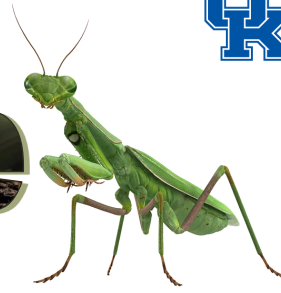


Boone County Horticulture

November-December 2023 Newsletter



Overwintering Tropical Perennials

*By Robert Brockman
Boone County Extension Agent
for Horticulture*

Many of the plants we grow in our area are truly perennials, but cannot survive our winters. Because of this, we oftentimes treat these plants as annuals. Due to the expense, or perhaps just the desire for challenge, many gardeners attempt to overwinter these tropical perennials indoors. A few tropical perennials grown in our area includes cannas, caladiums, elephant ears, begonias, geraniums, bananas, palms, non hardy figs, and *Mandevilla* vines. While some of these can be brought in and treated as a houseplant, others should be allowed to go dormant.

A few species that should be brought in and overwintered as dormant tubers or rhizomes include cannas, caladiums, and elephant ears. These species should be carefully dug up before the ground has a chance to freeze. Once dug, all dirt should be brushed (not washed!) off. In a dry location, allow them to dry for 7-10 days. They should be slowly rotated as they cure. Once fully cured, store them in a cool and dry location. Within a crate or box,



Quick TIP

Be sure to give trees and shrubs a good soaking before putting away the garden hoses. This will help prevent cold injury, and winter burn especially on evergreens.

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they shouldn't be touching each other and should be covered with dry potting soil. Rhizomes and tubers should have some air flow, and should stay on the dry side. We have observed in recent years that cannas in well protected locations oftentimes do not need to be dug up, and will overwinter fine in the ground.

Species that can be kept as houseplants include begonias, geraniums, bananas, palms, non hardy figs, and *Mandevilla* vines. Of these, most species of begonias, geraniums, bananas, and *Mandevilla* vines are commonly allowed to go dormant for the winter. When kept dormant overwinter, it is important that plants are kept in a cool location and given minimal water. Plants given too much water are susceptible to rot, while those given no water can also dehydrate and die.

There are several large challenges when bringing plants inside to be grown as houseplants. The first challenge is that of lighting. As we are talking about several completely unrelated plants, you must do your research to make sure you understand how much light your plants will need. A second challenge is that of watering. While many people forget about their houseplants



and never water them, it is actually more common to overwater houseplants. This overwatering issue can be even worse during the winter, when cool temperatures mean that plants don't need as much water as during warm weather. One potential way to be more consistent with your watering is to put watering days on your calendar, or to associate it with another task. The last large challenge with converting tropical perennials into houseplants is that of insect pests. It is easy to bring in a very small number of insect pests such as spider mites, aphids, or mealybugs, whose populations will explode when kept from their predators and parasitoids. Carefully look at any plant you are bringing in to make sure it doesn't have insects, and then continue to monitor for those that escaped detection.



Core aeration on lawns can still be done in early November on heavily compacted areas and on slopes where rapid water runoff has been a problem in the past.

Quick
TIP

Winterizing Your Roses

*By Joe Smith
Boone County Extension
Horticulture Technician*

Many people often inquire about how they should prepare roses for the upcoming winter season. Well, there are a number of things you can do to help prepare your roses for winter. First of all make sure your roses are healthy as they go into winter. Healthy, strong plants have a better chance of surviving the extremes of winter better than weak plants.

It is also important to continue watering roses until the ground freezes. Watering roses every 2-3 weeks usually provides sufficient moisture in the late fall.

A good fall clean up by removing fallen leaves and other debris from around the plant is also needed. Removing all of the old leaves is very important, especially if you had disease issues during the summer months. Leaves are a source of overwintering fungal spores that can re-infect your roses next year. Prune any visible broken, damaged or diseased canes.



Some extra winter protection for hybrid tea and climbing roses is often needed in our area. Hardy shrub roses, such as the Knock Outs, etc. don't usually need extra protection. Provide this winter protection, such as extra mulch or rose cones, but only after the roses have gone fully dormant. Applying extra mulch too early prevents the soil around rose roots from cooling down as it should, which in turn allows late growth, when they should be shutting down for the season. Basically you want mulch to keep the rose roots cold, so it's important to let the soil temperature go down before applying. The goal is for winter mulch to prevent soil temperature fluctuations during winter.

Winter protection for climbing roses is extremely important because most blooming occurs on the previous year's growth. Various methods of protection can be used to provide adequate protection. This includes wrapping in burlap, bending over and burying the canes, etc. First and most important, is choose a cold hardy cultivar suited to our zone 6 conditions such as New Dawn & William Baffin, etc. Even these hardy climbers benefit from a protective layer of much or soil especially to protect the graft union if they are grafted varieties.

I hope this has provided a little additional guidance in preparing your roses for the upcoming winter. Just remember while perfect, blemish-free rose bushes are often the goal of every gardener, it is often not totally attainable. Keep in mind that roses are often attacked by a large number of insects, diseases and environmental conditions in our area, so try to be satisfied with less than perfect results.

To Clean or Not to Clean?

*By Robert Brockman
Boone County Extension Agent
for Horticulture*

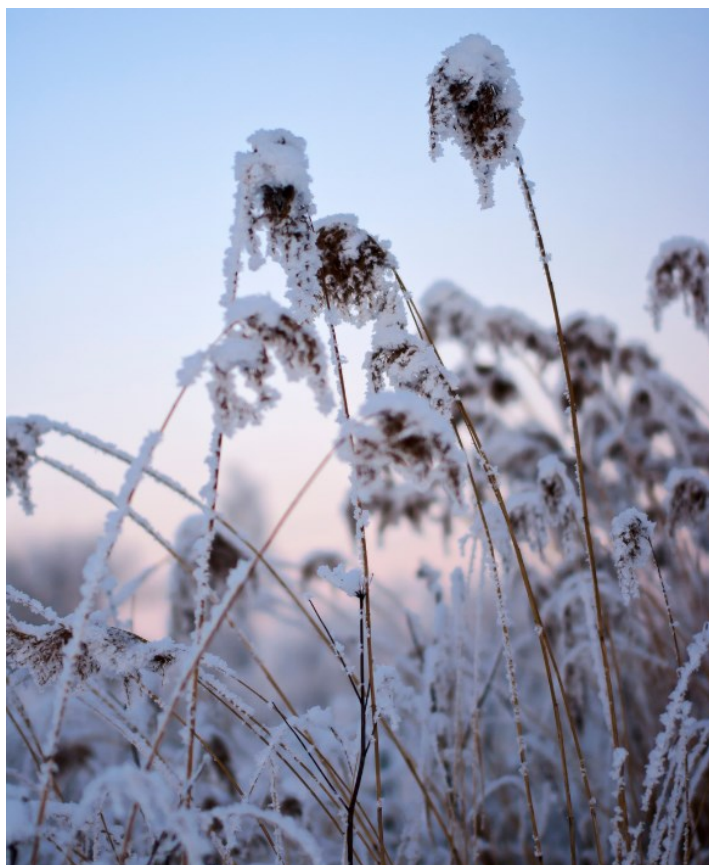
Now is the time of year for falling leaves and brown landscapes. Most summer annuals have died out and the top growth of herbaceous plants is also finished for the year. Gardeners tend to fall into two broad categories when it comes to cleanup. There is the first group who cleans things up as soon as plant material is dead or dying. And then the second group leaves all plant material in the garden until spring or beyond. Today we will look at a few reasons to keep plant material in the garden, and a few reasons to get rid of it.

Disease: dead or dying tissues from diseased plants should be immediately raked up and gotten rid of. These leaves and other plant tissues should either be burnt or trashed. While composting is a great and eco-friendly way of recycling dead plant material into compost, most composting systems do not reach a high enough temperature to kill pathogens. Most

plant material that was infested with insects should also be burnt or trashed. Many insects will disperse away from their host plants during the winter. However, quite a few species will overwinter as eggs or pupae within leaf litter underneath your plants. The bag worm (which looks like little cones) will overwinter as eggs inside their mother's bags, high up on the tree.

Ornamental grass: thick grasses produce a lot of dead biomass which can be difficult to grow through. Most species of ornamental grasses should have the top portion removed before the growing season starts in the spring. However, these grasses can provide good predator/weather protection for birds and other wildlife during the winter months. Ornamental grasses (and evergreens) are most helpful for wildlife when they are positioned near feeders and other cover, not next to the road. Make sure to remove the top portion of ornamental grasses in the spring.

Leaf litter: with leaves falling everywhere, it can be difficult to keep up with raking and leaf blowing. Leaves from large shade trees can be difficult to manage, but they can also be useful. In natural environments, heavy leaf litter provides a natural mulch that trees use to suppress competition, keep their soil moist, and eventually recycle nutrients. Many insects, such as overwintering bumblebee queens, burrow underneath leaf litter and into the top layer of soil for protection against the weather. While most of us don't like insects, they are very important for ecosystem (and perhaps your plant's) health. As mentioned above, if your plant had difficulties with a disease or insect outbreak, it



Quick TIP

Apply straw mulch to strawberries in December, or when temperatures are expected to get down to 20°F and the strawberry leaves are beginning to change from green to gray.

is likely best to remove leaves. If your plant was healthy this past year, try leaving a few fallen leaves in out of sight areas. Fallen leaves should be composted if possible. Fallen leaves are high in carbon and will decompose slowly unless paired with high nitrogen materials such as kitchen scraps.

Dead garden materials: at the end of the growing season, you likely have many dead annuals and herbaceous plant tissues. Some dead annuals such as zinnias can be used by birds for food, however, most annuals can be removed at the end of the season. Herbaceous perennials (perennials who die to the ground every year) can benefit from the protection of their dead leaf materials. If these herbaceous materials are large and unsightly, you can cut back the dead tissue so that it is harder to see. However, it can be beneficial to leave a few inches of dead plant tissue for protections against cold winter winds. As with other categories, remove any plant tissues that were diseased.



Congratulations!

Environmental Education Agent, Lacey Kessell and Horticulture Technician, Joe Smith, were both nominated for the 2023 Lisa P. Collins Outstanding Staff Awards! They were recognized at the University of Kentucky's Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Roundup Event. We are so proud of them and all that they do for Boone County Extension!

Winter Space Invaders

By Lee Townsend
Retired Extension Entomologist

Winter is an inhospitable season for cold-blooded arthropods that survive year-round in Kentucky. Most accomplish this in an innocuous fashion—out-of-sight and out-of-mind. Unfortunately, several species of these “accidental invaders” enter structures seeking shelter from the elements. While they come from distinctly different sources, all seem to recognize their good fortune and remain indoors until lengthening daylight prompts them to leave in spring to resume their normal activities. Unwilling landlords may not see their free-loading tenants again until fall.

Management Strategies

There is no magic solution to vanquish these interlopers. The same set of marginally effective strategies is available to those faced with these unwanted guests.

Interception

Insects moving to shelters are attracted to contrasting light and dark areas (window frames, columns, etc.) on vertical surfaces.

Large numbers may accumulate on sunny south or west walls of houses and buildings where they may be sprayed directly with an appropriately labeled insecticide before they have a chance to enter.

Exclusion

Exclusion is the next tactic. Seal as many obvious openings as practical. In spite of the best efforts, some persistent individuals will find a way inside. For further information, refer to *How To Pest-Proof/Winter-Proof Your Home* ([EntFact-641](#)).

Collect & Discard

Use a vacuum to collect and discard as many invaders as possible. Once outdoor temperatures consistently remain below 50°F, the influx should stop, or at least be greatly reduced. Also, these invaders do not reproduce indoors, so numbers do not increase.

Avoid Insecticides Indoors

Avoid the temptation to use insecticides indoors. “Bug foggers” or insect foggers have significant limitations and pose some significant risks. Refer to *Limitations of Home Insect Foggers (“Bug Bombs”)* ([EntFact-643](#)). In addition to potential exposure problems, indoor accumulations of dead insects can result in problems with carpet beetles and other scavengers.





Nutty Sweet Potato Biscuits

1 cup all-purpose flour	¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon	potatoes
⅓ cup whole wheat flour	¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg	6 tablespoons sugar
1½ teaspoons baking powder	⅓ cup chopped walnuts	¼ cup butter, melted
½ teaspoon salt	1 cup mashed sweet	½ teaspoon vanilla
		1 tablespoon milk

- In a large mixing bowl, **combine** flours, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg and walnuts. **Set** aside.
- Combine** sweet potatoes, sugar, butter, vanilla and milk; **add** to flour mixture and mix well.
- Turn out** onto a floured surface; gently **knead** 3 or 4 times. **Roll** dough into ½ inch thickness. **Cut** with a 2 inch biscuit cutter and **place** on a lightly greased baking sheet.
- Bake** at 450°F for 12 minutes or until golden brown.

golden brown.

Yield: 18 biscuits

Nutritional Analysis: 4 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 210 mg sodium, 14 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 4 g sugar, 2 g protein.



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

Kentucky Sweet Potato

SEASON: All year—peak season is October through March.

NUTRITION FACTS: Sweet Potatoes are a good source of fiber, complex carbohydrates and vitamins A and C.

SELECTION: Two varieties of sweet potatoes are grown in Kentucky. The pale sweet potato has a light yellow skin and pale yellow flesh that is dry and crumbly. The darker variety has a dark skin and orange sweet flesh that cooks up moist. Choose small to medium-sized ones with smooth, unbruised skin.

STORAGE: Store unwrapped in a cool (50 degree) dry, dark place with good ventilation for up to 2 months or at room temperature for 2 weeks.

PREPARATION: Scrub well. Leave whole or peel, then slice, dice or shred.

Baking: Pierce skin in several places and rub with

Source: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

margarine if desired. Arrange in a single layer and bake uncovered in a 375° F oven until soft when squeezed (45-60 minutes.)

Boiling: In a 3-quart pan, boil 4 whole medium-size potatoes, covered in 2 inches water until tender when pierced. Drain.

Microwaving: Pierce skin, place on a paper towel in microwave. If cooking more than 2 at a time, arrange like spokes. Microwave on high, turning halfway through cooking time. Allow 4-5 minutes for one potato.

SWEET POTATOES

Kentucky Proud Project

County Extension Agents for Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Kentucky, Nutrition
and Food Science students

OCTOBER 2012

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For more information or if you have questions, contact us—we are here to help!

859-586-6101 • boone.ca.uky.edu

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For more information or to register for any of our classes, visit our website at boone.ca.uky.edu. Click "Online Class Registration" or call us at 859-586-6101.

Upcoming Horticulture Events *Please Register!*

Putting Your Garden to Bed

► November 6, 6:30-7:30pm
Florence Branch Library
The gardening season has finished but there are still chores to do to prepare your garden for the winter months. Fall planting and landscape maintenance will be covered in this program.
Register with the Boone County Library at bcpl.org

Basics of Fertilizers and Soil Testing

► November 9, 6:00-7:30pm
Enrichment Center, Upper Level
Have you ever wanted to soil test but don't know how? Or perhaps you have tested your soil but don't know what your results mean or how to read a fertilizer table? Join us as we talk about the basics of soil testing and fertilizers.



COMMERCIAL PESTICIDE APPLICATOR CONTINUING EDUCATION TRAINING

Presented by the Buffalo Trace Cooperative Extension Service Counties

NOVEMBER 17, 2023 9AM-3:30PM EST

30 MINUTE LUNCH BREAK

This training has been approved by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture for 1 specific hour in each category.

- Category 1A: Agricultural Plant
- Category 2: Forestry
- Category 3: Ornamental & Turf & Lawn Care
- Category 4: Seed Treatment
- Category 10: Demonstration & Research
- Category 11: Aerial



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CALL (606)845-4641 TO REGISTER FOR THIS FREE TRAINING OR REGISTER USING THE QR CODE:



LOCATION: VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM

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Lexington, KY 40506



Extension Campus Location Key:

Find us here...

Virtual via Zoom, Must register to receive Zoom link 🏠
 Extension Service office, 6028 Camp Ernst Rd., Burlington
 Enrichment Center, 1824 Patrick Dr., Burlington
 Farmers Market, 1961 Burlington Pk., Burlington
 Environmental and Nature Center, 9101 Camp Ernst Rd., Union
 Boone County Arboretum, 9190 Camp Ernst Rd., Union; Register at: www.bcarboretum.org/