Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

FLOYD COUNTY
3490 KY ROUTE 321
PRESTONSBURG, KY 41653
(606) 886-2668
FAX: (606) 886-1458

WEBSITE: FLOYD.CA.UKY.EDU
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/FLOYDEXT

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Chad Allen
County Extension Agent for
Agriculture & Natural Resources

UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

July 2	Floyd County Beekeepers Association Meeting Extension Office 6:00pm
July 4	Official Holiday-Independence Day EXTENSION OFFICE CLOSED
July 9-12	4-H Camp Week JM Feltner 4-H Camp—Contact Our 4-H Agent
July 13	Floyd County Farmer's Market Meeting Held at the Market this month

Inside This Issue:

Other programs and events will be announced at a later time.

What to do in July & August

These are a few suggestions that may help you and your plants during this period. I will divide the suggestion into groups, so you can refer back to them.

Herbaceous plants

**Start selecting your favorite bulb varieties now by searching bulb catalogs. Now is the time to order so bulbs can be planted this fall.

**The best time to buy chrysanthemums is in late summer as soon as they become available. For a long blooming period, choose plants that are just coming into bud instead of those already in full bloom.

**Oriental poppies can be safely planted, transplanted, or divided this month. Plant the hardy, long-lived perennials in well-drained soil in full sun. Do not mulch around dormant oriental poppies. They prefer hot, sun-baked ground while resting.

**Since container-grown plants have a limited area from which to absorb water, plants in a sunny location may require watering several times a day. Check plants often to avoid water stress. This additional watering may leach nutrients from the media. Bi-weekly fertilization may be necessary to maintain vigor.

**During hot & dry periods of the summer, check all plants to see if watering is needed.

Woody Ornamentals

**Root cuttings of woody shrubs and evergreens, such as azaleas, holly, and hydrangea, at this time of year.

**Powdery mildew disease attacks many ornamentals, most often in late summer when the days are warm, and nights are cool. Some mildew, particularly those on roses, apples, and cherries, are increased by high humidity. Prevention by proper cultural techniques is the first defense. Grow resistant varieties; space and prune plants to improve aeration and lessen shading; water early in the day and at the base rather than on the leaves; and reduce nitrogen applications to avoid excessive, late-season growth.

**Water shrubs deeply once a week during August. Many plants, including camellias and rhododendrons, are starting buds for next seasons bloom at this time. Immature berries of hollies and pyracantha may drop if plants are water stressed.

Lawns

**Water during summer when soil becomes very dry. Soak 30-60 minutes per setting. Check soil with knife to determine when irrigation is needed.

**Do not mow during hot mid-day hours when turf is under moisture stress.

**Starting in late August, watch for small areas of dying grass - if dying or dead grass pulls up like a carpet and exposes white grubs, apply granular insecticide. You must observe the lawn almost every day for possible damage.

Fruits

**To reduce the number of pests on your fruit trees for the coming year, pick up and destroy all fallen fruit. Worms hide in the fallen fruit, and then pupate in the soil. They will be ready to lay eggs next year.

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Houseplants

**Turn and prune houseplants regularly to keep them shapely. Pinch back new growth to promote bushy plants.

**Check all houseplants closely for insect infestations. Quarantine gift plants until you determine they are not harboring pests.

**Over-watering indoor plants encourages root rot. Water when the soil is dry to the touch.

**Remember, some indoor plants require more sunlight than others, arrange them accordingly.

**Be aware of how temperature and humidity can affect your houseplants.

Vegetables

**Stop vine crops from taking over your garden and lawn by pinching off the fuzzy growing tips. This directs the plant's energy into ripening fruit rather than producing more vines.

**Watering properly is the key to conserving water in the heat of summer. One inch per week, applied at one time, will wet soil 6-8 inches deep and ensure good yield from mature crops. Two inches of organic mulch will cool the soil and reduce surface evaporation of water.

**Potatoes continue to grow as long as the tops are green. You should dig only as many as you need for immediate use. The tubers will keep better in the ground than in a warm, dry home.

Planting Fall Vegetables

It is not too late to continue to enjoy the garden and add new plantings. A variety of produce can be grown in Kentucky gardens in the coming weeks allowing fresh items to be available well into the fall.

The cooler nights experienced later in the year as these vegetables mature may increase the sugar content of many crops and thus increase their quality. Cooler nights also slow growth, so crops can take longer to mature than in the summer. Keep this slower pace in mind when you check seeds for days to maturity.

Late July or early August would be the time to make a last planting of bush beans, carrots, sweet corn, kale, collards, Bibb lettuce, turnips, and cole crops such as kohlrabi, Chinese cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, and broccoli. For late August and into September try planting mustard greens, spinach greens, radishes, turnip greens, and leaf lettuce.

Before planting, remove any existing debris including crops and weeds to the compost bin and cultivate the soil.

If the previous crop was well fertilized and grew vigorously you may need to add little if any additional fertilizer, otherwise apply about 2-3 pounds of a complete fertilizer such as 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 per 100 square feet of planting area.

Remember to keep fall gardens well watered as this tends to be a fairly dry time in Kentucky. A weekly irrigation sufficient to wet the soil to 6 or 8 inches should be adequate. This is more or less equivalent to a weekly one-inch rain.

To learn more about fall gardening options, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office and ask for publication ID-28, "Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky."

You Can Control Flies On Cattle

Warmer weather brings more pest problems. Horn flies and face flies are key pests of Kentucky cattle. Both species breed in fresh manure piles, but they present different threats and management problems. Fortunately, you have a variety of fly control options.

Horn flies are blood feeders. They remain on animals most of the time, taking 20 to 30 small blood meals per day. More than 100 flies along the sides and backs of each animal every day during the fly season can mean 12 to 15 pounds lower weaning weights for spring calves and poor gains for older animals. The close association between the horn fly and the animal, however, does make many control methods quite effective.

On the other hand, face flies spend about 90 percent of their time resting and they only visit animals to feed on liquids around the eyes and face. This makes some fly control methods more effective than others because face flies visit hard-to-treat areas for very short time periods.

One control option is insecticide-impregnated cattle ear tags which release small amounts of an insecticide distributed over the animal during grooming or rubbing. In general, ear tags provide excellent, long-term control of horn flies and some brands also reduce face fly numbers. Another advantage is that animals only have to be handled once.

Read the label before you use insecticide ear tags. All tags are labeled for beef cattle while only those with certain active ingredients are approved for use on lactating dairy cattle.

For fly control, it is best to tag animals after horn fly numbers reach 50 or more per side. This reduces the chances of developing resistance to the active ingredients that are being used. Normally, tags provide 12 to 15 weeks of fly control. Tagging too early in the season can mean the tags are not providing control in the fall that will help to control the overwintering population.

Another method of control is pour-on products. These are ready-to-use formulations that are applied to animals in measured doses based upon body weight. Horn flies are killed as they land on treated areas of the animal and pick up the insecticide through their body.

Typically, pour-ons provide about four weeks of fly reduction so you must reapply at intervals or use in combination with other methods. The length of control will vary with weather and other factors, so treat again when fly numbers build back up to about 100 per side but no sooner than the label instructions allow.

Many cattle producers like to use self-application devices, such as dust bags, back rubbers, or automatic sprayers for pasture fly control. You can purchase ready-made or assemble from easily found materials. These devices can do a very effective job of horn fly control and may provide satisfactory to excellent face fly control. All require regular inspection and service to be sure they are working properly and may not be as mobile as other fly control systems.

Location is important for these fly control methods. You must put them where animals can regularly use them. The number you need will vary with herd size, pasture area and other factors. The ultimate goal is to get each animal regularly treated.

Horn flies and face flies breed in cattle droppings in pastures. Animals consuming an insecticide that passes through the manure can make it toxic. Mineral blocks or loose supplements are available which contain fly control products. This method is only part of a total fly-control program because horn flies and face flies move in from nearby herds. Supplemental control though the use of dust bags or backrubbers is needed to deal with these "fly-ins".

Beef cattle producers have many alternatives for pasture fly control. Cost, effectiveness, past control history and herd management practices help to narrow this list. The source of this article was Lee Townsend, UK Entomologist. For more information on fly control, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Beneficial Snakes

Many people fear snakes, but despite the fright they can cause, the majority of snakes are beneficial. Of the 33 varieties of snakes in Kentucky, only four are venomous (Northern copperhead, Western cottonmouth [water moccasin], timber rattlesnake, and pygmy rattlesnake). Most snakes you encounter around your home are harmless. If you are scared of them, try to remember that they are useful—they keep the rodent population in check by eating mice, rats, chipmunks and even toads, insects, and other pests.

Summer months increase the possibility for an encounter with a snake, as snakes leave dormancy in the spring to mate. And because people go outside more often in the warm months to enjoy leisure and sporting activities, surprise encounters can happen. When threatened, a snake may coil up and hiss, but generally, its reaction will be to get away from you.

Snakes like damp, dark, cool places where food (usually mice) is accessible. They also will be drawn to areas that provide shelter and shade from the summer sun. The best way to get rid of snakes is to modify the habitat that is attracting them. Some recommendations include:

- Stack firewood 12 inches above the ground on a pallet
- Remove lumber or junk piles where snakes could hide
- Trim bushes and shrubs that grow against a foundation
- Keep all lots, fields, and lawns mowed and well kept
- Remove debris and trash from pond and stream banks
- De-clutter basements and attics, especially where rodents can be found
- Keep feed for livestock in covered metal containers to discourage rodents
- Remove pet food after feeding
- Use covered metal cans for trash

You can use glueboards to remove snakes. For longer snakes, you may need to nail several glueboards in succession to a piece of plywood. But remember that the best option for snake removal is to modify the environment so the snakes are not attracted to the area.

For more information, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Controlling Weeds in the Vegetable Garden

Home gardeners look forward to that first ripe tomato or ear of corn picked from their own carefully tended gardens. But after some vigorous hoeing on a hot humid day, some may be asking themselves if it is all worth it.

Weeds compete with crop plants for water, nutrients, and sunlight. Some weeds, like quackgrass, can chemically inhibit vegetable plant growth. Others host insect pests and pathogens. All of these result in fewer fresh vegetables for your table.

There are some preventive practices that effectively combat weeds. Frequent hoeing or rototilling on a weekly basis helps eliminate weeds when they are small and easily removed.

By planting rows a little closer, vegetable crops provide more shade which also helps to reduce weed pressure. After harvesting a crop, plant another in its place to continue using the space.

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Mulching works very well in the home garden. Use organic material such as grass clippings, leaves or straw to eliminate weed growth and build up organic matter to make the soil more fertile and friable. Do not use grass clippings from a lawn that was treated recently with the herbicide 2, 4-D. Treated clippings can cause twisting of the vegetable plants and can even kill some sensitive vegetable crops. Be careful about the kind of organic material you use. Hay can introduce a considerable load of weed seeds into your garden.

Black plastic mulch is of specific benefit to certain vegetables including tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, and vine crops. In addition to shading out and eliminating weeds, plastic mulches conserve moisture and promote early crop growth by helping to heat up the soil in spring. Landscape fabric has the added advantage of being water permeable and can be used for multiple years, although it is more expensive than black plastic.

Most importantly, do everything possible to keep garden weeds from going to seed. One red root pigweed plant can produce 100,000 seeds that can continue to germinate over the next 15 to 20 years.

For more information about how to get the most from your home vegetable garden, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office. The source of this article was Dr. John Strang, UK Extension Horticulturist.

Lawnmowers are No Place for Children

Each year, millions of people haul out their mowers, lawn tractors, trimmers, tillers, and chipper/shredders. Along the way, some also haul out unsafe operating habits that can lead to injuries.

Young children move quickly and are attracted to mowing activity. They do not understand the dangers it poses. Parents should keep young children away from any outdoor power equipment. Each year, about 75 people are killed and about 20,000 are injured on or near riding lawnmowers and garden tractors. One out of every five deaths involves a child.

More than 800 young children get run over or backed over by riding mowers each year. This happens when children fall while being given rides, or when they approach the operating mower. Children should never be in the yard while you are mowing, and they should never ride on the mower.

Children see mowing activity, want to ride along and approach the mower sometimes faster than the adult can see them. Never assume children will remain where you last saw them. Be alert and turn off the mower if children enter the mowing area. Use extra care when backing up or going around corners, shrubs, trees, or other obstacles.

As with all lawnmowers, there is a risk of a thrown object. Small children are at special risk since an object thrown from a lawnmower that would strike an adult in the leg could cause a much more serious injury by striking a small child in the body or the head.

Many children suffer serious burns to their hands and arms when they touch the hot muffler of running or recently running engines. Keep children away from power equipment, especially that which is running or has recently been running.

Protecting children in and around lawn care equipment can be accomplished by taking the appropriate precautions. While children may want to ride on mowers or other equipment keeping a firm “no riders” policy will help prevent injuries and allow for a safe, enjoyable summertime.

For more information regarding outdoor power equipment safety, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Summer Watering

When summer weather heats up with no sign of rain, gardeners hook up the water hose to give their thirsty landscapes a drink. It seems like a simple enough task, but there are some tips to help you get the most from your efforts.

Plants benefit more from occasional heavy watering than from frequent shallow watering. Water equal to about 1-inch of rain penetrates the soil to a depth of about 6 inches which is enough to sustain most plants for a week. Light watering generally wets the soil to a depth of only an inch or less. This top inch of soil may hold some of the plant's roots, but it will dry very rapidly. That means the water is not available to the plant for very long. It is much more effective to water less frequently and more thoroughly.

During hot weather, some plants will wilt toward the end of the day – this is normal even if the soil has enough moisture. Look at plants in the morning for signs of drought stress (wilting, cupping of leaves, rolling of grass blades) and apply water when these signs are present. Wait until the next morning if you only see these signs at night.

When you need to water your landscape, use a hose attachment to apply water to the base of the plant. A nozzle with multiple settings breaks the water into finer droplets that soak more easily into the soil. Apply water for several minutes before moving the hose to the next area. You can check with a hand spade to see how far down the soil has gotten moist. Try to apply enough water to soak to a depth of 6 inches. Soaker or drip hoses also are an efficient and effective way to water large areas. Plan to run this type of irrigation system for several hours to accomplish a thorough watering.

Morning is the best time to take care of any overhead watering. This gives wet foliage a chance to dry in the sun. Flowers, leaves, and stems that stay wet for several hours can have a higher incidence of disease.

For more information about caring for your home landscape and gardens, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Give Your Summer Garden New Life

Summer's heat and weather can take a toll on your flower garden. But with a little extra care, it is possible to bring it back to life for a few more weeks of vibrant color and texture.

It is always important to make sure annuals and perennials get plenty of water this time of year, especially in later summer. Annuals, in particular, will start to decline without an adequate supply of water to keep the ground moist.

The general rule of thumb for watering your plants is 1 inch of water per week. Plants growing in pots may need water as often as every day throughout the summer, depending on the type of plant and the size of the container. Once the top few inches of container soil is dry, add enough water so that a little drains through the hole in the bottom of the pot. If rain does not supply enough water, you should apply the necessary water in one application rather than in several small applications. Remember, the best time to water your plants is in the morning or early evening, preferably before 7 p.m.

During periods of drought, many annuals may appear to die. However, if you cut them back, water them regularly and apply fertilizer, they will often recover.

Another thing you can do to help your summer flower garden rebound is to remove spent, or old, flowers. This process is called deadheading. Deadheading helps encourage new growth that will produce new flowers.

Late summer is also the time to pull out the flowers that have seen their better days and plant new ones that are more suitable for fall.

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Annual flowers that give a good show in the fall include pansies, ornamental cabbage and kale and snapdragons. Perennials, such as anemones, asters, and showy sedums, also give a good show in the fall but you will need to transplant them the previous spring to give them a chance to provide their best show.

As you renovate your summer garden, be careful when applying fertilizer around perennial plants. If you apply fertilizer later than August, it may stimulate new growth at a time when the plants would normally begin to prepare for dormancy. And that can mean more winter injury.

Of course, all of this may be moot if you have not carefully tended your summer garden throughout the growing season. If you have kept your garden well-watered and periodically added fertilizer, your chances are greater for a late summer and fall show of color.

The source of this article was Rick Durham, UK Extension Horticulture Professor. For more information, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Heat Stress on Livestock

High temperatures raise the concern of heat stress on livestock. Heat stress is hard on livestock, especially in combination with high humidity. Hot weather and high humidity can reduce breeding efficiency, milk production, feed intake, weight gains, and sometimes cause death. High relative humidity when temperatures are at 80 degrees or more adds the likelihood of profit losses if necessary precautions are not taken.

To reduce heat stress in livestock, management options are providing shade; improve ventilation, and a sufficient quantity of cool water. Shade for livestock can be provided by trees, building, barns, or sunshades. In areas where no shade is available such as mined land pasture, you may want to build a sunshade which is a basically a pole building. These provide adequate shade if there is no other shade available for livestock. If using a barn for shade, it is important to have proper ventilation especially during high humidity.

Providing an adequate source of cool, clean drinking water is essential to help keep animal's internal body temperature within normal limits. It is important to keep above ground water lines shaded by having taller grasses cover them this can reduce water temperatures significantly. During hot weather cattle will drink more than 1 percent of their body weight per hour. In addition, most other livestock will drink similar amounts.

Increased water consumption will increase excretion of urine. This will also increase the loss of certain minerals. Free choice trace mineral salt should be provided in a location that the animals would consume it. Loose salt will be more readily consumed than block salt.

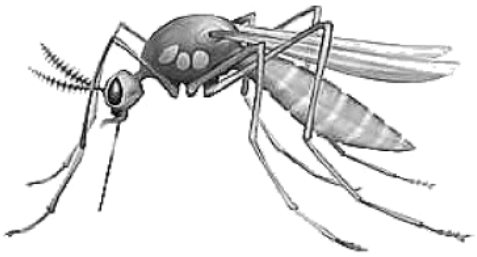
Also, if livestock must be handled or moved during hot weather it should be done before 8:00 a.m., if possible. While it may seem to make sense to work cattle after sundown, they need at least 6 hours of night cooling before enough heat is dissipated to cool down from an extremely hot day.

For more information, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service - Floyd County Office.

Simple Strategies to Control Mosquitoes

Mosquitos can ruin outdoor activities in the warmer months. It may seem like a never-ending battle when you are fighting to control the pesky insects. With mosquito-borne diseases becoming more prevalent, it is even more important to know how to take control of these pests around your home. Learning to do a few simple things could help protect you from more than the itchiness of a mosquito bite.

All mosquitos need standing water to develop through their larval stages, and that does not necessarily mean a lake or pond. It also includes bird baths, kiddie pools and even discarded soda pop cans. The key to controlling them around your home is to stop them from breeding in the first place.



Some things you can do include:

- Drain and remove trash, bottles and any debris that holds water.
- Recycle any unused containers that could collect water, especially old tires.
- Change water weekly in bird baths, wading pools, watering troughs and animal bowls.
- Fill in holes, depressions, and puddles in your yard.
- Make sure your culverts and ditches are draining properly.
- Check and clean out clogged gutters to ensure drainage.
- Keep ornamental ponds stocked with fish.
- Fix leaky hoses and faucets.
- Drain water from flowerpots and garden containers.
- Turn over wheelbarrows, buckets and other items that collect water.
- Adjust tarps covering woodpiles, boats, and grills to remove standing water.
- Encourage natural enemies of mosquitoes, such as warblers, swallows, martins, and other insect-feeding birds.

It is a good idea to start these practices early in the season. Just because the mosquitoes are not biting yet, it does not mean that they are not developing.

The source of this article was Michael Potter, UK Entomologist. For more information about mosquitoes, contact me at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.

Water Safety Reminders

There is nothing like cooling off with a day at the lake or nothing as relaxing as going fishing. As you enjoy Kentucky's wonderful waterways this summer, remember to take measures to stay healthy.

While many of our waterways are safe to swim in or eat fish from, some are not due to unsafe levels of pollutants and bacteria. It is important to check water quality advisories before heading to your favorite waterway for recreation. You can see the latest advisories for swimming, fishing and harmful algal blooms on the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet's website https://eec.ky.gov/Environmental-Protection/Water/Pages/Advisory.aspx. Do not swim in or consume fish from rivers, lakes, ponds, creeks, or streams with an advisory.

Any waterway in which you spend time can potentially affect your health. If you come in contact with contaminated water, you may experience symptoms like gastrointestinal issues, skin rashes, respiratory issues or eye or ear infections. If you experience these symptoms or suspect you have come in contact with water pollutants, contact your primary care physician.

To minimize your risk of getting a water-related illness, the Kentucky Department for Public Health and Kentucky Division of Water recommend you avoid ingesting or inhaling water. When you leave for the day, make sure you thoroughly wash your hands and any other body parts that came in contact with water. Do not put open wounds in the water, as it could cause the wound to get an infection. Do not get in water that smells bad or has surface scum. Avoid getting in water after a heavy rain event, especially in dense residential, urban or agricultural areas. Steer clear of waterways located below wastewater treatment facility outfalls, animal feedlots, straight pipes or other obvious pollution sources.

Also pay close attention to the water your pets and livestock consume. Do not let them drink from water sources with a bright green or blue surface scum. It can cause them to experience gastrointestinal issues. Keep your livestock from loafing in ponds or other waterways. Their urine and feces contaminate the water. Consuming this water can give them gastrointestinal issues. It can also lead to a fish kill.

The sources of this article were Amanda Gumbert, UK Extension Water Quality specialist, Kentucky Department for Public Health, and Kentucky Division of Water. More information on water quality and water safety is available at the UK Cooperative Extension Service – Floyd County Office.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