

JULY 2025

**UK** Cooperative  
Extension Service

# HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER

FROM THE GROUND UP

Clark County Extension Service • 1400 Fortune Drive • Winchester, KY 40391 • 859-744-4682 • [clark.ext@uky.edu](mailto:clark.ext@uky.edu) • <http://clark.ca.uky.edu/>

## A Word from the Agent . . .



Hello and happy July my friends! Let me tell you what, this has been a good growing season so far....I'm growing weeds in my garden and landscape beds like nothing I've ever seen before! The on and off rain we've had plus the temps and humidity, has made quite the phenomenal growing conditions for all those weeds. And disease, well we've had prime conditions for that as well!

So, if you are struggling with any of these problems, not only do I feel your pain, call me and I'll help you figure out what you can do. Now don't misread that and think I'm going to come help you pull weeds. I love y'all.....but.... So, call me when you need me!

**Carrie Spry**

Clark County Extension Agent  
for Horticulture  
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## Clark / Powell Beekeepers Association

**Monday, July 14  
6:30 pm**

**Clark County Extension Service**  
1400 Fortune Drive, Winchester, Kentucky

**~ POT-LUCK MEAL ~**

*Zoom option available for those who cannot attend  
in person. Call 859-744-4682 to be added to the  
email list to receive the link.*



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Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.



# Are You Falling for These Gardening Myths?

By: Chris Enroth,  
University of Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator

There are many garden myths to keep track of. Some myths are more localized, while others are widespread and often touted as garden “hacks” online. Some garden myths have grains of truth, while others can be completely false. So, which myths are a bust? The following are some common and odd gardening myths:

**Myth:** *If I treat my yard for white grubs this year, I won't have Japanese beetles next year.*

**Fact:** An adult Japanese beetle can fly between 10-15 miles. When they find a suitable host plant for feeding, they release an aggregation pheromone that tells other Japanese beetles where to go for food and mating. So even if you wipe out the white grubs (which include Japanese beetle larvae) in your yard, they are more than equipped to travel from distant neighbors' yards if you have tasty host plants.

**Myth:** *Adding sugar to the planting hole when planting tomatoes will result in the tomatoes harvested being sweeter.*

**Fact:** The sweetness of a tomato is pre-determined by the variety of tomato you plant. Sugar can also stimulate bacterial growth in the soil. When bacterial growth is kicked into high gear, it can pull nitrogen from the soil, which prevents your tomato plant from getting the nitrogen it needs. A better use for sugar is cake or cookies.

**Myth:** *Ants are integral to helping peony flowers open.*

**Fact:** That would be a neat trick, but the reality is also fascinating. Peony flower buds have small organs on the closed flowers called extrafloral nectaries. These nectaries secrete a sugary nectar that is attractive to ants. The nectary will feed the ants until the flower begins to open. This sounds like a good deal for the ants, but what does the peony get out of it? Ants will aggressively defend their food source, which in this case is the peony flower. Any other insect that comes along to take a bite out of the peony flower will have to contend with an army of defending ants.

**Myth:** *Use salt in an asparagus patch to help control weeds.*

**Fact:** This is somewhat true. Asparagus has deep roots and can tolerate or recover from salt damage better than shallow-rooted weeds. However, there is a reason salting your enemy's crops was a weapon of war for hundreds of years. Using salt in an asparagus patch can eventually cause excessive salt buildup in the soil, leading to both plant damage and soil structure damage. Fortunately, salt is soluble, and over time, rainfall and irrigation can leach the salt out of the soil, but the damage will already be done to your asparagus.

**Myth:** *Apply turf fertilizer early in the spring to help encourage new growth.*

**Fact:** Early spring turf fertilizer encourages top growth at the expense of root growth. That root growth is necessary for your turf to survive through the summer. A cool-season lawn already has a storage of energy for early spring growth. That's why we are mowing so often in the spring! If you plan to fertilize your lawn in the spring, it is recommended to wait until the vigorous spring growth begins to slow in early to mid-May. This will help your lawn recover from the flush of spring growth. Keep in mind that if you only fertilize your lawn once a year, a late summer to early fall feeding is the most important for recovery, as summer is very stressful for cool-season lawn grasses.

**Myth:** *You should always amend the backfill when planting trees.*

**Fact:** It is suggested to only add a minimal amount of amendments to the backfill in heavy clay soils. Otherwise, use the native soil to backfill the planting hole. Amending the soil can restrict outward root growth as it can be easier to grow in the amended soil, and the difference between the amended soil and the native existing soils can restrict water movement.





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# **NATURAL DYE GARDENS**

**Thursday, July 24**

**6:30 pm**

**Clark County Extension Service**  
*1400 Fortune Drive; Winchester, Kentucky*

Natural dyes are gaining popularity after being the only way to dye fabric many years ago. Join us as Horticulture Agent, Carrie Spry, talks about what plants we can grow to use for natural dyes and how to grow them, and FCS Agent, Shonda Johnston, walks us through the dying process using these plants.



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**TO REGISTER:**

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# Lightning Safety When Working Outdoors

According to statistics from Vaisala, Inc. and NOAA, 98 lightning related deaths have occurred in Kentucky since 1959. Many of those victims were farmers or outdoor laborers. Here are a few examples:

-  On **April 30, 1997**, a man and woman were struck by lightning while sitting on their front porch in Wingo (Graves County). The man received second degree burns on his leg and the woman sustained lesser injuries.
-  On **August 7, 2005**, a sixteen year old boy was struck by lightning while horseback riding near Simpsonville. Both the rider and horse were killed.
-  On **June 8, 2007**, two men working in a ditch along a creek in Lexington were injured when lightning struck the creek and the electricity traveled to them through the water they were standing in.
-  On **August 5, 2010**, an Amish girl was struck by lightning and killed while working in a field near Danby in Logan County.
-  On **August 21, 2013**, lightning struck a tobacco barn near Buckeye in Madison County. Two men who were hanging tobacco were killed and three others were injured.



During the summer months when thunderstorms are frequent across the Commonwealth, it's important to remember to take lightning safety seriously. Many lightning victims either didn't act promptly enough to get to a safe place, or they went back outside too soon after the storm passed. Lightning safety is simple - When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors! Once the storm has passed, a good rule of thumb is to wait 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder before heading back outside. That allows the storm to move a safe distance away.




**When Thunder Roars,  
Go Indoors!**

**STOP** all outdoor activities

Seek shelter in a building or metal hard-topped vehicle

Wait 30 minutes after you last hear thunder to resume activities

   
weather.gov/lightning

For more lightning safety tips and information for working outdoors, visit this OSHA Factsheet:  
[https://www.weather.gov/media/owlie/OSHA\\_FS-3863\\_Lightning\\_Safety\\_05-2016.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/owlie/OSHA_FS-3863_Lightning_Safety_05-2016.pdf).



# Earwigs: Hungry Bugs with Weird Butts

By Jonathan L. Larson, Entomology Extension Specialist

If you have noticed any odd damage to your flowers or garden plants this summer, you may have been victim to earwig feeding. Earwigs are odd-looking insects that feed on a wide variety of food, but in the summer, they can become a cryptic garden pest as well. Other times of the year, earwigs can be encountered in piles of firewood, in mulch beds, and even in the home. Wherever they are found, they often startle people and their name hints at some of their creepy past. Luckily, there are several ways to get a handle on these entomological oddities.



Male earwigs have a pronounced curve to their cerci (upper image), while female cerci are straighter and closer together (lower image) (Photos: David Cappaert, Bug-wood.org).

## Earwig Basics

If you have noticed any odd damage to your flowers or garden plants this summer, you may have been victim to earwig feeding. Earwigs are odd-looking insects that feed on a wide variety of food, but in the summer, they can become a cryptic garden pest as well. Other times of the year, earwigs can be encountered in piles of firewood, in mulch beds, and even in the home. Wherever they are found,

they often startle people and their name hints at some of their creepy past. Luckily, there are several ways to get a handle on these entomological oddities.

Earwigs are omnivores and scavengers. The European earwig will feed on plant leaves, flowers, and fruits, as well as preying upon aphids and consuming rotting plant and animal material. They like to hide in tight, moist areas and go through incomplete metamorphosis. Females overwinter in an underground home that she builds in the autumn. While there, she will lay a clutch of eggs that she tends to through the cold months until they hatch in the spring. They display maternal behaviors, tending to the young until they mature.

## Earwig Myths

Earwigs are omnivores and scavengers. The European earwig will feed on plant leaves, flowers, and fruits, as well as preying upon aphids and consuming rotting plant and animal material. They like to hide in tight, moist areas and go through incomplete metamorphosis. Females overwinter in an underground home that she builds in the autumn. While there, she will lay a clutch of eggs that she tends to through the cold months until they hatch in the spring. They display maternal behaviors, tending to the young until they mature.

## Real World Earwig Problems

In reality, earwigs are more of a problem when in the garden, rather than digging through your earwax. There are always some earwigs around; they can be in tree hollows, under paving stones, hiding under potted plants, and in wood piles. In these situations, they will feed on dead insects, prey on some small species, and scavenge

food from all over. Unfortunately, they will also feed on plants like cabbage, beets, potatoes, and cucumbers. They can also feed on ornamental plants like roses, marigolds, and dahlias.

Earwigs will chew through leaves and blooms, leaving behind irregularly shaped holes. This can superficially resemble slug, snail, or caterpillar

damage. Snails and slugs would also leave behind a shimmery trail or slime after they have fed, and caterpillars also tend to leave behind tell-tale frass or webbing (though not always). Earwigs come, eat, and leave without leaving behind much evidence. Unfortunately, this is a case of proving a problem through negative data; you have to look for the absence of these other signs to try and confirm an earwig problem. If earwigs are suspected, come back to the damaged plant at night to try and catch them in the act to confirm the problem.



Earwig wings are tightly folded when not in use. When they are unfurled, they have an ear-like

## Management:

### Deterrence

There are ways to deter earwigs from making holes in all your plants.

- 1) Opening up an ornamental area to increase air flow and sunlight infiltration can scare away earwig populations.
- 2) Using a thinner layer of mulch in gardens and flower beds reduces harborage for them.
- 3) Garden sanitation to remove old plant debris may also remove hiding spots.

### Traps

Some gardeners use to confirm the presence of earwigs and to suppress them.






- 1) Traps can be as simple as loose newspapers or cardboard laid in the garden. Earwigs will hide in/under these during the day and then the whole paper or cardboard can be picked up and disposed of.
- 2) Alternatively, using a sour cream container or tuna can, a baited trap can be constructed. In the evening, place the cans in the ground near damaged plants and fill the bottom with fish oil or vegetable oil with bacon grease to lure earwigs in. Some may drown but the traps can also be emptied into soapy water to kill any surviving earwigs.

## Chemical Management

- 1) Applications of residual insecticides can kill earwigs as they damage plants. Bifenthrin, cyhalothrin, permethrin, and deltamethrin are all possible choices.
- 2) Baits for slugs that contain spinosad can also be considered for earwig control and would offer less hazard to non-target organisms.



# Gus' QUICK TIPS for July

-  Now is the time to plan and plant a fall garden. Most plants with shorter growing seasons can be grown in the fall and often produce better results. Allow a little more time to mature than the seed package says as cooler nights will slow growth somewhat.
-  When watering, try to avoid wetting foliage or watering late in the evening as both can promote disease.
-  Do not spray chemicals in the heat of the day, PLEASE! Many plants can be damaged. Spray in the early morning or late evening when temperatures are cooler.
-  Monitor evergreens for spider mite damage. Drought stressed plants are particularly at risk. If you see signs of browning shake the branch over a white surface, if you see tiny moving red specks you likely have mites. Minor infestations can be treated with a daily spray from the hose. Larger problems may need chemical control.
-  Remove spent blooms from flowering annuals and perennials to promote more bloom. If your late blooming perennials (Asters, Goldenrod, Butterfly Bush, Mums, etc.) are already tall and threatening to flop, prune them back to 1' in height. This will result in a fuller, sturdier plant that will bloom slightly later than normal.

## RECIPE



### Baked Broccoli Frittata

1 cup broccoli florets	1 tablespoon olive oil	¼ teaspoon black pepper
½ cup tomato, diced	6 whole eggs	½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 small red bell pepper, sliced	¼ cup 2% milk	1 cup low fat mozzarella cheese, divided
2 green onions, sliced into 1 inch pieces	2 tablespoons water	
	¼ teaspoon salt	

**Preheat** oven to 375 degrees F. **Place** broccoli florets, diced tomato, bell pepper and green onions in a 9 x 13 inch baking dish. **Spoon** olive oil evenly over vegetables. **Roast** the vegetables in the oven until crisp-tender, approximately 10 minutes. In a bowl, **combine** eggs, Dijon mustard, water, milk, salt, black pepper and Italian seasoning. **Whisk** mixture until frothy. **Stir** in ¼ cup of shredded low fat mozzarella cheese. **Pour** the egg

mixture over the roasted vegetables. **Stir** gently with a fork to combine. **Sprinkle** the remaining ¼ cup of mozzarella cheese over the top. **Return** to oven and **bake** 20-25 minutes or until set and cheese is browned on top. **Serve** immediately.

**Yield:** 8 servings.

**Nutritional Analysis:** 130 calories, 8 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 170 mg cholesterol, 400 mg sodium, 5 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 2 g sugar, 9 g protein.



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

### Kentucky Broccoli

**Season:** May through early July, October through mid-November.

**Nutrition Facts:** Broccoli is a good source of vitamin A, vitamin C and phytochemicals, all of which have health benefits.

**Selection:** Choose tender, young, dark green stalks with tightly closed buds. One-and-a-half pounds of broccoli will yield 4 half-cup servings.

**Storage:** Store broccoli, unwashed, no more than 3 to 5 days, in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator. Wash broccoli just before using.

**Preparation:** Wash broccoli under cold running water. Trim the leaves and peel the stalk.

- **To steam:** Place on a rack above boiling water and steam 6-8 minutes. Rinse with cold water. Drain.
- **To boil:** Place in a saucepan with 1 inch of boiling water. Cover and cook 5-7 minutes
- **To microwave:** Place broccoli in a microwave-safe dish. Add 1-inch of water and cover with a glass lid or plastic wrap. Microwave 3-4 minutes or until crisp-tender.