



Newsletter

December 2016



Floyd County

3490 Ky. Rt. 321
Prestonsburg, KY 41653

(606) 886-2668
Fax: (606) 886-1458

www.ca.uky.edu/ces



Inside this issue:

Poinsettias For the Holidays	2
2016 Forestry Webinar Series	3
Mulching Strawberry Plants	3
Mistletoe: Tree Thief. Holiday Tradition	4
Taking Orders for Apple & Pear Rootstock	4
Body Conditions Scores Good Indicators of Herd Health	5
Live Christmas Trees for the Holidays	6
Winter Feeding Areas for Livestock	7
Make Farm Record Keeping a Priority	7
Ky-Va Maple Syrup School	8
Wreath Making Workshop	9

Keith Hackworth



County Extension Agent for
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Upcoming Events -

- ***Dec 1** – Floyd Co. Extension Council/District Board mtgs. – Extension Office – 5:30 PM
- ***Dec 5** – Wreath Making Workshop – Extension Office – 11AM - 6PM – **must pre-register**
- ***Dec 6** – Forestry Series – Preventing Wildlife Damage – Extension Office – 7:00 PM
- ***Dec 6** – Floyd County Beekeepers Association meeting – Extension Office – 6:00PM
- ***Dec 8** – Appalachian Roots meeting – Extension Office – 5:30 PM
- ***Dec 10** – Maple Syrup School – Letcher County Extension Office – see flyer
- ***Dec 13** – Floyd Co. ANR & P1 Council meetings – Extension Office - 5:30PM
- ***Dec 15** – Floyd Co. Farmers Market meeting – Extension Office – 6:00 PM
- ***Dec 15** – Forestry Series – Preventing Wildlife Damage – Extension Office – 7:00 PM
- ***Dec 15** – Big Sandy Trail Riders meeting – Extension Office – 7:00 PM
- ***Dec 26 – Jan 2** – Official Holidays – Floyd County Extension Office Closed
- ***Jan 9-10** – KY Fruit & Vegetable Conference – Lexington – contact me for details
- ***Jan 5** – Floyd Co. Extension Council/District Board mtgs.– Extension Office – 5:30 PM
- **Other events or programs may be announced at a later time.

Seasons Greetings



Poinsettias for the Holidays



Traditional red and green colors are well represented in the flowers available for the holidays. Poinsettias, the most popular and spectacular holiday flowers, can combine both these colors.

The three to six bloom red poinsettia is the most frequently used, but several other sizes, shapes and colors are available. Colors range from creamy white to yellow through shades of pink to the traditional red. The colorful plant parts often referred to as "flowers" actually are modified leaves called "bracts." The yellow centers are really the "flowers." Some poinsettias have marbled pink and white bracts; others may have pink flecks on red. Poinsettia bracts are very long lasting, providing a nice decorative plant for the holiday season. Consumers can buy miniatures as well as poinsettia trees and hanging baskets.

The poinsettia is not poisonous to people or pets, but is classified as a non-edible plant material. Some people have skin sensitivity to the white milky sap produced when a part of the plant is broken or injured. Ingesting a plant part may cause some discomfort. Active young children, who are apt to put just about anything in their mouths, and curious cats might choke on fibrous poinsettia foliage. Therefore it is a good practice to put poinsettias and all other non-edible plants out of children's and pets' reach.

Poinsettias will remain beautiful far beyond the holiday season when cared for properly. Keep these tips in mind.

Choose a plant with small, tightly clustered yellow buds in the center and crisp, bright, undamaged foliage.

At home, put the poinsettia in a room with bright, natural light. Ideally, plant foliage should be exposed to direct sunlight one or more hours daily. Avoid locations where there are drafts and close heat sources. Do not put the plant on top of a television set or near a radiator.

Water the plant when the soil becomes dry; drooping leaves may indicate it needs watering. Be sure to discard excess water in the drip saucer.

If you want to keep a poinsettia after the holiday season, fertilize it with ordinary houseplant fertilizer a few weeks after buying it. For more information on indoor gardening, contact me at the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.



2016 Forestry Webinar Series - Two Sessions Remain

December 6 (Tuesday) - 7PM - Preventing Wildlife Damage on Your Property: Tree Plantings, Gardens, and Ornamentals -- Wildlife on your property can provide hours of enjoyment through birdwatching, photography, hunting and many other activities, but they can also cause problems in many situations. Issues often arise with wildlife when home owners plant trees, ornamentals, or backyard gardens. This webinar will discuss some common wildlife issues relating to your property including how to identify the wildlife causing the problem, preventative measures, and in the worst case scenario how to legally and ethically remove individuals that are causing extensive damage. No Master Logger CEUs for this session.

December 15 (Tuesday) – 7PM - Caring for Your Woodland – Do you want to make your woodland as productive and healthy as possible? This program will provide woodland owners with a practical approach to caring for their woodland. Topics will include the importance of developing a plan to care for your woodland, explaining some of the most common woodland management practices, and identifying organizations and resources to assist and sometimes offset the expenses of woodland management practices. All woodland owners can benefit from attending this program. One hour of Master Logger CEUs for this session.

For more information or to register, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Mulching Strawberry Plants

Hopefully, you had a chance to mulch your strawberry plantings before the early winter cold. Mulch helps reduce the freezing and thawing of the soil that breaks off the small roots and in some cases can lift the plants partially out of the ground, translating into smaller berries and reduced yields.

Mulching also slows plant development in the spring which reduces the chances of frost injury to the flowers. Mulch conserves moisture, keeps berries off the ground which reduces rot development and keeps dirt off of the berries. It can also reduce weed development making harvest much nicer under wet conditions.

Wheat straw is the preferred mulch material, but oat and rye straw also work well. Try to acquire mulch that does not contain a lot of weed, wheat, oat or rye seeds as this can substantially increase weed control requirements in the spring. Apply the mulch when the night temperature is expected to reach about 20 degrees F which is usually sometime in mid-December in Kentucky, although this year the lower temperatures came earlier. Cover the plants so you can still see a number of leaves peeking out from beneath the straw. Excessive mulch can smother plants.



When spring comes, don't hurry mulch removal. The mulch will protect the strawberry fruit buds as long as it remains on the plant. Remove the mulch when the plants have begun to grow and the foliage looks slightly yellow. If the mulch is left on too long, it could substantially reduce your yields.

The source of this article was John Strang, UK Extension fruit and vegetable specialist. For more information on mulching, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Mistletoe: Tree Thief, Holiday Tradition

Once autumn leaves have fallen, mistletoe becomes highly visible on large trees throughout Kentucky. Phoradendron, the scientific name for this parasitic plant, means tree thief. You can commonly find these small leafy plants on twigs and branches of many hardwood species in the southern two-thirds of the United States. Mistletoes extract water, mineral elements and food from their host tree by way of a parasite nutrient-uptake organ; hence the name, tree thief.



Mistletoes' use in holiday traditions has roots in pagan times. Its parasitic nature and the fact that it appears to be alive while the host tree appears dead, led some to believe mistletoe mysteriously held the life of the tree during winter. Druids harvested mistletoe in a special rite, never letting the plant touch the ground, then hung it in their homes for good luck.

Our modern-day mistletoe holiday tradition likely originates with a mythological Norse goddess of love and beauty. Frigga, whose son was restored from possible death by mistletoe, was thought to bestow a kiss on anyone walking beneath one. Today, when two people meet under the mistletoe, tradition suggests they must exchange a kiss for good luck.



Phoradendron, the most common mistletoe growing in Kentucky, resembles another species that grows in Europe. It has simple, fleshy green leaves arranged oppositely on the stem. Stems are short and more branched than the host tree, so mistletoe often appears as a spherical bunch of dense vegetation. These bunches may be a foot or two in diameter and are located high in the tree for better sunlight exposure. Mistletoe berries range from white to straw-colored to light red. Birds eat the fruits, reportedly toxic to human and animals, then deposit the seeds onto branches where they germinate and penetrate the host tree.

Since birds tend to roost in open-grown trees, mistletoes do not appear as frequently in forest trees. Generally, they do not cause much damage, although they can be harmful to a tree already under stress. If mistletoe appears on landscape trees or other trees in the urban forest, you can control it through pruning.

The source of this article was John Hartman, Plant Pathology Professor. For more information about tree parasites and diseases, contact me at the U.K. Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Now Taking Orders for Apple and Pear Rootstock

The Floyd County Extension Office will now begin taking orders for apple and pear rootstock for spring grafting. The program enables small fruit producers to group orders and purchase the rootstock at a cheaper price. No additional orders will be taken after February 1st. So, place your orders now. For more information or to place an order, contact Dottie Collins or myself at the Floyd County Extension Office. Payment must be made at the time of ordering.

Checks are to be made payable to the Floyd County Agriculture Council.



Body Condition Scores Good Indicators of Herd Health

Early winter is an optimum time to prepare your spring-calving herd for reproductive success. Adequate nutrition from about 50 to 80 days prior to calving is critical to maximizing a cow's ability to rebreed and maintain a 365-day calving interval. If a cow gets inadequate nutrition or is thin at calving and breeding, she will take longer to come into heat and will require more services to conceive.



The best method to evaluate the nutritional status of your herd is to do body condition scores. A body condition score is an estimate of the degree of body fatness of an animal, which gives us an estimate of the amount of body energy reserves available to the cow. Scores range from 1 to 9, with 1 meaning a cow is emaciated or extremely thin, while a 9 is an animal that is extremely obese. Beef producers should train themselves to identify cows that are too thin, cows that are marginal and cows that have an optimal body condition score for rebreeding. Body condition scoring is a tool to help plan your supplemental feeding program so you can maintain adequate productivity in your herd.

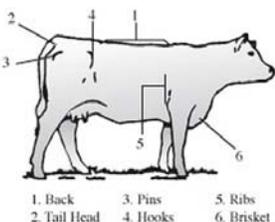
You can determine body condition score by looking at the degree of sharpness or thinness in several areas of the cow's body. The ribs and backbone are two primary regions you need to examine to help establish body condition score. Other important areas are the tailhead, shoulder and brisket regions of the cow. In general, cows with more fat appear smoother in these areas to the point that individual bones are difficult to see.

Cows that are too thin, scores of 3 or less, have easily identifiable fore and rear ribs, sharpness across the backbone, sharpness over the hook and pin bones near the tailhead and sharpness across the shoulders. These cows need to gain approximately 150-200 pounds before calving if you want them to rebreed in a timely fashion.

Cows that are borderline have a body condition score of 4. These cows have easily identifiable 12th and 13th ribs, but their fore ribs are covered. The backbone and hooks and pins are still prominent but are not sharp in appearance. The shoulders are less defined. These cows need to gain about 75 to 100 pounds before breeding season.

Cows that are in optimal body condition have scores of 5 or 6 and have a good overall appearance. No ribs are visible unless the animal has been shrunk. The backbone, hooks and pins appear rounded and not easily seen and the area around the tailhead is filled in but not mounded. These cows simply need to maintain their weight until calving.

Research has shown that cows with scores less than 5 at calving have lower pregnancy rates and take longer to rebreed than cows with scores of 5 or higher. The optimum body condition score for mature cows is a 5 or 6. Heifers that are calving their first calf need to have a score of at least 6 to maximize rebreeding success.



The best way to use body condition scoring is sort cows according to their score at 90-100 days before calving and feed these groups according to their score and nutrient needs to optimize reproduction. Each body condition score typically represents 75 to 100 pounds of body weight. Analyze your feedstuffs so that you can accurately balance rations to meet the needs of each group of cows. This method not only ensures adequate breeding potential of your cowherd, but is also an efficient

method of supplying nutrients to your cows.

The source of this article was Les Anderson, UK Extension beef specialist. For more information on scoring body condition in your cowherd, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Live Christmas Trees for the Holidays

Selection and purchase of a Christmas tree is an annual event for many families. More and more people are choosing to use a living tree that can be transplanted to the landscape once the holiday season is over. For many people this is a good option since the money usually spent on a disposable tree can be invested in a specimen that can add value to the landscape. However, care must be taken when bringing a temperate tree indoors for any length of time and then transplanting it outdoors, especially in winter. Here are some pointers to increase the chances of success.



- Living trees are generally marketed as either balled-and-burlapped or potted plants. Expect to pay more for a living tree than a cut tree and realize that nurseries are reluctant to guarantee your purchase since the tree will not be planted during the normal planting season.
- Consider where the tree will be placed in the landscape. Most Christmas tree species will eventually reach a height of 40-60 feet so appropriate planning is essential.
- Pick out the tree early so that a nicely shaped, vigorous plant can be chosen. But plan to keep the tree inside for no longer than 7-10 days. In the interim, go ahead and dig the hole where the tree will be transplanted and store the tree in this location. Be sure to keep the roots moist. Having the hole dug ahead of time will avoid any problems of inclement weather after the holidays.



- When it's time to bring the tree indoors, the main concern is to protect the plant from drying out. Avoid placing the tree near a radiator or other drafty place-keeping the tree on the cool side is also preferable. Place the tree in a large tub or cover the root ball in plastic to avoid spilling water onto the floor. Allow water to evenly soak into the root ball by applying it as a slow stream. It may be easier to water the plant by placing ice around the top of the soil and allow it to slowly melt and soak into the soil. Don't go overboard and keep the root ball extremely wet as this may damage the root system.

- After Christmas, the tree should be planted immediately in the pre-dug hole. Water the plant well after filling in the hole with soil. Water periodically throughout the winter, especially during warmer weather.

In spring and summer, water the plant every week as you would any other newly transplanted tree. For more information on caring for Christmas trees, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.



Winter Feeding Areas for Livestock



As we move closer to cold weather, it is a good time to think about strategies for winter feeding of livestock, since it is a necessary part of nearly all operations. Choosing the right place for winter feeding can improve production and reduce threats to nearby water resources. A poorly chosen site for winter feeding can have negative impacts on soil and water quality.

A significant amount of pollution can occur if winter feeding is conducted around streams, water bodies or other environmentally sensitive areas such as flood plains and creek bottoms. Storm-water runoff from these areas can carry mud and manure into nearby water bodies, creating water quality problems. If these contaminants can be traced to a specific operation, the owner could be subject to fines from regulatory agencies.

To reduce water pollution and avoid fines, producers can follow a few simple steps. First, place winter feeding areas in well-drained locations. These areas should not allow runoff containing mud and manure to drain into neighboring properties, streams or sinkholes. The farther away a feeding area is from surface or ground water resources, the less likely water pollution is to occur.

Next, producers should consider using confined winter feeding that allows cattle to access a structure or paddock for feeding and then return to a larger forage pasture. Smaller “sacrifice” pastures reduce the area damaged from winter feeding and can be used as central hubs for multiple pastures as part of a rotational grazing system. By placing water and mineral supplements away from the structure, cattle will be enticed to eat in the structure and then move out and away. The volume of manure will be easier to manage because the animals will spread it throughout the fields.

Finally, heavy-use area pads around winter feeding areas can greatly reduce mud and rutting from tractor and hoof traffic. These pads are constructed using geotextile fabric, crushed stone and dense grade aggregate.

By making these considerations for winter feeding of livestock, producers can greatly reduce the potential to contaminate water resources and can improve production.

The source of this article was Steve Higgins, UK Director of Environmental Compliance. For more information on this topic, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Make Farm Record Keeping a Priority

Record keeping may not be every farmer’s favorite activity, and probably not the reason you got into farming as a career. With time, patience and a commitment to get it done, it can make your financial life a lot less worrisome.

Record keeping doesn’t have to be stressful. It’s a way to discover things about your farm that will help you make better long-term decisions. You can use a ledger book or a computer—whatever helps you maintain consistency. Software programs can make your data more meaningful.

Software has become more user-friendly over time, and while it may not make the record keeping process fun, it could help you see the overall picture of your operation. Some programs track purchases of inputs and how you use the input on a particular enterprise or field. You’ll be able to keep track of repair and maintenance records for specific farm equipment and produce balance sheets, income statements and cash flow budgets.

continued on page 8.....

.....continued from page 7

For many livestock operations, a good time to start keeping records is when the veterinarian comes to check the herd. Vets usually charge per head, so that data can help you develop a list of animals that need attention. You can use the same data to develop health histories of your animals, which will lead to more informed exams and diagnosis in the future.

Make record keeping a team effort for your family. Sit down and work on the records and budget together. Perhaps one person can read the information while another person types it into the software program or writes it in the ledger book. Also, if you do a little bit each day and don't save it all up for the end of the year, you won't become overwhelmed.

If you've done the work throughout the year, year-end procedures can feel more satisfying. You can generate year-end reports with a few simple clicks and not have to sort through stacks of bills lying around the home or office.

The University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment's Department of Agricultural Economics has several tools online that could help with budgeting and decision making. Visit <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agecon/index.php?p=29> to see what is available.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



KY-VA MAPLE SYRUP SCHOOL

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10TH, 2016

8:30-3:30 @ THE LETCHER COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE

In collaboration with Harlan & Wise County Extension Offices.



\$10.00 per person (covers lunch)

Pay at the door!!!

Lunch: chili, chips & a drink



DISPLAYS!

BOOTHS!

GRAB BAGS!

Learn about small backyard operations, maple lines, maple evaporators, processing, packaging, bottling guidelines, forming an association, sugar content research, crop tree management, managing the Sugarbush, marketing, and adding value.

For more information, contact Shad Baker at the Letcher County Extension Office @ 633-2362 or via email at shad.baker@uky.edu. We are located off the Whitesburg by-pass at Stone Avenue & Extension Drive.

Cooperative Extension Service
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.
LEONGTON, KY 40546





Floyd County

Wreath Making Workshop

Date: Monday, December 5, 2016

Time: 11 am to 6 pm (come when you can)

Location: Floyd County Extension Office

3490 Kentucky Route 321
Prestonsburg, KY 41653



Learn how to make beautiful wreaths with cuttings from some of our native and landscape plants. Each participant will receive information and hands-on instruction on making a holiday greenery wreath. See how this could even be developed into a small secondary wood industry. Supplies are limited, so you **MUST** pre-register for this workshop. A fifteen dollar (\$15) fee is required for wreath and embellishment supplies. **Fee payable to the Floyd County Ag Council.**

Limited to the first 20 individuals!!!

Sponsored by:

The Floyd County Cooperative Extension Service
- ANR and FCS Programs

To register call Keith Hackworth or Andrea Johnson at the
Floyd County Extension Service
Phone: (606) 886-2668

Limited
Supplies

Must Pre-
Register

Cooperative Extension Service
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.
LEXINGTON, KY 40546



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.