

FALL 2024 EDITION

HORTICULTURE HAPPENINGS NEWSLETTER

(OB)

Kristin's Comments



Happy Gardening!

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

- Kickstart your autumn gardening with seed tape, perfect for germinating tiny vegetable seeds—the complete instructions for making seed tape are on page 2.
- With the arrival of autumn, gardeners will be planting mums in the garden. For tips on keeping the mums looking beautiful throughout the season and ensuring they return next year, please look at page 4 of the newsletter.
- Stay on top of all the fall gardening activities with our monthly calendars: September's recommendations are on page 5, and October's are on page 6.
- The Warren County Extension Office is thrilled to announce a new online training program focused on improving home lawns! We have received numerous inquiries in this area, and we hope people will take advantage of this opportunity to achieve a beautiful, vibrant lawn. For more information about this program and instructions on registering, please refer to page 7.
- Load up on a variety of fall vegetables with our Plate it up! Kentucky Proud recipe for Super Crunchy Salad! You can find the full recipe featured on the back of the newsletter.



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How to Make DIY Seed Tape

Do you need help starting small, seeded crops like lettuce, turnips, or cabbage in your garden? Do the seeds blow away in the wind or wash away after watering? Do you dread going back to thin out the plants later?

If you answered "yes" to several of those questions, don't worry; there is a more straightforward solution called seed tape! Seed tape makes it easy for gardeners to grow crops from tiny seeds. With seed tape, gardeners apply the seed to the tape and then plant the entire seed tape outdoors in the garden. You don't have to worry about seeds floating away; there is no need to thin out plants. A bonus is that the seed tape disintegrates over time and returns nutrients to the soil.

Seed tape is available commercially through garden supply companies; however, avid gardeners can make their seed tape at home inexpensively! Making seed tape at home requires a few essential items and materials collected around the house. Read here to find out how to make do-it-yourself (DIY) seed tape at home using this easy step-by-step photo guide.

Step 1: Gather all the supplies needed to make the seed tape. You will need a roll of toilet paper, glue (you can make your own or use all-purpose glue), a toothpick, garden seed packets, a clear ruler, and a black permanent marker.

Step 2: Unroll the toilet paper from the roll and lay it flat. Then, using a pair of scissors, cut the toilet paper in half. This will serve as the "tape" portion for the seed tape project.

View our YouTube video on how to make DIY seed tape at the QR code here:





How to Make DIY Seed Tape (continued)

Step 3: Lay the seed tape flat and mark the correct plant spacing according to the grown crop. Refer to the back of the seed packet to see how far apart the space between the seeds is. Use a ruler to measure the plant distance and mark the spot on the seed tape with a black permanent marker. If making multiple seed tapes for different crops, it is a good idea to label them with the crop name and the variety in the top right-hand corner using an ink pen.

Step 4: Create the glue to stick the seeds onto the tape. Mix two tablespoons of flour and two tablespoons of water in a small bowl until it forms a thick paste. If necessary, add more water to achieve a glue-like consistency. Alternatively, you can also use all-purpose glue to make seed tape.

Step 5: Before beginning this step, pour the contents of the seed packet onto a white plate or piece of paper. This step makes it easier for gardeners to see and pick up the seeds and place them on the seed tape. Next, dip the end of a toothpick into glue and put a small dot on the seed tape. Then, use the toothpick to pick up a seed and place it on the glue. Repeat this process until the entire seed tape is filled. Allow the glue to dry, then roll the tape onto a toilet paper roll. Store it in the refrigerator until environmental conditions are suitable for planting.

Step 6: When the conditions are right, prepare a seedbed for planting. Put the seed tape in the planting row and plant it at the proper depth. Refer to the back of the seed packet for the correct planting depth. Gently cover the seed tape with soil and water it. Watch for the seeds to sprout and grow in a straight row!

To view the entire process of making seed tape from start to finish, please watch this brief video on the Warren County Agriculture YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SwoeWl2_OY. You can also use the QR code on page 2 of the newsletter to see the process of making seed tape at home.

**Crops that can
be started on
DIY Seed Tape:
Arugula
Beets
Carrots
Lettuce
Radishes
Spinach**





Caring for Fall Mums

Have you ever wondered how to help mums last in the garden? Here are five tips for caring for fall mums in the garden. These tips will not only help the mums last longer during the season, survive the winter, and come back next year but also bring you the joy of seeing them bloom!

Tip #1: Choose mums with more buds than flowers. Pick a plant with several tight buds when selecting a mum to take home. Over time, the buds will slowly open and help the flowers last longer. Those unopened buds will also last longer in your deck, patio, porch, or yard. If you want an instant splash of color for an outdoor event, buy mums with several flowers in bloom.

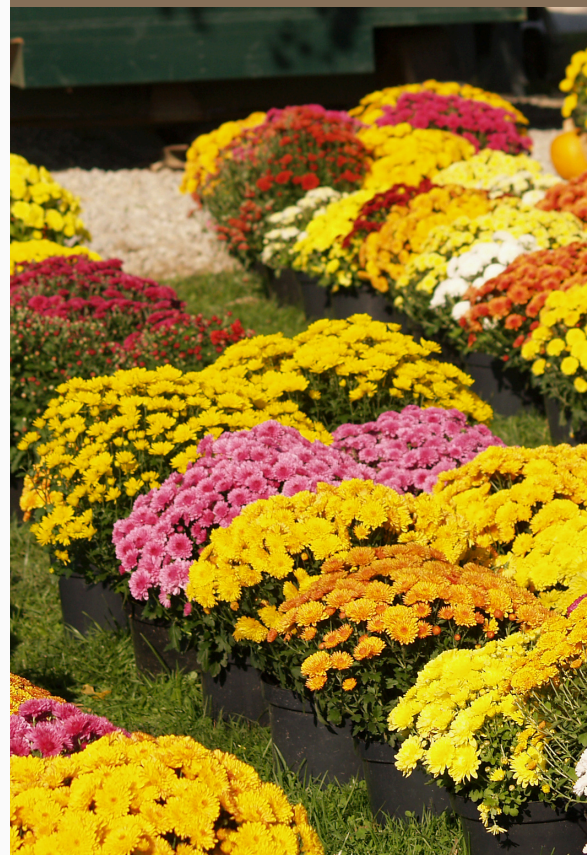
Tip #2: The key to successful mum growth is selecting the best location. When choosing the perfect spot for growing mums, select a site with at least 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight. Avoid garden spots that receive less sunlight, which can dull the vivid blooms. Also, make sure to plant them in moist, well-drained soil. Mums are susceptible to root rot, so well-drained soil is essential to prevent soggy roots. If your soil is not ideal, add 2 to 3 inches of organic matter, such as compost or well-rotted manure, to help improve drainage and nutrient retention.

Tip #3: Plant mums in the ground early to ensure their survival. To safeguard your mums to survive the winter and return next year, prepare the ground and plant them as soon as possible. Make sure the mums have no blooms when planting. Plant mums with more buds early to allow the root system to establish. Plant them at the same depth as their original container, space them 18 to 24 inches apart, and avoid adding fertilizer.

Tip #4: Water and mulch. After planting, water the mums by directing the stream of water at the base of the plant to ensure the root system can absorb it. Avoid splashing the foliage, which can lead to leaf diseases. It's best to water in the morning rather than late afternoon, allowing the plant to dry before nightfall. Apply 2 to 3 inches of organic mulch, such as wood chips, shredded bark, chopped leaves, or compost, to help retain soil moisture and protect the plant's root system from winter temperatures.

Tip #5: Pinch when necessary. Remember to pinch garden mums 2 to 3 times in spring and early summer when new shoots are 6 inches tall to encourage bushier growth and more flowers. Use pruning shears or hedge clippers to remove the plant's top growth. Repeat until early July.

Check out our
YouTube video for
Caring for Fall
Mums at the QR
code listed below:

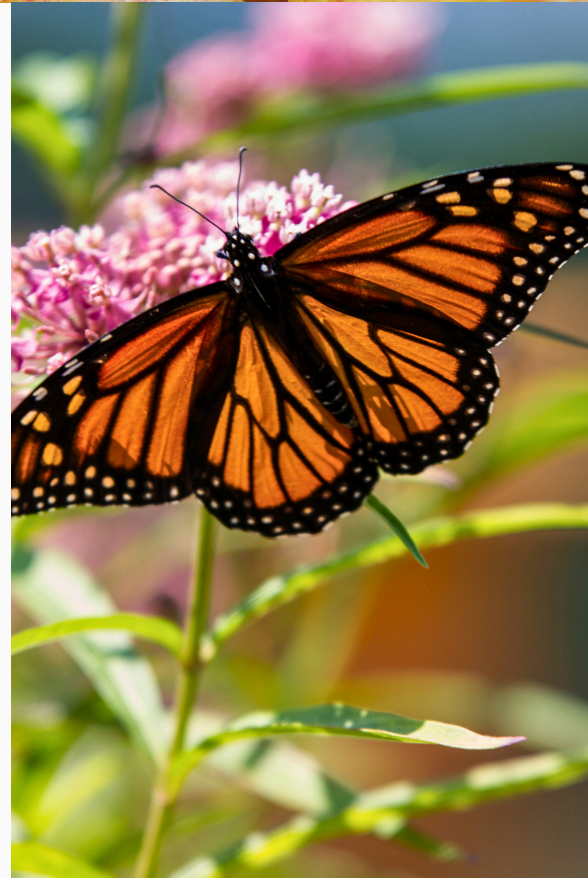




September Garden Calendar

SOURCE: MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

- Plant trees and shrubs from fall through November. Remember, your care and attention are crucial to watering new plantings adequately to ensure their healthy growth.
- Conifers, known for their resilience, naturally shed their inner needles in the fall. This process, especially noticeable on pines and arborvitae, is a sign of their health and should reassure you of your gardening skills.
- If you notice your spruces infected with needle cast, please take care of them by quickly pruning the infected branches and cleaning up any fallen needles. This responsible action can help maintain your garden's health.
- Damage from scorch, sunburn, and heat stress from the summer may be noticeable. In subsequent years, provide enough water to plants early in the day on hot days.
- Watch for cabbage loopers and imported cabbage worms as more cole crops are planted and temperatures cool.
- Finish planting cool-season seeds like leafy greens and radishes by mid-September. Sow seeds of these crops in a cold frame or low tunnel to prolong fall harvest.
- Pick pears before they are fully mature. Store in a cool, dark basement to ripen.
- Clean up any fallen or spoiled fruits.
- Pinch off young summer fruits (tomatoes, peppers, squash) to promote the ripening of more mature fruit.
- Harvest and process summer herbs for winter use by drying or freezing them. This step will ensure you have fresh herbs for your winter dishes.
- Perennials, especially spring bloomers like peonies, can be divided now. When planting peonies, plant only 1-2 inches deep, as planting too deep can cause flowers not to form.
- As milkweeds (*Asclepias* sp.) form pods, milkweed bugs can eat the seeds, leaves, and stems. Damage is minimal, and most infestations are merely a nuisance.
- Take cuttings of annuals now to provide vigorous plants for overwintering.
- Autumn is an excellent time to add compost to garden soils to increase organic matter content.
- Monarchs are migrating now; it's normal for milkweed plants (*Asclepias* sp.) to appear depleted due to caterpillar feeding.





October Garden Calendar

SOURCE: MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

- Make sure to adequately water plants, especially evergreens, if conditions are dry throughout fall.
- Peak fall color usually occurs in late October through early November. Now is the time to observe and choose nursery stock based on fall color.
- As perennials die back, cut them down to about 1 inch above the soil level. Leave some natives up, such as echinacea, rudbeckia, and helianthus, to provide a food source for wildlife during fall and winter.
- Plant daffodils and other spring bulbs by mid to late October. Tulips can be planted until the ground freezes.
- Dig non-hardy bulbs like dahlias, gladiolus, and cannas when the first frost kills the foliage or leaves turn yellow. Clean off dirt and allow it to dry under cover in an airy, frost-free place before storing.
- Look for fall color perennials with late-season blooms: New England aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*), goldenrod (*Solidago* spp.), and ornamental grasses.
- Plant garlic and shallot bulbs through October.
- Continue harvesting fall crops. Be sure to harvest tender crops, pumpkins, and winter squash before the first frost.
- Persimmons start to ripen, especially after frost. They are best eaten when the fruit is mushy (many people harvest fallen fruit). If they are underripe, they will have a chalk-like taste.
- Protect some tender fall crops with a frost or row cover.
- Keep broccoli picked regularly to encourage additional production of side shoots.
- Clean up plant debris to reduce the chance of fungal issues in the next year. Many fungi overwinter in leftover plant material.
- Leave fallen leaves around your garden beds to supply local wildlife with food and habitats over the winter. The leaves will also provide some fertilization and weed suppression.
- Houseplants and other tropical plants should be brought inside by early to mid-October or before nightly temperatures reach below 50. Before bringing them in, check and treat them for the following pests: spider mites, scale, whiteflies, mealybugs, and fungus gnats.





Super Crunchy Salad

SOURCE: PLATE IT UP! KENTUCKY PROUD

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup pepitas (raw pumpkin seed kernels)
- Cooking spray
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- Salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 1 pound Brussels sprouts, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 1/2 pound curly kale, stems removed and thinly sliced
- 1/2 pound Napa cabbage, thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 cups dried cranberries
- 1 (15-ounce) can Mandarin oranges, drained
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced
- 8 strawberries, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 1 (16-ounce) bottle creamy poppy seed dressing
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- Juice from 1 orange



Directions:

Place pepitas in a bowl and coat lightly with cooking spray. Sprinkle with cayenne pepper, salt and pepper. Toss to coat. Place in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Cook over medium heat, stirring often until lightly toasted, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Combine Brussels sprouts, kale, cabbage, dried cranberries, Mandarin oranges, green onions, strawberries, and toasted pepitas in a large bowl.

Dressing: In a small bowl, whisk together the bottled poppy seed dressing, orange zest, and orange juice. Pour over the salad, about 1/2 cup at a time, and toss until the salad and dressing are combined.

Yield: 10, 1 1/2 cup servings

Nutritional Analysis: 300 calories, 12 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 430 mg sodium, 43 g carbohydrate, 5 g fiber, 33 g sugar, 6 g protein

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