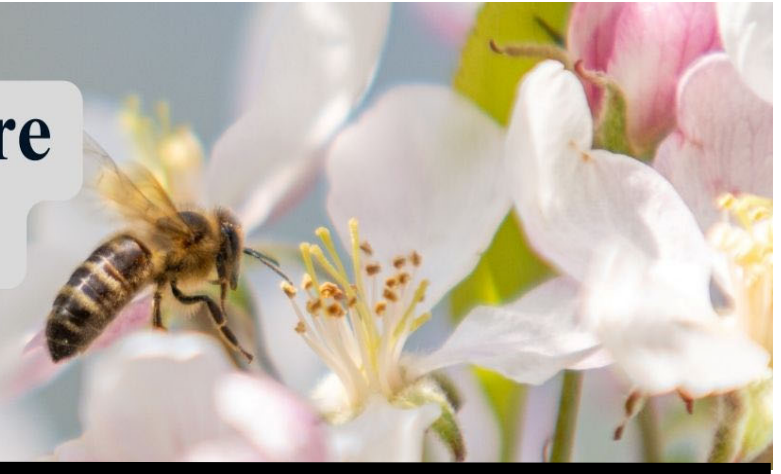




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# Clark County Horticulture Newsletter

August 2024



## A Word from the Agent . . .

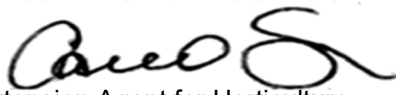


Hello and happy August! The dog days of summer are here, despite the fact it has already been feeling like it for a month! With a dryer than normal June and July, a lot of our plants and gardens have not been happy. So if this was the year you had big dreams and goals for your

vegetable garden, but it didn't quite pan out, please do not let it get you down. Even some of the most seasoned gardeners struggled to keep their vegetable gardens alive and productive. It's also been a stressful summer on our lawns and landscapes. If you feel like you need to re-seed your lawn, mid-August to mid-September is the time. A turf type tall fescue is the best choice for us. Call me if you have questions about your lawn or landscape!

This is sure to be a busy month for several reasons, one of them being school goes back in session. So please be mindful on the roads of school buses and walkers. As always, I hope to see you around the county!

Carrie Spry



Clark County Extension Agent for Horticulture  
[carrie.spry@uky.edu](mailto:carrie.spry@uky.edu)




HAPPY Birthday  
to former mayor, Ed Burtner,  
August 13, 2024

KEEPING YOU Informed

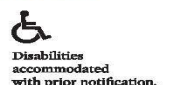


Clark / Powell  
**Beekeepers Association Meeting**  
POT-LUCK MEAL



**Monday, August 12**  
**6:30 pm**  
**Powell County Extension Service**  
**169 Maple St; Stanton, Kentucky**

Zoom option available for those who cannot attend in person. Call 859-744-4682 to be added to the email list to receive the link.



# Earwigs: Hungry Bugs with Weird Butts

By Jonathan L. Larson, Entomology Extension Specialist

If you have noticed any odd damage to your flowers or garden plants this summer, you may have been victim to earwig feeding. Earwigs are odd-looking insects that feed on a wide variety of food, but in the summer, they can become a cryptic garden pest as well. Other times of the year, earwigs can be encountered in piles of firewood, in mulch beds, and even in the home. Wherever they are found, they often startle people and their name hints at some of their creepy past. Luckily, there are several ways to get a handle on these entomological oddities.

## Earwig Basics

The name “earwig” refers to a small order of insects that have the scientific name of “Dermaptera,” which translates to “skin wing.” Earwigs tend to be flattened, dark in color, and are most famous for their cerci –the pincher-like organs at the rear of their body. Male earwigs have curved cerci, whereas females have straighter cerci.

In Kentucky, people mostly encounter the European earwig. This species is about half an inch long and has a dark red-brown color. Like other earwigs, it has short leathery covers that protect the folded-up membranous wings. These softer wings are folded-up, origami style, and when unfurled they are vaguely ear-shaped. European earwigs are not strong fliers, though.

Earwigs are omnivores and scavengers. The European earwig will feed on plant leaves, flowers, and fruits, as well as preying upon aphids and consuming rotting plant and animal material. They like to hide in tight, moist areas and go through incomplete metamorphosis. Females overwinter in an underground home that she builds in the autumn. While there, she will lay a clutch of eggs that she tends to through the cold months until they hatch in the spring. They display maternal behaviors, tending to the young until they mature.



**Figure 1:** Male earwigs have a pronounced curve to their cerci (upper image), while female cerci are straighter and closer together (lower image) (Photos: David Cappaert, Bugwood.org).



**Figure 2:** Earwig wings are tightly folded when not in use. When they are unfurled, they have an ear-like shape and are shimmering. (Photo: Whitney Cranshaw, Bugwood.org).

## Earwig Myths

Earwigs are known to have superstition and folklore that surrounds them. The name earwig is thought to derive from an Old English word “earwicg” that means “ear creature” or “ear beetle.” Other European nations also have a name that refers to the earwig as something that wants to invade the human ear. Even more sinister, some have believed that this insect deliberately wants to bore through the ear canal and try to get to the brain. It’s unknown how this superstition came to be; there have been instances where earwigs have been found in human ears, but they don’t appear to seek them out for shelter, nor have they ever actually been recorded to consume brains. Sorry, sci-fi and horror fans.

## Real World Earwig Problems

In reality, earwigs are more of a problem when in the garden, rather than digging through your earwax. There are always some earwigs around; they can be in tree hollows, under paving stones, hiding under potted plants, and in wood piles. In these situations, they will feed on dead insects, prey on some small species, and scavenge food from all over. Unfortunately, they will also feed on plants like cabbage, beets, potatoes, and cucumbers. They can also feed on ornamental plants like roses, marigolds, and dahlias.

- Continued on next page

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Earwigs will chew through leaves and blooms, leaving behind irregularly shaped holes. This can superficially resemble slug, snail, or caterpillar damage. Snails and slugs would also leave behind a shimmering trail or slime after they have fed, and caterpillars also tend to leave behind tell-tale frass or webbing (though not always). Earwigs come, eat, and leave without leaving behind much evidence. Unfortunately, this is a case of proving a problem through negative data; you have to look for the absence of these other signs to try and confirm an earwig problem. If earwigs are suspected, come back to the damaged plant at night to try and catch them in the act to confirm the problem.



**Figure 3:** Earwigs chew irregularly shaped holes in leaves and flowers of multiple cultivated plants. It's easiest to confirm an earwig problem by checking the plant at night and finding them as they feed. (Photo: Whitney Cranshaw, Bugwood.org).

## Management

### Deterrence

There are ways to deter earwigs from making holes in all your plants.

- 1) Opening up an ornamental area to increase air flow and sunlight infiltration can scare away earwig populations.
- 2) Using a thinner layer of mulch in gardens and flower beds reduces harborage for them.
- 3) Garden sanitation to remove old plant debris may also remove hiding spots.

### Traps

Some gardeners use to confirm the presence of earwigs and to suppress them.

- 1) Traps can be as simple as loose newspapers or cardboard laid in the garden. Earwigs will hide in/under these during the day and then the whole paper or cardboard can be picked up and disposed of.
- 2) Alternatively, using a sour cream container or tuna can, a baited trap can be constructed. In the evening, place the cans in the ground near damaged plants and fill the bottom with fish oil or vegetable oil with bacon grease to lure earwigs in. Some may drown but the traps can also be emptied into soapy water to kill any surviving earwigs.

### Chemical Management

Finally,

- 1) Applications of residual insecticides can kill earwigs as they damage plants. Bifenthrin, cyhalothrin, permethrin, and deltamethrin are all possible choices.
- 2) Baits for slugs that contain spinosad can also be considered for earwig control and would offer less hazard to non-target organisms.

**Heat Pet Safety**

**Never leave your pets in a parked car!**

**Safety Tips For Your Pets**

- Watch the humidity**
- Limit exercise on hot days**
- Provide ample shade and water**
- Don't rely on a fan**
- Watch out for hot pavement**

[weather.gov/heat](http://weather.gov/heat)

NOAA

# Heat, Drought and Blossom End Rot



Source: Carrie Spry  
Clark County Extension Agent for Horticulture

the soil, but rather an environmental factor that stops the plant from taking up calcium. Plants take up calcium via their transpirational system. As plants move water through the roots to the leaves and out the stomata, calcium moves into the plant. But in areas of severe drought, blossom end rot will appear because there is no water to move the calcium to the plant. To make matters worse, calcium is immobile in the plant, meaning it can't move from an area of low demand to an area of high demand, so even temporary deficiencies can cause permanent damage.

When temperatures exceed 100 degrees, many plants will close stomata to conserve water, thus closing the path for calcium to get inside. So don't be surprised if you are seeing blossom end rot on your tomatoes that were developing during the most recent heat wave.

Normally, a hot dry year would favor vegetable production as long as growers have adequate irrigation. However, when daytime temperatures inch up over 100 degrees Fahrenheit like we've seen several days this year, we begin to see problems with many vegetable crops.

Pollen begins to die and that affects fruit set and several disorders become apparent. One thing growers might see is blossom end rot, which is simply a rot at the blossom end of a fruit. Tomatoes usually suffer most, but eggplant, cucurbits and peppers can all succumb to the problem. It is technically caused by a calcium deficiency in the plant or the fruit. But in many cases, it's not a lack of calcium in

Unfortunately, there's nothing you can do to correct the problem; once blossom end rot appears it can't be reversed. The fruit is safe to eat, just cut off the bottom part and remember you are not able to commercially sell them.

Since summer is only two-thirds over, meteorologically speaking, there are some things you can do to prevent future occurrences of blossom end rot. If we see high temperatures again, try to minimize them for the plants by providing some kind of shade and giving them adequate water.



## Kid's Day

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24TH  
8:00 AM TO NOON

**\$10 VOUCHERS FOR  
THE FIRST 100 KIDS 18  
AND YOUNGER!**

Live Music  
from Rock U



Partner: Clark  
County  
Extension



Gold Sponsor: People's  
Exchange

Silver Sponsor: Community  
Trust

Bronze Sponsors: Traditional  
and Central Bank

# Selecting Fast Growing Shade Trees

Submitted by Kelly Jackson, Agent for Horticulture, Christian County Cooperative Extension Service

Trees are a valuable asset to our home landscape. In addition to blooms, texture, and fall color, trees also help reduce energy bills by casting shade on our homes during summer. People are often reluctant to plant large shade trees because they don't want to wait 20 years or more to enjoy the benefit. Selecting a fast-growing tree therefore is a primary concern. However, I would urge you to read about specific trees that are sold as "fast-growing" and any maintenance problems they may have before purchasing. Bradford Pear trees are an example of a fast-growing tree, but as most people are aware, they are very short lived, often breaking apart in storms after only 20 years of growth. Other fast-growing trees that should not be planted in home landscapes due to weak limbs or other problems include silver maple, eastern white pine, American sycamore, cottonwood, pin oak, and weeping willow.

Selecting the right fast-growing tree for you starts with an analysis of your landscape. Every tree has specific environmental conditions that are needed for optimum growth. The closer your landscape meets these conditions, the better your tree will perform. Some conditions to consider are: temperature, sunlight, soil texture, drainage and fertility. Additionally, overhead and underground utility lines will impact the placement of a tree and it is best to avoid these structures in order to reduce future problems. Large shade trees should be spaced one-half the distance of their spread from any structure or overhead obstruction and the full width of the mature tree from the trunk of any other large growing tree. Western, southern and southeastern exposures of your home receive the most heat from the sun and are good locations to place your large shade trees. Although there are many trees that produce shade, the one's listed below are considered fast-growing and very desirable and may be a good choice for your landscape.

- **Bald Cypress** (*Taxodium distichum*): H 60-100ft/W 40-50ft This native deciduous conifer is tall, with rich green feather-like foliage. Its leaves turn rusty orange in the fall. Very adaptable to many soil types.
- **Japanese Zelkova** (*Zelkova serrata*): H 60-80ft/W 30-40ft Shares a similar vase-shape as the American elm. Its dark green leaves turn golden bronze and reddish purple in the fall. In time, its bark becomes gray and exfoliating. Adaptable to high heat and drought.
- **Lacebark Elm** (*Ulmus parvifolia*): H 40-60ft/W 30-40ft The dominate street tree in many cities because of its pest resistance, adaptability to soil and climate. Its best quality may be its exfoliating bark, with shades of gray, green, brown and orange.
- **Red Maple** (*Acer rubrum*): H 40-60ft/W 25-40ft Red maple trees grown from seed or dug from local woods show considerable variability in the landscape. Any two red maples are not likely to have the same leaf shape or fall color. However, red maple cultivars like Brandy Wine, Red Sunset, and October Glory give reliable color and form and make a great addition to the landscape.
- **River Birch** (*Betula nigra*): H 50-60ft/W 40-50ft River Birch is the most heat tolerant of all native birches. Its attractive peeling bark almost require that you grow it as a clump of 3 to 5 trees rather than a single specimen just to enjoy its bark. Fox Valley is a dwarf cultivar growing only 10 feet tall. Heritage is another popular variety.
- **Sawtooth Oak** (*Quercus acutissima*): H 50-60ft/W 30-60ft A faster grower oak than others and underused in the landscape, the sawtooth oak has handsome foliage and tolerates varied soil conditions.
- **Tulip Tree** (*Liriodendron tulipifera*): H 80-100ft/W 30-40ft As our state tree, it seems only fitting to include it in this list. Fast growing in youth but slowing as it matures to its full size. This tree needs plenty of space due to its massive size. Ardis is a smaller-statured cultivar of the tulip tree with a maximum size of only 30 feet. Arnold is a unique columnar form good for screens.



*Ulmus parvifolia* -Nancy Loewenstein, Auburn University, Bugwood.org



# Gus'

# QUICK TIPS




# for

# AUGUST *august*

- 1 Many short season vegetables can be planted now for a fall crop. Look at beans, cucumbers, squash, radishes, lettuce etc. Keep in mind the shortening days will cause plants to mature more slowly. Allow at least two weeks longer than the predicted days to harvest.
- 2 Plant cool season crops like broccoli, cabbage, brussel sprouts and cauliflower now for best results. These crops perform better for us in fall than spring.
- 3 Finish trimming shrubs and hedges this month to allow time for re-growth to mature before winter.
- 4 Do not spray pesticides in the heat. Wait until late evening or early morning when temperatures are cooler. Always read labels thoroughly for additional precautions.
- 5 Divide crowded perennials now through mid September. This will help prevent diseases and provide you with more plants to share!
- 6 Harvest vegetables as they mature. Allowing fruits and vegetables to ripen seed on the plant will reduce further yields.
- 7 Monitor plants in the squash and pumpkin family for squash bug and squash vine borer. Treat as necessary before a significant problem develops.
- 8 Bagworms are still a problem on evergreens. Monitor plants closely as small bagworms are much easier to control than the more mature larvae.
- 9 Late summer brings the common tomato blights to forefront. Inspect plants regularly and remove any infected leaves as they appear. This will help control the spread of the disease. Also be careful not to wet foliage when watering as splashing water often spreads disease organisms.

## RECIPE



### Blackberry Coffee Cake

1 cup all-purpose flour	1/3 cup margarine	2 eggs
1 cup whole wheat flour	1/3 cup applesauce	1 teaspoon vanilla
1 1/2 cups white sugar	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon	2/3 cup 1% milk
2 teaspoons baking powder	2 tablespoons brown sugar	2 cups blackberries, washed
1 teaspoon salt		

**Preheat** oven to 350 degrees F. **Grease** and **flour** a 9-by-13- inch baking pan. In a large bowl, **combine** flours, sugar, baking powder and salt. Using a pastry blender, cut margarine and applesauce into the mixture until it resembles coarse crumbs. **Stir** in the cinnamon and brown sugar. **Set aside** 3/4 cup of crumb mixture to be used as a topping for the cake. In a medium bowl, **mix** together eggs, vanilla and milk. **Blend** into remaining flour mixture. **Spread** batter into prepared pan. **Sprinkle** blackberries evenly over the

batter. Gently **press** blackberries into the batter. **Sprinkle** reserved crumb mixture over fruit and gently pat down. **Bake** in preheated oven for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean.

**Yield:** 15 servings.

**Nutritional Analysis:** 170 calories, 5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 1 g trans fat, 30 mg cholesterol, 280 mg sodium, 32 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 18 g sugars, 3 g protein.