



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

### Cooperative Extension Service

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**MARCH 2023**

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## HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER

### *From the Ground Up*

### *A Word from the Agent...*



Hello and happy April! I hope this finds each of you happy, healthy, and hopefully not wind tattered. Those March winds were a little unforgiving for some, fingers crossed April shapes up to be a little different. Some people already have 2 mowings in on their lawns, while the rest of us really need to get that first one in before it gets out of control. Be sure your blades are sharp to start the new season off and it doesn't hurt to check that a rodent didn't make a home in your air filter over the winter. Work on getting in your cool season vegetables in the garden, but keep in mind we could still have frosts this month, so continue to hold off on warm season vegetables. Thanks to everyone who has signed up for now FULL "Growing Cut Flowers" class this month, I hope you are looking forward to it as I am! As always, let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of any help!

**Carrie Spry**

Clark County Extension Agent for Horticulture  
[carrie.spry@uky.edu](mailto:carrie.spry@uky.edu)



## Clark / Powell Beekeepers Association



**Monday,**  
**April 10, 2023**

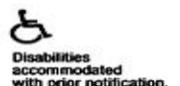
6:30 pm

Clark County Extension Service  
(1400 Fortune Drive; Winchester)

**~ POT-LUCK MEAL ~**

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

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LEXINGTON, KY 40546





Peonies, no matter how you pronounce it, are one of those spring time perennial flowers that are an old time favorite. These flowers are sometimes fragrant, make for great cut flowers, and come back year after year. They come in many colors including cream, coral, crimson, pink, purple, rose, scarlet, black, white, and yellow. Peonies generally grow two to four feet in height, thriving in full sun and well-drained soil. Their sumptuous blooms will be coming to us shortly in the months of May and June.

The two types of peonies generally grown are the garden peony or *Paeonia* hybrids and *Paeonia suffruticosa*, better known as the tree peony. The main difference you will notice between the two is that the garden peony will generally die back to the ground over winter, while the tree peony will retain woody growth through the cold months. Garden peonies are herbaceous perennials that are generally grouped into five categories based on their flower shape: single, semidouble, double, Japanese, and anemone. The tree peonies produce large numbers of flowers on the comparatively taller shrub-like plant. Peonies do well in cooler environments and are suitable to the Kentucky climate. Older peony varieties do best further south because newer varieties require a certain number of chilling hours each winter.

As peonies are coming up this spring and shoots get to about three to four inches in size, one may apply a complete fertilizer such as 5-10-5 or 10-10-10, or organic fertilizer such as 5-5-5, at the rate of 3 to 4



pounds per 100 square feet of bed area. A single application of fertilizer each year is generally adequate to maintain good plant growth and flowering throughout the season. Peonies multiply through tuber growth, which means that the plant will require occasional dividing. This division allows easy propagation to share with friends and family. Once a clump has become crowded, division of the

peony is recommended. To do this, dig and separate the tubers being sure each one has three to five eyes. Remove any damaged tubers, or those showing signs of disease. In general, peonies usually do not need to be divided for 10 to 15 years. If you find your peonies or other perennials in need of division, fall is a great time to perform this task.

If you are looking to plant peonies for the first time this spring, you may find them in nurseries sold as potted plants. Otherwise, tubers are generally planted in the fall. When planting garden peony tubers, select a site in full to part sun where peonies have not been planted before. Set the tuber so that the eyes are one to two inches below the soil's surface. For tree peony tubers, they should be planted so that the soil is covering the graft union, generally four to five inches. After planting, make sure to water the tubers well. When planting in the fall it is best to mulch with two to three inches of straw, wood chips, or leaves. This layer of mulch can help to insulate your new planting over winter while adding organic matter.

- by Carrie Spry, Clark County Extension Horticulture Agent



# VEGETABLE GARDENING SERIES

*FREE!*

*Limited Space!*

## May 4, 11, and 18

6:30 pm - Clark County Extension Service

### **May 4 Introduction**

Basic concepts for growing vegetables.

Cover the specifics on basic crops for cool and warm season vegetables.

**FREE VEGETABLE PLANTS!**

### **May 11 Maintenance**

Maintenance aspect of vegetable garden plots.

Topics include: watering, pest/weed management, and fertilizing

**DOOR PRIZES!**

### **May 18 Harvesting & Storage**

Cover many details about harvesting vegetables. Clark County Extension FCS Agent, Shonda Johnston, will share information about storage of fresh vegetables.

**DOOR PRIZES!**



College of Agriculture,  
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To register, call the Clark County Extension Service at 859-744-4682 or email [cynthia.carr@uky.edu](mailto:cynthia.carr@uky.edu)

Classes will be taught by **Carrie Spry**,  
Clark County Extension Agent for Horticulture

# Now is the Time to Deal with Carpenter Bees

By Lee Townsend, Extension Entomologist



Figure 1. Carpenter bee  
(Photo: Lee Townsend, UK)

Carpenter bees (*Figure 1*) are beginning to buzz about after spending winter as adults in the tunnels where they were raised last summer. After mating and a little spring cleaning, females will re-use their “home tunnels” (*Figure 2*) while the others will have to find new sites. Carpenter bees usually do not venture far, so many tunnels can appear in suitable wood over several years.

Carpenter bees chew ½-inch diameter tunnels that follow the wood’s grain. Females may use their strong mandibles to extend the galleries by more than ½-inch per day. After construction, females spend much of May gathering pollen and nectar that is fashioned into bean-sized portions of bee bread. The female will deposit an egg on each “loaf” and separate them into cells.

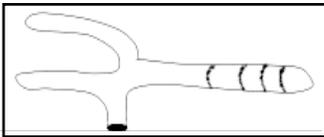


Figure 2. Three-branched carpenter bee tunnel with individual brood cells (After Balduf 1962)

## Impact

Tunneling in soft wood is the main damage inflicted by carpenter bees. Over time, increasingly larger carpenter bee populations can weaken wood. In addition, the accumulating waste from the bees stains surfaces directly below nest openings.

Damage becomes significantly worse if woodpeckers discover carpenter bee galleries. These birds will destroy wood to reach the succulent bee larvae just below the surface (*Figure 3*).

Finally, the buzzing of these intimidating bees can stress those that live or work around the structures used by carpenter bees as nesting sites. Females are not aggressive but can give a painful sting if antagonized. Males, recognizable by the yellow spot on their faces (*Figure 4*), hang out near nesting sites and may investigate intruders who enter “their” space. While intimidating, males do not have stingers.



Figure 3. Woodpeckers destroy wood to gain access to carpenter bee gallery (Photo: A. Heisdorffer)

## Management

### - Preventative Measures

Carpenter bee control is not easy, so prevention is the best long-term strategy.

- Use hardwoods (when practical), or cover softwoods with flashing or screen to prevent injury to areas that are chronically attacked.
- Close barn and shed doors while bees are establishing new galleries; this helps reduce infestations in outbuildings.
- General maintenance of wood helps because carpenter bees exploit rough areas on wood surfaces to begin a nest. Filling cracks and crevices, sanding, and painting or varnishing exposed wood will make it less attractive.



Figure 4. Male carpenter bee with white face  
(Photo: Lee Townsend, UK)

## Insecticides

There are some insecticide options, but accessibility and dimensions of infested surfaces can make treatment impractical or limit its success.

### - Dust Formulations

The use of dust formulations of insecticides applied directly into tunnel openings has been the favored option. In this approach, bees are exposed to the dust as they enter and leave. Ultimately, they should receive a lethal dose. Example dusts include boric acid dust, or products such as Bonide Termite & Carpenter Ant Dust (deltamethrin). Diatomaceous earth and combinations of dusts with desiccants are also possibilities.

### - Sprays

Insecticide sprays can be applied into tunnels, but bees may not pick-up of the dried residue as rapidly as they would with dusts. Insecticide applications to wood may provide some preventive effect, but bees are not ingesting the wood, only gouging it away; they can work quickly though the treated surface. Example sprays include Bayer Home Pest Control Indoor & Outdoor Insect Killer (cyfluthrin), Bonide Total Pest Control Outdoor Formula (permethrin), Bonide Termite & Carpenter Ant Killer Ready to Use (deltamethrin), and Spectracide Bug Stop (l-cyhalothrin). After treatment, tunnel entries should be filled and sealed so they are not attractive to bees next season.



## DO YOU KNOW?

### Facts about the Cottontail Rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*)

**Origin:** Eastern and South-Central United States, Southern Canada, Eastern Mexico, Central America and the northern most South America.

**Lifespan:** Average lifespan in the wild is about two years. The longest lived wild cottontail on record was 5 years.

**Size:** Adult size is 14 to 19 inches, and weighs 2 to 34 lbs.

**Diet:** Herbivore

- They eat almost exclusively on vegetation.
- Food items include bark, twigs, leaves, fruit, buds, flowers, grass seeds, sedge fruit, and rush seeds.
- They are coprophagous (meaning they eat feces, this allows more thoroughly by passing twice through the digestive tract). They produce two types of fecal pellets, one of which is consumed. The predigestion of pellets greatly increases the nutritional value of dietary items.
- In the winter, their diet is mostly twigs, buds, and bark of woody vegetation.

**Activity:** Crepuscular, most active during dawn and dusk.

#### Reproduction:

- Breeding season is from February to September.
- Nest is a shallow hole that is filled with fur and grasses.
- Gestation lasts 28 days. The average litter size is 3 or 4 young called kits.
- A female rabbit can have up to seven litters in one year.
- Babies are weaned by four to five weeks.
- The kits move out of the nest for short tips by 12 to 16 days and are completely weaned and independent by 4-5 weeks. Litters disperse at about 7 weeks.
- The female does not stay with the nest. She revisits to nurse the young twice a day. She does her best to keep the nest from being found by predators.



#### Extra Facts:

- Rabbits have a high mortality rate, the death rate is up to 80% a year
- Rabbits can run up to 18 mph
- Their front incisors never stop growing.
- Domesticated bunnies have a very different demeanor from feral rabbits.
- They twitch their nose when they smell. They have 100 million receptors in their noses. Twitching helps expose all of them.

Source: <https://www.kywildlife.org/>

## Recipe

LET'S GET  
cooking!



### Cheesy Broccoli Potatoes

5 slices turkey bacon  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 clove garlic, minced  
2 tablespoons chopped chives

Salt and pepper to taste  
4 large potatoes, cubed  
2 cups fresh broccoli florets  
1 cup fat-free, shredded cheese

Preheat oven to 425° F. Cook bacon until crispy, crumble and set aside. Spray 9x13-inch baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. In a small bowl, combine olive oil, garlic, chives, salt and pepper; stir to blend. In a large bowl, toss together potatoes and broccoli. Pour olive oil blend over potato mixture; stir to coat. Pour into baking dish and cover with foil. Bake for 35 minutes or until potatoes are

tender; remove from oven. Sprinkle cheese and bacon on top and place back in oven until cheese melts.

**Yield:** 8, ½ cup servings.

**Nutritional Analysis:** 140 calories, 5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 20 mg cholesterol, 470 mg sodium, 15 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 2 g sugar, 10 g protein.



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



# Gus' QUICK TIPS for APRIL

- 1 If you haven't trimmed back ornamental grasses and perennials, do so now.
- 2 Remove flower stalks from bulbs. Apply fertilizer and make sure to leave the foliage to die back naturally. The leaves provide food for next year's flowers.
- 3 Continue planting trees and shrubs this month.
- 4 You can begin trimming evergreens now through late summer. However, pruning after the spring flush of growth will result in less re-growth.
- 5 Add organic matter to flower beds and garden plots. Incorporate into the soil where possible.
- 6 Edge beds for a crisp, clean look. This will also keep creeping weeds from encroaching as rapidly.
- 7 Apply new mulch to beds as needed. Total mulch depth should not exceed 3-4" and a 2" layer is usually sufficient. Be sure to keep mulch away from tree trunks and bases of shrubs though.
- 8 If you have a spray program for fruit trees, begin spraying after flower petals drop. As always, follow the labeled directions very carefully. Better yet, plant fruit trees with natural disease resistance.
- 9 Sharpen mower blades. Clean cuts make for a healthier, more attractive lawn.
- 10 Crabgrass preventer should be applied by the middle of the month or when the forsythia are blooming.
- 11 If you start seedlings indoors, gradually toughen them up with brief trips outdoors on nice days. Start with short times in a shady spot at first because they sunburn easily.



**save!**  
**date!**

## Winchester / Clark County Farmers' Market

# Opening Day!

**Saturday, May 13**

**8:00 am to 12:00 noon**

**Depot Street**

For questions and information email:

[wccfarmersmarket@gmail.com](mailto:wccfarmersmarket@gmail.com)

