

March / April 2023

Volume 1, Issue 2

January 2023, 4th warmest ever recorded

The lasting damage from the December 2022 freeze AND warm winter temperatures



Lets start by talking about weather. After the 2022 holiday season, I don't know about you, but I haven't had to wear my winter coat or wear my thicker wool socks to keep

warm. In contrary, majority of the "winter" days, I've worn a light long sleeve shirt, an occasional light jacket and there have been days that I've worn a short sleeve and open toe sandals. The birds, insect, and trees are enjoying this weather and so am I. That said, I'm mostly concerned about what the future holds for us as far as our food supply (fruit trees, small fruits, winter wheat, etc.) along with our ornamental trees and shrubs.

Talking with UK Ag Weather meteorologist, Matt Dixon, he has reported "January 2023 was our 4th warmest January ever recorded (129 year record)". And as of February 2023, "this placed near the top for the warmest February's ever recorded. Bottom line, after our Arctic air event in December, winter has felt non-existent".

Matt is comparing this weather pattern similar to Winter 2017. I remember that all too well.

Apple and peach production is where we will see some crop production loss.

In December 2022, we were hit quickly with extreme low temperatures after days of milder temperatures. Plants did not have the proper time to harden off for the winter season. I have noticed that not every landscape has been affected the same. Our landscape microclimates and planting orientations has played a role into what has or has not been affected. Some plants are now showing some symptoms of winter damage such as complete defoliation of hollies and magnolias, browning/dieback of laurels, arborvitae, nandina, boxwood, junipers, azaleas, roses and more. So what to do, right? We are recommending NOT to fertilize or prune at this time. Just a little bit more patience and lets wait till mid-May to see what new growth occurs. At this time, we can evaluate what plant tissue has permanently been damaged, and from there we can make proper recommendations.

Now as far as this "spring-like" weather we have been experiencing. I've noticed, maples, magnolias and ornamental cherry in full bud and some open flowers and other trees and shrubs that are not too far behind. Not only are plants breaking dormancy about 6 weeks too early, but bugs and insects too. With day time highs in the 70's and night lows in the upper 20's/30's, this could really have an negative effect on plant health and insects overwinter survival. Spring will be here soon, but we may have some more winter injury if we get a cold snap when buds and flowers emerge.

Check out UK Ag Weather for more up to date information: <http://weather.uky.edu/agweatherupdate.php>

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Save the Date!
Saturday,
September 9th
Campbell Extension
OPEN HOUSE



Master Gardener News...



The Northern Kentucky Master Gardener Program is a partnership between Campbell, Boone, and Kenton counties. Participants in the program attend a 15-week training course that introduces them to various horticulture topics, such as botany, soils, plant selection and care, etc.

After completing the training portion, participants will volunteer 40 hours to non-profit organizations in our community. Once they complete the training and volunteer requirements, they become a certified NKY Master Gardener.

Besides maintaining our educational gardens, you may see them at local farmers' markets, community gardens, school gardens and more.

We are also fortunate to have the Northern Kentucky Master Gardener Association. This group of volunteers organizes educational programs and field trips for our Master Gardeners. It is a great opportunity to meet others that have the same passion for gardening and volunteering.

The current class is completing their training and will be out volunteering this spring.



If you are interested in becoming a Northern Kentucky Master Gardener, the next class will be held at the Boone County Cooperative Extension Service. The start date is set for early December. For more information, contact the Boone County Extension Office at (859) 586-6101.

From the Garden...

Spring is on the way! We have seen winter aconite, snowdrops and daffodils brightening up our shade garden. We extend the bloom time of our daffodils by selecting varieties that bloom early, mid, and late season. We will have daffodils in the garden from February to late April or early May. 'Tete Tete' will make its debut in mid-late February. Although they look delicate, these dwarf daffodils have been known to emerge through the snow. The large, double daffodils will bloom in April. You can also find a variety of flower colors. Along with the traditional yellow, we have combinations of yellow, salmon, white, and peach.



We have begun our garden cleanup by removing last year's foliage from our Lenten Rose, hardy ferns and other semi-evergreen perennials. If you

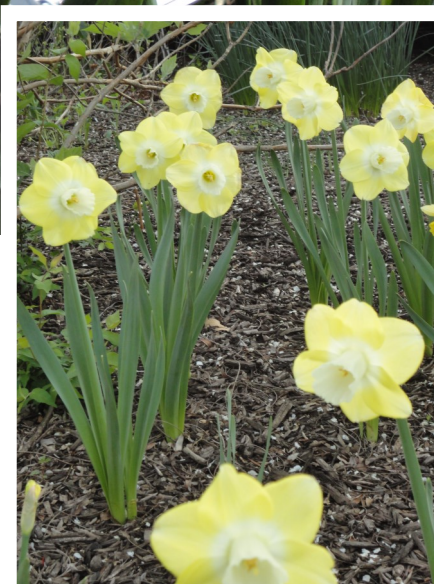
visit our butterfly garden or pollinator garden, you may notice it looks very untended. We intentionally leave plant debris over the winter. There are several butterflies and beneficial insects that will overwinter there. We will clean out those beds last.

Many gardeners have noticed the damage the December cold snap did to their plants. We were not immune. Many of our broadleaf and needle evergreens have severe cold damage. We will be monitoring our plants and pruning out any dead branches. We have lost some of our smaller shrubs and we will be removing and replacing them soon.

Many of our spring ephemerals will make their appearance in April. Ephemeral plants appear in the spring and go dormant in the summer heat. Come see our Columbine, bleeding heart, Virginia bluebells, shooting star and more before they're gone.

The Lakeside Commons Educational Garden is located behind the Campbell County Cooperative Extension Service (3500 Alexandria Pike, Highland Heights). The gardens are open to the public from dawn to dusk.

Special thanks to our Master Gardener volunteers. Without them, we would not be able to maintain the garden.



GARDEN CALENDAR: MARCH-APRIL

General

- Clean, sharpen and disinfect your gardening tools. *To learn more, visit
- Disinfecting tools: <https://plantpathology.ca.uky.edu/files/ppfs-gen-17.pdf>
- Sharpening pruners: <https://plantpathology.ca.uky.edu/files/ppfs-gen-17.pdf>
- Campbell County residents can have their soil tested free of charge. Testing will determine soil pH and fertilizer recommendations. Learn how to collect a proper sample at https://campbell.ca.uky.edu/files/instructions_for_soil_testing_samples.pdf

Houseplants

- Inspect your houseplants for insects and disease. To learn more, visit <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/files/ef406.pdf>
- As houseplant come out of winter, it is a good time to propagate them. Visit <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/ho/h067/h067.pdf> for helpful tips.
- Repot houseplants if needed. Use a pot 1-2" larger than the previous pot.

Lawns

- Overseed thin lawns in March. To learn more visit <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/agr/agr51/agr51.pdf>



- Crabgrass germinates around the middle of April. Apply pre-emergent herbicide in March. Soil

temperatures should be between 50-55 degrees for five days.

- Learn more about pre-emergent herbicides at <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/AGR/AGR272/AGR272.pdf>

Flowers

- Butterflybush and Bluebeard (Caryopteris) bloom on current year growth. Wait until you see green buds, then prune them back to a set of healthy leaf buds.



- Cut back ornamental grasses 4-6" from the ground.
- Let tulip and daffodil foliage yellow before

cutting back. Do not fold up foliage or tie back with rubber bands.

- Cut back last year's foliage from Lenten Rose, Epimedium and hardy ferns.
- Plant cool season flowers such as pansies, snapdragons and dianthus now. Plant warm season flowers after May 15.



Trees & Shrubs

- Prune tree/shrubs. https://forestry.ca.uky.edu/files/pruning_landscape_trees.pdf https://fayette.ca.uky.edu/sites/fayette.ca.uky.edu/files/pruning_landscape_shrubs_0.pdf

- When mulching trees, do not put mulch against trunks. Add 2-3" of mulch. Avoid "volcano" mulching.

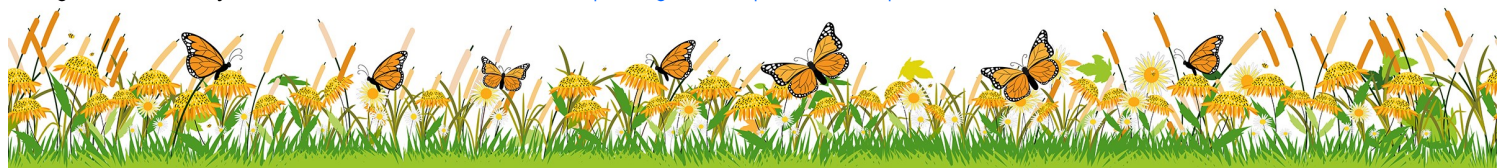


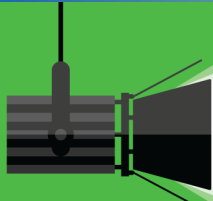
Fruits and Vegetables

- Plant the spring vegetable garden.
- Direct seed radish, carrots,

spinach, and snap peas.

- Start lettuce and kale seed indoors or direct seed in the garden.
- Plant transplants of broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage.
- Continue spraying fruits for insect and disease prevention. Consult Disease & Insect Control Programs for Homegrown Fruit in Kentucky (ID-21) to properly time sprays. <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/id/id21/id21.pdf>





Plant Spotlight: *Lenten Rose (Helleborus orientalis)*



Lenten Rose or Helleborus, is a bright spot in the winter and spring garden. Blooms appear at the end of February and remain for several weeks. Flowers range in colors from dark maroon, pink and yellow. There are also bi-color flowers of white blooms with splashes of red.



This evergreen perennial provides year-round beauty. Its dark, leathery foliage looks good through most of the winter. It will start to decline by winter's end. Simply cut off the spent leaves when new leaves and flowers begin to emerge.

This plant has few insect or disease problems. It requires part to full shade. Avoid planting it in wet soil as root rot can occur. Avoid planting in windy, exposed sites as this will damage the leaves. The thick, leathery leaves are not palatable to deer.

If grown in masses, it can become an attractive groundcover. The clumps will grow over time and can be divided. It is best to divide them in the spring after blooms have faded.

The flowers can be a nectar source for honeybees foraging on a sunny, spring day.



A Gardener's Calendar

Gardeners don't need a calendar to tell them the growing season is imminent. Longer days, and even though we still don't see it much, the sun's rays are increasing in intensity and warmth. We use these signals to tell us it's time to check seed inventory, clean and sharpen tools and make final plans for the vegetable garden. Knowing how much space you have and how best to utilize it will go a long way



to grow. Being a perennial and its ease of care once established are assets. You do need to locate the asparagus planting at the edge of your garden since it comes back every year. Planting two year old asparagus roots or crowns enables you to begin harvesting the second year after planting. If you like asparagus consider adding it to your garden

Melons were always a mystery to me. Some growers reported

toward harvests of your favorite produce. You probably know the vegetables you want to include. Learn the spacing and days to harvest of your favorites. Knowing this will help to allocate space and time your harvest. It also gives us an approximate time of when we can replant a new crop in this location. Growers with limited garden area, but who maximize to its fullest, frequently out yield those of us with unlimited space.

I was fortunate to have found gardening as a passion very early in life. My desire to pursue it more vigorously every season hasn't diminished.

Just about every horticulturist who does garden presentations leads off with the wisdom of "Never Plant More Than You Can Maintain" This is sound advice grounded in countless and perpetual yearly mistakes. This is advice I should, and you should follow.

Unfortunately I never do. With so many new cultivars of vegetables to try, how can you only plant a few? Limiting yourself to just a couple of new additions is, however, good advice. How many times have you succumbed to the hype surrounding a new variety only to be disappointed with the results? Growing "All America Selections" is a great way to lessen the chances of disappointment. All America Selections have been tested in numerous geographical areas of the country and have proven themselves over many years. Look for the All-America Selection logo on the seed packet.

Every year I try to incorporate a new vegetable I have grown before in my garden. Experimenting over the years has led to some wonderful discoveries. For years I shied away from asparagus because of it being a perennial and its reputation as being difficult

success while others not so much. The vines do sprawl over the garden and can be difficult to contain. Master Gardener, Jim Crawford, gave me one of his prize melons "Sugar Cube" many years ago. Sugar Cube is a small melon, perfect for one or two servings and is as sweet as its name. This melon now has an honored place in my garden.

Another wonderful garden crop we discovered late is sweet potatoes. We never ate enough of this tuber for me to consider growing them. Sweet potatoes are in no way related to Irish



potatoes and should not be planted until mid-May in warm soil. They are planted with rooted slips you can order or buy at good garden centers. They do require a long growing season and must be dug after a light frost.

As with many vegetables you grow in your own garden you wonder why you never considered them before. Gardening should be a yearly adventure. Sometimes conditions will be perfect and the harvests memorable. Other times not so much. My advice is keep it interesting by experimenting. An addition to our recent year's garden is something we should have been doing decades ago. Joe Boggs, Hamilton County Horticulture Agent, delivered the keynote presentation at this year's Tri-State Diversity Conference. Joe's address was: "The Value of Incorporating Flowers in every Garden and Landscape". My initial reaction to flowers in a vegetable garden was the flowers occupying space that was better off dedicated to something edible, how wrong I was! The rewards of attracting pollinators to a vegetable garden are almost endless.

Crops such as melons, tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant rely on bees for pollination. You can attract pollinators to the vegetable garden by incorporating flowers. Not only do they attract pollinators, they may also attract beneficial insects that feed on garden pests.



To attract bees, consider planting perennials such as coneflower, Black-eyed Susans and beebalm. You can also plant annual flowers. Annual flowers will need to be replanted yearly

but usually provide a long bloom season. Zinnia, Salvia, and Sunflowers are sure to attract many bees to the vegetable garden. When selecting sunflowers make sure they are pollen bearing.

Plant your flowers in large clumps or drifts. This will make it easier for the bees to see them. Also, bees do not see red. Blues, pinks and purples are a better choice.



If you are interested in becoming a market vendor in Campbell County for the 2023 market season please contact the respective market:

Campbell County Farmers Market Association (Highland Heights, Alexandria, and Newport)

Kevin Neltner 859.486.7535

Fort Thomas Farmers Market

Tiffany Tomeo 513.284.0272



Upcoming Events:

Horticulture 101: Gardening for Beginners, March 29 at 10:00am

You want a great landscape but don't know where to start. Come learn the basics of soil preparation, plant selection and proper garden tools.

Perennials for Summer, April 26 at 10:00am

Come learn about perennial plants that bring summer beauty to the garden.

Watch for more Campbell County Classes and Programs. Check our website or Facebook page and the March/April Newsletter.

campbell.ca.uky.edu



Spring Harvest Salad

5 cups torn spring leaf lettuce	Dressing: 4 teaspoons lemon juice	2 teaspoons Kentucky honey
2½ cups spinach leaves	2½ tablespoons olive oil	½ teaspoon salt
1½ cups sliced strawberries	1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar	¼ cup feta cheese crumbles
1 cup fresh blueberries	1½ teaspoons Dijon mustard	½ cup unsalted sliced almonds
½ cup thinly sliced green onions		

1. Combine leaf lettuce and spinach leaves with sliced strawberries, blueberries and green onion in a large salad bowl.

2. Prepare dressing by whisking together the lemon juice, olive oil,

balsamic vinegar, Dijon mustard, honey and salt; **pour** over lettuce mixture and toss to coat.

3. Sprinkle salad with feta cheese and sliced almonds.

4. Serve immediately.

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

Yield: 8, 1 cup servings.

Nutrition Analysis: 130 calories, 9 g fat, 1.5 g sat fat, 240 mg sodium, 12 g carbohydrates, 3 g fiber, 7 g sugar, 3 g protein.



Kentucky Lettuce

SEASON: Early to late spring.

NUTRITION FACTS: Lettuces have 5-15 calories per cup depending on variety.

Lettuce provides vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron.

SELECTION: Choose crisp, brightly colored lettuce with no blemishes, slime, browning or wilted leaves.

STORAGE: Store washed and dried lettuce in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for three to five days, depending on the variety.

Source: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov



PREPARATION: Wash well and dry before using. Add dressing just before serving to prevent wilting. Lettuce is almost always eaten raw in salads or on sandwiches. Lettuce can also be steamed or added to soups at the end of cooking.

LETTUCE

Kentucky Proud Project

County Extension Agents for Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Kentucky, Nutrition and Food Science students

March 2012

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. For more information, contact your county's Extension agent for Family and Consumer Sciences or visit www.ca.uky.edu/fcs.

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