or squash during the off years. These plants do very well in containers in a patio garden, and if you have children, this can be a great activity for them during the summer.

### Tidbits

Things to do right now:

- Cutback lirioppe (monkey grass)
- Remove damaged or diseased rose canes
- Prune overgrown shrubs
- DO NOT prune spring blooming shrubs
- Plan vegetable garden
- Soil test garden
- Start seeds indoors for cool season vegetables

In March, do the following:

- Amend soil in garden according to soil test
- Divide and replant crowded summer and fall perennials

### Upcoming Events

March 11, 1:00pm – Pecan Grafting Workshop, Hickman Co Fairgrounds

March 12, 9-Noon – Inspired and Inspiring Gardens at Cherry Civic Ctr in Paducah. Tix are \$15 in advance or \$18 at the door. Call 270-554-9520

March 15, 9:00am – Recovering Drought Damaged Lawns, Carr Street Community Ctr in Fulton

Cam Kenimer  
Fulton County Extension Agent  
Agriculture & Natural Resources



#### **Filing a Complaint**

The Cooperative Extension Service prohibits discrimination in its programs and employment on the basis of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. To file a complaint of discrimination, contact Rosemary Veach, UK College of Agriculture, Lexington, KY 40546, or Terry Allen, UK Affirmative Action Director, Lexington, KY 40546, or the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.