



Winter arrived and definitely let us know it was here! I am writing this as the thaw is starting and I am getting ready to swap out my snow boots for my rain ones. The days may have been gloomy, but it is starting to stay a little lighter each day, which means spring will be arriving soon. In the mean time take this opportunity to start planning your gardens and getting all those seed orders together.

Happy Gardening!

Jessica Bessin

Jessica Bessin,
Mercer County Extension Agent for Horticulture



The Season For Snow and Ice!!

Dr. Bill Fountain, UK Horticulture Extension Specialist

Like it or not, winter brings the damaging effects of snow and ice to trees and shrubs. Wet snows are bad, but freezing rain is often worse. Ice storms typically start as warm rain falling through rapidly cooling air at ground-level. This results in rain quickly turning to ice on all exposed surfaces. Freezing rain is especially serious on evergreens and deciduous species that have not shed all their foliage.



Ice is heavy. A half inch on a power line can weigh 500 pounds. For trees this can amount to a weight increase of 30 times. Corrective pruning and replacement are the only solutions once breakage has occurred. But, are there options to prevent breakage?

The natural tendency is to protect plants by shaking the ice and snow from the branches. Unfortunately this can cause long-term damage. As ice bends the branches, fluids in conductive tissues are still liquid. Only later do they freeze. Shaking damages the conductive tubes and results in air pockets called embolisms or cavitation that will never again be able to conduct water and mineral elements. The result is that plants become stressed, grow poorly, suffer desiccation making them more likely to be attacked by diseases and insects.

The best recommendation for plants covered in wet snow or ice is to do nothing. If branches are in eminent danger of breaking, ice can be melted with cold water from a sprinkler. (Warm or hot water damages plants.) Using cold water to melt ice is with the understanding that both will refreeze on the ground. This should never be used where ice is likely to accumulate on walks or roads.

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification



Butternut and Acorn Squash Soup

<p>1 butternut squash, halved and seeded</p> <p>1 acorn squash, halved and seeded</p> <p>1 tablespoon olive oil</p>	<p>1/2 cup chopped sweet onion</p> <p>4 cups chicken broth</p> <p>3 tablespoons peanut butter</p> <p>1/2 cup packed brown sugar</p>	<p>1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper</p> <p>1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon</p> <p>1/4 teaspoon nutmeg</p> <p>Fresh parsley for garnish</p>
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Using a vegetable peeler, **remove** the skin from the butternut and acorn squashes and **cut** into 1-inch cubes. In a large soup pot, **heat** the oil on medium high. **Add** the onion, and **cook** 1 to 2 minutes until it starts to become translucent. **Add** cubed squash, and **cook** 4 to 5 minutes. **Add** chicken broth, and bring to a boil. **Lower** heat, and **simmer** 30 to 35 minutes, until the squash is fork tender. Allow to **cool** slightly, then **blend** until smooth in a food processor or

blender. **Return** mixture to the pot, and **heat** to medium low. **Add** peanut butter, brown sugar, pepper, cinnamon, and nutmeg. **Stir** until well blended. **Garnish** with fresh parsley. **Serve** warm.

Yield: 7, 1-cup servings

Nutritional Analysis:
200 calories, 6 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 600 mg sodium, 36 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 14 g sugar, 10 g added sugar, 4 g protein.



Potato Broccoli Soup

<p>4 cups cubed potatoes</p> <p>2 heads broccoli, (3-4 cups florets)</p> <p>2 tablespoons olive oil</p> <p>1/4 cup all-purpose flour</p> <p>1/2 cup melted butter</p>	<p>3 cups 2% milk</p> <p>1/2 teaspoon salt</p> <p>1/2 teaspoon pepper</p> <p>5 ounces cheddar cheese, reduced-fat, shredded</p>	<p>2 green onions, finely minced, divided</p> <p>1/2 cup reduced-fat sour cream</p> <p>1/4 cup bacon bits (optional)</p>
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Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. **Place** potatoes in large saucepan, **cover** with water and bring to a boil. **Reduce** heat and **cook** potatoes until tender, about 15 minutes. **Cut** broccoli heads into small florets and **place** on baking tray. **Drizzle** with olive oil and **roast** for 15 minutes. **Drain** cooked potatoes in a colander. In the saucepan, **combine** the flour and melted butter; **cook** on medium heat for 1 minute. Slowly **add** milk to the mixture, stirring constantly until thickened. Soup can be thinned by adding an additional

1/2 cup of milk or water, if desired. **Add** the potatoes, broccoli, salt, pepper, cheese, half of the green onions and bacon bits. **Cook** on low until heated. A few minutes before serving, **add** the sour cream and **stir** to combine. **Serve** topped with remaining onions.

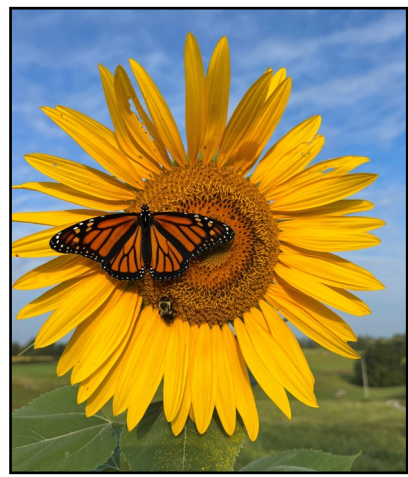
Yield: 6, 1 1/4 cup servings

Nutritional Analysis: 390 calories, 24 g fat, 13 g saturated fat, 60 mg cholesterol, 370 mg sodium, 30 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 9 g sugars, 15 g protein.

Seed Catalogs Can Brighten Your Day

Cold temperatures and gray days make it feel like spring is lightyears away. If you're a person who enjoys the outdoors like I do, you might have been experiencing a little cabin fever, especially after the polar vortex. I suggest flipping through a seed catalog during these gloomy days.


Something about seeing vegetables at their peak of harvest or the endless pages of brightly colored flowers seem to lift my spirits. I know I am not the only one, as many of you have shared with me how much joy it brings to flip through a seed catalog on a gloomy day with a warm beverage. Looking through these catalogs gets you excited for the growing season and start thinking about all of the endless possibilities for your garden.



A few things to keep in mind when you look through catalogs, make sure to write down when you find something new, nothing worse than not being able to find which catalog that new variety is in. Double check to make sure it actually grows well in our area. No need to add extra stress trying to get something to survive in our climate. Once you know our area is well suited for a particular plant, try something new it's always fun to add a new color flower or try a new veggie. Always look for disease resistant varieties; this will help you out in the long run especially, especially when it comes to vegetables. My final word of advice when selecting seeds, select ones you know your family will enjoy! After seeing how much fun my kids had last summer, I learned you can never have too many sun flowers in your garden!

Think Green For Valentines Day!

Traditionally when we think of Valentine's Day, we think of roses and other cut flowers. Cut flowers are always a wonderful gift to receive but, if you have a plant enthusiast as your Valentine, why not surprise them this year with something different? How about a plant that can make them think of their sweetheart for years? Heartleaf Philodendron tolerates a great deal of abuse such as low light and low commitment. These plants can easily be propagated at any season from stem cuttings. Another popular house plant is the Cyclamen. It has heart-shaped leaves and blooms in shades of white, pink, rose, purple, and red make it a popular selection for Valentine's Day. Cyclamen prefer cool temperatures and bright indirect light. Kalanchoes are a durable houseplant that come in a variety of beautiful flower colors. They grow best in bright indoor light levels and a well-drained potting media. Be careful of overwatering, as this is a succulent plant.





REALITY STORE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024
@KING MIDDLE SCHOOL GYM
8TH GRADE STUDENTS
FROM KMS & BURGIN
SNOWDATE: FEBRUARY 29

VOLUNTEER ROLE:

- No experience necessary
- Individuals needed to work in a booth
- Guide sheets and materials will be available
- In order to offer this program for the students, we need a minimum of 50+ volunteers. We NEED your help!

TO VOLUNTEER:
<https://bit.ly.reality24mercer>
or call 859-734-4378
email: dana.anderson@uky.edu



WIC/Senior Training
February 20
6:00 PM

Produce Best Practices Training (PBPT)
February 20 at 7:00 PM

You must RSVP. Please call
859-734-4378

Mercer County Extension Office
1007 Lexington Road—Harrodsburg, KY 40330

Mark Those Calendars!!

Fort Harrod Garden Group-February 6th, Boyle County Extension Office 10:00 AM

Apple Care Class-February 15th, Mercer County Extension Office 10:00 AM

If there is bad weather, this class will move to February 22nd.

WIC and Senior Training-February 20th, Mercer County Extension Office 6:00 PM

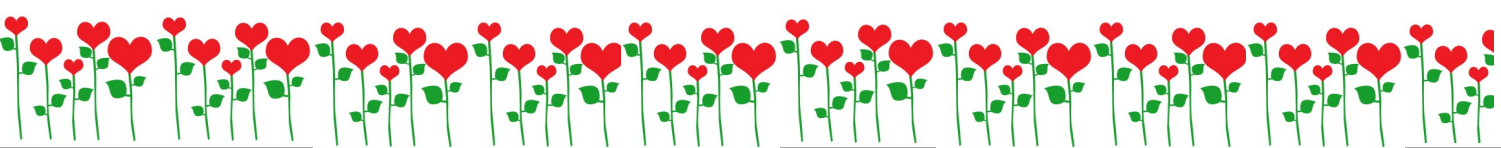
Produce Best Practices Training-February 20th, Mercer County Extension Office 7:00 PM

Fort Harrod Beekeeping Club-February 26th, Mercer County Extension Office 6:30 PM

Make sure to check out the Fort Harrod Beekeeping Facebook page for all the latest updates and announcements!

Growing Potatoes-March 7th, Mercer County Extension Office 10:00 AM

See insert for more details.



APPLE CARE



February 15

10:00am

**Must RSVP by February 9
to 859-734-4378**

This class will start off at the Mercer County Extension Office, where we will discuss apple care basics. We will then take a short field trip (two miles from the Extension Office) to a small orchard for hands-on pruning experience.

Limited transportation will be provided. Pruners and other tools will be available for use.
(Snow date Feb 22)

Mercer County Extension Office
1007 Lexington Rd
Harrodsburg, KY 40330



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University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.
Lexington, KY 40506



Growing POTATOES



March 7

10:00am

**RSVP by March 1 to
859-734-4378**

Have you thought about adding potatoes to your garden or even growing them in a container? Join us for this early spring class on how to grow almost everyone's favorite vegetable, the potato!

First 20 people to RSVP by March 1st will get a container and potatoes for their own garden.

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Harrodsburg, KY 40330



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