

Madison County Horticulture Newsletter

Pay Dirt

HORTICULTURE

February 2012



Cooperative
Extension Service
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Hello Horticulturalists!

Will the groundhog see his shadow this year? We have had such warm temperatures on and off this winter I feel like I am spoiled already. There have even been reports of daffodils and crocuses emerging. Let's just hope that flowers and fruit trees do not start to bud, only to get bit by a cold snap.

Do not forget your sweethearts on the 14th, support the flower industry!

Hoping for an early spring,

Amanda Sears

County Extension Agent for Horticulture

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<http://ces.ca.uky.edu/madison/horticulture>

New Club Forming

Are you interested in local, sustainable food?

Eat Local, Grow Local is having an organizational meeting Tuesday, March 13th at 7:00 p.m. at the Madison County Extension Center. Topics of interest for this group include local eating, seasonal eating, seasonal cooking, home vegetable growing, sustainable growing, learning where your food comes from, and promoting the local food economy.

If you are interested in learning about or contributing to the discussion of any of these topics, please join us.

It would be helpful with the planning of the meeting if you would indicate your interest by calling our office at 859-623-4072 or by emailing eatlocal.growlocal@gmail.com.

Forcing Branches of Woody Plants To Flower

Winter can be dreary at times. Why not force some branches from spring flowering trees and shrubs into flower early? Some plants well suited to forcing include forsythia, red maple, spirea, and dogwood. Others include apples, pears and peaches, as well as crabapples and ornamental pears.



Follow good pruning practices when you remove branches. Prune back to an outward facing bud or remove branches entirely by cutting back to a natural branch point. A first priority for pruning would be branches that appear diseased, crowded, or growing downward. Once you have brought the branches indoors, make a fresh slanted cut at the base of the branch just before you add it to a vase. Place the branches into slightly warm water containing a floral preservative. You can make your own preservative solution with 2 cups lemon-lime soda, 2 cups water, and ½ teaspoon chlorine bleach. Keep the branches in a cool (60-65F) area, away from direct light, and change the solution every 4 or 5 days. Once flower color is evident the branches can be moved to a well-lit room and arranged to suit the occasion. (Source: Dr. Richard Durham, UK Specialist)

**Madison County
Farmers' Market Meeting**
Monday, February 6th - 6 to 8 pm
Madison County Extension Office
This is an informational meeting.

Gardeners of Madison County
Monday, February 20th
Madison County Extension Office
6:30 to 8:30 pm
Artist-member, **Judy Isaacs**, will lead the popular clay garden items program. All area gardeners are welcome.

**Private Farm Pesticide
Applicator Certification
Training Sessions**

Four sessions will be given - you only need to attend one session to get your certification:

- Monday, Feb 20 - 12 noon
- Monday, Feb 20 - 6:00 pm
- Monday, Feb 27 - 12 noon
- Monday, Feb 27 - 6:00 pm

This is not Commercial Certification; this is only good for your own private use on the farm. Questions? Call 859-623-4072.

**2nd Annual Growing Giant
Watermelons & Pumpkins Workshop**

March 3, 2012 from 1 to 4 pm

Madison County Extension Office

Speakers will talk about all aspects of growing giant watermelons and pumpkins. There will also be a panel discussion.

Cost for this program is \$10/ family at the door. Please call 859-623-4072 to register.

Fruit Pruning

Saturday, March 3

2:00 to 3:30 pm

Berea College Gardens
on Scaffold Cane Road,
Berea

This class is limited to 25 participants.

Note: Class is nearly filled. Please call 859-623-4072 to check on registration. We will

Grafting Apple Trees

Tuesday, March 6

Madison County Extension Office

This same class will be offered three times in one day. You may sign up for one class.

Please call to pre-register. The times are:

- 9:00 am to 10:30 am
- 12 noon to 1:30 pm
- 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm

Call 859-623-4072, to sign up or ask a question. Call soon - this class fills fast!

Women in Agriculture Workshop: How to Grow Blueberries and Make Freezer Jam

Always wanted to grow your own blueberries? Or are you currently growing them but want to learn more?

Come to this workshop to learn more about growing and culture of this fruit. Topics will include site selection, variety, fertilization, harvesting, and pruning. This class will be taught by Amanda Sears, Horticulture Agent for Madison County.

In the second portion of this workshop, Master Gardener Mark Walden will teach how to make freezer jam. Never made freezer jam? It is really easy to do and a great way to preserve fruit if you do not want to use a canner. He will go over all the required equipment and give an actual demonstration.

If you plan on attending this class, [please call 859-623-4072](tel:859-623-4072), and let us know so we can have handouts and seating available to everyone.



This class is sponsored by the Madison County Farm Bureau Women's Committee, but it is open to every one! Call 859-623-4072 to register!

**How to Grow Blueberries and Make Freezer Jam
Tuesday, March 27th
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Madison County Cooperative Extension Service Office
230 Duncannon Lane, Richmond**

Home Fruit Disease Management

Late winter is the ideal time for home fruit growers to get a jump on disease management.

You should trim fruit trees to thin the tree canopy. This allows for good air movement and sunlight penetration. Rake up and destroy fallen leaves and remove and destroy fruit mummies left on trees or on the ground from last season.

Remove galls on nearby cedar trees which are a source of apple rust diseases. Prune out fire blight cankers in existing apple trees and black knot swellings from plum trees while it is still cold.

Prune grapevines to allow good sunlight penetration and air movement for maximum fruit production. Remove any diseased, dead or cankered vines and remove and destroy last year's fruit mummies hanging on the vines and lying on the ground.

Berry growers should prune out dead and winter-injured blackberry and raspberry canes and diseased blueberry twigs and branches.

When ordering nursery stock for new fruit plantings, choose to plant disease resistant varieties.

We have more information on selecting varieties and growing fruit at the Madison County Extension Office. Just come by or give us a call, at 859-623-4072, and we will be glad to share that information with you. (Source: Dr. John Hartmann, UK Plant Pathologist)



Old, shriveled fruit from the previous year are called mummies. They may carry disease and should be removed.

Planning An Onion Crop

By Dr. Tim Coolong, UK Vegetable Specialist

Although we're in the midst of winter, it is never too soon to think about next growing season. This is particularly true if you want to grow onions.

Onions are a good crop for Kentucky farmers. Typically in late winter it takes eight to 10 weeks to produce a reasonably sized transplant. If you want to plant in late March or the beginning of April, you should have seeded your transplants in late January. If you have not already seeded, it's not too late for an onion crop this year. You can purchase transplants.

Be sure to buy intermediate day-long or day-neutral onion varieties. Onions can typically be categorized into short, intermediate and long day types.

Onions will bulb in response to day length. Short-day varieties need 11 to 12 hours of sunlight per day to bulb, intermediate-day varieties bulb with 12 to 13 hours of sunlight, and long-day varieties bulb with 13 to 14 hours.

The types of onions grown during the winter in the Deep South, such as Vidalias, are short-day types. Unfortunately, Kentucky is far enough north that if planted here short-day onions will bulb very early in the spring when plants are still small. The result will be small golf-ball or tennis-ball size bulbs.

Instead, try to buy intermediate-day types such as the popular Candy onion. These will begin to bulb in mid-May and should mature by early to mid-July.

Many growers report bulbs the size of softballs when growing Candy onions. If you decide to plant a long-day variety, such as Walla Walla or Sweet Spanish, your plants will begin to bulb in June and continue until early August when they will be mature. Although long-day types yield well in Kentucky, high summer temperatures may lead to an increased disease risk.



Sauteed Onions and Apples



Needed:

3 large yellow onions, sliced

2 tablespoons olive oil or canola oil

6 large tart apples, cored and sliced

1/4 cup brown sugar, packed tightly

1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

In a large saucepan over medium heat, sauté onions in oil until tender, stirring frequently to avoid scorching. Add the apples over the onions and sprinkle with remaining ingredients. Cover and simmer for about 10 minutes. Uncover and simmer until apples are tender.

Yield: 12 servings; 110 calories per serving.

Prepared by Phoebe Alexander, Intern, Family and Consumer Sciences, University of Kentucky

