

HORTICULTURE HAPPENINGS & NEWSLETTER

Kristin's Comments



Happy Gardening!

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Welcome to the Late Winter & Early Spring 2024 Edition of the Horticulture Happenings Newsletter! Here's a quick preview of what you'll find in this edition:

- Kickstart gardening this season using a germination mat to start your vegetable seeds. For more details on employing a germination mat, please look at page 2.
- February is an excellent time to show love and support to local cut flower growers in Kentucky. To find out how to support them, turn to page 3 of the newsletter.
- If you're new to gardening and need resources, many people visit the Extension Office to see what is available. Check out page 4 for the most popular gardening resources.
- Please make the most of your garden with our monthly calendars! Check out February's recommendations on page 5 and March's on page 6.
- The Warren County Extension Office has planned special events, including the three-part series Grow Your Business and Build Your Social Media Presence. This program will help you master your online presence through social media. Check out page 7 for more information on this program and how to register. For other upcoming events, see the bottom of page 7.
- Finally, remember to try the Fruit Treat recipe featured on the back of the newsletter!



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Use a Germination Mat when Starting Vegetable Seeds

Home gardeners can start growing seeds at this time of year. It's a popular activity as they desire to grow heirlooms that their family has been extending for generations. Another benefit of starting seeds at home is the assurance of obtaining unique and specific varieties that may need to be made available in local markets.

If you plan to start seeds at home, having the right equipment to ensure healthy seedlings for outdoor planting later is essential. It would be best to consider investing in a light system that provides the necessary light for germination. To ensure that the seedlings get enough light, you can add a timer to the light system, which will help you keep track of 16 to 18 hours of light exposure.

A germination mat is a valuable tool when starting seeds. It helps to increase the temperature of the root zone, which is essential for developing seedlings. By keeping the root zone warm, seedlings germinate faster and are less prone to damping off, a common ailment that affects seedlings during their early stages.

It's important to note that certain plants require specific temperatures to germinate. Most plants grow best at 60-70 degrees Fahrenheit, but some vegetables like cabbage and broccoli prefer higher temperatures of 80+ degrees Fahrenheit.

If you'd like to learn more about how to start seeds at home, you can contact the Warren County Extension Office. We can give you helpful information and resources to get started.

View our short
YouTube video on
the germination
mat at the QR
code here:





Show Love to Kentucky Cut Flower Growers

Show love and support for local flower farmers this month by purchasing a seasonal bouquet subscription! With a seasonal bouquet subscription from a commercial cut flower grower, consumers ensure their monies return to the local economy to support farmers and their families.

A bouquet subscription is like a CSA, which stands for Community Supported Agriculture. With this system, the consumer invests early in the growing season to assist the cut flower farmer with upfront costs such as seeds, soil amendments, and other materials and supplies. In return for the investment, the customer receives beautiful, seasonal, locally grown flowers from their fields.

Each bouquet looks different throughout the growing seasons. Spring bouquets are filled with stems of anemones, tulips, ranunculus, and poppies. Summer bouquets have stems of bright, warm-season flowers such as zinnias, sunflowers, celosia, and basil. Fall bouquets contain several other varieties of sunflowers and other fall-themed blooms. Since the subscription lasts the entire growing season, they make lovely gifts for that special someone in your life!

Every cut flower grower operates their bouquet subscription service differently depending on what works best for their farm. Some may offer delivery, and others may have a few designated locations for customers to pick up on specific days.

In South Central Kentucky, we are fortunate to have several cut flower growers to consider. Below is information about cut flower growers in south-central Kentucky and ways to contact them about their bouquet subscription service.

To discover other cut flower farmers throughout Kentucky, check out this map from the Center of Crop Diversification website. It lists commercial cut flower farms and their services throughout the state. To check it out, click here: <https://uk-horticulture.github.io/KY-Cut-Flowers/>.

Check out the
cut flower
grower map at
the QR code
below:





Popular Gardening Resources

Gardening is a widely popular hobby among homeowners! If you want to improve your gardening skills for 2024, you'll be glad to know that several gardening resources are available at the Warren County Extension Office to help you achieve your goals. Here's a quick overview of the popular gardening publications offered by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

To grow vegetables at home, please look at Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky. This resource provides growing profiles for various vegetables ranging from asparagus to watermelon. It contains everything you need to know about cultivating vegetables in Kentucky.

Some people who enjoy gardening but need more space will want to pick up the Gardening for Small Spaces guide. This guide teaches you more about container gardening and raised bed gardening. It goes into more depth on these two specific gardening methods: materials needed, preferred soil media, recommended plant spacing, and more.

The Culinary Herbs publication is an excellent resource that provides insights into growing annual and perennial herbs to enhance the flavor of cooked dishes at home. It offers a comprehensive guide to different herbs and their cultivation and suggests various food items that pair well with each herb.

Adding flowers to your garden and landscape area can provide a stunning and seasonal burst of color! You'll be able to look at the Annual Flowers publication to learn more about the recommended flowers for Kentucky. This publication lists the annual flowers best suited for the region, mature height, bloom color, and insect and disease pests that can affect these flowers.

If you want a low-maintenance garden, consider planting perennial flowers! For information on the best perennials for sunny or shady locations in Kentucky, check out the publications entitled Perennials for Sunny Locations and Perennials for Shady Locations.

It has become increasingly popular to attract wildlife to the garden. To attract more butterflies, check out the Attracting Butterflies with Native Plants publication. Homeowners in Kentucky who wish to attract more hummingbirds may find Hummingbirds: An Attractive Asset to the Garden a helpful publication.

All resources are available through the Warren County Cooperative Extension Service. Contact us at (270) 842-1681 to receive a copy for your enjoyment!

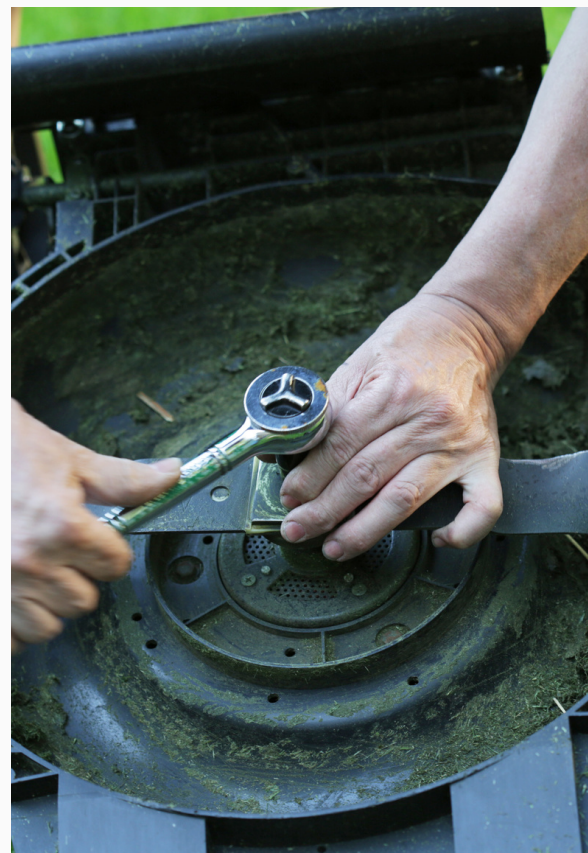
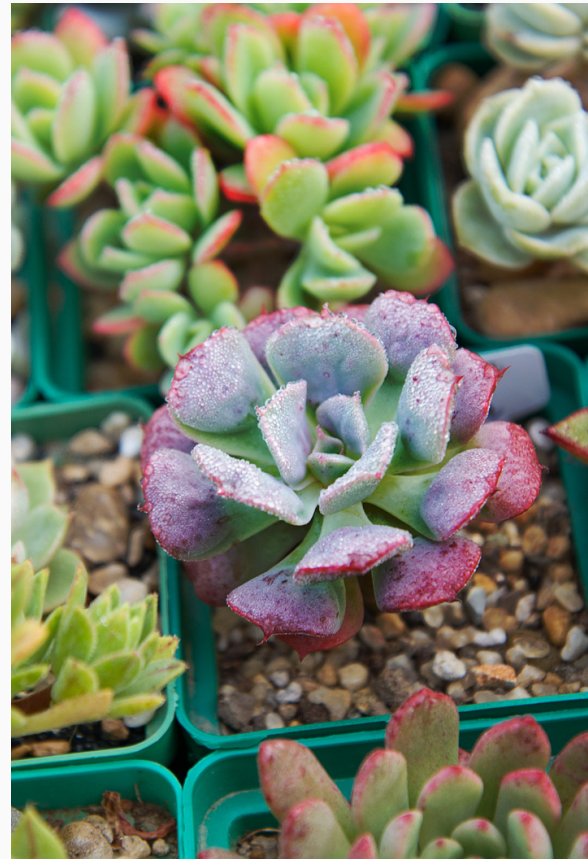
See our popular
Gardening for Small
Spaces publication
at the QR code
listed below:





February Garden Calendar

- Perform maintenance tasks on backyard fruits this month. Prune home fruits to maximize sunlight potential and help fight off disease pressure. Apply dormant oil to apple and pear trees. February is also an excellent time to fertilize fruit trees. Apply fertilizer rates on fruit trees according to the plant growth rate and condition. Contact the Warren County Extension Service to obtain a fruit tree spray guide to have on hand for the season ahead.
- Sow seeds of cool-season vegetables indoors. Begin trays of broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kohlrabi, lettuce, and Chinese cabbage on February 15th for western Kentucky and February 25th for central Kentucky.
- Use an artificial grow light system to supply enough light needed for germinating seedlings. 2 cool white fluorescent lights or a mixture of one cool white bulb and one warm fluorescent light work well for most vegetables. Plants require 16 to 18 hours of light daily for germination.
- A germination mat can also increase root zone temperature to help seedlings germinate faster. Remove the germination mat after germination has occurred.
- Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), which is held in February. In this activity, bird enthusiasts count the number of birds found in their backyard, neighborhood, or other locations. The sightings are then recorded at the website located at www.birdcount.org
- Check feeders daily and replenish when the seed is low or empty. The feeders help provide birds with an adequate food supply during stressful winter days when it has caused the ice covers their native food sources.
- When you feed birds, please make sure you have the right food source for the desired birds you want to attract. Sunflower seeds are ideal for several species of birds, including cardinals, chickadees, and finches.
- Sharpen and clean gardening tools before the gardening season starts. Organize the garden shed with containers, soil, and other gardening equipment.
- Get lawn mower blades sharpened before spring. If any repairs are needed, contact a repair shop to schedule an appointment for service before they are booked for the season.
- Plan your garden on paper right now to help get a kick-start on the gardening season. Ensure you provide enough space for developing plants to reach their mature heights.





March Garden Calendar

- Apply pre-emergent herbicide for crabgrass control between the first part of March and April 15th for central Kentucky. A good indicator plant to use for knowing when to apply this product is when the forsythia shrub is blooming.
- Perform a soil test and apply lime and fertilizer recommendations based on soil test results.
- Gradually harden off vegetable seedlings grown indoors two weeks before planting outdoors. Each day, increase the plant's time outside by a few additional hours and then eventually work up to 24 hours a day for a couple of days to help toughen them.
- Prepare the garden soil for planting.
- Move transplants of cabbage and kohlrabi to the garden on March 15th for western Kentucky and March 25th for central Kentucky.
- Start seeds outdoors of beets, carrots, collards, kale, mustard, peas, spinach, early potato seed pieces, radishes, turnips, green onions, and endive on March 15th for western Kentucky and March 25th for central Kentucky.
- Begin trays of tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers indoors on March 15th for Western Kentucky and March 25th for Central Kentucky.
- Plant cool-season herbs like dill and parsley.
- Plant asparagus and rhubarb crowns in the home vegetable garden. Fertilize established plants with 1 lb. 5-10-10 per 100 sq. ft. Dig and divide any 4-year-old rhubarb plants.
- Plant cool-season flowers such as pansies, ornamental cabbage, and kale to add spring color to the garden and landscape. These flowers work great in containers, too!
- Get the lawn mower ready for the season by sharpening mower blades and performing other needed mower maintenance.
- Prune fruit trees in the orchard or backyard to help increase sunlight and airflow potential. Remove clippings from the area and discard them properly.
- Incorporate organic matter like compost into garden soil to improve soil structure.
- Prune back roses in the garden or landscape.
- Repot houseplants if you notice decreased plant growth and the roots running out of the container's drainage holes.
- Monitor young fruit and landscape trees for vole damage.
- Remove dried plant material from perennial flowers and cut back grasses to stimulate new growth.





Grow Your Business, Build Your Social Media Presence

Building your social media presence is essential to your success in 2024! We are offering an exciting program on how to master your online presence through social media. Here is a breakdown of the program and what to expect in each class.

The “Building Your Social Media Presence” program is a three-part class series. Interested participants attend the classes held at the Warren County Extension Office every Wednesday from 10:00 AM until 12:00 Noon. The first class, scheduled for February 21st, is Building Your Brand and Growing Your Social Community. Participants will receive a general overview of social media platforms. They will also learn more about the types of posts to include on social media and ways to schedule in advance.

The second session, February 28th, will provide ideas on better communicating with customers and boosting ads to help reach more clientele. Agents will assign homework at the end of sessions 1 and 2 to help participants explore and learn more about their audience demographics on social media.

Lastly, agents will conduct one-on-one coaching sessions on March 6th to allow participants to ask individual questions to help achieve their goals.

How to Register

- The deadline to register for the program is Monday, February 19th. Please act fast and register by contacting the Warren County Extension Office at (270) 842-1681 or visiting our 5162 Russellville Road in Bowling Green, KY location.
- The registration fee for the program is \$20.00 per business.

Upcoming Events:

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing Asparagus in the Garden
Tuesday, February 27, 6:00 PM
Warren Co. Extension Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All About Pawpaws
Tuesday, March 26, 6:00 PM
Warren Co. Extension Office |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit Tree Pruning Demonstration
Saturday, March 2, 9:00 AM-Noon
Jackson’s Orchard 1280 Slim Island Road
Make sure to dress for the outdoors. | <p>To register for these programs, contact the Warren County Extension Office at (270) 842-1681.</p> |





Fruit Treat

SOURCE: PLAN. EAT. MOVE!

Ingredients:

- ½ cup butter softened
- 1 cup flour
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup old-fashioned oats
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups plain Greek yogurt
- 4-5 teaspoons honey, to taste
- 1 cup strawberries, sliced
- 2 cups blueberries
- 2 bananas, sliced



Directions:

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
- Mix together all crust ingredients with hands or fork. Once mixed, form into a ball. (The mixture will be crumbly.)
- Line a pizza pan or cookie sheet with parchment paper. Spread and pat down the crust to form a circle.
- Bake for 10-12 minutes or until crust is lightly browned. Remove crust from oven and let cool.
- Mix yogurt and honey together. Spread on crust.
- Top with fruit. (You can also use other types of fruit.)

Yield: 8 servings

Nutritional Analysis: 270 calories; 12g total fat; 7g saturated fat; 0g trans fat; 35mg cholesterol; 105mg sodium; 31g carbohydrate; 1g fiber; 15g sugar; 7g added sugar; 11g protein; 0% Daily Value of vitamin D; 8% Daily Value of calcium; 6% Daily Value of iron; 6% Daily Value of potassium

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