



Are you doing your rain dance yet? I know I am! Make sure to water all those flowers and veggies so they will be ready for the Mercer County Fair Floral Hall at the end of this month! Looking forward to seeing all the great entries! Happy Gardening!

Jessica Bessin

Jessica Bessin,
Mercer County Extension Agent for Horticulture



Time to water!

As I am working on this newsletter, rain has been forecasted for today. Hopefully, by the time it arrives in your mailbox you won't need this watering information. If you have trees anywhere from newly planted 3 years old, now is the time to water for their survival. Here are a couple of tips on watering from Amanda Sears, Madison County Extension Agent for Horticulture.

How much water do plants need?

In general, plants need an inch of water a week. That water can come from rain or from irrigating. Invest in a rain gauge to keep up with how much precipitation you receive.

How do you know if you have watered enough?

One method is to put something in the garden to measure the amount of water you have applied. Try an old tuna can. It is about an inch tall. Put it in the area where you are irrigating and see how long it takes to fill it.

Another idea is to dig down into the soil or insert something like a long screw driver to see how deep the water has soaked. The soil should be wetted to about six inches down.

If plants need an inch of water a week, do I apply that all at once or a little every day?

It's better to only water a couple of times a week, but for a longer duration than a little bit every day. This allows the water to seep deeper which encourages better, deeper root growth on the plant.

So all I need to do is get my hose out and get started?

Well, yes and no. Hoses work great, but it would be best to water plants at the soil line instead of watering overhead. Leaves do not need water and in fact, the longer leaves are a wet, the more likely they are to develop disease issues. If you overhead irrigate, consider doing so in the morning so plants have a chance to dry out during the day.

Consider purchasing a soaker hose. It would need to stay on longer than if you were using a hose, but it delivers water right where it needs to be and would be more efficient.

NOTICE

Public Notification of Procedure for Filing a Complaint:

The Cooperative Extension Service prohibits discrimination in its programs and employment on the basis of race, color, age, religion, gender, disability, or national origin.

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).

Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating. Lexington, KY 40506



Tomato Basil Bruschetta

3 plum tomatoes, chopped
½ cup thinly sliced and coarsely chopped onion
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
6 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon minced fresh basil or 1 teaspoon dried basil
½ teaspoon dried oregano
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground pepper
1 pound loaf, whole wheat French bread, cut into ½ inch slices

1. Combine tomatoes, onions, garlic, red wine vinegar, 2 tablespoons olive oil, basil, oregano, salt and pepper; set aside.
2. Preheat broiler of oven.
3. Lightly brush both sides of bread slices with remaining olive oil and arrange on ungreased baking sheet.
4. Place three to four inches from the broiler and heat slices for two to three minutes on each side or until golden brown.
5. Top each slice with tomato mixture, using a slotted spoon and serve.

Yield: 16, ½ inch slices
Nutritional Analysis: 140 calories, 5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 250 mg sodium, 19 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 0 g sugar, 4 g protein.

Plate it up!

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

Cucumber, Corn, and Bean Salsa

2-3 large cucumbers
2 tomatoes
1 yellow bell pepper
1 small red onion
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
½ cup black beans

¼ cup fresh whole kernel corn, cooked
1 ounce package dry ranch dressing mix
¼ cup cider vinegar
2 tablespoons sugar, optional

Wash all vegetables. Finely **chop** cucumbers, tomatoes, pepper, and onion. **Combine** in a large mixing bowl with chopped cilantro. **Drain** and rinse beans and add to chopped vegetables. **Add** corn. If using canned corn instead of fresh, **drain** off liquid prior to adding to vegetables.
In a small bowl, mix together ranch dressing packet, vinegar, and sugar. **Pour** dressing over vegetables and mix well. **Serve** immediately or refrigerate until chilled.

Yield: Makes 20, ½ cup servings.
Nutritional Analysis: 50 calories, 0 g fat, 130 mg sodium, 7 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 70% Daily Value of vitamin C and 6% Daily Value of vitamin A

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

Milkweed, Not Just For Monarchs

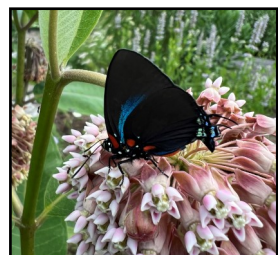
If you have ever been to the Extension Office you may have noticed, or even visited, our demonstration garden. Over the last couple of years it has gone through some changes and currently is a Monarch Waystation. Monarch waystations are essentially gardens that have several nectar plants and milkweed plants on which Monarch butterflies develop. These waystations are unique because of all the other diversity of pollinators they attract besides the monarch.

We have a lot of KY native plants in our demo garden, but the star of the garden has been the common milkweed. Common milkweed is a herbaceous perennial that grows in well-drained soils in full sun, but will also tolerate poor soils as well. In the summer, they have what appear to be large pink/purple balls of flowers, but when you look closer they are made up of multiple individual flowers. They can reproduce by rhizomes and in the fall produce large seed pods. Once the seed pods mature, fluffy white seeds emerge and float across the landscape. Common milkweed can be hard to transplant, so I would recommend collecting seeds as they emerge and planting them in the fall. This allows the seeds to go through the cold period they need and has been my most successful way of getting it established.

Not many insects are able to feed on milkweeds. The sticky white sap, that gives milkweed its common name, and the leaves contain toxic chemicals to deter mammals and insects from feeding on the foliage. Only certain insects, which have evolved to be able to deal with those chemicals without being poisoned, can thrive on the plants, and have become specialists on milkweeds.

We all know about the monarch that feeds on milkweed, but we have observed a variety of other insects feeding on this plant. Just on our few plants we have observed red milkweed beetles (pictured above), swamp milkweed beetles, milkweed bugs and oleander aphids. Many natural enemies including lady beetles, syrphid fly larvae, and lacewings feed on aphids and be found hanging out on the milkweed plants

Insects that cannot feed on the actual plant are lured in by the sweet smelling flowers. Honey bees cover the flowers when they are in full bloom. I have observed bumble bees, day flying moths, tiny native bees, and many different species of butterflies. Even one I have never seen in person before, the Great purple hairstreak pictured above. If you are interested in attracting more pollinators to your garden, adding common milk weed is a must!



The Beetles of Summer

Whether you call them fireflies or lightning bugs, seeing them in the evening is a pleasant reminder that we are moving into the early summer months. It is fascinating to watch their periodic flashes and the patterns they make with their lights. Plus, they provide a fun night time activity for children, seeing how many of these magical insects they can catch.

A common question that is asked about these insects is how do they light up the night sky? This phenomenon is called bioluminescence, which produces light without heat. In Kentucky, there are a number of different species, and if you watch them carefully, each species is a bit different in how it flashes. The timing and patterns of the flashes is unique to each species. Fireflies use these unique flash patterns to recognize members of their species and identify members of the opposite sex.

Fireflies are actually beetles, not flies or bugs, and belong to the Family Lampyridae. Adult males produce the flash near the tip of their abdomen. They use a protein called luciferin and an enzyme called luciferase to produce cold light. Fireflies are luminescent in all their life stages, not just as adults. Larvae crawling on the ground can be observed flashing at times while they search for slugs and snails to eat.

One of the fireflies that I watch for is the big dipper firefly, *Photinus pyralis*. These males move upward while flashing and tracing the letter 'J' in the air. Females of one genus of firefly, *Photuris*, may send out false flash codes to attract males of another genus. They do this to lure males of other species close enough so that they can capture and eat them. This has been referred to as the 'femme fatale of fireflies.' Generally, during the last couple of decades, firefly numbers appear to be declining. While we may not know why this is happening or if this a just cycle in firefly populations, seeing fireflies in the evening will always remain a treat. Source: Ric Bessin UK Entomologist.

Mark Those Calendars!!

Floral Hall Registration-July 1st

Registration officially opens to start entering all of your items for 2024 Mercer County Floral Hall.

Fort Harrod Garden Club- NO MEETING IN JULY

Floral Hall Registration Help- July 2nd and 12th, Mercer County Extension Office

See insert for more details.

Tree Identification Class-July 11th, Mercer County Public Library 12:00 PM

Floral Hall Volunteer Training- July 19th, The Stable at Mercer County Fairgrounds 10:00 AM

Mercer County Fair & Horseshow- July 20th-29th.

Fort Harrod Beekeeping Club-July 29th, 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!

Mercer County Extension Open House- August 8th, Mercer County Extension Office



Fort Harrod
Beekeeping Club

Mercer County Floral Hall



Floral Hall Volunteers Needed!

Friday, July 19 at 10:00am

Orientation for new and returning volunteers is scheduled for Friday, July 19 at the Stable (the Floral Hall and Farmers Market building at the fairgrounds). You do not have to RSVP for this. We will also need volunteers to work two-hour stints overseeing the exhibits July 23-26.

MERCER COUNTY FAIR & HORSE SHOW



Open Floral Hall

We have two days set in July for those needing help entering your items online:

Tuesday, July 2 and Friday, July 12

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY!

Please call **859-734-4378** to reserve your spot.

Opens July 1 for entry. DEADLINE TO ENTER is Wednesday, July 17 at noon.

<http://mercerfairky.fairentry.com>

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

Monday, July 22

Entry Check-In by appointment

Tuesday, July 23

10:00 am – 2:00 pm Floral Hall open to the public

5:00 pm – 9:00 pm Floral Hall open to the public

Wednesday, July 24

10:00 am – 2:00 pm Floral Hall open to the public

5:00 pm – 9:00 pm Floral Hall open to the public

Thursday, July 25

10:00 am – 2:00 pm Floral Hall open to the public

5:00 pm – 9:00 pm Floral Hall open to the public

Friday, July 26

10:00 am – 2:00 pm Floral Hall open to the public

5:00 pm – 9:00 pm Floral Hall open to the public

Saturday, July 27

Entry Check-Out 9:00-11:00am



Fort Harrod
Beekeeping Club

July 29 at 6:30pm

Meet our new Kentucky State Apiarist
Amanda Skidmore!



As State Apiarist, Skidmore's responsibilities will include identifying infectious diseases for honeybee colonies and

helping to eradicate those diseases. In addition, she will help to educate the non-beekeeping public about the importance of honeybees and offer best advice practice to the beekeeping community.

Mercer County Extension Office

1007 Lexington Road—Harrodsburg, KY 40330
859-734-4378



Mercer County
Public Library
Lunch & Learn:

Tree ID Class

July 11 at 12:00pm



Learn how to ID some of our native and other common trees. Bring your lunch! The library will provide beverages and something sweet. Presented by Jessica Bessin, Extension Agent for Horticulture.

Mercer County
Public Library
109 W Lexington St
Harrodsburg, KY
40330



Mercer County Floral Hall



Did you know there are a wide variety of horticulture items you can enter in Mercer County Fair Floral Hall? Choose from over 100 types of flowers, fruit, and vegetables to enter this year! Registration for Floral Hall closes 7/17/2024.



You can also find the catalog and other fair information by scanning the QR code or going to this link:
<https://mercer.ca.uky.edu/countyfair>



Cooperative Extension Service
Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.
LEXINGTON, KY 40546



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.