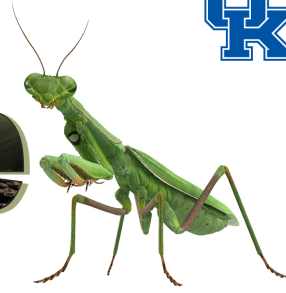


# Boone County Horticulture

## Nov-Dec 2025 Newsletter

 **Martin-Gatton**  
College of Agriculture,  
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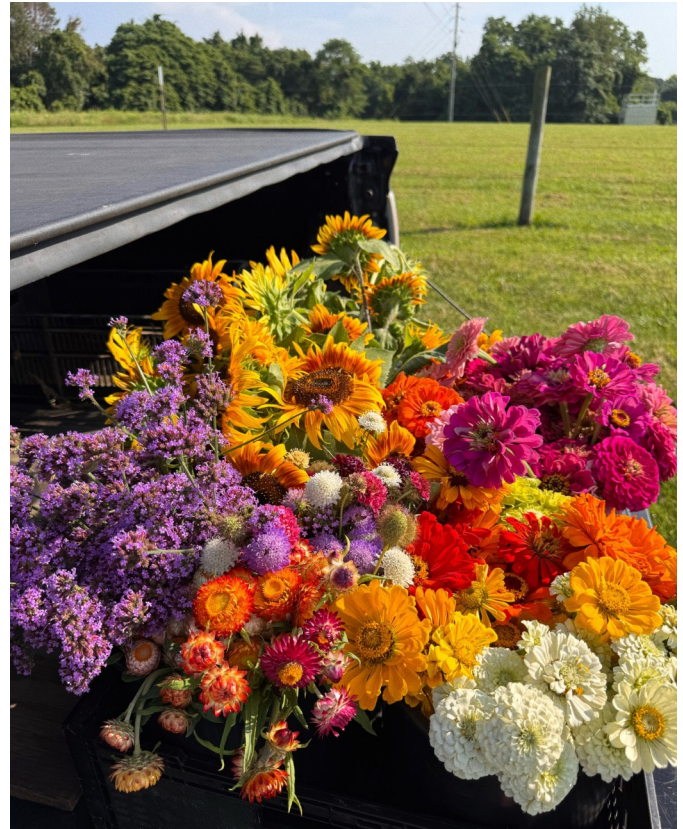
**Cooperative Extension Service**  
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## Demonstration Garden Yearly Review

*By Sophia Becker*  
Boone County Extension  
Horticulture Technician

**The Demonstration Garden at the Boone County Environmental and Nature Center** is a 1-acre teaching garden and orchard that serves as a cornerstone for horticultural education, hands-on training, and community outreach. Designed as an outdoor classroom, the garden hosts a variety of immersive learning experiences, including *Fruit Tree Pruning Workshops*, *Cut Flower Walks*, and in-depth classes on topics such as *vegetable pest management*, *cut flower production*, and *sustainable gardening practices*. For nearly a decade, this garden has not only educated hundreds of community members and volunteers, but has also produced thousands of pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, all of which are donated to local food banks to support the community.



## Northern Kentucky Master Gardener Involvement

The success of the Demonstration Garden is driven in large part by the dedicated efforts of Northern Kentucky Master Gardeners and Extension horticulture staff. The growing season begins in February with seed-starting sessions, where volunteers and staff sow trays with hundreds of vegetable and flower seeds in preparation for the spring planting. As the season progresses and the soil warms, biodegradable plastic mulch is laid to reduce weeds and conserve moisture, and seedlings are transplanted into the field.

From early spring through late fall, Master Gardeners gather every Thursday for structured garden workdays. These sessions offer volunteers hands-on experience in planting, direct-sowing cut flowers, placing tomato cages, staking tall crops, and managing a wide range of horticultural tasks including weed control, irrigation, harvesting, and pest identification. Each activity is a learning opportunity, with Extension staff providing on-the-spot instruction in areas such as harvesting techniques, identifying nutrient deficiencies, recognizing signs of common pests and diseases, and implementing integrated pest management strategies.

*(Continued)*

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## MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.

These workdays foster a strong sense of community among volunteers and serve as a living laboratory for experiential learning, allowing Master Gardeners to build their skills while contributing to a meaningful cause.

### Plants Grown and Community Impact

In the 2025 growing season, the Demonstration Garden cultivated **28 varieties of vegetables**, including staples such as tomatoes, peppers, squash, and eggplant. In addition to food crops, the garden also grew **63 varieties of cut flowers**, which played a critical role in supporting a wide range of community and educational initiatives.

These flowers were used in Extension-led floral arranging classes, providing participants with hands-on floristry experience. Beyond that, they were incorporated into therapeutic horticulture programs at a local drug rehabilitation facility, offering residents a creative and restorative outlet. Throughout the summer, dozens of fresh flower arrangements were also donated to area nursing homes, spreading joy and beauty to elderly residents.



As of October 1st, the garden has yielded 752 pounds of fresh produce, with a goal of reaching 1,000 pounds before the end of the season. All harvested produce is donated to Master Provisions, a local nonprofit organization that distributes food to pantries, shelters, and other community partners across Northern Kentucky.

### An Ongoing Commitment to Education and Service

The Demonstration Garden continues to serve as a vital hub for Master Gardener training, community service, and public horticulture education. It exemplifies the mission of Cooperative Extension by combining research-based knowledge with practical application in a community-centered environment.





## Southwest Injury of Thin Barked Trees

*By Robert Brockman  
Boone County Extension Agent  
for Horticulture*



*Sunscald injury to southwest side of trunk. (Photo: John Strang, University of Kentucky) <https://fruitscout.mgcafe.uky.edu/sunscald-injury-peach>*

As we all know, too much of a good thing can become a bad thing. This is definitely the case with winter sun on thin barked trees such as maples, beech, honeylocust, crabapples, and fruit trees. Young trees of these species are most susceptible, particularly those that are exposed to a lot of light coming from the southwest, the most intense sunlight.

Southwest injury on a tree trunk is sometimes called frost cracking. It occurs when the sap underneath a tree's thin bark heats up on warm and sunny winter days. If this is followed by a cold night below freezing, the sap can freeze. This freezing of the sap leads to a rupturing and death of the tree's circulatory tissues, which are just underneath the bark.

You can protect your young trees from southwest injury in several different ways. The first way is to hold off on pruning away some of the lower branches. These lower branches can help shade the sensitive bark and prevent the underlying sap from heating up. A second option for protecting your tree is to paint the exposed trunk with a white latex paint, which will reflect much of the light and heat away. This white paint is particularly important on the south and southwest sides of the trunk. A third option is to wrap the trunk with a loose hardware cloth, screening, or light colored hard plastic.

If your tree has had damage from southwest injury in the past, it may still recover. Whether it recovers or not is largely dependent on the amount of tissue that is killed and the age of the tree. Perhaps contrary to what you might think, younger trees can withstand more southwest injury as they are growing quickly and the tissue can grow back over that wound. While it is always dependent on age and several other factors, once a tree has southwest injury on more than one third of the trunk's circumference, it often struggles to make a full recovery. Trees with significant southwest injury may live for a long period of time, but will often start to rot from the inside out.

## Quick TIP

If soil samples indicate that your trees or shrubs need fertilizer, the best time to fertilize is after they go dormant in late fall. Hold off on nitrogen fertilization as much of this will leach away.

# Keeping Your Plants Happy During Wintertime

*By Rachel Rudolph  
UK Horticulture Assistant Professor*

Even though your houseplants do not have to deal with the cold like your garden does, you should still change how you care for them this season, ensuring they stay healthy and continue to grow well. Following these tips, your leafy friends will bring lushness and natural beauty into your home, even in winter.

## Decrease watering

In general, less light means less water. Plants need less water in the winter because they don't get as much sunlight, compared to spring and summer. To test soil moisture, push your finger into the potting soil at least one inch deep. If the soil is dry, water thoroughly. It is better to water plants well less often than water just a little bit every day. In the winter, it is possible that you will only need to water once every two to three weeks.



## Pay attention to the Sun

If possible, move your plants closer to the windows. If they're on the ground, put them on a plant stand. Every week or two, rotate the pots to ensure all sides of the plants get some sunlight.

## It's okay if a few leaves fall off

Plants outside over the summer will probably lose some leaves when they come back inside. This is normal because they are getting used to the lower light levels inside. It's normal for plants that stay inside all year to lose a few leaves as winter approaches. This is just their way of getting ready for less light.

## Avoid temperature extremes

Keep plants away from cold drafts, radiators and hot air vents. Sudden hot or cold drafts can kill plants, stress them out, or dry them out.

## Put the fertilizer on hold

Winter is a time for most houseplants to rest. They don't need fertilizer because they usually aren't actively growing. In the fall, stop fertilizing and start back up again in the spring when plants get more sunlight and start growing again.



Consider leaving some fallen leaves in an out of sight area of your yard. Overwintering bumblebee queens and many other insect pollinators will spend the winter in protected locations such as these.

# Quick TIP

## Scan for pests

If you are bringing plants inside for the winter, be sure to check the leaves, stems and soil surface for pests. Wipe leaves down with a wet cloth or remove pests by hand before bringing the plants inside. Small bugs that feed on sap, like aphids and scales, tend to show up more in the winter. Another common winter pest is the spider mite which likes warm, dry places to live. When watering, flip the leaves over and look at the undersides and along the stems. If you find bugs, use your fingers or damp cloth to remove them. Neem oil and insecticidal soap may be options for managing houseplant pests. With any product, be sure to read the entire label for application instructions and precautions.

## Increase the humidity

In the winter, the air inside our heated homes is often drier. Most houseplants, especially those from tropical areas, do best when the humidity is between 40 and 50%. However, in the winter, most homes have humidity levels between 10 and 20%. Putting plants close together is an easy way to make the air around them more humid. Plants can also be put on trays with pebbles and water to make the air more humid. To keep the roots from rotting, pot bottoms should be above the water. As the water evaporates, it makes the air around your houseplants more humid. Keep plants away from vents with blowing air.

More information on caring for houseplants is available at the Boone County Extension office.

## Let Us Give Thanks

### Let us give thanks for a bounty of people:

**For children** who are our second planting, and, though they grow like weeds and the wind too soon blows them away, may they forgive us our cultivation and fondly remember where their roots are.

Let us give thanks:

**For generous friends**...with hearts as big as hubbards and smiles as bright as their blossoms;

**For feisty friends** as tart as apples;

**For continuous friends**, who, like scallions and cucumbers, keep reminding us we had them;

**For crotchety friends**, as sour as rhubarb and as indestructible;

**For handsome friends**, who are as gorgeous as eggplants and as elegant as a row of corn — and the others — as plain as potatoes, and so good for you.

**For funny friends**, who are as silly as brussels sprouts and as amusing as Jerusalem artichokes, and serious friends as complex as cauliflowers and as intricate as onions;

**For friends as unpretentious as cabbages**, as subtle as summer squash, as persistent as parsley, as delightful as dill, as endless as zucchini, and who — like parsnips — can be counted on to see you through the long winter;

**For old friends**, nodding like sunflowers in the evening-time, and young friends coming on as fast as radishes;

**For loving friends**, who wind around us like tendrils, and hold us despite our blights, wilts, and witherings; And finally, **for those friends now gone**, like gardens past, that have been harvested — but who fed us in their times that we might have life thereafter;

**For all these we give thanks.**

*By Max Coots*

## Quick TIP

November is a good time to apply nitrogen to cool season lawn grasses such as tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass. If your lawn needs nitrogen, 1-1.5 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1000 square feet is usually sufficient.



## Kentucky Extension Master Gardener Conference

*By Jean Warken  
Boone County Master Gardener*

The Kentucky Extension Master Gardeners State Conference was hosted by the Lake Cumberland MGA and held at the Pulaski County Extension Office in Somerset in late September. The Northern Kentucky Master Gardeners Association (NKYMGA) was well represented with 15 members in attendance.

A variety of inspiring topics were covered, including Charlie Nardozzi's easy methods of planting vegetables, flowers, and herbs. He discussed why gardeners should be using no-dig gardening, as well as caring for and harvesting from no-dig gardens. Charlie calls this layering process "lasagna gardening," which eliminates the need for digging, turning, and tilling. Learn more at <https://www.gardeningwithcharlie.com>

Other topics included insect biological control, foraging for food and cooking ideas, nature-based stormwater management, permaculture, and pollinators. Knowledge is gained not only through the event speakers at the conference, but also during mingling breaks. Participants shared experiences and best tips and tricks for producing vegetables, fruits, flowers, and herbs.

Boone County Master Gardeners volunteer their time beautifying our county. Sites include the Boone County Extension Office and Nature Center Demo Gardens, the Dinsmore House, the Arboretum at Central Park, Big Bone Lick Beautification, and the Commemorative Grave Site of Daniel Goff, and more.

You will find us at the Boone County Farmers Market and the county fair "Ask A Master Gardener" booth, giving out tree seedlings on Arbor Day, and offering seed packets at various locations. Members are always coming up with new and interesting ideas on how to contribute to the community.

The Master Gardeners continue their education with local field trips throughout the year, as well as classes that are open to the public at the Extension offices. Contact the Boone County Extension Office at 859-586-6101 to learn more about the Master Gardener program.

The Northern Kentucky Master Gardener Association offers grants to provide financial assistance for horticultural beautification and gardening projects to non-profit organizations and public institutions. To learn more about the application process, contact Terri Loeser at [terriloeser@hotmail.com](mailto:terriloeser@hotmail.com)



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!*

## Please Note:

► For most Horticulture classes, registration opens one month prior to the class.

### Understanding AI

► November 6, 10-12:00pm  
Boone County Extension Florence  
Join the discussion on the origins of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it has developed up until current times.

### Honeysuckle Removal: Volunteer Day at the Nature Center

► November 14, 1-3:30pm  
Environmental & Nature Center  
Help us start tackling the honeysuckle bush invading our woodlands! Please register that you plan to attend. Some equipment will be provided but feel free to bring your own.

### Holiday Houseplants

► December 2, 10-11:30pm  
Boone County Extension Florence  
Come and learn how to grow some of the houseplants we associate with the holiday season!



### Festive Journey—A Holiday Adventure

► December 18, 9:30am-4pm  
Extension Enrichment Center  
Join Extension for a 5-destination holiday adventure focusing on diverse traditions, with each stop offering a hands-on craft based on that culture's celebration, a unique way to explore the season. Target audience: adults. Registration required—opens November 1 at 9am.

### Building a Butterfly Garden

► January 15, 10-11:30am  
Boone County Extension Florence  
Join us as we discuss the principles of designing your butterfly garden. Emphasis will be on plant species and why to plant that plant.

### Edible Landscaping

► January 22, 6-7:30pm  
Extension Enrichment Center  
This class will show you how you can incorporate food producing plants into your ornamental gardens in an attractive way.

### Fruit Tree Pruning

► February 19, 5-6pm  
Nature Center Barn and Gardens  
Come out for a hands on pruning demonstration. We will focus on apples, pears, and plums.

### Gardening for the Birds

► February 26, 6-7:30pm  
Extension Enrichment Center  
This class is for you if you want to learn what birds need from our home landscape and how to make the landscape more bird friendly.



## Holiday Closings:

**November 27 & 28, 2025**  
**December 24, 2025 —**  
**January 2, 2026**

## Extension Campus Locations:

Virtual via Zoom, Must register to receive Zoom link 🏠  
Extension Service office, 6028 Camp Ernst Rd., Burlington  
Enrichment Center, 1824 Patrick Dr., Burlington  
Florence Location, 7111 Dixie Hwy., Florence  
Farmers Market, 1961 Burlington Pk., Burlington  
Environmental and Nature Center, 9101 Camp Ernst Rd., Union  
Environmental & Nature Center Barn & Gardens, 9203 Camp Ernst Rd., Union  
Boone County Arboretum, 9190 Camp Ernst Rd., Union; Register at: [www.bcarboretum.org/](http://www.bcarboretum.org/)

# Find us here...



## Apple Carrot Bake

5 medium apples, peeled and sliced (about 4 cups)  
 1 (14.5 ounce) can sliced carrots (may use 2 cups fresh or frozen steamed carrots)  
 ¼ cup light brown sugar  
 1 Tablespoon flour  
 1 teaspoon cinnamon  
 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter  
 ½ cup orange juice

Preheat oven to 350° F. Arrange apples and carrots in a 1½ quart greased casserole dish. In a small bowl, combine brown sugar, flour and cinnamon; sprinkle over carrots and apples. Dot carrot and apple mixture with butter and cover with orange juice. Bake uncovered for one hour or until sugar mixture caramelizes.



*Yield: 8, ¾ cup servings. Nutritional Analysis: 120 calories, 9g fat, 3g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 10mg cholesterol, 125 mg sodium, 24g carbohydrate, 2g fiber, 19g sugar, 1g protein.*

*Source: <https://www.planeatmove.com/blog/apple-carrot-bake/>*

*Rita May, Senior Extension Associate for Kentucky Nutrition Education Program, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service*

### Improve Your Skills in the Off-Season

Winter doesn't have to be a dormant season for your green thumb! It's the perfect time for learning. Look no further than the University of Kentucky to help plan your perfect Kentucky garden.

Kentucky Hort News is a great place to start. Created in 2020, UK Horticulture's Webinar Wednesday are weekly webinars covering topics such as selecting annuals, pest management, native plants, fruit trees, and pollinator gardens, just to name a few. You can register to watch the webinars live and ask questions directly to the experts. Missed a session? No problem! Past episodes are readily available for viewing at your convenience. Some programs even offer printable notes to help you retain all that valuable information. To learn more, go to <https://kentuckyhortnews.com>.

The UK Department of Forestry & Natural Resources also offers a fantastic resource: From the Woods Today. This is another Wednesday live series, with many recorded episodes to explore. You can learn about a variety of interesting topics, such as invasive species, mushrooms, tree planting techniques, wildlife, and more. You can find them at <https://forestry.mgcafe.uky.edu/woods-today>.

And be sure to check out in-person classes at the Boone County Extension office.

Don't let the winter blues keep you from pursuing your passion. Explore these resources, expand your gardening knowledge, and get ready for a flourishing spring season!

*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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