

Madison County Horticulture Newsletter

Pay Dirt

HORTICULTURE

September 2011



Cooperative
Extension Service
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Hello Horticulturalists!

This is a great time to plant trees and shrubs, but remember to do your research before making a purchase. Check how large it's final size will be before planting to make sure it will fit your location. Do not plant too close to your house, other trees, or power lines.

Life's a garden, dig it,

Amanda Sears

County Extension Agent for Horticulture

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

Gardeners of Madison County

Monday, September 19 at 6:30 p.m.

Madison County Extension Office
Please note new start time! Horticulture Agent, Amanda Sears, will provide information about services available through the Cooperative Extension Service. Everyone is welcome.

Madison County Herb Club

Monday, September 12th at 6:30 p.m.

Madison County Extension Office
The Madison County Herb Club will give a lesson on drying and preserving your herb

When Do I Pick Pears?



Unlike most fruit, pears continue to ripen once picked off the tree.

In fact, it is best to pick pears before they are completely ripe. To pick, look at the skin color and the lenticels (the little spots on the fruit surface). The lenticels are white or green on immature fruit, so when they turn brown you know the fruit can be picked and will ripen satisfactorily off the tree. When ready, the fruit will also separate easily from the tree with an upward twist of the fruit.

Mature pears should ripen within a few days, if stored at 60-70 degrees Fahrenheit and high relative humidity (80-85 percent). Pears will ripen even faster if stored with other pears in a closed container, such as a paper sack. Ripening fruit gives off a gas called ethylene, which in turn stimulates further ripening. Ripened pears should "give a bit" when pressed near the stem end.

It's Not To Late!

There is still space available in two upcoming classes!

- **Interested in becoming a Master Gardener?** The first class meets on September 13th, from 1 to 4 p.m. and runs fourteen weeks. Each class is about a different topic in horticulture. At the end of the series, the participant is required to do thirty hours community service in return. The cost is \$100. Call 859-623-4072 for details soon, as class size is limited.
- **There is still room in the Pumpkin Centerpiece Class.** Mike Reed, Powell County Extension Agent, will be showing how to make a centerpiece using live flowers with pumpkins and gourds. This class will be held Thursday, October 13th from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. The cost is \$5.00. You must pre-register and pay in advance. All materials will be supplied.

To register for the **Pumpkin Centerpiece** class, call 859-623-4072, and make sure that there is an available seat. Then send your registration fee (checks made payable to "Mike Reed") to the Madison County Extension Office, P.O. Box 270, Richmond, KY 40476. Or come by the Madison County Extension Office to pay your registration fee in person. **Your paid registration holds your spot!**



Fall Beekeeping Workshop

Two beekeeping classes in one!



There will be a Fall Beekeeping Workshop on **September 13th from 6 to 8 p.m.** at the Madison County Extension Office. From 6 to 7 p.m. the discussion will be on varroa mites, feeding and other fall jobs. From 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. the topic will be fall requeening (methods, benefits and disadvantages of doing this in the fall) and the Governor's Office of AG development grants.

If you are interested in attending this class, please call the Madison County Cooperative Extension Office at 623-4072. For more information on the workshop, contact Tammy Horn at tammy.horn@eku.edu.

Tree Fruit Information

Interested in learning more about tree fruit in Kentucky? Check out Kentucky Fruit Facts at www.ca.uky.edu/fruitfacts/.

This newsletter comes out several times a year and focuses on fruit crop news and upcoming meetings around the state. You can subscribe to receive it via email by visiting the website or by mail by contacting me and giving me your name and address.



Fall Lawn Care

Now is the time to turn our thoughts to renovating the lawn. Successful renovation involves selecting the best grass, eliminating competition from other grass or weeds, good timing, and proper seedbed preparation and seeding.

A turf-type tall fescue is the grass of choice, unless you already have an established lawn of some other species. In areas where there is little to no salvageable turf, use a non-selective herbicide such as Roundup or Finale to kill all competing grasses and weeds. Newly germinated seed cannot out-compete those species that are established and actively growing. At the very least, use 2,4-D to control the broadleaf weeds. Read the label carefully as many of waiting period between application and seeding so be sure to take that waiting period into account and apply at the right time.

September is the best month for seeding or over-seeding lawns. However, it can also be one of our driest months. Plenty of water is a must! If weather is hot and windy, one or two light irrigations per day may be needed until germination is complete.

Overseeding onto unprepared ground is rarely successful. Dry, compacted surface soil must be worked in order to allow for maximum seed and soil contact which insures the best stand of grass. Tilling will bring a lot of ungerminated weed seeds to the top where they receive enough light, water and air to germinate so resist the urge to till. We do need to break up that crusty top however so seed can germinate. Our goal is to loosen the soil surface without completely mixing and tilling the soil. Tough but not impossible.



A soil test will determine if lime, phosphate, and potash are needed. Nitrogen will be needed in order to get good seedling establishment but if nitrogen is applied before seeding, it will increase the aggressiveness of other grasses and weeds that were not killed, thus increasing competition against the desirable grasses. Therefore, it is often best to apply the nitrogen after germination.

For those of you who may not need such a big lawn overhaul, remember that fall is the best time to fertilize cool season grasses. Moderately maintained lawns can be fed twice with the feedings about 30 days apart. Halloween and early December are two good feeding times. It is best to apply fertilizer just prior to a rain. Leave your clippings on the lawn this fall for an extra application of nitrogen.

Fall is a great time for broadleaf weed control. Use 2,4-D for plantain, wild garlic, and dandelions. Use combination products such as Weed-B-Gon, to control chickweed, ground ivy, henbit, white clover, red sorrel and wild violets. Only use weed control and fertilizer in new lawns after you have mowed 2-3 times. Be careful of chemical drift onto desirable plants.

(Article by Patti Meads, Woodford County Extension Agent for Horticulture)

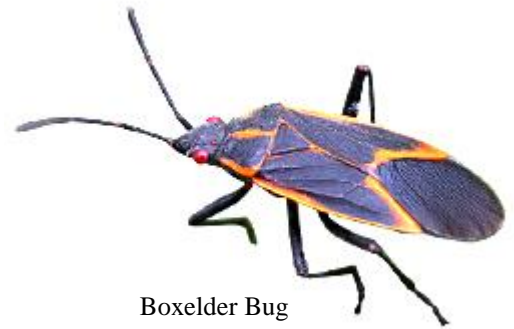
Fall Invaders: Boxelder Bugs

Boxelder bugs are common insects that feed on sap from leaves, twigs, and seeds of boxelders, as well other members of the maple family. Large numbers of them accumulate in the fall and can be seen on tree trunks or branches, or sunning themselves on the south or west sides of buildings. This harmless accidental invader may be a temporary nuisance as it moves into sheltered sites to spend the winter.

Adult boxelder bugs are elongate, 1/2 inch long insects with sucking mouthparts. They are mostly black with some red markings. There are three narrow red lines on the segment behind the head, one down the center and one on each side and a thin red inverted "V" about the middle of the back. The wingless immature or nymphal stage has a black head, antennae, and legs. The red abdomen has an orange-yellow stripe and spot down the center of the back.

Boxelder bugs feed on plants during the summer. They move to sheltered areas (including nearby houses and buildings) in the fall and remain there during the winter. Sweep or vacuum up and discard those found inside. They will not multiply nor will they infest any household articles. These insects are only a nuisance or accidental invader; however, they may leave an odor and stain when crushed.

Exclusion is important in reducing numbers that get indoors. Check door sweeps and places outside the house that may allow them to get inside. If large numbers are present every year, removal of female boxelder plants should be considered because this is the major host plant for them. Other alternatives include controlling insects while they are on the boxelder plant or direct sprays of congregations of the insects on outside walls. Insecticidal soap provides a safe control alternative but it must be sprayed directly on the insects to be effective.



Boxelder Bug

Ag Expo Time!

Come join us on Thursday, September 8th, from 4:30 to 7:00 pm, for the "Ag Expo" at the Madison County Fairgrounds!

There will be plenty to do for the whole family. In particular interest to you horticulture enthusiasts, local farmers' market vendors will be set up selling goods. Also there will be information on the Farm to School initiative and information about eating local. I will have a booth to answer your horticulture questions and have a board dedicated to the most common questions I encounter here at the office. What are they? You will only find out if you come out to the Expo!

The Madison County Beef Cattle Association will be grilling free hamburgers and hotdogs to be served from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. There are also great Door Prizes, including a flat screen TV, portable generator, a string trimmer, and more!

Please call 859-623-4072 by Tuesday, September 6th if you plan to attend so that we may prepare enough food. There is no rain date for this event, it will take place rain or shine.

Got Questions? We've Got Answers

- Soil Testing
- Insect Identification
- Plant Disease Diagnosis
- Plant Identification

For Horticulture questions, please contact me at 859-623-4072, or e-mail, amanda.sears@uky.edu.
You may also stop by and visit me at the Madison County Extension Center.