Hello, Gardeners!

I hope everyone is having a wonderful spring and making big plans for the summer garden.

With all of the rain we’ve had and warmer days, it’s a good time to pull weeds that were missed last year, plus any new emerging weeds this spring, while they are still easy to pull.

It’s also a good way to keep tabs on the soil moisture. As anxious as we all get as gardeners, be sure to wait for the soil to dry enough before planting so that your seeds don’t rot in the ground.

Our 10th Annual Plant Fair & Spring Fling is rapidly approaching. Our plant vendors will have plenty of beautiful flowering plants, as well as herbs and vegetables.

Since it always rains on Plant Fair day, the Education Sessions will be held inside the doors on the west end of the school building. The Garden Gate Store and some of our craft vendors will also be in the dining hall.

Be sure to stop by the Welcome Center to register for free drawings.

Hope to see everyone there!

Don’t forget…

The deadline for students to submit a Scholarship application is April 19th, 2019 at 3 pm. Info is on the Save the Date page.

Wallace Avenue Community Garden

We were excited that the first year of the Community Garden was such a huge success and it looks like this year will be, too!

Gardeners were anxiously awaiting the registration date and the opening day of the Community Garden so they could plant their spring crops!

For information on renting a plot, please call the Grayson County Extension Office at 270-259-3492.
Monthly Garden Tips!

These tips are based on our average frost dates. Please use them as a general guideline. Our weather can vary greatly in Kentucky, not only from year to year, but also within the various zones. Check weather forecasting sources regularly for extended outlooks.

April:
- Begin digging new garden beds when soil is workable
- Sow cold-tolerant vegetable seeds (peas, beets, greens)
- Remove winter mulch and weed as needed
- Cut back ornamental grasses
- Replant perennials that were pushed up from frost
- Plant cold-tolerant annuals
- Plant asparagus roots
- Seed bare spots in your lawn
- Stake peonies
- Prune perennial stems that were winter damaged

May:
- Direct seed summer vegetable seeds
- Transplant peppers, tomatoes, eggplants, melons squash, etc. (early May, weather permitting)
- Water transplants and new plantings frequently
- Pull weeds as they appear
- Pick ripe strawberries regularly to avoid fruit-rotting diseases
- Apply fresh mulch for summer
- Plant sweet potatoes at the end of the month

June:
- Fertilize vegetable garden 1 month after plants emerge by side dressing alongside rows
- Prune flowering bushes after blooming is complete
- Continue weeding to prevent weeds from going to seed
- Stake or cage tomatoes
- Replace early spring crops with heat-loving crops
- Plant a succession crop of corn and beans
- Harvest regularly to encourage continued production

We are on Facebook!
Keep up to date with the latest local gardening news plus upcoming workshops and seminars by “liking” us on Facebook.
Master Gardener Association of Grayson County Kentucky
Tips and Tricks for Starting Seeds
By: Luke Jacobs (KY Extension Master Gardener)

Start your garden early by sowing seeds in containers indoors. Any container that drains well can be used, but many gardeners prefer peat pots or pellets placed in flats or plastic flats with many sections that are sold specifically for this purpose. Either way, many valuable advantages will be gained from growing your own plants from seeds.

Potting media is important. It can be created by mixing sand, organic compost, fertilizer, and sterilized topsoil. Just make sure the growing medium is free of contaminants and drains well. It should also have adequate water holding capacity to provide enough water to the roots of plants.

Before planting seeds, fill pots with soil and water the day before, allowing for overnight drainage. Follow the directions on the seed packet for planting depth and distance apart. A good rule of thumb is to plant seeds no closer together than an inch apart. Place a watertight tray under pots and water them from the bottom to avoid damaging new seedlings. Place pots near a window facing south or southwest. If plants do not have to stretch up to get enough light, their stems will be stronger and will be better able to support heavy fruits and leaves later in the season. Plants require 12-14 hours of light per day.

Cooler temperatures, at night, will make your seedlings more robust, so maintain at 60° F or below once it's dark. During the day, maintain temperatures between 70° F and 75° F. Most vegetable seeds will germinate in that range, but peppers, cabbages, and tomatoes will germinate faster if kept toward the higher end of the range.

Thin your seedlings when they are about an inch tall. Use tweezers or small scissors to clip them off at the surface of the soil. This will avoid damaging the seedlings you want to keep. Thin them so that there are no more than 3 strong seedlings per 2-inch pot. Once plants have formed their first true leaf, fertilize them at each watering with a water-soluble plant food.

Sometimes, soil borne fungi can cause a problem called "damping off". This occurs when the seedlings get dark at the soil line, fall over and die. If this happens, your soil wasn't sterile. Always use sterile potting soil for starting seeds. Letting the surface of the soil dry out in between waterings can help prevent this problem also.

Before transplanting seedlings to the garden, prepare them for the harsher environment by a process called "hardening off". Reduce the light intensity and the temperature. The easiest way to harden seedlings is to set them outside every day when the weather is mild for the 2 or 3 weeks prior to transplanting.

Additional Resources: UK Publication-HO 56& ID-128 Home Vegetable Gardening pg. 8-10
At this time of the year, in mid-April, morels are popping through the ground in KY. All we need is a warm wet spring. After temps of around 50° and a nice warm rain, the ground becomes a host for last season’s spores of the morels. The first rule is... KNOW your mushrooms. There are numerous types of mushrooms and a few that can be closely associated with the morel and are toxic.

One of the best sources is to go with someone that has hunted morels throughout their life and can immediately identify them. And they are always willing to eat them! This is a big test!

After finding a patch of morels, an open mesh bag is suggested for gathering as this will allow spores to drop to the ground and you are ‘planting’ your crop for the following years.

The color of a morel can vary, I like the white ones. I am very leery of those having another color even after being assured they are fine. No, I will go with what I know, and someone else can have those others.

After moving to KY, one Spring I was invited to ‘go look for dry land fish! Hmm…..was this like snipe hunting? I must admit that now when I am invited to go, my boots are on and I am waiting for them to get ready! However, I usually say “Going to look for morels”!

There are Morel Mushroom Retreats usually in April in various parts of the state. The one near Berea is one of the larger ones but is unscheduled for this year due to the uncertainty of the morel season. Often only a few days notice can be given for one of these retreats, so go online and check out one close to your area.

After the last few years of low or non-existing morels, everyone is hoping for a great season.

With the high water in certain areas... along the edge of the retreating water is a good place to find morels. It will be good to check those high water levels.

But morels are extremely elusive. And where there was a patch last year, there might be none this year. But mushroom hunting gets you outside in the spring of the year, searching for a delicacy that few have the opportunity to find.

But always KNOW what you eat. Read, research and go with someone that can identify a morel.

Be Careful. And if you don’t find one today, there is tomorrow and maybe next year! Enjoy the search!

Sources:  https://plantpathology.ca.uky.edu/
Joe Lacefield, KY Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
I have issues with Powdery Mildew every year. Part of the problem is because of moisture in the area from fog and humidity, and partly because I didn't put my garden where it would get a nice cross breeze to dry the plant leaves from the morning dew. Unfortunately, Powdery Mildew is not selective in affecting only one particular kind of plant. For home gardeners, both fruit and vegetables can be affected, in addition to all those pretty flowers, ornamental grasses, and beautiful bushes and shrubs we so proudly planted. Field crops and grains can also be affected.

Although the disease probably won’t kill the plants, everything from plant health, blooms, fruit development, and yields can be adversely affected.

Powdery Mildew is easy to spot because the “leaves, stems, buds, flowers, and fruit appear as if they have been dusted with powder. Later in the growing season, tiny, round, black fungal fruiting structures of the overwintering stage (chasmothecia, formerly known as cleistothecia) may appear to “pepper” mildewed tissue”. You may possibly see random spots of Powdery mildew, or it may cover the entire plant.

Other obvious clues are odd looking leaves (curling, discoloring, blotchiness, etc) or odd-shaped or odd-colored fruits that may split open. I found it interesting that although the edible parts of some fruits and vegetables do not become infected with Powdery Mildew, it “can still reduce yield and/or quality”.

Like some other diseases, it can overwinter in the soil, as well as on all parts of the plants, including flower buds and bark. The spring rains cause the spores to splash onto plants or the spores can be carried by the wind to other plants.

It can develop throughout the growing season with temperatures over 55°F. Although more prevalent in crowded and damp conditions, Powdery Mildew can also infect plants in areas with humidity levels as low as 40%.

So What Do We Do?

- Choose resistant/tolerant cultivars.
- Avoid planting in shaded, high humidity and low lying areas.
- Rotate annual plants to help protect against overwintered diseases.
- Remove diseased plant debris. DO NOT COMPOST!
- Mulch…Mulch…Mulch to avoid overwintered spores in the soil from splashing onto the plants
- Ensure plants are well spaced to allow enough sunlight to the center of plants, good air movement to dry the leaves.
- Fungicide? Generally recommended mainly for commercial plants or valuable plants, not so much for residential yards and gardens. If the disease appears late in the season, it causes minimal damage.

Prevention is the “best remedy” for home gardeners.

If you have issues with Powdery Mildew, contact the Extension Office for recommended fungicides.

Source: Plant Pathology Fact Sheet PPFS-GEN-02
Wallace Avenue Community Garden

No yard? No place to garden? Limited mobility? No problem! Our raised beds are perfect for your family, or share a plot with a Garden Buddy.

Community Garden Fees

Small plots are 48 sq. ft. – $15 for the entire season
Large plots are 80 sq. ft. – $25 for the entire season

There is also a refundable plot clean-up deposit equal to the plot rental fee.

For plot availability, please call the Grayson County Extension Office at 270-259-3492
The Master Gardener Association of Grayson County

Horticulture or Horticulture-related field Scholarship!

Deadline for submission: Monday, April 19, 2019 by 3:00 p.m.

We are offering a scholarship

to a Grayson County higher education student

studying horticulture or a horticulture-related field

for the 2019/20 school year.

If you know of a deserving student who would be interested,
please pass along this information.

Contact the Grayson County Extension Office at 270-259-3492 for more information.

Please share this information with a student who would be interested.

Link to application:  http://grayson.ca.uky.edu/ files/2018_mg_scholarship.pdf

Save the Date!!!

May 4th, 2019, Saturday, 8 am to 2 pm CDT – 10th Annual Master Gardener Plant Fair & Spring Fling, Leitchfield, KY. Education sessions and additional vendors inside the building.

June 8, 2019, Saturday, 1 pm to 3pm CDT, Children’s Garden Workshop, BEEs and ME (Ages 5 -11) at the Grayson County Extension Office. Park in the back lot.

Cost is $7 for first child, $5 for each additional child in the family. Advanced registration and payment required. Pay in person at the Extension Office, or by mail to Grayson County Extension Office, 123 Commerce Drive, Leitchfield, KY 42754.

For more information contact the Grayson County Extension Office at 270-259-3492, or check us out on Facebook:  Master Gardener Association of Grayson County Kentucky
Save the Date!!!

10th annual
Plant Fair &
Spring Fling

Saturday, May 4, 2019
DERBY DAY!
8:00 AM—2:00 PM

Presented by the Master Gardener Association of Grayson County, KY

- PLANT SALES
- VENDOR BOOTHS
- CONCESSIONS
- WORKSHOPS
- CRAFTS FOR KIDS
- FREE PARKING

Located at Grayson County Middle School on Hwy 62
Leitchfield, KY

For information contact:
The Grayson County Extension Service
123 Commerce Drive
Leitchfield, KY 42754
(270) 259-3492

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Master Gardener Association of Grayson County KY

University of Kentucky
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