

Erika Wood

Erika Wood
County Extension Agent for Horticulture

75 CORNWALL DRIVE
MADISONVILLE, KY 42431-8780
(270)821-3650
WWW.CA.UKY.EDU/CES

HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER



WINTER 2025

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

Winter cover crop can improve garden soil

Winter Safety!

Don't let Poinsettia Diseases ruin your holidays!

Holiday Tree Removal

Recipes

Upcoming Dates

WINTER COVER CROP CAN IMPROVE GARDEN SOIL

Source: Rick Durham, extension professor, Department of Horticulture

No matter how small your garden is, it can play an important role in absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and temporarily locking it in the soil. There are a number of ways you can improve on this natural cycle, but at this time of year, the best way is through a cover crop.

Soil left bare over the winter months is susceptible to weed growth, erosion that can wash away valuable nutrients and a loss of carbon into the atmosphere. Soil nitrogen left over from this year's crop is subject to leaching due to fall and winter precipitation. Planting a fast-growing cover crop can help prevent these problems.

The term crop in this context may be misleading. These plants are not meant to be harvested. Instead, they add important nutrients, promote beneficial bacterial growth and stabilize the soil.

Easy and effective cover crops that can be planted at this time of year include annual rye grass, hairy vetch, red clover and winter rye.

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK



- Hopkins County Extension Horticulture
- Hopkins County Famers Market
- Master Gardeners, Pennyroyal



SUBSCRIBE

to the Hopkins County Extension Horticulture YouTube page to receive all the latest videos!

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1bpH8is-c3py-PlwILiXhQ>

Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.

Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.



WINTER COVER CROP CAN IMPROVE GARDEN SOIL CONTINUED

Annual rye and winter rye are particularly effective as late-season cover crops. They germinate quickly and are an effective barrier against weeds. Grasses, however, do not capture nitrogen in their root system, so consider pairing rye with a legume, such as red clover or hairy vetch.

Hairy vetch and red clover work well as a cover plant, whether paired with rye or by themselves. Being legumes, they are excellent at fixing nitrogen in the soil. They are also prolific enough to reduce weeds and prevent erosion. In the spring, their blossoms will attract bees to your garden. If you worry about hairy vetch or clover reseeding in your lawn – though they're pretty plants and would add biodiversity and important nutrients – just cut them back before they bloom.

Come spring, you have two options. You can turn over your cover crop into the soil, allowing your vegetables or flowers to benefit from the nutrients it will slowly release. Or you can cut it back and let it die naturally, planting directly into the crop and using it as a mulch to continue to suppress weed growth and supply nutrients to your garden. Depending on which cover you plant, this may be easier said than done, because some, particularly grasses, are difficult to directly sow or plant into.

Grasses have a densely packed root system, which make them difficult to till or turn over. If your garden is particularly small or you're gardening in raised beds, rye might not be your best option. However, vetch and clover both have root clumps which are easily dug up and turned over or planted between. Be sure to terminate the cover crop before allowing the plants to go to seed.

CALL (270) 821 - 3650
TO SIGN UP

UPCOMING DATES

PLANT FAMILIES - MONTHLY ONLINE CLASSES

JANUARY 14 - NOON - 1 PM

A DEEP DIVE INTO THE WONDERFULL WORLD OF BOTANY

APOCYNACEAE (MILKWEEDS)

SEMINARS & SWAPS

JANUARY 25

9 AM - PRAYER PLANTS

10:30 AM - PALMS

12 PM - BEGONIAS

1:15 PM - HOUSEPLANT SWAP

HORTICULTURE BOOK CLUB

JANUARY 31 - NOON

MONTHLY CLASSES

JANUARY 30 - 5:30 PM

EXOTIC INSECTS UPDATE

Emerald Ash Borer, Spotted Lanternfly, etc.

LUNCH & LEARN

JANUARY 28 - NOON - 1 PM

STARTING SEEDS INDOORS

Vegetables, Flowers, & Herbs

Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
Family and Consumer Sciences
4-H Youth Development
Community and Economic Development

MARTIN-GATTON COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. Reasonable accommodation of disability may be available with prior notice. Program information may be made available in languages other than English. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.

Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.









WINTER SAFETY!



Brandon Peloquin - National Weather Service Wilmington, OH
Jane Marie Wix - National Weather Service Jackson, KY

Wintertime can bring a wide range of hazards, whether it be exposure to the cold (for you and your animals), slick surfaces and roads that can lead to accidents and falls, or fires resulting from the improper use of heaters. Hundreds of people are injured or killed each year as a direct result of winter weather.

Here are some tips to remember when winter turns especially harsh:

-  **Stay dry to stay warm! Wet clothes result in much faster heat loss.**
-  **Wear multiple layers. Wool keeps you warmer than cotton because wool fibers trap air pockets and when wool is exposed to damp conditions, it wicks moisture away from your skin and helps keep you dry.**
-  **Cover everything you can! At least half your body heat can be lost if your head isn't covered.**
-  **Avoid overexertion, such as shoveling heavy snow, or walking in deep snow. The strain from the cold and the hard labor may cause a heart attack. Sweating could lead to a chill and hypothermia.**
-  **Remember the animals! - make sure they have access to melted water, plenty of food, and shelter to keep them protected.**
-  **Stay informed on the latest weather forecast. All Kentucky National Weather Service offices have a phone line the public can call to get a weather forecast for their areas. Also, NOAA Weather Radios are specially built radios that only play a recorded forecast and other weather information. These can be purchased in many stores.**






It's also important to know the signs that someone is getting too cold. Hypothermia is a medical emergency that occurs when your body loses heat faster than it can produce it. Confusion, shivering, difficulty speaking, sleepiness and stiff muscles are all signs of hypothermia and signs that medical attention is needed - call 911 immediately! To warm someone up who is showing signs of hypothermia, lie close to the person and cover both of you with thick blankets. The hotter you get, the more warmth you can give to the other person. Frostbite is another medical emergency that causes damage to the body's tissue (mainly on extremities such as hands and feet, or any place that is unprotected) due to blood vessels diverting blood to other parts of the body to help keep your vital organs warm. This will cause the affected area to become frozen, and can be a very dangerous situation, especially since it becomes numb and the victim can be unaware of its severity.

Finally, even though winter will often bring cold and snow, occasionally warm spells in the winter can lead to thunderstorms or flooding. Stay up to date with the latest weather forecasts to know what weather hazards or threats could impact you and your family this upcoming winter.

For more information visit: <https://www.weather.gov/safety/winter>

Don't let Poinsettia Diseases ruin your holidays!

Check out these tips to ensure disease-free poinsettias that will last well into the New Year!

-  Inspect bracts and leaves for spots or damage.
-  Check stems for lesions, especially near the soil line.
-  Examine roots for rot or damage if possible.
-  Maintain plant health and vigor with proper nutrition, light, and watering practices.
-  Remove plants from decorative pot covers. These may hold water.

*Source: Kentucky Pest News
An Equal Opportunity Organization.*



Holiday Tree Removal

Check out these eco-friendly ways to dispose of a cut tree:

- Donate your tree to be used as a fish habitat in local lakes.
- Create a winter wonderland for birds by placing your tree outdoors with bird feeders and natural decorations.
- Take your tree to a local chipping station and use the mulch in your garden.
- Contact your local county extension office for more information!

An Equal Opportunity Organization.



Butternut and Acorn Squash Soup

1 butternut squash, halved and seeded	1/3 cup chopped sweet onion	1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 acorn squash, halved and seeded	4 cups chicken broth	3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon olive oil	3 tablespoons peanut butter	1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
	1/3 cup packed brown sugar	Fresh parsley for garnish

Using a vegetable peeler, **remove** the skin from the butternut and acorn squashes and **cut** into 1-inch cubes. In a large soup pot, **heat** the oil on medium high. **Add** the onion, and **cook** 1 to 2 minutes until it starts to become translucent. **Add** cubed squash, and cook 4 to 5 minutes. **Add** chicken broth, and bring to a boil. **Lower** heat, and **simmer** 30 to 35 minutes, until the squash is fork tender. Allow to **cool** slightly, then **blend** until smooth in a food processor or

blender. **Return** mixture to the pot, and **heat** to medium low. **Add** peanut butter, brown sugar, pepper, cinnamon, and nutmeg. **Stir** until well blended. **Garnish** with fresh parsley. **Serve** warm.

Yield: 7, 1-cup servings

Nutritional Analysis:

200 calories, 6 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 600 mg sodium, 36 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 14 g sugar, 10 g added sugar, 4 g protein.

Kentucky Winter Squash

SEASON: August through October.

NUTRITION FACTS: Winter squash, which includes acorn squash, butternut squash, pumpkin, and other varieties, is low in fat and sodium and an excellent source of vitamin A and fiber.

SELECTION: Winter squash should be heavy for its size with a hard, tough rind that is free of blemishes or soft spots.

STORAGE: Store in a cool, dry place and use within one month.

PREPARATION:

To steam: Wash, peel, and remove seeds. Cut squash into 2-inch cubes or quarter, leaving rind on (it will remove easily after cooking). Bring 1 inch of water to a boil in a saucepan and place squash on a rack or basket in the pan. Do not immerse it in water. Cover the pan

tightly and steam the squash 30 to 40 minutes or until tender.

To microwave: Wash squash and cut it lengthwise. Remove seeds. Place it in a baking dish and cover with plastic wrap. Microwave until tender, using these guidelines:

- **Acorn squash:** 1/2 squash, 5 to 8 minutes; whole squash, 8 1/2 to 11 1/2 minutes.
- **Butternut squash:** 2 pieces, 3 to 4 1/2 minutes.
- **Pumpkin:** 1 pound piece, 7 to 8 minutes.

To bake: Wash squash, and cut it lengthwise. Smaller squash can be cut in half; larger squash should be cut into portions. Remove seeds, and place squash in a baking dish. Bake at 400 degrees F for 1 hour or until tender. Seeds can be toasted at 350 degrees F for 20 minutes.

WINTER SQUASH

Kentucky Proud Project

County Extension Agents for Family and Consumer Sciences

University of Kentucky, Dietetics and Human Nutrition students

November 2019

Source: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers market, or roadside stand.

<http://plateitup.ca.uky.edu>



Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability. For more information, contact your county's Extension agent for Family and Consumer Sciences or visit www.uky.edu/afcs



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



Nutty Sweet Potato Biscuits

1 cup all-purpose flour	¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon	1 cup mashed sweet potatoes
1/3 cup whole wheat flour	¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg	6 tablespoons sugar
1½ teaspoons baking powder	1/3 cup chopped walnuts	¼ cup butter, melted
½ teaspoon salt		½ teaspoon vanilla
		1 tablespoon milk

- In a large mixing bowl, **combine** flours, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg and walnuts. **Set** aside.
- Combine** sweet potatoes, sugar, butter, vanilla and milk; **add** to flour mixture and **mix** well.

- Turn out** onto a floured surface; gently **knead** 3 or 4 times. **Roll** dough into ½ inch thickness. **Cut** with a 2 inch biscuit cutter and **place** on a lightly greased baking sheet.
- Bake** at 450°F for 12 minutes or until golden brown.

Yield: 18 biscuits

Nutritional Analysis:

100 calories, 4 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 5 mg cholesterol, 210 mg sodium, 14 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 4 g sugar, 2 g protein.



Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers' market, or roadside stand.

Kentucky Sweet Potato

SEASON: All year—peak season is October through March.

NUTRITION FACTS: Sweet Potatoes are a good source of fiber, complex carbohydrates and vitamins A and C.

SELECTION: Two varieties of sweet potatoes are grown in Kentucky. The pale sweet potato has a light yellow skin and pale yellow flesh that is dry and crumbly. The darker variety has a dark skin and orange sweet flesh that cooks up moist. Choose small to medium-sized ones with smooth, unbruised skin.

STORAGE: Store unwrapped in a cool (50 degree) dry, dark place with good ventilation for up to 2 months or at room temperature for 2 weeks.

PREPARATION: Scrub well. Leave whole or peel, then slice, dice or shred.

Baking: Pierce skin in several places and rub with

margarine if desired. Arrange in a single layer and bake uncovered in a 375° F oven until soft when squeezed (45-60 minutes.)

Boiling: In a 3-quart pan, boil 4 whole medium-size potatoes, covered in 2 inches water until tender when pierced. Drain.

Microwaving: Pierce skin, place on a paper towel in microwave. If cooking more than 2 at a time, arrange like spokes. Microwave on high, turning halfway through cooking time. Allow 4-5 minutes for one potato.

SWEET POTATOES

Kentucky Proud Project

County Extension Agents for Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Kentucky, Dietetics and Human
Nutrition students

OCTOBER 2012

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. For more information, contact your county's Extension agent for Family and Consumer Sciences or visit www.ca.uky.edu/fcs.

COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION
SERVICE



Source: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov