

The Boyle County Thymes



Tips on Dividing Perennial Plants

Alexis Sheffield, Boyle Co. Agent for Horticulture

Perennials can be one of the best investments for your landscape, cut flower garden, or even fruits and vegetables, I'm looking at you asparagus and raspberries! They fill up a space relatively quickly with long lasting garden color without all the annual planting, but what happens when they get overcrowded? Depending on the species, many perennials need to be divided every 3-5 years, while this can be a bit time consuming, it also means FREE PLANTS. Dividing your perennials aids in rejuvenating the oldest garden resident, and also makes you popular in the neighborhood, if you decide to share. Here are a few tips to make this task as simple as possible.

1

START AT THE DRIP LINE

To minimize root damage begin digging at plant drip line. Dig a trench around the plant until you can lever it out of the hole.



2

DIVIDE IN COOL WEATHER

For best re-establishment, divide and replant in Sept. to allow them to settle in before the high heat of Summer.



3

SPREAD THEM OUT

Place a division into a hole and fan the roots out as much as possible without damaging them. Make sure everyone is facing down or out.



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Planting for Spring Surprises

by Julie Steber, Boyle Co. Master Gardener

Everyone I know loves being surprised. That's the feeling I get in the spring when the first signs of crocuses appear in my garden beds and across my lawn. I planted the bulbs over 10 years ago and they still bring joy and a feeling of surprise when they pop out of the winter ground. The garden catalogs will soon be arriving with an abundance of new bulbs to choose from. Some basic things to consider for planting bulbs include:

1. Selecting the right bulbs for Kentucky. The UK College of Agriculture publication HortFacts 52-04 is a good reference to use in selecting bulbs recommended for Kentucky Gardens. Include different bulbs with different bloom times to help stretch the flowering season. Consider the mature height and color theme of the bulbs you select. Bulbs are perishable and should be purchased as fresh as possible and stored in a cool place until time for planting.



2. Locate the site for planting. Generally well-drained sites are best. Soil pH should be 6.0 to 7.0. If you have clay soil it is best to amend with compost or other organic material before planting. Full sun is not necessary. Some bulbs can be planted directly in the lawn (for example my surprise crocuses) and others prefer to be naturalized on hill sides, areas beneath trees, or in more formal designed beds.

3. Mass plant for the most impact. Small bulbs should be planted in groups of at least 10-12 and large bulbs in groups of 5-6. For a more naturalized appearance avoid planting straight rows. Try planting in an oval shape, kidney shape, or a shape that fits the location. You can show off bold border plantings along drives and walkways.

4. Plant bulbs between October 15 and end of November. Bulbs are planted in the Autumn because they require a chill period of 10-16 weeks before sprouting in the Spring. Small bulbs of about an inch in size should be planted in holes 5 inches deep about 1 to 4 inches apart. Large bulbs greater than 2 inch in size should be planted in holes 8 inches deep about 4 to 8 inches apart. This will help avoid frost damage and keep animals from digging them out. Add 1 ounce of bone meal per square foot to the bottom of the hole. Place bulbs with pointed side up and cover with half the soil removed from the hole.

5. When the bulbs make surprise appearances in the spring repeat fertilizing with 10-10-10 at a rate of 1-2 pounds per 100 square feet. Remove the flower organs after the flower petals fall. Allow the foliage to die naturally. Be sure to photograph and record the location of bulbs so as not to disturb them after the foliage is gone. In Kentucky some bulbs are considered to be more of an annual flower. For example, Tulips generally will display the best show the first spring after planting and will require replacements in following years. Hope you enjoy your spring surprises!

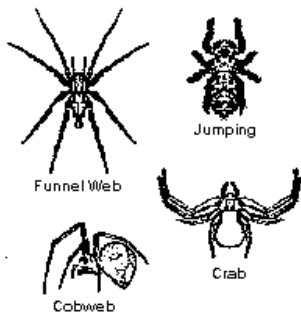
Common Spiders Found Around Homes and Buildings

By Lee Townsend and Ken Yeargan

University of Kentucky Dept. of Entomology

Spiders tend to evoke two images - webs and bites. Webs are often associated with abandoned, neglected, or haunted houses, while the animals themselves bring to mind the image of a painful or deadly bite. The immediate question - "Is this a black widow or brown recluse?"

Spiders are abundant (over 1,000,000 individuals per acre in a grassy field) and can be found almost anywhere from the bedroom closet to the 22,000 foot level on Mt. Everest. There are about 2,500 different species in North America. Some live in holes in the ground while others may be found under rocks or logs. Those that prefer dark, shaded areas may also occur in cellars and basements. These species may become established in homes.



Most spiders found in homes and buildings are "accidental invaders" that have entered around doors, windows, or other openings. Homes in wooded areas or with naturalized or landscaped foundations may be prone to more frequent invasion because the surroundings are ideal spider habitats.

Spiders are beneficial, feeding mostly on small insects and other arthropods. Some trap their prey in webs or snares; others are active hunters that use excellent vision to stalk or ambush their food. Virtually all spiders have poison glands that connect with the fangs. Venom produced by the glands is used to kill or paralyze prey and in defense. Only a few species, such as the black widow and the brown recluse, have venom that is very toxic or harmful to humans.

Most species do not attempt to bite; many have fangs that are not capable of piercing the skin. However, some will, with results that are similar to a wasp or bee sting. There is the chance that a person can have an allergic reaction to the venom.

Common Kentucky Spiders

Wolf Spider

Wolf Spiders or ground spiders are common. Most are dark brown. Wolf spiders actively hunt prey and do not use snares or webs.

They inhabit grassy or leaf-covered areas and may be active during the day or at night. The female carries an egg sac on her rear end and the young ride on her back for a time after hatch.



They look fierce and their rapid movements make them seem aggressive. They have strong fangs and could bite if disturbed or pinched. Wolf spiders do not persist indoors but are common "accidental invaders".

Funnel Web Spiders

Funnel Web Spiders (Agelenidae) or grass spiders resemble wolf spiders but have a pair of long, distinctive silk spinning tubes at the rear of the abdomen. They build a horizontal, sheet-like web that has a funnel shaped retreat. These webs are most obvious when covered with dew in the morning. The spiders live in shrubbery, grass, under rocks or in debris and seldom come indoors.

Fishing Spiders

Fishing Spiders (Pisauridae), active hunters, are among the largest

spiders in the eastern United States. They prefer moist habitats, such as around streams or other bodies of water, but may be found in basements or other damp



parts of buildings. They have the typical dark markings of a wolf spider.

Jumping Spiders

(Salticidae) have a distinctive body shape and short, strong front legs; many are brightly colored or iridescent.

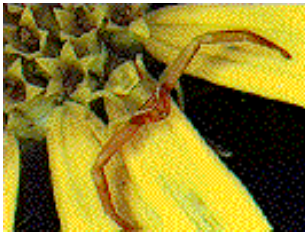
Two very large eyes on the front of the head give them the best vision of all spiders. They slowly stalk their prey and make a sudden pounce from a short distance.

Salticids occasionally wander indoors and may overwinter there.



Crab Spiders

Crab Spiders (Thomisidae) have two long front pairs of legs. They wait in ambush for insect prey on plants, flowers, tree trunks or soil litter. They rarely enter buildings and do not persist indoors.



Sac Spiders

Sac Spiders (Clubionidae) live on foliage or in the ground. They build tubular retreats under stones, or in rolled leaves or folds of grasses. A pale yellow to pale green species that spins silken tubes among the leaves of shrubbery can give a painful bite.

Cellar Spiders

Cellar Spiders (Pholcidae) with long, thin legs build sheetlike or irregular webs in dark places. They commonly hang upside down under the web.

Orb Weavers

Orb Weavers (Araneidae) include "garden spiders" and their relatives. They weave classical, sheet-like orb webs that consist of rays and spirals of silk. They have poor eyesight and have trouble walking on anything but webs. They rarely occur indoors but frequently live on or near the outer walls of buildings.

Two spectacular members of the group are the large black and yellow garden spider and the marbled spider with a yellow-orange abdomen that has brown to purple markings. The former tends to build webs in open, sunny places in gardens around houses and in tall grass; the latter



prefers wooded areas between trees and shrubs. Some members of the family, known as the spiny-bellied spiders, have thorn-like projections on the abdomen. They usually dwell in wooded areas.

Cobweb Spiders

Cobweb Spiders (Theridiidae) build irregular cobwebs inside and outdoors and tend to hang upside down from them. The webs are built in protected places, sometimes in buildings. Typically, they have a spherical abdomen. The house spider frequently lives in buildings, typically locating its web in the corners of rooms or in the angles of windows. The black widow is a member of this family. A row of small bristles on the hind legs is used to help wrap the spider's prey in silk. As a result, this group is also known as "comb-footed" spiders.



Brown Spiders

Brown Spiders (Loxoscelidae) are also known as the recluse spiders. The best known and most notorious member of this family is the brown recluse that has a violin-shaped pattern on the back of the front body segment. These spiders have only 6 eyes, while other spiders have 8. They construct a sticky sheet of silk that helps trap their prey.



Brown recluse spider (left photo by M. Johnson, University of Kentucky Entomology) and close-up, showing fiddle pattern (right photo courtesy University of Florida)

The bite of a brown recluse is serious. It is associated with tissue destruction and may require surgical treatment. Read more about Brown Recluse spiders and in [ENTFact-631: Brown Recluse Spider](#).

Upcoming Classes and News

Classes are subject to cancel if people do not call to register. Please call ahead even for free classes!
All classes are at the Boyle Co. Extension Office unless otherwise stated.

- **August 14th: Hiking Club - 6pm**
 - Central KY Wildlife Refuge: meet at pavilion
- **August 15th: Season Extension - Part 1 6pm**
 - For the first part of the series, learn techniques used for season extension regardless of what you grow.
- **September 4th: Season Extension - Part 2 5pm**
 - Participate in a hands on approach to building a low tunnel.
- **September 16th: Hiking Club- 6pm**
 - Shaker Village: meet at Centre Trail Head
- **September 24th: Cover Crops 6pm**
 - Learn the benefits of cover cropping your garden and what you can plant now.
- **October 8th: Growing Better Garlic 6pm**
 - The first 20 who sign up will take home their own garlic to start!
- **October 19th: Hiking Club- 8am**
 - Red River Gorge: meet at extension office.
- **October 22nd: Hydrangeas 101 6pm**
 - Learn the ins and outs of growing hydrangeas. The first 10 to sign up will receive a free plant!



Transportation for Hiking Club is available on a first come, first serve basis and will depart from the Extension Office 30 min prior to hike time.



Fungus Among Us

by **Lindsey Sweis, Boyle County Master Gardener**

With all of the rain that we've been having, you have most likely spotted mushrooms popping up here and there. In the past couple of weeks, I've found multiple types of mushrooms in my vegetable garden, in my lawn, on trees, and (yikes!) even on my wooden deck. But, what, exactly are mushrooms, and what role do they play in our landscapes? This column will explore these questions and highlight different common species of fungi (the organism that mushrooms are a part of) found in our area.

First of all, what are mushrooms? Mushrooms are fleshy fruiting bodies of organisms called fungi. Think of them as apples on an apple tree, where mushrooms are apples and the fungus is the overall apple tree. Perhaps you remember learning about the Kingdom of Fungi (alongside the Plant Kingdom, Animal Kingdom, etc.) back in your school days. Within this Kingdom, or group of living things, some scientists estimate that there are approximately 5.1 million species (individual types) of fungi.

From our human perspective, some of these species of fungi are beneficial. These fungi provide ecological support for the plants that we want to grow, or they help with other processes that we like, such as baker's yeast (yes, a type of fungus!) making bread dough rise. Other fungi are considered harmful because they harm or kill plants and animals that we depend on, or they destroy human-built structures by causing them to rot. Finally, some fungi (as far as we currently understand) are neither particularly beneficial nor particularly harmful; they're just doing their thing, minding their own business in the environment.

This Month's Featured Fungus: Coprinus spp.

These mushrooms are popping up all over my vegetable garden right now. They are some species of Coprinus mushroom, which are also called "Inky Caps" because the top part of the mushroom (cap) dissolves into a black liquid as the mushrooms age. They are potentially slightly beneficial because they break down decayed, woody debris in the soil, possibly making more organic matter available to surrounding plants. You can leave these mushrooms alone, or remove them if you don't like how they look. They will not directly harm your plants.



That being said, the presence of most mushrooms is indicative of relatively moist or wet soil, since water triggers fungi to produce mushrooms. Subsequently, if you have a lot of these mushrooms in your soil on an ongoing basis, it means that the environment is staying too wet, and other not-so-friendly fungi might also move in that will harm your plants. If you discover a type of fungus that you are curious about, you are welcome to email me photos (lindsey.sweis@gmail.com), and I would be glad to help you try and identify it. Please include multiple clear photos of the entire mushroom, taken from different angles.

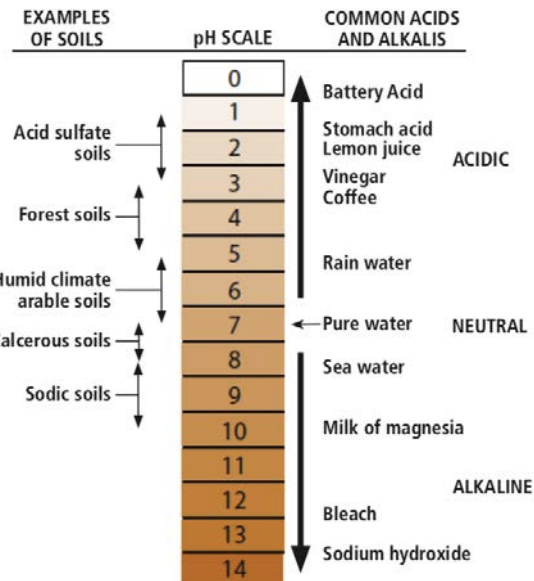
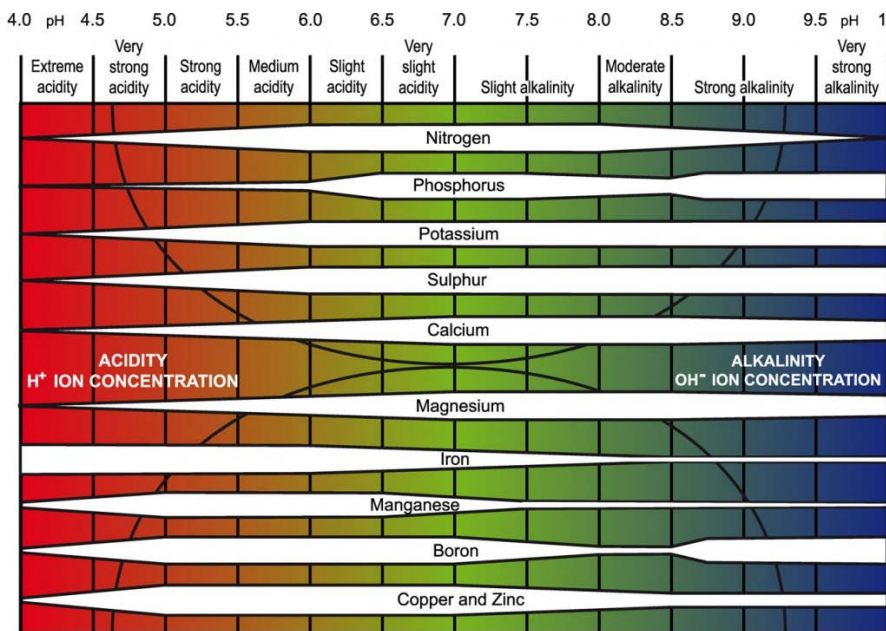
Soil pH and Your Plants

Soil pH is determined by the concentration of hydrogen ions (H^+). It is a measure of the soil solution's (soil water together with its dissolved substances) acidity and alkalinity, on a scale from 0 to 14 (Figure 1). Acidic solutions have a pH less than 7, while basic or alkaline solutions have a pH greater than 7. Also, because pH is a logarithmic function, each unit on the pH scale is 10 times more acidic than the unit above it. For example, a pH 6 solution has a 10 times greater concentration of H^+ ions than a pH 7 solution, and a 100 times higher concentration than a pH 8 solution.

A soil's ability to hold and supply nutrients is related to its cation and anion exchange capacities, the number of parking spaces for nutrients on soil particles. Cation and anion exchange capacities are influenced by soil pH. Soils with high amounts of clay and/or organic matter typically have higher cation exchange capacity (CEC), that is, are able to bind more cations such as calcium or potassium than more silty or sandy soils. They also have greater buffering capacity.

Soil pH affects nutrient availability because the H^+ ions take up space on the negative charges along the soil surface, displacing nutrients. The effect on nutrient availability depends on the size and charge of the nutrient molecules and whether or not they can be lost to leaching.

In general, nitrogen (N), potassium, calcium, magnesium and sulfur are more available within soil pH 6.5 to 8, while boron (B), copper, iron, manganese, nickel (Ni), and zinc are more available within soil pH 5 to 7. At pH less than 5.5, high concentrations of H^+ , aluminum and manganese in soil solution can reach toxic levels and limit crop production.



Phosphorus is most available within soil pH 5.5 to 7.5.

This is why taking a soil test prior to planting is so important to the health of your plants. Knowing pH and CEC can help you identify if changes need to be made for plants to succeed, without wasting money or nutrients. So, don't forget to get your sample into the office this fall!



Grilled Cauliflower Dippers with Guacamole

1 large head cauliflower
 ¼ cup olive oil
 1½ limes, zested and juiced
 2 cloves garlic, crushed
 1½ teaspoons honey
 ¼ cup cilantro, finely chopped
 2 tablespoons smoked paprika

Guacamole
 2 avocados
 1 Roma tomato, finely diced
 ½ lime, juiced
 1 clove garlic, minced

½ small red onion, chopped
 1 jalapeno, chopped
 ¼ cup cilantro, finely chopped
 ½ teaspoon salt

Preheat grill to medium-low. **Remove** outer green leaves from cauliflower. **Slice** into ¾ inch thick slices, cutting from top of the head to bottom of stalk. In a small bowl **whisk** together olive oil, lime juice, garlic, and honey. In a separate bowl, **mix** together the cilantro, lime zest and paprika. **Brush** the cauliflower slices with the liquid mixture on both sides. **Place** on grill and sprinkle with dry mixture. **Grill** slices on both sides until browned and

tender, about 5 minutes on each side. **Remove** cauliflower and cut into dip-sized pieces. **Peel** and **seed** avocado. **Place** in a bowl and mash. **Add** remaining ingredients and **serve** with grilled cauliflower.

Yield: 6 servings

Nutritional Analysis: 210 calories, 17 g fat, 2.5 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 240 mg sodium, 17 g carbohydrate, 7 g fiber, 5 g sugars, 4 g protein.



Red Potato Salad with Creamy Pesto Dressing

2 pounds new potatoes
 2 large eggs
 ¾ cup nonfat Greek yogurt, plain

½ cup prepared pesto
 ½ lemon, juice and zest
 Salt and pepper to taste

1 medium tomato, diced
 1 medium red onion, diced

Wash potatoes, **chop** into 1 inch cubes. In a saucepan, **boil** potatoes in salted water until just tender, about 10-15 minutes. **Drain** and **cool**. **Place** eggs in a small saucepan. **Cover** eggs by 1 inch cold water. Bring eggs to boil over high heat. **Remove** saucepan from burner and **cover**. Let eggs **stand** in the water for 12 minutes. **Drain**, run under cool water and **peel**. **Slice** eggs and set aside. In a small bowl, **whisk** yogurt, pesto,

lemon juice and zest. **Season** with salt and pepper. In a large bowl, **combine** potatoes, eggs, diced tomato and onion. Gently **stir in** yogurt mixture. **Chill** several hours and **serve**.

Yield: 6, ½ cup servings

Nutritional Analysis: 210 calories, 8 g fat, 1.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 60 mg cholesterol, 290 mg sodium, 29 g carbohydrate, 3 g dietary fiber, 5 g sugars, 10 g protein.

Trowel & Error: What's that goo?

By: **Amanda Sears, Madison Co. Horticulture Agent**

You may have noticed greenish/brown jelly like blobs appearing in your drive way or lawn. That is called Nostoc. It is a type of bacteria that gets its energy from photosynthesis like plants do. Following a period of rain, it may appear suddenly in lawns, pastures, paved surfaces, roofs or stones.

Nostoc has many colorful names including witches' butter, mare's eggs and meadow ears, among others. In fact, one of the earliest names for it was star jelly, based on the belief that it was a remnant of shooting stars fallen to earth. It can be hazardous on paved surfaces as it is very slippery when wet. From its gelatinous, green state, it dries to a black crust that comes back to life when there is sufficient rain.

When found in lawns, it is generally on a site where the grass is growing poorly due to severe compaction, overwatering or both. It has not caused the lawn's decline; it has simply colonized an area where it has favorable conditions to grow. Poor drainage, compacted soils and fertilizers containing phosphorus create a favorable environment for colonies of Nostoc.

To discourage its growth, improve drainage and eliminate phosphorus fertilizers. Products that contain potassium salts of fatty acids may be used to kill it in lawns. Core aerating the lawn to reduce compaction may help, but tilling the soil will merely break it into more pieces and encourage its spread. For paved surfaces and small patches in lawns, shoveling it up and discarding it in a landfill may be an option. Another option would be to choose a lawn chemical designed to control algae and moss.

The good news is that although they are a bit alarming looking, they do not cause any harm. Although we may not appreciate it growing in our lawns or on our pavement, Nostoc possesses many redeeming properties. Several Nostoc species have been used as both a food and medicine for centuries, and have more recently been evaluated for their pharmaceutical properties, including antibacterial metabolites, cholesterol regulation and control of certain cancers.



Plant Spotlight

Cucumber Tree ***Magnolia acuminata***



Magnolia acuminata, commonly known as cucumber tree, is native to eastern North America, reaching its largest size in the southern Appalachian Mountains. This is a deciduous magnolia that produces slightly-fragrant, greenish-yellow, tulip-like flowers (2-4" long) at the twig tips in late spring, but is named for the green, warty, cucumber-like fruits (seedcones) that follow the flowers. Cone-like fruits mature to a showy red in late summer, releasing individual red coated seeds suspended on slender threads at maturity. Cucumber tree is a straight-trunked tree that typically grows 40-70' (less frequently to 100') tall with a pyramidal crown. Trunk diameter of mature trees can reach 3-4', with furrowed dark gray-brown bark. Unlike most magnolias, this tree often produces respectable fall color (gold).

Best grown in moist, organically rich, well-drained loams in full sun to part shade. Generally intolerant of soil extremes (dry or wet). Intolerant of most urban pollutants. May take 12 or more years before first blooms appear. Is tolerant to being planted near Black Walnut trees.

Boyle County Extension Office

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If you've been by the office lately, you may have noticed some BIG changes! Over the next year we will be doubling the size of our office building and meeting room space, adding a large covered pavilion, and my favorite, a big ol' messy space addition onto the barn. I am so excited that hopefully within the next 12 months we will have a large meeting room area to host all kinds of hands on workshops that aid in easy cleanup and new experiences!

If you are interested in seeing our plans please feel free to stop by the office and check them out. The more the merrier!

“Autumn is an artist who uses
an oak leaf on which to paint a
masterpiece”

~William Allen Ward

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