

The Hoe Truth

newsletter

HELPING YOU GROW!



in this issue

- Plant of the Month
page 6
- October To Do's
page 3
- Garden Club Trips
page 1
- Recipe of the month
page 6

upcoming wheelbarrow classes

October 2 - African Violets
October 16 - Species Tulips
November 13 - For the Birds



Garden Club

October 21st

Barker Arboretum and Downing Museum (Bowling Green)

All trips leave the Extension Office at 9:00 AM.

Van space is limited to 12 passengers, so call today to reserve your spot!



Kentucky forests signal season change

Source: Billy Thomas, UK extension forester

If you've been waiting all year to see beautiful fall colors in Kentucky, it is almost time. Mid-October is usually the beginning of the state's brilliant fall tree color show. Actually, these brilliant colors have been there all along; they've been masked by a cloak of chlorophylls, green pigments vital to a tree's food-making process.

Trees use and replenish chlorophylls during the growing season. High replacement maintains green leaf color. As fall approaches, the green pigments are replaced at a slower rate due to complex environmental factors and the trees' genetic makeup. The dwindling supply of green pigments unmasks other pigments that were present all along, revealing the spectacular show of fall color.

We can enjoy a variety of fall colors because Kentucky's diverse climate and soil composition enable many diverse trees to grow here.

Black gum, pear, sumac, dogwood, maple, oak and sassafras trees produce various shades of red. Other trees give us a range of orange and yellow hues such as yellow-poplar, birch, hickory and beech.

Since black gum and sumac trees shut down chlorophyll production early, they are the first to reveal fall color. Both change from green to red, leaf by leaf. No leaf seems to be all green or red at the same time, giving a spotty appearance throughout the trees.

You might be surprised to know that what makes leaves change color has less to do with "Jack Frost" and more to do with shorter days activating a "chemical clock" that tells the trees to shut down chlorophyll production and prepare for winter. When the tree completely shuts down chlorophyll production, a layer at the base of the leaf forms. This abscission layer causes the leaf to fall off the branch, leaving only the bud with next year's leaves and flowers to wait for the signal in the spring to bloom and grow.

We'd BEE delighted if you'd join us for Bee Keepers meetings.

The first Monday of each month
at 6:30 PM.

Washington County Cooperative Extension Service

Cooperative
Extension Service

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



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification

OCT
2025



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

Kentucky & Kissing Bugs

Over the last week or so, kissing bugs have been in the news. In the southwestern and western United States, there are growing concerns about the prevalence of kissing bugs and the possibility that a parasite they vector may be more common in those states than previously believed. That parasite is responsible for Chagas disease, a health issue more common in Central and South America that can become a chronic long-term health issue.

As reporting expands, there have been publications and social media questions about kissing bugs and Kentucky, as well as how at-risk people and animals might be affected. There is one species of kissing bug that dwells here, the eastern bloodsucking conenose, but thus far, it has not posed a distinct human health hazard.

Eastern bloodsucking conenoses are out and about in Kentucky, looking to take blood meals. People can be bitten by conenoses, leaving people to wonder if they were exposed to/contracted Chagas disease. Luckily, the chances of Eastern bloodsucking conenoses vectoring Chagas disease are low due to a variety of circumstances that make the conenose different than their close relatives in the subfamily Triatominae.

Eastern bloodsucking conenose basics

As part of the kissing bug group, these are blood feeding critters (if the name wasn't a giveaway). Kissing bugs belong to the Hemiptera order, also known as true bugs. Hemiptera also includes things like aphids, stink bugs, bed bugs, cicadas, and many more. All true bugs have piercing sucking mouthparts and go through incomplete metamorphosis. Conenoses are specifically a part of the Triatominae and are closely related to assassin bugs and wheel bugs. Conenoses start life as an egg and progress through eight nymphal instars, or stages, to reach adulthood. To go from one stage to the next, they must take a blood meal. The adults are about 3/4 inch long, dark in coloration, and have distinctive orange or red-orange squares on the border of their body.



Figure 1: Eastern bloodsucking conenoses are large insects with a distinctive black and orange coloration and patterns on the edge of their bodies. (Photo: Sturgis McKeever, Georgia Southern University, Bugwood.org)

Kissing bugs get their common name for their penchant of biting a human host near the mouth. This creepy kiss is done when humans are asleep to minimize chance of detection. Conenoses can also bite on the face. In addition to biting people, eastern bloodsucking conenoses will dine on frogs, rats, raccoons, cats, and dogs. Because of this, they can be found in tree cavities, near doghouses, and by animal enclosures.

Is there anything to be concerned about?

Kissing bugs as a group are responsible for vectoring the parasite that causes Chagas disease. This disease is more commonly associated with Central and South America than Eastern North America. In the acute phase of Chagas, which would occur soon after transmission, the CDC describes that the patient may experience fever and/or swelling around the bite site. In chronic cases, those who suffer from Chagas may have heart and digestive tract issues.

Typical vectoring of the Chagas pathogen comes from a kissing bug biting a person and then defecating on the person's face, often near the bite site. Upon waking, the person may wipe or itch at the bite, which can transfer the parasite into the wound.

The eastern bloodsucking conenose can and will bite humans. In the past, the pest has tested positive for the parasite responsible for Chagas. It is believed that they may acquire the parasite from rats or other wildlife they have fed on; however, they are not classically considered to be competent vectors for Chagas to humans. This is because, unlike their relatives, these conenoses do not tend to defecate while engaged in feeding or soon after feeding while still on the sleeping human. Without exposure to the infected feces, you should be relatively less likely to acquire Chagas. For this reason, if you find a conenose in your home, it is extremely unlikely you will end up with Chagas disease here in Kentucky. Of course, if you feel concerned or ill, please consult with a medical professional!

Mistaken identities

The eastern bloodsucking conenose can be confused with multiple, more common insects. This can include the ones you see in the diagram below. Pictured are the bloodsucking conenose, a wheel bug, a western conifer seed bug, and then a brown marmorated stinkbug. Wheel bugs have a large cog that projects from the top of their thorax that differentiates them from a conenose. Western conifer seed bugs have flattened legs that resemble an oar or paddle. Brown marmorated stink bugs are much lighter in color than the conenose.

Management

Even if you are not at distinct risk of infection, few people enjoy the idea of an insect drinking their blood while they are asleep. Conenoses are best prevented by using pest proofing methods like applying caulk to seal cracks and gaps around windows, walls, roofs, and doors; by repairing screens and windows; and by closing holes and cracks leading to the attic/crawl spaces. Conenoses are also attracted to lights and will fly at houses with outdoor lighting. Turning off outdoor lights or changing to timers/motion detection can reduce light attraction. Finally, checking pet or animal domiciles for bugs is also practical.

Those who live near wooded areas are more at risk and should be proactive. You may also need to perform pest control for things like rats, raccoons, etc. that are acting as hosts to the conenose. Insecticides are generally not necessary but pyrethroid products applied to cracks and crevices can be used for serious infestations.

By Jonathan L. Larson, Entomology Extension Specialist



Figure 2: From left to right, the bloodsucking conenose, a wheel bug, a western conifer seed bug, and then a brown marmorated stinkbug..(Photos: Kansas Department of Agriculture, Joseph Berger, David Cappaert, and Susan Ellis, Bugwood.org, respectively).

October *to do's*

Lawns

October through November is the best time to fertilize your lawn for a low-maintenance approach. Apply no more than 1.5 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. This would be about 4.5 pounds of ammonium nitrate or 3 pounds of urea. Don't apply phosphorus and potassium unless your soil test determines your need. There is no sense in wasting money on fertilizer that your soil and plants don't need.

Don't let leaves stay on your lawn long, as they can smother it. It's better to chop them up with the mower than to let them lie whole. Raking is the best option, as well as a bagger on a lawn mower.

Flowers

Dig tender bulbs before or just after a very light frost. Plants such as cannas, elephant ear, gladiolus, caladium, dahlia, and calla lilies need to be dug to ensure you have them next year. Often, it's not the freezing soil that kills them because usually the soil doesn't freeze deep enough to get them. Actually, it's the cold, wet soil that causes them to rot. Gladiolus can actually be cured like an onion and stored in a cool, dark place. Other bulbs, such as caladium and dahlia, do better if packed in dry peat or vermiculite in a cardboard box. Store them in a cool, dark, dry place where the temperature remains above freezing.

Trees And Shrubs

October is still a good time to plant many trees and shrubs. Don't fertilize them when you plant them; wait until colder weather in November or December. Remember to keep newly planted trees and shrubs watered even after the leaves fall off. Their root systems are still growing, and they need water. A tree that has a trunk 2 inches in diameter needs 15 gallons of water per week, while a tree with a 1-inch-diameter trunk needs 10 gallons. If you got a soil test done and you don't want to apply sulfur or lime to lower or raise your pH, then you should choose plants that are tolerant to your particular soils. Arborvitae, alders, ash, bald cypress, hawthorn, hornbeam, juniper, honey locust, swamp white oak, sycamore, willows, and redbud are all tolerant of high pHs or those above 7. Dogwoods, most evergreens, some oaks, hollies, azaleas, and rhododendrons are tolerant or prefer pHs below 7 or even down to 4 or 5.

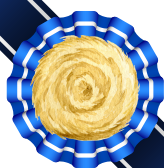
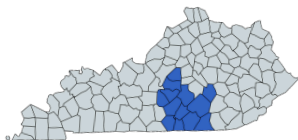
Vegetables

Harvest winter squash when the rind is hard. This means it is very difficult to penetrate it with your fingernail. Don't allow them to be exposed to frost; they won't keep as long. Store them in a cool place above freezing and out of direct sunlight.

Harvest pumpkins when they turn the color they are supposed to be, meaning deep orange usually. Like winter squash, the rind should be hard. Make sure to leave a portion of the stem attached to the pumpkin. This will help it last longer.

In early October, sow sets of Egyptian tree or multiplier onions. Harvest carrots before a heavy freeze.

Apply a fresh layer of mulch or leaves over the garden if you didn't sow a cover crop. This will protect your soil during the winter and add nutrients for next year's crop.



COUNTRY HAM COOKING

Dr. Gregg Rentfrow joins us for a demonstration of how to properly cook a Country Ham.

yum!

Entries are due September 30th, 2025 to the Washington County Extension Office.

Hay & Silage Classes:

- Alfalfa
- Alfalfa/Grass: Samples in this class must contain 20-80% grass.
- Mixed: Samples in this class must contain 10-80% legume.
- Grass: Samples in this class must contain less than 10% legume.
- Small Grain: Winter wheat, winter rye and oat.
- Summer Annual: Sorghum/sudangrass, millet, teff, annual lespedeza, and soybean.

Each producer may submit as many samples as they wish in as many categories as they wish. However, only their best sample in each category will be considered for awards.

NEW THIS YEAR: Samples will be sent to Ward by the Extension Office for FREE. Results take 1-2 weeks to return.

Washington County scored very well in several categories last year and placed in the top three in four different categories! We hope to have a repeat of this again this year!



WHEN?

**OCTOBER 27TH
5:30 PM EST**

WHERE?

**WASHINGTON
COUNTY
EXTENSION
OFFICE**

**245
CORPORATE DR
SPRINGFIELD,
KY**

● **RSVP**

There is LIMITED space for this program.

📞 **859-336-7741**

STEP INTO FALL

WALKTOBER AND
SCARECROW SHOWDOWN

WALKTOBER

Track your steps through October and submit the total for a free camo cooling towel!



Sign Up - Complete the QR code or call the WC Extension Office at (859) 336-7741 to register. All ages are welcome to participate - this could be a fun family competition.

Walk & Log Your Steps - log steps on paper, use an app, smart watch, tracker - whatever works for you.

Turn In Your Steps & Claim Your Prize - Turn in your total number of steps during the first week of November & pick up your free camo cooling towel! Steps can be submitted at the Extension Office, by phone, or email to cabrina.buckman@uky.edu.



SCARECROW SHOWDOWN

SEPT 19TH Registration Due

Complete the QR Code or Call the WC Extension Office at (859) 336-7741

SEPT 24-26 Set Up - Set up your Scarecrow at Idle Hour Park.

NOV 1ST Tear Down - Collect your Scarecrow from Idle Hour Park.

Entry Categories:

1. Business
2. Family/Individual
3. Club/Organization

Awards: Awards will be given in each entry category. Additionally, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd overall People's Choice awards will be presented, based on votes from the community.

Scarecrows will be set up from September 24th to 26th and will remain in place until voting is concluded on November 1st. The Washington County Extension Office will provide each entry with one bale of straw to use in their display.





HORTICULTURE HOW TO

WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP

COME MAKE YOUR OWN WREATH
WITH LIVE GREENERY!
PARTICIPANTS CAN STOP BY ANYTIME
DURING THE DAY.
COST \$25.00 BOW INCLUDED

DECEMBER

5

9:00 AM UNTIL
4:00 PM

WASHINGTON COUNTY COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION OFFICE
245 CORPORATE DRIVE
SPRINGFIELD, KENTUCKY
CALL TO REGISTER 859-336-7741



Martin-Gatton

College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment

Washington County Cooperative Extension Service

245 Corporate Drive, Springfield, Kentucky 40069

Dennis Morgeson, Horticulture Agent

859-336-7741 * dennis.morgeson@uky.edu

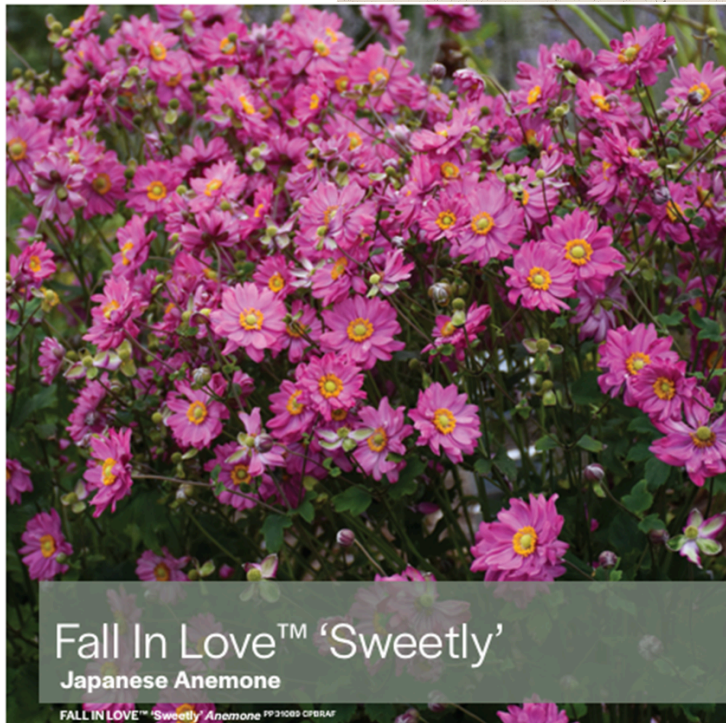
around the office

- 20th - Quilting Club
- 22nd - Homemaker Lesson
- 23rd - Garden Club Trip
- 25th - Wits Workout
- 30th - Livestock



Tune in to 100.0 WLSK every Tuesday morning at 8:30 for extension updates and daily farm tips!

plant of the month



Fall In Love™ 'Sweetly'
Japanese Anemone

FALL IN LOVE™ 'Sweetly' Anemone PP31085 CFBSAF

Perennial

Hardy in USDA Zones 4A - 9B



- Height: 20-26 in
- Space: 24-30 in
- More than 4 Hours of Daily Sun
- Light to Medium Moisture
- Blooms Late Summer to Early Fall
- Deer and Rabbit Resistant

- Fall blooming perennial
- Semi-double, rose pink flowers
- Large mound of dark green foliage
- Grows best in full sun to part shade and average, moist soil
- Deer and rabbits tend to leave this plant alone
- Heavily mulch in fall for the first two seasons to prevent frost heaving
- Pair with Coral Bells, Rose Mallow, Hosta

Fall Harvest Salad

Ingredients:

- 5 cups torn leaf lettuce
- 1 medium red apple, chopped
- 4 teaspoons lemon juice
- ¼ cup feta cheese crumbles

Dressing:

- 2 ½ tablespoons olive oil
- 1 ½ teaspoons Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon salt

- 2 ½ cups spinach leaves
- 1 medium pear, chopped
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup chopped walnuts

- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Kentucky honey

Directions:

Combine leaf lettuce and spinach leaves in a large salad bowl. Mix apples and pears with lemon juice in a small bowl and add to lettuce mixture. Prepare dressing by whisking together the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, Dijon mustard, honey and salt; pour over lettuce mixture and toss to coat. Sprinkle salad with cranberries, feta cheese and walnuts. Serve immediately.

Recipe of the month

We're online! Find us at washington.ca.uky.edu or stop by our facebook page, just search: Washington County Extension Office.