



University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES Newsletter

Nothing is out of reach!

FEBRUARY 2023

UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

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Other programs will be announced later.

If you have a special request for programs or need information on a topic, contact me at the Floyd County Extension Office.



Keith Hackworth

Keith Hackworth
County Extension Agent for
Agriculture & Natural Resources

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| February 2 | Small Fruits Production Workshop
Extension Office 5:30pm |
| February 6 | Grow Appalachian Gardening Series
Extension Office 6:00pm |
| February 7 | Floyd County Beekeepers Program & Meeting
Extension Office 6:00pm |
| Feb. 15-18 | National Farm Machinery Show
Fairgrounds— Louisville |
| February 16 | Homeschool Gardening Series—Session 1
Extension Office 10:30am |
| February 16 | Floyd County Farmer's Market Meeting
Extension Office 6:00pm |
| February 23 | Floyd County ANR/Ag Dev (P1) Council Meetings
Extension Office 5:30pm |
| February 28 | Floyd County Extension Master Gardener Club Meeting
Extension Office 6:00pm |
| March 2 | Grafting Workshop (fruit tree)
Extension Office 5:30pm (call to confirm) |
| March 6 | Grow Appalachia Gardening Series
Extension Office 6:00pm |
| March 9 | Grafting Workshop (fruit tree)
Extension Office 5:30pm |
| March 14 | Fruit Tree Production Workshop
Extension Office 5:30pm |
| March 17 | Floyd County Beekeepers Program & Meeting
Extension Office 6:00pm |

Note: Due to some upcoming repairs, some events may be postponed or modified. Please confirm with the Extension Office at 606-886-2668 prior to the event.

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

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LEXINGTON, KY 40546



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

Heirloom Fruits and Vegetables



As more and more consumers seek self-sufficiency, many are finding success in their backyard gardens. Concurrently the green movement continues to spur interest in organic practices and heirloom fruits and vegetables. Heirlooms are vintage varieties preserved by passing down seed through generations. Generally 50 to 100 years old, heirlooms are always open pollinated and usually breed true to type. They often are selected for flavor potential and quality.

Prior to the development of commercial farming methodologies, heirlooms held a prominent place on the family farm. Today many of these old-time favorites are finding a niche at local farmers' markets and roadside stands.

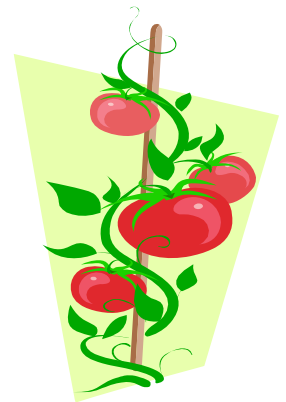
Many hybrid varieties are a cross between two other varieties to establish characteristics for mass marketing. Growers might cross tomato varieties for disease resistance, uniformity and solid texture to improve shipping stability. Beans and cucumbers might grow low to the ground on bush type plants which allows for mechanized harvesting.

Heirlooms require a different set of growing practices. Tomatoes are often indeterminate and require staking. Beans and cucumbers are mostly vine varieties that need trellising. The fruits may be more susceptible to disease and many do not hold up under excessive handling.

These characteristics leave heirlooms poorly suited for commercial growers who sell to large wholesale markets. Smaller wholesale markets for heirloom growers include local restaurants, food co-ops and health food stores. Selling seed, transplants, and value-added products such as salsa or soup mix represent other income producing opportunities. The difference between hybrids and heirlooms arguably may be one of quality versus quantity. It is noteworthy that heirlooms almost always are ripened on the vine where hybrids are often picked in the green stage. This may account for taste and texture differences in the end.

Whether you want to grow heirlooms to sell or simply for the enjoyment of your own table, many sources exist for good heirloom seeds. Because they are open pollinated, heirloom lines are much easier than hybrids to maintain. Look for reputable catalog companies that offer product descriptions and history. The Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Center in Berea offers a wide variety of old-fashioned bean seeds. Kentucky heirloom tomato varieties include KY Beefsteak and Depp's Pink Firefly. Some communities offer seed exchanges through their local farmer's markets.

The source of this article was Timothy Coolong, UK Extension professor, horticulture. For more information about growing fruits and vegetables in Kentucky, contact the Floyd County Extension Office. Our telephone number is 606-886-2668.



Recommendations for Taking Soil Samples

Soil testing is an important management practice for gardens, pastures, lawns, landscapes, croplands, and other agricultural lands. It is used to properly inform the producer or landowner of the amounts of nutrients (fertilizer and lime) needed for the best results. Soil testing can save you money and/or increase production.



The result of a soil analysis is no better than the sample you collect. Since a pound of soil can represent several acres, take samples that depict the area on which you want fertility data. Take random core samples at a uniform depth throughout the area. Mix cores together well in a clean, dry plastic bucket; then fill the sample box and take it to the Extension office.

Collect cores at the same time each year so you can compare results from year to year. Although you can take samples through much of the year, fall and spring are the best times to take them. Do not take cores when soil is too wet because it is difficult to mix them well and they are hard to handle. The soil should be dry enough to till when you take samples.

The Floyd County Conservation District offers a service of soil sampling and covers the cost of testing to the residents of the county, if their technician takes the samples. You can contact them to schedule this service at 606-889-9800. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity.

The other option is taking the sample yourself and paying the testing fee. If you chose to do this, bring samples containing at least a quart of soil to the Extension Office. For more information on collecting samples or related questions, contact me at the Floyd County Extension Office.

Winter Fruit Tree Care

During the winter months, home orchard owners need to protect their fruit trees from rabbits and voles. But hold off on any pruning until after the worst of the cold, winter weather has passed.

Rabbits and voles injure fruit trees by chewing the bark from the lower trunk and portions of the roots. This damage may kill or severely weaken the trees.

If grass has grown up around the base of the trees, it should be removed so as not to provide cover for rabbits and voles. If your trees are mulched, pull the mulch back for five to six inches at the base of the trunk to keep the rodents away.



Pick up and discard any fruit that remains beneath the trees to avoid attracting the rodents. Cleaning up fruit from the ground should be a part of annual fall and winter orchard cleanup.

Finally install rodent guards around the lower trunk. These may be plastic wrap guards that are commercially available. Home orchard owners can also construct their own guards using quarter inch hardware cloth.

The guards should cover the trunk to a height of 18 inches and encircle the trunk. During the winter months inspect the ground around the trees for tunnels in the grass or holes indicating vole activity. Use snap traps when vole activity is noted.

Prior to spring growth, prune out dead and diseased wood. Pruning increases air movement within the tree canopy, potentially reduces pest problems, improves spray coverage, and promotes high-quality fruit production. Late February, March or early April usually is the best time to prune.

For more information on home orchards, contact the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Incorporating Edible Plants into the Landscape

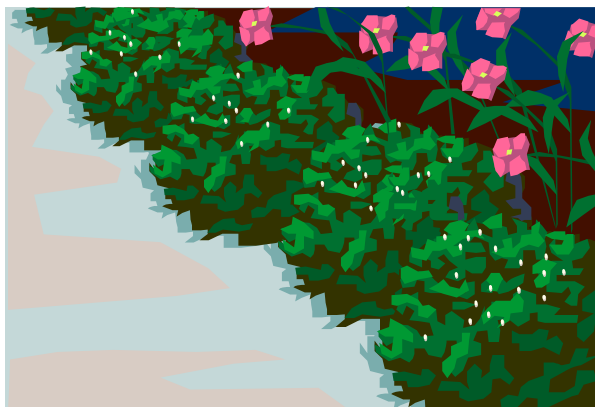
A nice landscape of a few trees and shrubs, some flowers and well-tended turf has value. Our landscapes help define our outdoor living space, provide shade, and help screen unwanted views.

A well-maintained landscape may add as much as 5 to 10 percent to the value of our property.

But landscapes can provide another resource that we do not often consider--food. What if it were possible to introduce edible plants to your landscape?

Growing your own food has some obvious benefits such as fresh and flavorful fruits and vegetables. Many food-producing plants can fill the roles that we usually assign to other plants in our landscape.

Trellised blackberries, for example, make a great hedge or screen. Using thorny types can also provide some measure of security. Many retain some of their leaves throughout the winter to provide some screening.



Trellising the blackberries will help define the planting and promote more upright growth. The time needed to prune and thin blackberries is comparable to many other hedge-type plantings. Also, blackberries have relatively few problem insects or diseases.

In flower beds, you can plant fancy-leafed lettuce in early spring. Lettuce is finished by mid-May, just around the time you are adding annual flowers.

In summer, try a few rainbow chard plants, colored peppers and purple or variegated basil. All are relatively pest free and are a good contrast to flowering annuals and perennials.

Also, consider containers. Cherry tomatoes grow well in hanging baskets where vines are allowed to droop over the edge of the pot. Several herbs are well suited to containers and provide savory flavoring for your salads and meals.

The next time you are looking to add plants to your landscape, do not overlook herbs and food producing plants. Some may provide what you need and more.

The source of this article was Rick Durham, UK Horticulture Extension specialist. For more information about adding herbs, food producing plants and where they grow best in your yard, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Looking Forward to the Vegetable Garden

Soon you will be receiving seed catalogs for this vegetable-growing season. While listening to the cold wind blow outside, what a comfort it is to think about spring and summer and planning your garden.

To make the most of your garden, every aspiring gardener should follow seven steps to have a successful gardening season.



Plan your garden on paper before you begin.

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.



Prepare the soil properly and add fertilizer and lime according to soil-test recommendations.

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 will have to control weeds and pests, apply water when needed and harvest on time. Vegetables harvested at their peak are tasty and the flavor is simply the best.

Grow vegetables that will produce the maximum amount of food in the space available.

Plant during the correct season for the crop. Choose varieties recommended for your area.

Harvest vegetables at their proper stage of maturity. Store them promptly and properly if you do not use them immediately.

A well-planned and properly kept garden should produce 600 to 700 pounds of produce per 1,000 square feet and may include many different crops.

Finally, the closer the vegetable garden is to your back door, the more you will use it. You can see when your crops are at their peaks and can take maximum advantage of their freshness. Also, keeping up with the planting, weeding, watering and pest control will be easier.

The source of this article was Richard Durham, Extension Horticulture Specialist. For more guidance on your vegetable garden, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office or download the publication, “Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky” (<http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/id/id128/id128.pdf>) on the web.

REMINDER

Now is the time to collect and properly store your scion wood for grafting new fruit trees!!!

Not Too Soon To Think About Calving Season

Calving season will be here before we know it. Providing sound management during that time can mean more live calves, which translates to more profit for you.

It is important to have a short calving period to allow frequent observation and assistance if needed. Some specific things a producer can do to limit calf loss include:

- Separate first-calf heifers from mature cows. Calving difficulty can run as high as 30 to 40 percent for 2-year-old heifers compared to just 3 percent for mature cows. Place them in a small, accessible pasture near a corral where assistance can be given if needed.
- Provide a clean area for calving. The calving area should be a well-sodded pasture or clean, dry maternity pen, not a wet, muddy lot. It should also be large enough for adequate exercise and offer protection from prevailing winds.
- Be familiar with the signs of calving. Within a few hours of calving, cows generally become nervous and uneasy. As contractions increase, a cow will likely wander away from the rest of the herd.
- Check cows frequently. Observing cows three or four times a day and providing assistance, when necessary, results in more live calves. However, cows should be disturbed as little as possible during labor.
- Know when a cow needs assistance. Intervention is justified when two or three hours have passed without progress or if delivery has not occurred within 90 minutes after the water sac appears. In a normal delivery, the calf's front legs and head will appear first.



There are also a few steps to take after the calf is born to help it get off to a good start. These include making sure the calf is breathing normally after it is delivered and that it consumes colostrum. Ideally, a calf should consume its first milk within 15 to 30 minutes after birth.

Immediately after calving, increase the cow's energy intake to about 16 pounds of total digestible nutrients per day. The extra energy will help the cow produce enough milk for her calf and allow her to rebreed on schedule.

The source of this article was Les Anderson, UK Extension Beef Specialist. For more information on beef cattle production and management, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Ways to Improve Hay Quality

If you raise livestock, you know it is very important to feed your animals nutritious hay to keep them healthy. You can take many practical steps to improve your hay quality.

You must first get and maintain a good forage stand. Making sure your soil has adequate nutrients is key to getting good stands. A soil test is important, because it will let you know the nutrient levels in the soil, so you only apply what is needed.

Your extension agent can help you learn how to effectively test your soil and can submit your samples to one of UK's soil testing laboratories. Agents can also help you understand the results.



Soil tests with adequate levels of phosphorus and nitrogen but low levels of potassium are becoming common across Kentucky hay fields. Inadequate potassium can increase the amount of broomsedge, a very undesirable forage. There may be a couple of reasons for low potassium levels. When you cut hay, potash is removed at nearly three times the amount that phosphorus is, and the soil is not able to replenish this nutrient to sufficient levels on its own. Repeatedly using only 'balanced' fertilizers like triple-19 (19-19-19) will deplete potassium in hayfields. In tight financial times, producers may skip potash applications to save money.

Controlling weeds at the right time and using the right herbicide will help you improve hay quality. With many weeds, like buttercup, by the time you see the blooms, they are much harder to control. University of Kentucky has an extension publication, AGR-207: Broadleaf Weeds of Kentucky, that contains common pasture weeds, when to treat each and which herbicide you can use for effective control. This publication is available online at <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/AGR/AGR207/AGR207.pdf>. You can also get a paper copy at the Floyd County Extension office.

The stage of maturity when you cut your hay is the most important factor affecting quality. You must harvest at the right time, when the plant is switching from a vegetative to a reproductive (flowering) stage. Many times, this means cutting the hay earlier than normal. Of course, the challenge of cutting hay in the spring in Kentucky is our wet weather. However, we often get a string of days with good sun and dry weather in late April and early May. Being ready to cut early when the weather allows is extremely helpful.

Using legumes, especially the tall ones like red clover and alfalfa, provide high yields and will add nitrogen to the soil over time. They are higher in protein and energy than grasses and continue to yield well in the summer when many of our cool-season grasses are suffering from the heat. Research shows that red clover, in particular, is good at minimizing the adverse effects animals get from consuming too much toxic endophyte-infected tall fescue.

Tedding and raking hay are integral parts of harvesting. But if you ted or rake the hay when it is too dry, it can lead to leaf shatter. This hurts hay quality, because the high-quality nutrients are concentrated in the leaf.

Making good hay means baling at the right moisture content and protecting hay from the weather. Proper moisture at baling will prevent heating and molding of stored hay. Covered storage structures are best for hay storage. If you don't have covered storage space, breaking the contact between the bale and the ground is important, since most moisture enters the hay from soil contact. You can prevent moisture absorption by using materials, such as old tires and/or crushed rock, to elevate the hay off the ground.

You can also wrap your hay in plastic, which will provide some protection from the rain. Hay should be as dry as possible before covering in plastic and should be fed out in the year it was made.

After you have done a good job harvesting hay, remember to feed it efficiently to minimize losses. There are many methods of feeding hay, but the best ensure that there is minimal waste. Livestock tend to eat high quality hay quickly, which also lowers waste.

The source of this article was Jimmy Henning, UK Eextension Forage Specialist. More information on producing quality forages is available by contacting me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Composting Basics

Composting is a great way to add valuable organic matter to your soil while reducing the amount of yard and food waste that ends up in landfills. It is also something that nearly everyone can do. Compost is the result of a natural process where decaying organic substances, such as plants, are broken down by microorganisms. This produces a nutrient-rich, organic material that you can apply to your lawn or garden, much like you would a commercial fertilizer.

You can start a compost bin or pile in your backyard. You can purchase a bin or make one by using inexpensive, leftover materials like pallets or chicken wire. The bin can be as big or small as you want, but for most rapid composting, a pile that is at least 1-yard tall and 1-yard wide and 1-yard long is best. Make sure you place your compost in an area that is flat and well-drained.

Once you have defined a compost area, collect yard waste and food scraps. Yard waste includes twigs, shrub trimmings, grass clippings, leftover straw, and leaves. Most fruit, vegetable and grain scraps are compostable as are coffee grounds, herbs, nuts, and eggshells. Avoid meat scraps, oils, and dairy products. Remember, you need to have a mixture of “brown” material (dried leaves, straw, twigs, coffee grounds, even cardboard) and “green” materials (fresh grass clippings, vegetable scraps, other fresh plant materials) for the composting process to work. Mix or turn the pile once a week to help speed the breakdown of organic materials. If the compost pile is extremely damp, turn it more often. If it is dry, add some water or fresh plant material. It can take four to six months to complete the composting process. You will know it is finished when the compost is dark brown, crumbly and smells like soil.

Compost can be used in the vegetable garden or spread around ornamental plants in the landscape but be careful not to use too much. A 1-inch layer of compost, worked into the top few inches of soil, will feed plants for several months.

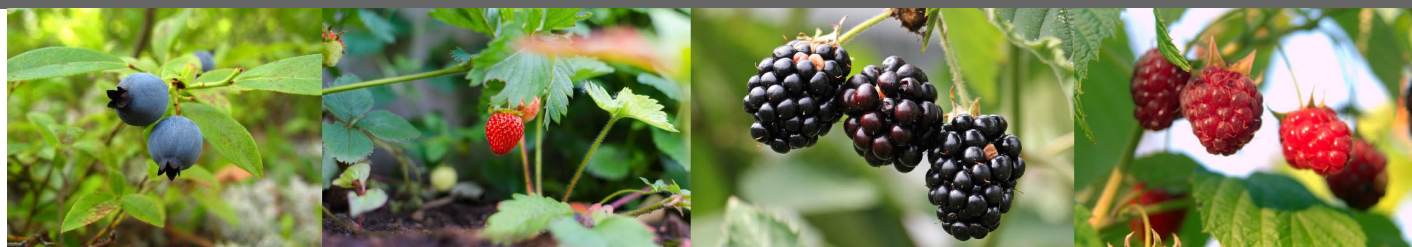
The source of this article was Rick Durham, UK Extension Horticulture Professor. More information on composting or other gardening tips is available at the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

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February is typically a cold month across the Commonwealth, but it can also be a wet one. This combination of cold, sometimes frozen and snow covered ground, with rain falling on top, can lead to devastating river flooding. In fact, some of Kentucky's worst river floods have occurred in the month of February. The floods of late February and early March of last year hit eastern Kentucky especially hard, setting records on the Kentucky River. Another February flood many long-time Kentuckians remember was the Flood of '57 when the Big Sandy, Kentucky and Cumberland Rivers were especially hard hit. Extreme floods on the Ohio also occurred in February 1883, 1884 and January/February 1937.

The National Weather Service (NWS) provides river level forecasts to keep those that would be affected by flooding safe and aware. Flood Watches are issued when flooding is possible, sometimes days in advance. When a Flood Watch is issued, and you are in a flood prone location, stay tuned to trusted news sources and to the NWS and be ready to seek higher ground. When a Flood Warning is issued, flooding is either happening or about to happen. Move to higher ground immediately! Many fatalities happen when drivers ignore road closed signs and barriers, and drive into water of unknown depth. Just 6 inches of fast-moving water can knock over and carry away an adult, and 12 to 24 inches of fast-flowing water can carry away everything from a small car to a large SUV, van and truck. Never attempt to cross flood waters by vehicle or on foot!

During a flood, small decisions like turning around and not driving through a flooded roadway, not driving around barricades, and delaying travel until conditions improve, can make a big impact on whether you keep your vehicle...or even your life!



College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

Small Fruit Workshop

Thursday, February 2, 2023 5:30pm

The Small Fruit Workshop will address the basics of producing blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, and other small fruits.

The workshop will cover the topics of:

- Site and Variety Selection
- Planting and General Care
- Spray Programs

Light refreshments will be served.



Floyd County Extension Agent for
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Floyd County Extension Service
3490 KY Route 321
Prestonsburg, KY 41653
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Email: khackwor@uky.edu

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Fax (606) 886-1458



University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
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Cooperative Extension Service

Grafting Fruit Trees Apples & Pears

Floyd County Extension Office
Thursday, March 2, 2023 5:30pm

AND

Floyd County Extension Office
Thursday, March 9, 2023 5:30pm

MUST REGISTER!!

Keith Hackworth will give a hands-on demonstration on how to graft apple and pear trees. We will have a limited supply of rootstock on hand so that you can try your hand at making a graft. We will also be discussing the basics of training and pruning your young fruit trees.

**Please call Keith Hackworth or
Lori Gearheart at 886-2668 to register.**

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



2023 Plant Order Form

Floyd County
Cooperative

Extension Service

3490 KY Route 321
Prestonsburg, KY 41653

606-886-2668
khackwor@uky.edu

Purchaser Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Quantity	Item	Unit Price	Total
_____ bundles	Strawberries (Allstar) (June bearing—larger berry)	\$5.00 (bundle of 25)	
_____ bundles	Strawberries (Earliglow) (June bearing—smaller, sweeter berry)	\$5.00 (bundle of 25)	
	Blackberries (Natchez)	\$4 each	
	Blueberries (Duke) (two varieties needed for pollination)	\$8 each	
	Blueberries (Chandler) (two varieties needed for pollination)	\$8 each	
	Raspberries (Prelude) - bare root	\$4 each	
	Jewel Black Raspberries	\$4 each	
	Asparagus (Millennium)	\$1 each	
_____ bundles	Onion plants (Candy)	\$5 (bundle of 60)	
		Total Due	

Pre-payment is required by Friday, February 24, for all plant orders. Make checks payable to: Floyd County Ag Council

Payment Information:

Amount Paid: _____

Date: _____

Received by: _____

Check No.: _____ or Cash _____

Plants are expected to ship from the nursery during the first week of April. We will call or email to let you know when the plants will be available for pickup.

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