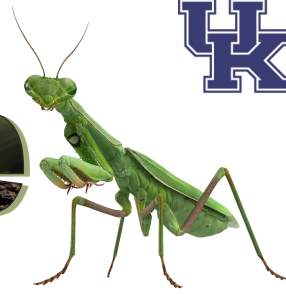


# Boone County Horticulture

March-April 2023 Newsletter



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

Cooperative Extension Service  
Boone County  
P.O. Box 876  
Burlington, KY 41005  
(859) 586-6101  
Fax: (859) 586-6107  
boone.ca.uky.edu

## Winter Damaged Landscapes

By Joe Smith  
Boone County Extension  
Horticulture Technician

There are several types of landscape plants, both deciduous and evergreen that are considered to be marginally hardy in Northern Kentucky. Plant hardiness is based on the lowest temperature that the plant can tolerate under normal type growing conditions. The newer USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map places most of Kentucky in Zone 6 with the exception of the extreme southwestern counties which are in Zone 7a. Temperatures listed on this hardiness map are based on the 30-year average of the lowest single winter temperature recorded each year. Remember this is not the absolute lowest temperature reached over the 30-year period, just the average. This map also does not take into account the duration of cold, soil moisture, or wind chill. While there are some shortcomings with this zone map, it is still a great resource in selecting what plants to grow in our area.



Problems can arise for broadleaved evergreens and other marginally hardy plants when winters are colder than average. Examples include: holly, boxwood, cherry laurel, southern magnolia, Leyland cypress, and nandina. Many of these plants that had survived perfectly in previous winters are now showing damage ranging from significant leaf burn or twig dieback to even death of the entire plant.

(Continued)

Wait until after bloom to prune spring-flowering shrubs (forsythia etc.) and ornamental trees (magnolia etc.) grown for their spring flowers.

# Quick TIP

Cooperative Extension Service  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
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LEXINGTON, KY 40546



Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.

Assessing and managing the winter injury on landscape plants can sometimes be tricky and often requires some time and a lot of patience.

Rule number one in dealing with winter injury is to be patient. If the foliage or the tips have been damaged but the stems and buds are still green, wait until the plant puts out new growth before deciding if the plant should be pruned back or removed etc. Sheering back the dead foliage will immediately improve the appearance of the plant, but pruning should not be done until after the chance of the last frost has passed (late April/early May).

Spring fertilization is usually not recommended for winter injured plants. The addition of nitrogen can encourage more growth than the damaged stems can supply with moisture during the upcoming hot and dry summer months. Generally the addition of water during dry periods is more beneficial than applying fertilizer. When necessary, fertilization of most woody landscape plants should occur in the late fall/early winter timeframe.

Established broadleaf evergreens in exposed locations should be protected from the intensity of winter sun and wind if possible. They can be sprayed with an anti-transpirant product like "Wiltpruf" or covered with light cloth or burlap before the onset of extreme winter weather. Also you can spray water on the cloth before the onset of extremely windy sub-freezing temperatures. The water frozen on the cloth adds additional protection from the cold drying winds.

The best long-term approach, however, is to match the plant to your site and use plants that are fully hardy to our planting zone (6A). You can also use the generally hardier needled evergreens where evergreens are needed and hardier deciduous species more suited to our climatic zone.



## Quick TIP

Rejuvenate your lirioppe before new growth begins by using a lawn mower or hedge shears to cut back the old foliage to a height of about 2 to 3 inches.



## Starting Spring Vegetables

*By Robert Brockman  
Boone County Extension Agent  
for Horticulture*

With the calendar flipping into March, it is time to reboot and get started in the vegetable garden. While many vegetables are cold intolerant and will struggle and eventually die during cool, damp weather, we have many good options for the spring garden. Some vegetables commonly grown in the spring include beets, rutabaga, chard, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, turnips, spinach, peas, onions, lettuce, Brussels sprouts, kale, collards, and radishes. Of these, the cold hardiest includes kale, spinach, collards, and carrots. Safe spring planting dates for cool season vegetables is March 1st until the end of the month and varies by species.

Methods of planting vary between species. Most plants within the Brassica family are easier to start indoors before transplanting outside. Root crops such as carrots, beets, and turnips are typically sown directly into the vegetable garden as they do not transplant well. Information on seeding depth and distance between seeds can be found on the seed packet. Whichever way you plant your vegetables, make sure they have a site with plenty of sunlight and good drainage. Additionally, both plants and seeds may need additional moisture until they establish a strong root system.



As the weather is always unpredictable, it is smart to have a backup plan in case we have colder than normal early spring weather. Short plants can be easily covered in the spring with a thick layer of straw mulch or row covers. Row covers, often called frost blankets, are typically made of polyethylene and work by trapping heat given off by the soil up against the plants. Row covers come in many types and levels of thickness. Like blankets in our homes, thicker blankets will more effectively hold heat in. Great care should be taken when using row covers, as sunny days will quickly heat up and damage plants.

Cool season spring vegetables are well adapted to low temperatures but are quickly stressed-out in the heat. Periods of high temperatures will lead to bitterness and strong flavors. Additionally, many cool season vegetables will mature rapidly and send up flowerheads, signaling the end of their culinary life.

More information on growing spring vegetables can be found in ID-128, Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky. You can pick up a physical copy of ID-128 at the Boone County Cooperative Extension Office or you can find it online at <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/ID/ID128/ID128.pdf>

In mid-to-late March, start seeds indoors of peppers, tomatoes, and eggplant. You can also start sweet potato slips indoors at that time.

**Quick  
TIP**

## Ligularia

By Joseph Morgan  
Boone County Extension  
Horticulture Technician

The *Ligularia* genus consists of almost 140 individual species, over half endemic to China where, in their native range, they are typically found in bogs. While we do not have all these species available to us as gardeners, there are several great candidates for your landscape. Leopard plants prefer wet soil and part to full shade (shading from the hot afternoon sun is a must), if you are looking for a plant to fill a trouble spot like this, *Ligularia* may be for you.

Cultivars such as 'Little Rocket', 'The Rocket' and 'Bottle Rocket' bring color and unique texture to an otherwise dark and unfriendly section of the garden. These cultivars share several characteristics; large yellow spiked blooms and deep green serrated foliage with purple undersides make these plants pop. 'The Rocket' is the largest of three cultivars, able to spread to a total of six feet in diameter and equal height, 'Little Rocket' is middle of the three with an expected height and spread of four feet, while "Bottle Rocket" clocks in at two and a half feet in either direction.



<https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0260/0619/2212/products/ligulariabottlerocket.jpg?v=1612867864>

Some key points to cover when discussing Leopard plants are the importance of consistent moisture and shielding from the hot afternoon sun. As mentioned previously, these plants are normally found in bogs, consistent moisture is imperative to healthy plants. For many gardeners, this means an adequate mulching around the plant to help lock in ground moisture. In dryer periods, supplemental irrigation is a must. It can be expected that this plant will partially wilt during the hot afternoon, if the foliage does not spring back as the day cools down, it is usually a good time to go ahead and water. *Ligularia* will tolerate morning sun and dappled sunlight, but it mustn't be exposed to full sun at all times or leaves will scorch. While this is definitely an instance of "right plant for the right place", if you do have a suitable location for this plant I would highly recommend giving it a shot.

## Quick TIP

In late March & early April, overcrowded perennials can be divided and transplanted before new growth is over 4 inches tall, if possible.



Recipes from the 2023 Food And Nutrition  
**RECIPE CALENDAR**



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

# Slow Cooker Buffalo Chicken Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken breast
- 6 small sweet potatoes
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped (optional, for topping)
- Low-fat Greek yogurt, low-fat sour cream, or low-fat dressing (optional, for topping)

### Buffalo sauce:

- 1 tablespoon hot pepper sauce
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper\*
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1/2 tablespoon cornstarch  
+ 1 tablespoon water

\*For a hotter sauce add another 1/4-1/2 teaspoon cayenne

1. Wash hands with warm water and soap, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds.
2. Rinse sweet potatoes under cool running water and set aside.
3. Add raw chicken to a slow cooker.
4. In a small bowl combine all buffalo sauce ingredients, reserving cornstarch. Pour sauce over the chicken.
5. Cover slow cooker with lid and cook on high heat for 4 hours or on low for 6 to 8 hours.
6. About 45 minutes before the chicken is done, preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.
7. Place sweet potatoes on a baking sheet and bake until tender, about 40 to 50 minutes.
8. When chicken is fully cooked, remove it from the slow cooker and shred it.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider. This material was partially funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — SNAP.

9. Before returning the shredded chicken to the slow cooker, mix cornstarch and water together and add to the slow cooker. Whisk until thickened. Return chicken to the slow cooker and combine with the sauce.
10. When sweet potatoes are done cooking, split each one open and top with a portion of shredded buffalo chicken.
11. Drizzle optional topping over the finished sweet potatoes and chicken, and top with green onions, if desired.
12. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

**Note:** To make an optional blue cheese cream topping, mix 8-ounce nonfat plain Greek yogurt, 1/3 cup blue cheese salad dressing, 2 tablespoons low-fat milk, and 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper in a small bowl.

**Makes 6 servings**

**Serving size: 1 potato with chicken**

**Cost per recipe: \$8.82**

**Cost per serving: \$1.47**

### Nutrition facts per serving:

210 calories; 6g total fat; 3g saturated fat; 0g trans fat; 65mg cholesterol; 270mg sodium; 18g total carbohydrate; 3g dietary fiber; 5g total sugars; 19g protein; 0% Daily Value of vitamin D; 2% Daily Value of calcium; 6% Daily Value of iron; 15% Daily Value of potassium.

### Source:

LaToya Drake,  
Program Coordinator  
II, University  
of Kentucky  
Cooperative  
Extension Service

# SPRING COLE CROPS

High tunnels offer growers the ability to start direct seeding various cole crops in early March. Join us at our Nature Center high tunnel to learn more about extending the growing season. Dress warm!



**April 14, 2023**  
**2:00PM**

**Nature Center, 9101 Camp Ernst Rd., Union**

Call 859-586-6101 or go online to [boone.ca.uky.edu](http://boone.ca.uky.edu) to register.

## Quick TIP

When the flowers of forced bulbs becomes unsightly indoors move these to a cooler room or garage. Gradually reduce watering as the leaves begin to mature. With milder weather in late winter or early spring these can be planted directly outdoors in the garden. Recovery and normal blooming cycle may take one or two years.

For More Information...

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

# Upcoming Horticulture Events *Please Register!*

## Home Vegetable Garden Planning, Planting & Maintenance

► March 9, 12noon-2:00pm,  
*Enrichment Center, Upper Level*  
Join us as we discuss vegetable garden best practices.

## Fruit Tree Pruning Demonstration

► March 11, 10:00am-12:00 noon  
*Nature Center Barn*  
Come learn why proper pruning is essential for higher yields of tree and small fruits.

## Fruit Grafting for Beginners

► March 15, 1:00-3:00 pm  
*Nature Center Barn*  
This will be a beginners hands on session with a limited number of participants. We will demonstrate various grafting methods and techniques. (Limited to 20 people.)

## Iconic Plants of the Bluegrass

► April 4, 10:00am-12noon  
*Enrichment Center, Upper Level*  
This class will discuss the bluegrass region of Kentucky with its unique topography and the flora that characterizes this region.

## Growing a Champion Pumpkin & Entering Produce in the Boone County Fair

► April 6, 10am-12pm OR 6-8pm,  
*Enrichment Center, Upper Level*  
We will discuss the methods involved in growing championship giant sized pumpkins and how to enter them in the fair.

## Growing Blueberries in Containers

► April 12, 6:00-8:00pm  
*Environmental & Nature Center*  
Learn about growing blueberries in containers while we tour our blueberry demonstration plots.

## Spring Cole Crops

► April 14, 2:00-3:00 pm  
*Environmental & Nature Center*  
High tunnels offer growers the ability to start direct seeding various cole crops in early March. Join us at our Nature Center high tunnel to learn more about extending the growing season. Dress warm!

## Gardening in Small Spaces

Learn how to garden in restricted spaces. Raised beds, containers, and small residential landscaping alternatives will be covered.

### Must register at [bcpl.org](http://bcpl.org)

► April 17, 6:30-7:30pm  
*Florence Branch BCPL (425 US-42)*  
► April 24, 6:30-7:30pm  
*Walton Branch BCPL (21 S. Main)*

## Earth Day Seed Giveaway

Celebrate with free seeds!

### No registration required.

► April 22, 10:00am-12noon  
*Florence Branch BCPL (425 US-42)*  
► April 22, 1:00-3:00pm  
*Walton Branch BCPL (21 S. Main)*

## Arbor Day Tree Giveaway

► April 28, 4:00-7:00pm  
*Enrichment Center,  
Lower Parking Lot*  
Free tree seedling giveaway offered to the general public!



# Find us here...

## Extension Campus Location Key:

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/](http://www.bcarboretum.org/)

### Straw Bale Gardening

► May 10, 1:00-3:00 pm  
*Enrichment Center, Upper Level*  
 We will demonstrate how to successfully prepare or “season” a straw bale and also discuss how to plant it for season long vegetable production.

### Tree & Shrub Options for Small Properties

► May 16, 10:00am-12:00noon  
 OR 6:00-8:00pm  
*Enrichment Center, Upper Level*  
 Join us for great tree and shrub options that will work for small sites.

### Beyond Red Maples—Under Utilized Landscape Trees

► May 24, 1:00-3:00 pm  
*Enrichment Center, Upper Level*  
 Avoid monoculture in your landscape. We will discuss some great underutilized tree selections for the Northern Kentucky area.

### Cover Crops & Green Manure

► June 9, 1:00-2:00 pm  
*Environmental & Nature Center*  
 Join us as we discuss the role of cover crops in adding organic matter and building the soil structure. We will discuss cover-crop selection, sowing techniques and soil incorporation.

### Learn the Trails

*Environmental & Nature Center*  
 Learn the three main trails at the Nature Center through these guided hikes so you can feel comfortable hiking on your own during Hike the Trails!

- May 3, 10:00 am  
*Blue Trail (0.5 miles)*
- May 24, 10:00 am  
*Yellow Trail (0.7 miles)*
- June 21, 10:00 am  
*Red Trail (2 miles)*

### Hike the Trails

10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.  
*Environmental & Nature Center*  
 ► *Every Wednesday from May-October*  
 Enjoy exploring the Nature Center on your own. You must sign-in and out at the large Shelter House. Rain may cancel.



### Honeysuckle Removal at the Nature Center

► March 24, 1:00-3:30 pm  
*Nature Center*  
 Volunteer work day removing honeysuckle from the Nature Center.

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

859-586-6101 • [boone.ca.uky.edu](http://boone.ca.uky.edu)

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