



Hopefully, by the time you receive this newsletter we all might be thawing out a little bit. Take this time in the cold to look through those seed catalogs and make your plans for spring.

Happy Gardening!

Jessica Bessin

Jessica Bessin,
Mercer County Extension Agent for Horticulture



House Plant Winter Care

Throughout this whole newsletter I realized I keep talking about how cold it is. Well, it is really cold. At least it is while I am writing this. Even though our houseplants are inside and out of the elements, they go through a dormant period, too. Not necessarily visible like our trees and shrubs do, but they are receiving less light and there is definitely a temperature change in our houses. Here are some to think about with winter houseplant care.



Decrease Water: In general, watering can be significantly reduced during the winter.

Growth decreases during the winter months with lack of sunlight, so water needs reduce as well.

Increase Humidity: Most of our houseplants enjoy high humidity to begin with, once we turn on our heat, the humidity drops. You can consider placing a humidifier near your plants. I like to group my houseplants together to create a microclimate.

Light: Even in the best window locations, your plants are probably still not getting enough light in the winter. North and East facing windows can provide great light in the summer, but are too shady in the winter. Consider moving them to a different location or for some plants, especially succulents investing in a grow light.

Temperature: Try to reduce temperature fluctuations, keeping location in mind. Are your plants above a heat register or are they next to a drafty window?

Fertilizing: No need to fertilize in the winter as they are growing really slowly. Pick your normal fertilizer schedule back up in late March or April

Dusting: Just like in the rest of our house, dust can build up on our houseplants. Winter is a great time to take a damp cloth and wipe them off. Not only will this make them look better, but will help with their growth.

NOTICE

Public Notification of Procedure for Filing a Complaint:

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To initiate a complaint at the college level, contact Tim West in the Business Office at 859-257-3879. At the University level, Terry Allen and Patty Bender in the [UK Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity](#) (859-257-8927) may be contacted. Additionally, employee or clientele complaints involving any research or extension sponsored program or activity may be directed to the USDA, Director Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W Whitten Bldg., 14th & Independence Ave. SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 (202-720-5964).

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Disabilities accommodated with prior notification



Kale and Potato Soup

4 teaspoons olive oil
1 chopped yellow onion
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 box (48 ounce) low-sodium chicken broth

6 red potatoes, diced
½ cup chopped carrot
4 cups shredded kale
½ pound cooked chicken breast, shredded

¼ teaspoon black pepper

1. In a large saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat for 1 minute. Add chopped onion and garlic and cook uncovered for 5 minutes.

2. Add chicken broth, potatoes and carrot; cover and bring to a boil.

3. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes.

4. Mix in the kale, chicken and black pepper. Cover and simmer for 15

minutes or until kale is tender.

Yield: 6, 1½ cup servings.

Nutritional Analysis: 270 calories, 5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 25 mg cholesterol, 210 mg sodium, 43 g carbohydrate, 5 g fiber, 15 g protein.

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers' market, or roadside stand.



Butternut Squash and Turkey Chili

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 pound ground turkey

1 pound (1 small) butternut squash — peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch cubes
1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
1 (4.5-ounce) can chopped green chilies

2 (14.5-ounce) cans petite diced tomatoes
1 (15-ounce) can no-salt-added kidney beans, drained and rinsed

1 (15.5-ounce) can white hominy, drained
1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon salt

Stovetop: Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Stir in the onion and garlic; cook and stir for 3 minutes or until onion is translucent. Add ground turkey. Break into pieces and stir until cooked through and no longer pink. Add the butternut squash, chicken broth, green chilies, tomatoes, kidney beans, hominy, and tomato sauce. Season with chili powder, cumin, and salt. Bring to a simmer, reduce heat to medium-low, and cover. Simmer until the squash is tender, about 20 minutes.

Electric Pressure Cooker: Press sauté function. Add olive oil and onion; cook and stir for 3 minutes or until onion is translucent. Add garlic and cook for 30 more seconds. Add ground turkey. Break into pieces and stir until cooked through and no longer pink. Add the butternut squash, chicken broth, green chilies, tomatoes, kidney beans, hominy, and tomato sauce. Season with chili powder, cumin, and salt. Close the lid, and then turn venting knob to the sealing position. Pressure cook at High Pressure for 15 minutes, allow for a natural release. Open the lid carefully.

Yield: 10, 1-cup servings

Nutrition analysis: 190 calories, 4g total fat, 0.5g saturated fat, 20mg cholesterol, 590mg sodium, 25g total carbohydrate, 7g fiber, 5g total sugars, 0g added sugars, 16g protein, 0% DV vitamin D, 8% DV calcium, 10% DV iron, 15% DV potassium



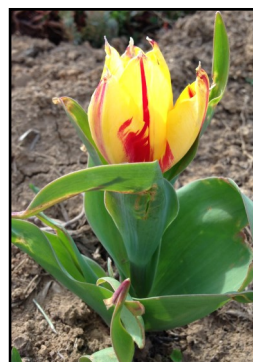
Tulip Mania

It is cold out, really cold. So lets think about warmer spring days ahead and some of our favorite spring flowers popping out of the ground. One of those being the tulip. Tulips are popular this time of year around Valentines Day, but their natural time to shine is April into May here in Kentucky. Local growers have their tricks to force tulip bulbs so they will be in full bloom just in time for your sweetheart.

The tulip is a perennial bulb in the lily family that is native to southern Europe and central Asia. They are fairly easy to grow, planted in the fall and like most bulbs they do not like poorly drained soils. They come in a variety of colors and different types and are eye catching when planted in masses. They are intolerant of heat and will quickly decline once temperatures start reaching over 70 degree F. At times, especially for large display plantings, they are treated as an annual crop. The bulbs are pulled at the end of the season, and depending on the variety their performance starts to decline in the second year. These bulbs are often composted or can be replanted, just know they might have smaller blooms than the initial display. If you are leaving them as perennials, just make sure to cut the bloom off once it starts to decline and leave the foliage to die back naturally. Even though it looks ugly, that is fueling the bulb for the following season for a nice display.

Tulips have an interesting history. In the 1600's historians say tulips became extremely popular due to their appearance and bright colors. The most popular ones are those with the streaks through them, bright white and with red streaks. Everyone wanted one of these special tulips, and some tulip bulbs were as expensive as a house. Buyers of tulips paid high prices with hopes of selling them for a higher price. However, as with many things, the bubble eventually burst and tulip prices plummeted. Now we know the streak pattern that everyone desired was caused by a virus that weakens the bulb and makes it harder to reproduce.

There are hundreds of varieties of tulips out there; single, double, parrot, and fringe just to name a few. I encourage you to visit botanical gardens this spring and check out their display to get ideas for your own yard.



Late Winter Pruning

One activity that is quickly approaching is pruning. Typical pruning is done between February and March after most of our severe weather has passed. It is not just the perfect time of year to prune fruit trees like apples, but also our shade trees and shrubs.

For shade trees the focus is on correcting damage and promoting healthy growth. Dead branches, branches rubbing together, or crowding the trunk are all reasons for pruning. Thinning out diseased or unproductive branches to the tree's trunk, or major limb improves the tree's health, making it more open to receive additional sunlight and air movement. Heading back cuts, which remove only the terminal portion of a shoot, encourage the development of side branches and stiffen the remaining branch. This can be particularly useful for apple and pear trees, whose branches should be trimmed to support a heavy crop load.

Shrubs are pruned to maintain a certain shape or size. Flowering shrubs, like lilac and forsythia, should undergo rejuvenation pruning each year so the shrubs will flower more. This type of pruning removes between one-fourth and one-third of old growth each year and encourages new growth.

It is important to not go overboard with pruning. While some trees are excessively pruned at the top because they encroach on utility lines, for the most part intensive pruning is not needed and tree top pruning should be avoided. Painting or sealing cuts is not necessary and may actually delay the regrowth that helps the tree recover from pruning. Source: Dr. Richard Durham, UK Extension Specialist for Consumer Horticulture

Mark Those Calendars!!

Fort Harrod Garden Club-February 10th, Mercer County Extension Office 10:00 AM

Join us as we use milk jugs to get a jump start on seeding tricky perennials.

Apple Care-February 13th, Mercer County Extension Office 10:00 AM

See insert for more details.

Harrodsburg Tree Board Meeting- February 17th, Mercer County Extension Office 5:00 PM

PBPT and WIC/Senior Training-February 27th, Mercer County Extension Office 6:00 PM

See insert for more details.

Fort Harrod Beekeeping Club-February 24th, Mercer County Extension Office 6:30 PM

See insert for more details. Make sure to check out the Fort Harrod Beekeeping Facebook page for all the latest updates and announcements!

Fort Harrod Garden Club-March 10th, Mercer County Extension Office 10:00 AM

Join us as we learn about microgreens and grow our own.

Growing Oyster Mushrooms-March 13th, Mercer County Extension Office 10:00 AM

See insert for more details.





Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment

NEOPESTALOTIOPSIS DISEASE IN STRAWBERRY: A New Reality for Kentucky Growers

FEBRUARY 6, 2025
6:00 - 7:30 PM (EST)
WEBINAR VIA ZOOM
REGISTER AT: [HTTPS://BIT.LY/41F6K7C](https://bit.ly/41f6k7c)



Agenda:
6:00 pm - Managing Neo-pest Disease with Dr. Nicole Gauthier
6:45 pm - Starting Your Own Disease-free Plugs with Dr. Shawn Wright
Q&A session will follow presentations

FORT HARROD GARDEN CLUB

Fort Harrod Garden Club meets the last Wednesday of the month at 10:00am.

If you would like to receive a text message about meetings and volunteer opportunities, please contact Mercer County Extension Office at 859-734-4378 or email Jessica.Bessin@uky.edu.



APPLE CARE

February 13

10:00am

Must RSVP by February 7 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 20)

Mercer County Extension Office
1007 Lexington Rd
Harrodsburg, KY 40330

 **Cooperative Extension Service**
Mercer County

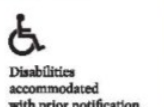
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University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.

Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.

Growing Oyster Mushrooms

March 13 at 10:00am

Learn how to grow your own oyster mushrooms. This is a hands-on class. Space is limited.

Call 859-734-4378 to RSVP

Mercer County Extension Office
1007 Lexington Road
Harrodsburg, KY 40330



Cooperative Extension Service



Produce Best Practices Training (PBPT)

February 27 at 6:00 PM



WIC/Senior Training
February 27
6:30 PM

You must RSVP. Please call **859-734-4378**

Mercer County Extension Office

1007 Lexington Road—Harrodsburg, KY 40330