

Cooperative Extension Service

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MARCH 2023

HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER
From the Ground Up

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<i>"Twice Baked Acorn Squash"</i>	

A Word from the Agent...



February weather certainly threw us some curve balls! Trees are budding, daffodils are blooming, and everything is running way ahead of normal it seems. Hopefully March is nice and doesn't dump too much winter on us. Thanks to all who came out to Winter School, we had 3 great nights of information. We got some good classes coming up this spring and summer as well, some of which you can now sign up for.

Time change is this month, so yay for longer evenings!! If you apply pre-emergent crabgrass control, do it when the forsythia are blooming. Call with any questions that I can help with!

Carrie Spry
Clark County Extension Agent for Horticulture
carrie.spry@uky.edu

PS - For the curious folks, yes my husband got my hint about dark chocolate day and I got to enjoy a gift of dark chocolate truffles this past month. Even though he accused me of making up holidays, he caved to the pressure many of you applied on my behalf :)



CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS

SPRING FORWARD

Daylight Saving Time Begins
Sunday, March 12, 2023

Monday,
March 13, 2023
6:30 pm
Clark County Extension Service
(1400 Fortune Drive; Winchester)
~ POT-LUCK MEAL ~

GROWING

Cut Flowers



College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service



THURSDAY, APRIL 20

6:30 pm

Clark County Extension Service

If you can spare some garden space or have sunny spots in your landscape, you can grow flowers!

Discussion will include management tips to ensure your success.

*Free
Seeds!*

IF YOU REGISTER!

**Space
is
limited!**

Class taught by Carrie Spry - Clark County Extension Agent for Horticulture

To register, call the Extension Office at 859-744-4682 or email cynthia.carr@uky.edu



Mulch and Mold

By Carrie Spry, Clark County Extension Agent for Horticulture

Mulch has many benefits around plant beds, foundation shrubs and other gardening locations in the yard. However, nuisance fungi occasionally grow on mulch applied to landscape plants and trees.

In landscape beds and gardens, mulch helps control weeds, prevents extreme soil temperature fluctuation, decreases water evaporation and improves drainage. Mulch also reduces mower and string trimmer damage by suppressing vegetation near shrubs and trees. As it decomposes, mulch produces organic materials to improve soil and otherwise benefit plants. You need to periodically re-apply mulch to continually receive these benefits. Nuisance fungi occasionally grow on mulch. They include shotgun fungus, slime molds, stinkhorns, earth stars and toadstools.

The shotgun fungus shoots masses of tiny black spore structures onto adjacent surfaces such as vehicles and home siding.

Slime molds are more unsightly than harmful. Often referred to as 'dog vomit', they don't cause plant diseases and aren't parasitic. Slime mold spores usually appear from late spring to autumn. Abundant wet weather stimulates above-ground appearance of these fungi that initially appear slimy but quickly become dry and powdery when converting into spore masses. Slime molds often

quickly appear and usually disappear in one to two weeks. They tend to reproduce in the same location every year. Fungicide use isn't recommended because slime molds aren't harmful.

When mulch hasn't been composted, it might contain fungi that cause plant diseases. However, this situation is rare and only occurs in non-composted mulch. Plant material fertility problems can arise when fungi in decomposing mulch remove nitrogen from the soil.



Shotgun Fungus



Slim Mold Fungus (dog vomit)

Insufficient moisture problems can develop when fungi permeate thick layers of dry mulch creating a surface that's difficult for water to penetrate. To gain the most benefit, use composted mulch with a high bark content, and little wood material. Avoid finely-ground, woody products that haven't been composted.

If you buy fresh wood chips from a tree-maintenance firm, add water to the chips and allow them to partially compost for about six weeks. If this material doesn't have fresh leaves, add some nitrogen to speed up the process. Avoid using fresh or partially composted wood chips near the house foundation because they can provide a food source for termites.

Immediately after your put mulch around plants or trees, soak it with water to enhance bacterial activity to initiate decomposition. Periodically wet mulch during the growing season. Avoid using soured mulch because it tends to injure plants. You can spot sour mulch by its acrid odor.

Winter Woes on Woody Landscape Plants:

Winter Drying

By Julie Beale, Plant Disease Diagnostician,
and Sara Long, Plant Diagnostic Assistant

The UK Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (PDDL) has received many broadleaf and needled evergreen samples with discolored foliage recently. Despite relatively mild weather during much of the winter thus far, extremely low temperatures, low humidity, and strong winds during the third week of December 2022 resulted in a range of winter injury symptoms in landscape plants. Furthermore, other environmental and cultural stress factors preceded the severe weather in many cases and have contributed to the extent of damage visible now.



Figure 1: Taxus shrubs along an exposed border show needle discoloration from winter drying (Photo: Julie Beale, UK).

Symptoms

Since the beginning of January, most of the samples with winter injury that have arrived in the PDDL have shown symptoms of winter drying. On broadleaf evergreens (boxwood, cherry laurel, holly, magnolia, rhododendron, etc.) symptoms typically include marginal leaf scorch, irregular spotting, complete browning of the leaves, and occasionally extensive leaf drop. Conifer (arborvitae, Leyland cypress, Cryptomeria, juniper, etc.) symptoms include pale, bronze or brown needles or needle tips, particularly on the exterior foliage and branch tips. Symptoms are often more noticeable on the wind-exposed side of affected plants.



Figure 2: Severe leaf burn on windward side of boxwood (Photo: Julie Beale, UK)

Causes of Winter Injury

Unlike their deciduous counterparts, “evergreen” plants retain foliage year-round. Even during winter months when active growth is not occurring, water is still lost through the leaves and needles of these plant species via transpiration, although more slowly than during times of active growth. Environmental and cultural factors that affect overall moisture availability in plants increase the likelihood of winter drying symptoms, including:

- Areas where soil is frozen, limiting, or preventing water uptake by roots.
- Low moisture retained in leaves/needles due to drought (i.e., late summer and fall 2022).
- Sunny winter days with wind and low humidity which increase transpiration rates.
- Inadequate root systems from recent transplanting (within 3-4 years), a restricted root zone (due to nearby sidewalk, driveway, or building) or mechanical injury to roots.
- Plants or sections of plants in a protected area (i.e., along a warm brick wall) that have not completely hardened off.

Management of Winter Injury Symptoms

Resisting the urge to promptly remove the damaged plant material may be difficult, but for the next several weeks, patience is key. Often the foliage is damaged, but the stems and buds are still viable and will produce new healthy growth in spring. A “wait and see” approach is often best when dealing with winter-injured plants. When new growth begins to emerge in spring, it will be clear which symptoms are “cosmetic” and which symptoms indicate significant plant damage.

To help reduce the risk of winter drying in the future, good general plant care practices, such as watering during periods of drought and applying mulch, are beneficial. Supply adequate irrigation to broadleaf evergreen and conifer plants, especially late in the growing season so that plants have sufficient moisture during the winter months. Fertilizer is not typically recommended as this can encourage succulent top growth that is easily damaged in winter. If fertilizer must be applied, a fall application is best, since spring fertilization may promote more new growth than roots can support during summer droughts. Locate sensitive plants in sheltered locations. If severe cold and wind is predicted, protect plants that are prone to winter drying and located in exposed sites with temporary fencing to block the wind or a light covering of burlap or fabric (e.g., old bed sheets). Wetting the fabric before windy weather will allow the covering to freeze, increasing wind protection.



VEGETABLE GARDENING SERIES

FREE!

Limited Space!

May 4, 11, and 18

6:30 pm - Clark County Extension Service

May 4 Introduction

Basic concepts for growing vegetables.

Cover the specifics on basic crops for cool and warm season vegetables.

FREE VEGETABLE PLANTS!

May 11 Maintenance

Maintenance aspect of vegetable garden plots.

Topics include: watering, pest/weed management, and fertilizing

DOOR PRIZES!

May 18 Harvesting & Storage

Cover many details about harvesting vegetables. Clark County Extension FCS Agent, Shonda Johnston, will share information about storage of fresh vegetables.

DOOR PRIZES!



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To register, call the Clark County Extension Service at 859-744-4682 or email cynthia.carr@uky.edu

Classes will be taught by **Carrie Spry**,
Clark County Extension Agent for Horticulture



Gus' QUICK TIPS for

MARCH

- 1 If you need to sow grass seed, first half of the month is ideal but you can seed all month with reasonable results. Turf type tall fescue is THE best choice for our area in all conditions.
- 2 Feed flower bulbs a balanced fertilizer now to promote nice blooms next year. Do not cut leaves down after flowering. They provide food for the plant, so let them die naturally.
- 3 Vegetable gardens are awakening. Only work soil when the conditions are right. To help determine this, squeeze a handful of soil into a ball and drop it from waist height. If it crumbles easily the soil is dry enough to work. If not, wait for drier times as wet soils form hard clods.
- 4 Remove old stems from rhubarb and asparagus and fertilize with nitrogen, compost or rotted manure.
- 5 Time to plant cool crops in the garden. These include: asparagus, beets, broccoli plants, cabbage plants, carrots, chard, collards, kale, lettuce seed and plants, onions, peas, potatoes, radishes, spinach, and turnips.
- 6 Spring is the time to repot houseplants that are in need of it. Do not increase the pot size to drastically though. Also, start feeding houseplants a weak fertilizer solution (one quarter strength).
- 7 Plant pansies and other cold tolerant flowers to help liven up your landscape beds.
- 8 Use sunny days to begin bed clean up, but be careful not to tread on emerging plants.
- 9 Cut back perennials and ornamental grasses before they emerge this year. Most grasses can be divided at this time as well, if needed. But get your muscles ready, grasses can be very woody almost and may require an ax.
- 10 Prune and fertilize brambles and blueberries.
- 11 Clean out birdhouses or if you don't have any, now is the perfect time to hang a few.
- 12 Seeds of hardy annuals such as larkspur, bachelor's buttons, Shirley and California poppies should be direct sown in the garden now.
- 13 Spray peach trees with a fungicide for the control of peach leaf curl diseases. See [HO-57](#) for more info on peaches.





save! date!

Winchester / Clark County Farmers' Market

New Members & Past Members Market Meeting

Thursday, March 23

6:30 pm

Clark County Extension Service
(1400 Fortune Drive)

The **2023 Winchester / Clark County Farmers' Market Application** is now available online by clicking on the link below:
<https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLScFmosxC17.../viewform...>

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SELLING AT THE MARKET FOR 2023, MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THE MARKET MEETING ON MARCH 23. Important information and rules will be shared that you need to know!

For questions and information email: wccfarmersmarket@gmail.com