

**HORTICULTURE**

# Horticulture Happenings

Winter 2021/2022

(sg)

**Cooperative Extension Service**  
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## Kristin's Corner

Welcome to the late winter and early spring edition of the Horticulture Happenings Newsletter! In this newsletter, find seasonal and timely information to use in and around the garden.

Planning the garden now is key to a successful 2022 gardening season! Read tips on page 2 to start planning your kitchen garden.

Make sure to soil test early this year! Since the soil lab at the Princeton Research Center was destroyed in the December tornado, all samples will be mailed to Lexington. Get ahead of the spring rush by collecting soil samples now. To read more details on how to sample different horticulture areas around the home, turn to page 3.

Jump start spring gardening activities by reading pages 4 and 5! These pages contain a checklist of "things to do" for February and March to help you stay on track for the busy spring gardening season!

February is a good month to perform general maintenance practices on home fruit in the backyard. Flip to page 6 for specific home fruit practices needed to boost production during the season.

Now is the prime time to prune fruit trees in the backyard during the dormant season. To learn more about home fruit tree pruning, mark your calendars for the in person fruit pruning demonstration at Jackson's Orchard. This annual event will be held on Saturday, March 5th! Refer to page 7 to learn how to register for this free event.

Lastly, check out our seasonal recipe for roasted root vegetables! This Plate it Up! Kentucky Proud recipe features a combination of root vegetables which makes for a colorful dish. To get the full recipe for roasted root vegetables, flip over to the back page of the newsletter.

Hope that you enjoy this Horticulture Happenings Newsletter! If you have any questions about specific horticulture or gardening topics, feel free to contact me at the Warren County Extension Office. I will be glad to help in any way that I can.

Happy Gardening!

Happy Gardening!

*Kristin G. Hildabrand*

**Kristin G. Hildabrand**  
**Warren County Extension Agent**  
**for Horticulture**



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LEXINGTON, KY 40546



Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.



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# Perk up Your February by Planning Your Kitchen Garden

*Written by Maggie Shelton, Warren County Extension Master Gardener Intern*



Cold and windy outside? Then take a mental vacation to Spring! Imagine the smell of the soil, the dirt in

your hands, the warm sun on your neck, and ... having a plan! February is a great time to dream about what you want to grow; explore the gardening websites and seed and plant catalogs; and pull out your notebook and grid paper. Whether you are new to gardening or have a few seasons under your belt, there are many things to think about (or revisit) when planning your garden. Start now. Spring is right around the corner!

Where to begin? First, make a list of plants you'd like in your garden. You can dream big while it's cold outside, but, if you're new to gardening, start small so you're not overwhelmed. Some easy to grow favorites are tomatoes, peppers, cucumber, green beans, basil, and parsley. Remember, the larger the garden, the more time you'll need for tasks like watering/weeding/mulching, tying up tomato plants as they grow, and regularly checking zucchini for squash bug eggs. Gardening is a labor of love that takes time.

Other ways to ensure you use your gardening time (and space) wisely is to identify the fruits and vegetables you and your family like to eat and grow those. Think about the fresh herbs you'd like to have handy. Also, identify "companion plants" to include. Those are specific fruit, vegetables, herbs, or flowers that when planted in proximity to one another provide mutual benefits that protect and increase the plants' health and productivity, for example tomatoes and basil. Be aware that there are also plants that should not be planted near each other such as tomatoes and potatoes.

Determine where to locate your garden. Most kitchen garden plants need full sun, and southern exposure is best. Locate it away from trees and areas that retain water when

it rains. Make sure you have access to water or a plan for transporting water to the garden.

There are many types of garden bed designs to pick from or combine. Think about the space, maintenance, and cost needed for each as well as the height, spread, and moisture needs of your plants. Raised beds are popular because they don't require digging and warm up more quickly in the spring so you can plant earlier. You can also use containers with potting soil if you don't have appropriate yard space.

It is extremely important that you ensure your soil has the nutrients needed to grow strong healthy plants. You can take a soil sample to your local extension center for an assessment, and they will recommend amendments you should add. Contact your center about how to take soil samples. The assessment may take a few weeks, so do it early.

One last thing to think about as you plan your garden is whether you can add a few extra plants so that you'll have some extra fresh vegetables you can donate to those in need. Look for a food pantry that accepts fresh food or a local soup kitchen. For more info on planning to share, you can contact <http://gleanky.org/plant-it-forward>.

I hope this article has you excited about getting started. I highly recommend downloading Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky from the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment website. This book provides lots of information and easy to follow instructions on the topics above as well as information on preparing your garden site, growing from seeds, how/when to set your plants in your garden, fertilizing, composting, dealing with pests, and growing organic. Your local cooperative extension center is also a great resource.

Happy Garden Planning.

# Soil Sample Early!

Since the University of Kentucky lost the Princeton Research and Education Center in December due to the tornado, we are encouraging producers to submit soil samples early rather than waiting until spring. All soil samples will be analyzed by the Soil Testing Laboratory in Lexington. March is predicted to be an extremely busy time, take advantage of the warm days and get soil samples collected and to the local Extension Office for analysis!

Here are good tips to remember when collecting the best soil samples from the home lawn, vegetable garden, fruit plantings, as well as other horticultural areas around the home.

## TOOLS YOU'LL NEED

A soil probe, auger, garden trowel, or a spade and knife are all the tools you need to take the individual cores that will make up the "field" sample. You will also need a clean, dry bucket (preferably plastic) to collect and mix the sample cores. Soil sample boxes or bags and information forms for submitting samples are available at your local County Extension office.

The most representative sample can be obtained from a large area by sampling in smaller units on the basis of soil type, cropping history, erosion, or past management practices. More accurate results are obtained when problem areas are sampled separately, especially when "trouble-shooting" during the growing season. In such instances, take a sample both from the poor growing area and adjacent areas of good growth. Designate each sample area with a letter or numbers on an area map for record-keeping purposes. Collect at least 5 to 10 soil cores for each lawn or garden area. Take the soil cores randomly throughout the area to be sampled and place in the bucket. From that mixture, you will BRING IN 2 CUPS (1 PINT) OF SOIL FROM EACH SAMPLE AREA.

## BUSH AND VINE FRUITS

- Sample the top 8 to 12 inches of soil.
- Fertilize in February.

## HOME LANDSCAPE TREES & SHRUBS

- Sample the top 6 to 12 inches of soil.
- Take samples from under the drip line of established trees (under tips of the longest branches all the way around the tree), or just outside the root ball or planting area for newly planted trees.
- Fertilize in late fall, early winter or early spring.

## HOME FLOWER GARDENS

- Annual Flowers—Sample the top 6 to 8 inches of soil.
- Perennial Flowers—Sample the top 6 to 12 inches of soil.
- Don't take samples too close to foundations, sidewalks, driveways or limestone graveled areas, unless these are treated as separate "problem areas".
- Granular dry fertilizer can be added to the flower garden when it is tilled in the spring.

## HOME VEGETABLE GARDENS

- Sample the top 6 to 12 inches of soil, preferably in October or November.
- Do not include compost or manure in the sample.
- Fertilize in early spring before planting, and sidedress with more fertilizer later in the season as needed.

## TREE FRUITS

- Sample the top 12 to 18 inches of soil.
- Take samples from drip line area under branch tips (or closer to trunk for newly planted trees).
- Fertilize in February, according to soil test results.

## LAWNS AND TURFGRASSES

- For established lawns, sample the top 2 inches of soil only. Do not include grass, roots or thatch in the sample.
- For areas to be tilled up for a new lawn, sample the top 4 inches of soil.
- Sample problem areas and areas with shrubs or flower beds separate from other turf or lawn areas.
- Sample front and back yards separately.
- For lawn samples, do not sample under the drip line of trees.
- Fertilize lawns only at the proper time of year (primarily in the Fall).



# February



## KENTUCKY



## Gardening

# Checklist

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- Brighten up the winter home by forcing branches of flowering trees and shrubs indoors. Forcing branches can be done as soon as the buds begin to swell in late winter. Forsythia and pussywillow can be forced as early as late February. Wait until March to force more difficult ornamentals such as crabapples, magnolias, and redbuds.
- Perform maintenance tasks on backyard fruits this month. Prune home fruits to maximize sunlight potential and help fight off disease pressure. Apply dormant oil for apple and pear trees. February is also a good time to fertilize fruit trees. Apply fertilizer rates on fruit trees according to the plant growth rate and condition. Make sure to obtain a fruit tree spray guide to have on hand for the season ahead. Contact your local Extension Office for more information.
- Sow seeds of cool season vegetables indoors. Begin trays of broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi, lettuce, and Chinese cabbage on February 15th for western Kentucky and February 25th for central Kentucky.
- Use an artificial grow light system to supply enough light needed for germinating seedlings. 2 cool white fluorescent lights or a mixture of one cool white bulb and one warm fluorescent light work good for most vegetables. Plants require 16 to 18 hours of light daily for germination.
- A germination mat can also increase root zone temperature to help seedlings germinate faster. Make sure to remove the germination mat after germination has occurred.
- February 14th is the day to celebrate Valentine's Day. Support local flower farmers in the area by purchasing bouquet subscription services or buying gift certificates to use later in the season.
- Houseplants are another good option to buy for your special someone in your life. Succulents are a good choice for houseplants, since they thrive on neglect and like it on the dry side.
- Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) which is held in February. In this activity, bird enthusiasts count the number of birds found in their backyard, neighborhood, or other locations. The sightings are then recorded at the website found at [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org)
- Check feeders daily and replenish when low on seed or empty. The feeders help provide birds with an adequate food supply during stressful winter days when it has caused the ice to cover their native food sources.
- When feeding birds, make sure you have the correct food source for the desired birds that you wish to attract. Sunflower seeds are very attractive to several different species of birds including cardinals, chickadees, and finches.
- Sharpen and clean gardening tools before the gardening season starts. Take time to organize the garden shed that is filled with containers, soil, and other gardening equipment.
- Get lawn mower blades sharpened before spring. If any repairs are needed, contact a repair shop to schedule an appointment for service now before they are booked for the season.
- Plan your garden on paper right now to help get a kick-start on the gardening season. Make sure to provide enough space for developing plants to reach their mature heights.

# March



## KENTUCKY



# Checklist

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- Apply pre-emergent herbicide for crabgrass control between the first part of March and April 15th for central Kentucky. A good indicator plant to use for knowing when to apply this product is when the forsythia shrub is blooming.
- Perform a soil test and apply lime and fertilizer recommendations based on soil test recommendations.
- Clean and sharpen garden tools.
- Gradually harden off vegetable seedlings grown indoors 2 weeks before planting outdoors. Each day, increase the plant's time outside by a few additional hours each day and then eventually work up to 24 hours a day for a couple of days to help toughen them up.
- Prepare the garden soil for planting.
- Move transplants of cabbage and kohlrabi to the garden on March 15th for western Kentucky and March 25th for central Kentucky.
- Start seeds outdoors of beets, carrots, collards, kale, mustard, peas, spinach, early potato seed pieces, radishes, turnips, green onions, and endive on March 15th for western Kentucky and March 25th for central Kentucky.
- Begin trays of tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers indoors on March 15th for western Kentucky and March 25th for central Kentucky.
- Plant cool season herbs like dill and parsley.
- Plant asparagus and rhubarb crowns in the home vegetable garden. Fertilize established plants with 1 lb. 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. Dig and divide any 4 year old rhubarb plants.
- Plant cool season flowers such as pansies, ornamental cabbage, and kale to add spring color to the garden and landscape. These flowers work great in containers, too!
- Get the lawn mower ready for the season by sharpening mower blades and performing other needed mower maintenance.
- Prune fruit tree in the orchard or backyard to help increase sunlight and airflow potential. Remove clippings from the area and discard properly.
- Incorporate organic matter like compost into garden soil to improve soil structure.
- Prune back roses in the garden or landscape.
- Repot houseplants if you notice decreased plant growth and the roots running out the drainage holes of the container.
- Monitor young fruit and landscape trees for vole damage.
- Remove dried plant material from perennials flowers and cut back grasses to stimulate new growth.

# Fruits for February!

Move over Valentine’s Day! February is not only the month for flowers, but it is also a time for gardeners to show their love and care for fruits! Right now is the absolute best time of year to perform general maintenance practices such as pruning, fertilizing, and spraying needed for quality home fruit production.

Prune fruit trees and grapes in late February or early March after the severe winter weather has passed but just before new growth begins in the spring. Thinning out cuts and heading back cuts are types of cuts needed to improve air flow and maximize sunlight potential through the canopy to help fight off harmful diseases. Depending on the type of fruit tree being grown, train the tree in a specific shape with a main central leader for apple production or an open vase shape required for peach trees.

After pruning, apply a dormant oil spray to apple and pear trees. Dormant oil is a refined petroleum product that effectively controls red mites and scale insects from overwintering in tree bark by suffocating them. In order for dormant oil to be effective, put on the spray before new growth begins in the spring and when temperatures are above freezing for at least 24 hours. Make sure to read and follow all directions listed on the label before applying.

To keep fruits healthy, fertilize fruit trees in February after the ground thaws but before blooming. The exact time for fertilizer application will vary according to location, so the best indicator for timing of fertilizer is to watch the buds. As the buds begin to swell, go ahead and apply fertilizer based on soil test recommendations. By doing it this way, nitrogen fertilizer is not wasted and the grower gets a better timing of fertilizer for plant uptake.

For first year plantings, fertility adjustments are made prior to planting so their root system has time to establish in the ground. During subsequent seasons, apply fertilizer rates according to the plant growth rate and condition. If the average terminal growth is less than the value listed under the desired vegetative growth in Table 1, increase the quantity of nitrogen applied. If the terminal growth exceeds the amount, reduce the quantity of nitrogen. Nitrogen should be at its peak level during the spring growing season.

Stop by your local county Extension office to find out more information on maintaining home fruits. They have lots of research-based information from the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service to help gardeners know when is the best time and proper

way of pruning, fertilizing, and spraying. All Extension publications can be viewed and printed from the UK Extension website: <http://www.uky.edu/hort/document-list-home-fruit>.

Fruit	Desired Vegetative Growth	Rate (distributed in the dripline area)	Time
Tart Cherry	8" new terminal growth for mature trees; 1-3 year old trees may have double this amount of terminal growth	1/6 lb. 33-0-0 or 1/2 lb. 10-10-10 per tree per year of age	February
Pear	Less than 12" new terminal growth for mature trees; 1-3 year old trees may have double this amount of terminal growth	1/8 lb. 33-0-0 or 3/8 lb. 10-10-10 per tree per year of age	February
Apple	12-15" new terminal growth for mature trees; 1-3 year old trees may have double this amount of terminal growth	1/4 lb. 33-0-0 or 3/4 lb. 10-10-10 per tree per year of age	February
Peach / Plum	14-20" new terminal growth for mature trees; 1-3 year old trees may have double this amount of terminal growth	1/6 lb. 33-0-0 or 1/2 lb. 10-10-10 per tree per year of age	February

Table 1: Fertilizer Guidelines, UK Cooperative Extension Service, HortFact—3004



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

# FRUIT TREE PRUNING WORKSHOP

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Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>  
9:00 a.m.  
Jackson's Orchard  
(1280 Slim Island Road)

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*This workshop is free, but we ask that people register by contacting the WCEO at (270) 842-1681.*

*Make sure to dress accordingly since the program will be held outdoors.*

*Please make sure to practice social distancing.*

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LEXINGTON, KY 40546



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# Roasted Root Vegetables

## Ingredients:

- 6 medium beets
- 2 large sweet potatoes
- 3 parsnips
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- Dressing (recipe follows)

## Dressing:

- 1 ½ teaspoons lemon juice
- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 ½ tablespoons barbeque sauce
- ½ teaspoon chili powder



## Directions:



Stir together dressing and set aside. Preheat oven to 400° F. Peel beets, sweet potatoes and parsnips. Cut into ½ inch thick cubes. Toss vegetables with olive oil and place in a single layer on a greased baking sheet. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake at 400°F for 20 to 25 minutes, or until tender. Cool. Arrange vegetables on a serving dish and drizzle with dressing.

Yield: 6 servings

Nutritional Analysis: 210 calories, 10 g fat, 1.5 g sat fat, 3 g protein, 30 g carbohydrate, 0 mg cholesterol, 750 mg sodium, 7 g fiber



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