



We are already talking about County Fair! Yes, it is time to start thinking about the items to enter in the fair! Don't forget, if you are looking for vegetable transplants, our local high school, farmers market, and other local producers are an excellent resource.

Happy Gardening!

Jessica Bessin,
Mercer County Extension Agent for Horticulture



Ants on Peonies

Peonies, the "queen of all flowers", are getting ready to put on a spectacular show this spring in Kentucky. However, with the development of flowers on peony plants, ants also arrive. While ants on the buds and flowers can be a nuisance, they do no harm. Once bloom is complete, ants will disappear from peony flowers and move on to find a food source elsewhere.



It is a myth that peonies require ants to bloom. The relationship between peonies and ants is a type of mutualism, in which two organisms of different species benefit from the activity of one another. Peony flowers provide food for ants and in turn, the ants protect the blossoms from other floral-feeding insects. Nectaries are present at the base of the green sepals that surround peony flower buds. Later, nectaries are visible on sepals on the back side of the blossoms near the stem. These plant organs secrete nectar, which is composed of sugars (sucrose, glucose, and fructose), amino acids, lipids, and other organic compounds that are a food source for ants.

When a scout ant finds the nectar on the peony, she emits a pheromone, or odor trail, on the way back to her nest. At the nest, the scout alerts other ants of the food source. The recruited ants then follow the odor trail back to nectar on the peony flowers. While the ants are feeding on the nectar, they protect their food source by swarming and chasing away other insects that come to feed on the flower buds. Because the presence of ants on peony floral tissues is only temporary, the application of an insecticide is unnecessary. When cutting peonies at full bloom for use indoors, hold them upside down by the stem just below the flower and shake the ants off outdoors or gently rinse the ants off before arranging them. Source: University of Missouri IPM Extension Program.

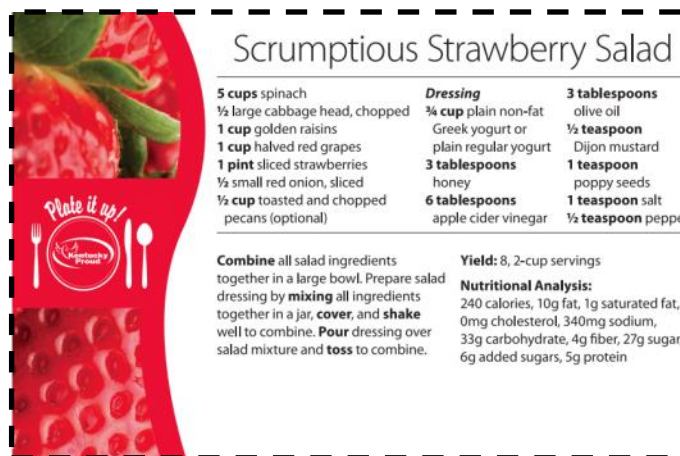
NOTICE

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).

Scrumptious Strawberry Salad



5 cups spinach
½ large cabbage head, chopped
1 cup golden raisins
1 cup halved red grapes
1 pint sliced strawberries
½ small red onion, sliced
½ cup toasted and chopped pecans (optional)

Dressing
¾ cup plain non-fat Greek yogurt or plain regular yogurt
3 tablespoons honey
6 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

3 tablespoons olive oil
½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon poppy seeds
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper

Combine all salad ingredients together in a large bowl. Prepare salad dressing by **mixing** all ingredients together in a jar, **cover**, and **shake** well to combine. **Pour** dressing over salad mixture and **toss** to combine.

Yield: 8, 2-cup servings
Nutritional Analysis:
 240 calories, 10g fat, 1g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 340mg sodium, 33g carbohydrate, 4g fiber, 27g sugar, 6g added sugars, 5g protein

Dijon Chicken Asparagus Roll Ups



3 tablespoons Dijon mustard
½ cup low fat mayonnaise
1 lemon, juiced (approximately 3 tablespoons)

2 teaspoons dried thyme
2 teaspoons black pepper
½ teaspoon salt
16 spears fresh asparagus, trimmed

4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves (about 5 ounces each)
4 slices skimmed mozzarella cheese
1 cup panko bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. **Grease** an 11-by-7-inch baking dish. In a bowl, **mix** together the mustard, mayonnaise, lemon juice, thyme, salt and pepper; set aside. **Place** asparagus in a microwave safe dish and **microwave** on high 1-1½ minutes. **Place** chicken breasts between two sheets of heavy plastic (a re-sealable freezer bag works well) on a firm surface. **Pound** the chicken breasts with the smooth side of a meat mallet to thickness of ¼ inch. **Place** one slice of cheese and four asparagus spears on each breast. Tightly **roll** the chicken breasts around the asparagus and cheese. **Place** each, seam side down, in the prepared baking dish. **Apply** a coating of the mustard mixture to each chicken breast and **sprinkle** each with the panko crumbs, **pressing** the crumbs into the chicken to secure. **Bake** 35 minutes or until the chicken temperature is 165 degrees F. For crisper chicken, **place** roll-ups under the broiler for 1-2 minutes on high.

Yield: 4 servings
Nutritional Analysis:
 370 calories, 10 g fat, 3.5 g saturated fat, 115 mg cholesterol, 1060 mg sodium, 2 g fiber, 2 g sugars, 41 g protein.

Vegetable Transplants

It's finally time to purchase transplants for our garden. You want to look for a couple of things when purchasing to make sure you get the healthiest plants available. Transplants which were seeded at the right time and were grown at the right temperature, in abundant light and adequate moisture, will be compact, with the distance between leaves very small. The stems will be pencil thick and rigid. Leaves will be dark green, large and upright with no tendency to droop. Also, avoid ones that are already starting to flower, these develop a poor root system and won't be able to support production later.

Save the Epsom Salts for Your Bathtub

If you have been on Facebook lately, you might have seen posts circulating about tomatoes and Epsom salts. Most of the time these posts recommend to place a scoop of the Epsom salt in the hole in which you are getting ready to plant a tomato. It's time to debunk the Epsom salt myth.



Epsom salts are Magnesium sulfate which in the online gardening world has claims to improve seed germination, help uptake nutrients, and help you grow an overall healthier plant. People often feel safe using it because it is advertised as not persistent in the soil, so you can't overuse it like other fertilizers out there.

Tomatoes are not very salt tolerant. Placing large amounts of Epsom salts at the time of planting can damage or even kill your plant. Epsom salts are a source of magnesium. Soils in the area generally have adequate amounts of magnesium in them. If you think you may have a magnesium deficiency, consider having a soil test done. We offer them for free all year at the Extension Office. Source: Amanda Sears, Madison County Horticulture Agent.

Plastic Layer

The Mercer County Extension Office has purchased a plastic layer for vegetable production. The plastic layer is equipped to make a 3ft plastic bed and lay trickle irrigation lines. This piece of equipment is now available to rent. There is a rental fee of \$25 for three days. Rolls of plastic and irrigation lines are not included. If you are interested in renting the plastic layer, please contact the Mercer County Extension Office to fill out and review the rental agreement form, give us a call at 859-734-4378 for any further questions.



FARMERS MARKET

MERCER COUNTY

Don't Miss a Beet!

MARKET DAYS ARE BACK!

FIND YOUR SHARE OF LOCAL GOODS FROM LOCAL PEOPLE.
 LOCALLY RAISED FLOWERS, HERBS, HONEY, PRODUCE, MEATS & EGGS,
 HANDCRAFTED/ HOMEMADE ITEMS, BAKED GOODS & SO MUCH MORE!

Located at the Mercer County Fairgrounds Stable Building
 560 Linden Ave. Harrodsburg, KY

Join Us:

SATURDAYS 9-1PM
MAY 6 - OCT 21

WEDNESDAYS 2-5PM
JUNE 7 - SEPT 27

MONTHLY MARKET EVENTS

- May 6 - Opening Day - Derby Style
- June 3 - Kids Day at the Market
- July 1 - All American Cookout
- Aug 5 - Back to School Donation Drive
- Sept 9 - Tailgate Party
- Sept 21 - Farm to Table Dinner**
- Oct 21 - Halloween at the Market
- Nov 18 - Thanksgiving Pop-up

**TICKET PURCHASE REQUIRED FOR DINNER

Monthly events will feature a variety of entertainment: food trucks, music, door prize entries, cooking demonstrations & speakers

FOOD PRESERVATION WORKSHOPS

University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Cooperative Extension Service

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES
 Creating Healthy & Sustainable Families

- MAY 4TH- GREEN BEANS
- MAY 18TH- GARLIC JELLY
- JUNE 1ST- TOMATOES
- JUNE 8TH- MANGO PINEAPPLE RELISH
- JUNE 29TH- CREAM STYLE CORN
- JULY 6TH- APPLE BUTTER
- JULY 20TH- MIXED VEGETABLES
- AUGUST 10TH- ROASTED RED PEPPER SPREAD
- AUGUST 17TH- VEGETABLE STACK
- AUGUST 18TH- BLUEBERRY LIME JAM
- AUGUST 29TH- CHICKEN SOUP

ALL CLASSES WILL BE AT THE MERCER COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE AT 10:00AM RSVP REQUIRED
 859-734-4378 OR TARA.DUTY@UKY.EDU

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

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Mark Those Calendars!!!

Fort Harrod Garden Club- May 2nd, Mercer County Extension Office 10:00 AM

Join us this month as Fayette County Horticulture Agent, Jamie Dockery shares the best perennials for shady locations. If you would like to receive a text reminder about the club meetings and locations, please call the Mercer County Extension Office at: 859-734-4378.

Growing Herbs- May 12th, Mercer County Public Library 12:00 PM

See insert for more details.

3rd Annual Tomato Give-Away- May 18th, Mercer County Extension Office 9:00 AM- 4:00 PM

See insert for more details.

Tomato Production in Kentucky- May 18th, Mercer County Extension Office 10:00 AM

See insert for more details.

Fort Harrod Beekeeping Club - May 30th, 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!

Insect Quest- June 7th, Mercer County Extension Office

See insert for more details.



Fort Harrod
 Beekeeping Club

CAMP IQ: Insect Quest



June 7
9:00am — 4:00pm

Come learn all about how insects are an important part of our ecosystem. The good, the bad, and the ones that aren't really bothering anyone! Lunch and snacks provided.



Ages 9—12

Learn about insects & their activities. Identify & label insects.

Start your own insect collection.

Instruction on collections and projects for county/state fair.

Limited to 12 participants. Call **859-734-4378** to register. RSVP by June 1.



College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

Mercer County Extension Office
1007 Lexington Road—Harrodsburg, KY



Tomato Production

May 18
10:00am

Please call 859-734-4378 to RSVP.

Do you deal with disease and insect issues on your tomatoes? Do they decline early in the season? Join us as we share the secrets to productive tomatoes all summer long!



Free Tomato Plants

May 18

9:00am-4:00pm or until supplies last

Courtesy of the
Mercer County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Program

Mercer County Extension Office
1007 Lexington Road—Harrodsburg, KY 40330
859-734-4378



Fort Harrod
Beekeeping Club

Tuesday

May 30

Meeting begins at 6:30.

Theresa Martin from Williamsburg will give a talk entitled, "Dead Bees Don't Make Honey." Theresa is a member of KSBA and hasn't ever lost a hive in six years of beekeeping.

Weather permitting, we will check hives at 6:00pm. Bring your bee suit!

*Note this month's meeting is on Tuesday due to Memorial Day.

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

MERCER COUNTY
FAIR & HORSE SHOW



Floral Hall Catalog
available May 1



Pick up a copy at the office, scan the QR code, or check out our website at:

<https://tinyurl.com/mercerfair23>

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



Mercer County Public Library
Lunch & Learn:

Growing Herbs

Thursday, May 11
at 12:00pm



We will cover the basics of growing herbs and which ones do best in our area. Whether you are growing them for culinary use or planting them for pollinators they make a great addition to any garden! Bring your lunch! The library will provide beverages and something sweet. Presented by Jessica Bessin, Mercer County Extension Agent for Horticulture.

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