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FEATURE ARTICLE

**NOW'S THE TIME TO THINK
ABOUT YOUR FALL GARDEN**

Cool weather crops grow best when daytime temperatures are in the 70s and low 80s and nights are in the 40s and 50s. Once evening temperatures start to dip below freezing, most growth will stop, though you can continue to harvest most fall vegetables as long as evening temperatures don't dip into the teens. The trick is to get them to a harvestable size in time—if you wait until the weather cools off to plant your seeds, it'll likely be too late.

Count Backwards From Your Frost Date

Each region of the country has an ideal planting window for fall crops. They need time to mature while the weather is still warm, but if planted too early they may be stunted by the heat and many will bolt, meaning they will send up flower stalks and set seed prematurely, leaving the edible portion of the crop tough and bitter.

To find the optimal time to plant fall crops, you need to know the average date of first frost in your area. Your local cooperative extension office or any local nursery should be able to provide this information, or you can look it up in an online almanac. Then, check the back of the seed packet for each crop you want to plant for the "days to maturity." Subtract that number from the average date of last frost to find the best time to plant.

For example, if you want to grow Calabrese broccoli, which needs about 75 days to mature, and your average date of first frost is October 15, plant the seeds no later than August 1. It's better to err on the side of planting a bit early because growth will slow as the days get shorter, so the last two weeks of July is the optimal planting window in this scenario. Plus, you never know if cold

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weather will come earlier than usual.

Sow Your Seeds

It's easiest to start fall crops in flats rather than sow the seeds directly in the ground, so you can start them in a partially shaded area outdoors or in a sunny window indoors. The seed-bed needs to remain evenly moist for germination to occur, which may require watering several times a day if temperatures are in the 90s. Alternatively, string up a canopy of shade cloth over a bed and start them directly where they are to grow.

Plant the Seedlings

Once your plants have two "true" leaves, which look more like the leaves on a mature plant, they're ready to be planted. Although warm weather vegetables, like tomatoes, beans, squash and cucumbers, tend to be large, sprawling plants, most cool-weather crops are pint-sized in comparison, which makes them easy to plug into any available open space in the late summer garden. If any of your summer crops have succumbed to disease and are declining, pull them out and pop the fall crops in their place. You can even plug in fall seedlings around the base of taller summer crops that are still producing—they will benefit from the shade while the weather is still hot. Once the weather cools to the 70s or 80s during the day, however, cut the summer crops to the ground so the fall crops will flourish in full sun.

There is no need to till vegetable beds that have had summer crops growing in them before planting fall crops, but it helps to fork the soil lightly to loosen the top couple inches of soil, which may have become compacted over the course of the growing season. If you're squeezing the seedlings in around existing summer plants, try to break up the crust on top of the soil at planting time and use a trowel to loosen the soil for each seedling to a depth of 4 or 5 inches—the larger plants shouldn't mind the soil disturbance at this point in the season.

Assuming compost and soil amendments were mixed into the beds at planting time, there should be enough nutrients to support healthy growth of the fall crops. It never hurts to spread a fresh layer of compost on top of the soil when you plant them, however. Water the seedlings whenever the top inch of soil becomes dry to the touch. Fortunately, pests and disease are usually less of a problem once the weather cools.

The Fall Harvest

Cool weather brings out the best flavor in leafy greens and many root crops. Cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, carrots and Brussels sprouts become extra sweet as the days become shorter. In the mild winter climates of California, Florida and the Deep South, fall crops may continue to produce all winter long. Wherever freezing weather is common, they will eventually succumb to the cold. In this case, you still have the option of installing row covers or cold frames over the crops to keep them alive and available for harvest well into early winter.

What to Plant

Get inspired for your fall garden with the list of cool weather crops below. The approximate days to maturity are

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HOME GROWN 877

I went outside to my yard and found all these tan-green beetles chewing the heck out of my tree leaves, my roses and my grapes. I found them on a bunch of other plants too. They are feeding in piles. The insects are stacked on each other. It made me sick so I just went inside. I tried using insecticidal soap and none died. What are these? Are they new?

Sorry to disappoint but it is the same old guys that have been around for the last billion years or so. But some years, we see more of them than others. These guys are called Rose Chafers, *Macrodactylus subspinosus*. If you included everything that they ate in their name, it would take up two pages. Rose chafers are beetles that can measure from five-sixteenths of an inch to half an inch in length. They are slender with a body color that is a tan-green combo. Their legs are brownish-orange and are spiny. They are doing more than just feeding in the heaps you see. They are engaged in their two favorite activities: eating and mating. Yes, there are orgies going on in your yard. Rose chafer numbers generally are worse on sandy soils. It is much easier for mom to lay eggs in easy-to-dig soil. For many gardeners, this year has been huge for the numbers of rose chafers seen. But they are more than just seen. They chew ragged holes in flower petals like roses and peonies and gnaw holes in fruit like strawberries, grapes and raspberries, just to name a few. They chew up leaves on trees and bushes and strip off the top layer of leaf leaving it skeletonized or looking lacy. They are especially annoying when they fly, land in your hair and get tangled. They land on shoes and climb up the inside of pant legs. Little scratchy-scratchy legs wandering up your leg can cause a flurry of pants-slapping. Rose chafers will feed for about four weeks and in large numbers, can make a mess out of many plants. That's bad enough but in many areas, a short time later, Japanese beetles will be emerging and will trash the same plants. If you decide to use a pesticide, make very careful selections for any edible plants. That might include pesticide with the active ingredients of carbaryl or Malathion. Control can happen through several methods. In small numbers, rose chafers can be hand-picked and dropped into a bucket of soapy water so they sink. Or use a barrier of cheese cloth or floating row cover material that is secured to the ground which can exclude them for the four or so weeks they are feeding. Pesticides with the active ingredients of cyfluthrin, imidacloprid, bifenthrin, permethrin or carbaryl can be used for large numbers. But if this is an edible crop, use particular care in pesticide selection. Your choice must be approved for use on food crops.

I have a maple tree that has some kind of problem and I think that it will kill the tree. About a week or two ago, I noticed some leaves and they have brown on them. Most of the brown is on the veins of the leaf and along the edges. The spots are big and small and the big spots make the leaves appear shriveled. I have watched the leaves and they are not getting any better. What can I do?

The answer that you do not want to hear is: nothing. You cannot do anything because you cannot make a fungus problem go away. Once any plant gets a fungal problem, you or the plant cannot make it leave. The problem isn't fatal and in most cases, not even serious. But if you keep worrying, maybe you can cause ulcers for yourself, just maybe. The leaf problem is a common one in damp or rainy cool springtime weather called Anthracnose. In maples, spots are brown and irregular and many, but not all are on the veins of the leaves. Sometimes, it looks like an entire vein is brown. When enough spots run together, they can cause the leaf to die and fall off the tree. The brown almost looks like the leaf is scorched. If another kind of Anthracnose gets on sycamore trees, it is serious. The maple anthracnose is just unsightly. There should be good, new leaves on the ends of the branches now. The damaged leaves do not repair themselves. The only thing you could have done was to anticipate it was going to happen this year and spray the tree. That means you also have to be psychic.

Gretchen Voyle, MSU Extension-Livingston County Horticulture Educator 517/546-3950



COOKS CORNER

BBQ Bacon Chicken Bites

Spicy Southern Kitchen Christin Mahrlig

Ingredients

3 boneless, skinless chicken pieces cut into 1 ½-inch chunks
 ½ cup Stubb's Chicken Marinade
 ½ cup Stubb's Spicy BBQ Sauce, plus more for basting
 1 pound bacon, each piece cut in half
 Toothpicks (soak them in water for at least 1 hour)
 Ranch dressing for serving (optional)

Instructions

Place chicken pieces and chicken marinade in a plastic bag. Let marinate in refrigerator for 2-4 hours.

Remove chicken from bag and coat each piece with Spicy BBQ Sauce.

Wrap a piece of bacon around each chicken piece, securing with a toothpick.

Heat grill to medium-high. (Make sure grill is greased well so bacon does not stick.) Grill chicken pieces until chicken is cooked through and bacon is crispy, turning halfway through. Baste with more BBQ sauce just before removing from grill.

Serve with Ranch Dressing or more BBQ sauce.



Best Way to Cook Corn on the Cob

Ingredients

6-8 ears of corn, husks and silks removed and cut in half (if desired)

1 cup milk

1 stick salted butter

Instructions

Fill a large pot about halfway with water. Bring water to a boil.

Add milk and butter. Add corn and reduce heat. Simmer corn for 6 to 8 minutes. Remove corn from cooking liquid and it's ready to serve.



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Cauliflower	75	Brussels Sprouts	90
Lettuce	50	Cabbage	95
Arugula	40	Beets	60
Chard	55	Radishes	30
Spinach	45	Kohlrabi	60
Kale	60	Turnips	50
Mustard	40	Rutabagas	75
Tatsoi	45	Carrots	80
Mizuna	45	Onions*	120
Broccoli	80	Garlic*	120

*Onions and garlic are typically planted in early fall and harvested in late spring or early summer the following year.

Brian Barth



GROW GREAT CUT FLOWERS

Cutting your own flowers for bouquets is an easy way to bring the garden indoors to enjoy day or night. You can cut just about anything for an arrangement, but a good rule of thumb is to choose varieties that grow taller than 2 feet.

Early morning, when plants are turgid, or filled with water, is the best time to cut with clean, sharp garden shears or pruners. It's a good idea to carry around a bucket or large plastic cup filled with water. Cut stems that are left out, even if only for a few minutes, can seal up, inhibiting the absorption of water. When you're ready to arrange, remove all of the foliage that would dip below the waterline in the vase.

Then make a fresh cut about an inch above the end of the stem. To get them to last even longer, remember to change the water every two to three days — clean water keeps the stems hydrated and the inside tissue clear of clogs.

Some flowers have solid, hearty stems that require a 45-degree angled cut to ensure the stem isn't flush with the bottom of the vase. This method works well for increasing the surface area so stems can easily take up water.



Adapted from Garden Gate

Milkweed for Monarchs

Monarch caterpillars feed exclusively on the leaves of milkweed, the only host plant for this iconic butterfly species. As such, milkweed is critical for the survival of monarchs. Without it, they cannot complete their life cycle and their populations decline.

Indeed, eradication of milkweed both in agricultural areas as well as in urban and suburban landscapes is one of the primary reasons that monarchs are in trouble today.

Plant Milkweed

The good news is that planting milkweed is one of the easiest ways that each of us can make a difference for monarchs. There are several dozen species of this wildflower native to North America, so no matter where you live, there is at least one milkweed species naturally found in your area.

Planting local milkweed species is always best. You can collect your own seed or purchase seed or plants to add to your garden, or any landscape in your community. Three species have particularly wide ranges and are good choices in most regions: common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), swamp milkweed (*A. incarnata*), and butterflyweed (*A. tuberosa*). The latter two are highly ornamental and widely available via the nursery trade.

Here are some resources to help you find the best milkweed for your area:

Planting the Right Milkweed in your Region

[Twelve Native Milkweeds for Monarchs \(blog\)](#) [Fact Sheet about Milkweed](#)
[Milkweed Native to Eastern U.S.](#) [Milkweed Native to the Great Plains](#) [Milkweed Native to Southeastern U.S.](#)

Milkweed seedling plugs

[Monarch Watch Milkweed Market](#)

Milkweed Seeds for Home, Schools and Community Groups

[Botanical Interests Seed packets](#) [Xerces Society](#)



The above information was obtained from the National Wild Life Federation web site has an abundance of additional information to include seed packets for school children. This gave me the thought of possibly the grow lab, rest areas and Crossroads to name a few. ED

GROWING VERTICAL VEGETABLES

One of the easiest ways to grow rambling or vining plants is to train them up trellises or supports. In a small garden, growing things upwards is a good solution because space is limited but you still want a lush appearance and lots of diversity in your plantings. In a bigger garden, vertical displays can become wonderful design features and focal points and provide much needed screens or windbreaks. And, if you enjoy creating wildlife habitat in the garden you'll find that having plants at eye level is the best way to see small creatures such as iridescent hummingbirds and hovering butterflies.

Start the spring garden off with snow peas or sugar snap peas on a trellis or net strung up between two poles. After you've the succulent pea pods in early summer, plant pole beans in the same spot to finish up the season. Both peas and beans will naturally twine and cling, so they are among the easiest to train vertically. I especially like the pole varieties of these to kinds of vegetables, because it is much easier to find the pods when they are at eye level.

I've found that scarlet runner bean, with their pretty coral and white or all red blossoms, are a surefire way to attract hungry hummingbirds. My favorite support for peas and beans is plastic netting with big three inch square openings. Sometimes you can find garden netting that is made out of jute or some other natural fibers so that at the end of the season the whole vine and its support can be put in the compost pile. If you do use plastic netting, be sure to remove and store it for the winter, as cold and wet weather seem to make it degrade faster.



Tomatoes are one of the rambling vines that perform best when provided with strong stakes, sturdy trellises or sturdy cages. If left to spread on the ground, they would take up a great deal of room and the fruits would be hidden and more prone to diseases, Cherry tomato plants, especially can get huge and dense to be sure to provide them with extra strong vertical support other wise each plant makes such a jungle of foliage that is hard to harvest the fruit by the end of the season.

HOW TO CONTAIN YOUR TOMATOES

To contain my tomatoes, I use cages made out of very heavy gauge wire, the kind that is used for reinforcing concrete. The holes between the wire squares are big enough for me to reach through to harvest red ripe tomatoes but stiff enough to support the heaviest vines. Don't purchase those flimsy vase shaped thin wire cages often sold for tomatoes, because they will fall over before most vigorous varieties are even half done growing. If you don't have the time or the materials to make wire cages, use sturdy wood or metal stakes to tie your vines to,

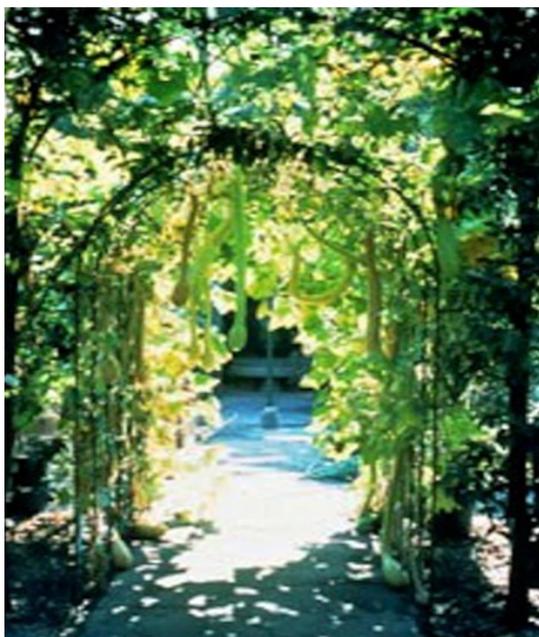
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or string strong wire between poles to support their growing branches. This year, we made some very nice looking tomato cages out of wooden 1x1's. They look like 4 ladders screwed together into a box shape; we used metal fasteners and wing nuts to they can be disassembled and put away for winter. Once you plant your seedlings, you may have to encourage the young vines to attach themselves, but once they get going they'll climb right up without effort.



For growing vining summer squash or any kind of gourds, the traditional teepees made from stakes of saplings are useful and handsome. I like to grow miniature pumpkins this way because the bright little orange fruit look like wonderful summer ornaments as they grow up their supports. Or make a long A-frame trellis with stout string between the wooden members. Plant four or five seeds about two inches from the base of your upright supports. Once strong seedlings have emerged, thin to the strongest plants for growing on, as well as well spaced and uncrowded seedling always produce the most fruitful plants. Small melons and vining cucumbers can also be grown this way, although their vines will need help to climb upwards. Stretch plastic ribbon, natural fiber twine or even strips of old pantyhose are good materials for tying your vertical vines. When growing plants with heavy fruits like winter squash or melons, it's a good idea to cradle the growing fruit in slings made of old T-shirts or plastic netting. Another great vining vegetable is the Italian heirloom Trombetta, a delicious climbing squash, its luxuriant vines with their lime green trumpet-shaped fruits are a true visual feast, whether you grow just a few plants on poles or a whole fence of these tall climbers.



In planning for climbing varieties don't forget the ornamental as well as the edible. Some of my favorite flowering vines, all easy to grow from seed include evening-flowering moon flowers, bright morning glories, lavender flowering hyacinth bean vines, climbing spicy nasturtiums, and of course all the beautiful hues of fragrant sweet peas for early spring and summer bloom. All of these beauties can grace your yard with walls of attractive foliage and glorious flowers to enjoy inside and out all season long.

From Renne's Garden

Controlling Wasps, Hornets, and Yellowjackets

Paper wasps, hornets and yellowjackets are a potential health threat to Kentuckians. Hundreds (perhaps thousands) of people in the United States die each year from allergic reactions to the venom of these insects. Wasps, hornets and yellowjackets are more dangerous and unpredictable than honey bees and should be treated with respect; nests should be eliminated with great care and in a specific manner.

Paper Wasps



Paper wasps, hornets and yellowjackets construct nests of a paper-like material which is a mixture of finely chewed wood fragments and salivary secretions of the wasps. Paper wasps typically build their umbrella-shaped nests under eaves and ledges. These wasps are not as aggressive as yellowjackets or hornets, and can be eliminated rather easily with a wasp and hornet spray sold at most grocery and hardware stores. These formulations have an added advantage in that they often spray as far as 20 feet.

Treatment of wasps, hornets, and yellowjackets is best performed at night; paper wasps can be eliminated during the daytime provided you do not stand directly below the nest during treatment. Most wasp and hornet sprays cause insects to drop instantly when contacted by the insecticide. Standing directly below a nest increases one's risk of being stung.

Paper Wasp Nest



Paper Wasp Nest

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

Following treatment, wait a day to ensure that the colony is destroyed, then scrape or knock down the nest. This will prevent secondary problems from carpet beetles, ants and other scavenging insects.

Hornets



Hornet Nest

Hornets are far more difficult and dangerous to control than paper wasps. The nests resemble a large, inverted tear-drop shaped ball which typically is attached to a tree, bush or side of a building. Hornet nests may contain thousands of wasps which are extremely aggressive when disturbed. The nests are often located out of reach and removal is best accomplished by a professional pest control firm.

A full wasp suit sealed at the wrists, ankles and collar is recommended when disposing of a hornet nest. Treatment can be accomplished by applying a wasp freeze-type, aerosol insecticide or dust formulation (Sevin, or Ficam,) directly into the nest opening. Hornet nests have a single opening, usually toward the bottom, where the wasps enter and exit. It is essential that the paper envelope of the nest not be broken open during treatment or the irritated wasps will scatter in all directions, causing even greater problems.

Following treatment, wait at least a day before removing the nest to ensure that all of the wasps are killed. If hornets continue to be observed, the application may need to be repeated. Experienced pest control operators will sometimes remove a hornet nest which is attached to a branch by slipping a plastic garbage bag over the intact nest and clipping it at the point of attachment. This technique should not be attempted by anyone else and should only be done at night with a wasp suit.

Yellowjackets

Yellowjackets are another dangerous wasp encountered around homes and buildings. Nests are often located underground in an old rodent burrow, beneath a landscape timber, or in a rock wall or wall of a building. If the nest can be located, it can usually be eliminated by carefully applying a wasp spray insecticide into the nest opening.

GENESEE COUNTY FAIR

The Genesee County Fair is August 22 thru August 28. Vicki Perkins is the chairperson and she needs volunteers from 9:30 AM until 8:30 PM. She would prefer at least 4 hour shifts. Call 810-686-9547 and leave a message of when you are available to volunteer. She also needs help with the set up as well. That will be on August 20 at 11:00 AM. Anyone can come out to help with that.

2016 MASTER GARDENER COLLEGE POSTER CONTEST

As part of the 2016 MG College an Extraordinary Project Search showcasing outstanding contributions EMGs make in their communities was given. Fourteen posters were submitted from 7 different counties. Seven of those posters were from Genesee County. Crossroads Village won the "Peer Preferred Project" award (where all the attendees of the MG college voted for their favorite poster). The rest of the Genesee County Projects-Desert Oasis Cactus Garden, Genesee County Partnership with MDOT (Rest Area Poster, Flushing River Trail Educational Signage, Carriage Town Ministries Food and Garden, Genesee County Humane Society and Genesee County District Libraries all received Honorable mention from the highly regarded judges: Whitney Cranshaw, Ron Bates, Paul Zamit and Joe Boggs.

Congratulations to Genesee County for their strong turnout in this contest and for the fantastic posters that will be seen at our August membership meeting and at the Genesee County Fair.



Joanie Snyder and her volunteers along with Amy McMillian

REGISTRATION for the GENESEE COUNTY FALL Master Gardener class is now open

The classes will be held on Wednesdays of the week at Swartz Creek Performing Arts Center running from August 31 to December 7, 2016, 5 to 9 p.m. Please share this news with anyone you know who may be interested in taking the class. Here is the link to the registration page:

<http://events.anr.msu.edu/mgvpgenesefall2016?>

We are so fortunate to be having a second class this year so let's get the word out and make this class as successful as our January class.

CLOTHING ORDERS

Our 2nd clothing order was another success. Thank you to all of the members who have ordered shirts.

Our next order will be turned in on Sept. 2, 2016. If you want to order an item the payment must reach our PO

Box by this date or your order will not be turned in. Please check out

our website : gene-seecountymg.org/shirtorder.html for new items available. Mail payment to PO Box 34, Flushig, Mi. 48433

DATES TO REMEMBER

For our August MGAGCM meeting we will meet at Crossroads Village in the Warehouse meeting room.

This is the room outside of where we have our awards banquet. Crossroads has been very gracious to permit us to hold our meeting here this month as it is the eve of their biggest summer event of Thomas Train. There is one request and that is that we DO NOT MOVE ANYTHING in this room as it is set up the way Crossroads wants the room arranged and we are asked that we comply with their request. Social time is 5:30 pm-6:00 pm and our speaker will begin at 6:00 pm with our business meeting starting at 7:10 pm.

Our speaker will be Brian VanPatten and he will be speaking on Edible Spring Plants.

Our snack's will be provided by Katie VanPatten, Diana Carleson and Marilyn Nichols.



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**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITES**

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www.michiganmastergardener.org

MMGA Inc Facebook Page at:

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