FAIR TIME IS ALMOST UPON US

If you have a vegetable or flower garden, why not consider entering some of your produce or flowers in a local fair? We often find gardeners may have better crops than they think! Enter a wide variety of vegetables and flowers and chances are you'll win at least a few ribbons and maybe make enough money to pay for next year's seeds, that is, if the fair pays premiums. Some do and some do not. Nearly every kind of fruit, vegetable, flower (including flower arrangements), and potted plants can be exhibited at most fairs. All you have to do is get it there.

You'll first want to obtain a fair book, which contains the rules. Read the directions closely, and follow them. If they ask for 10 cherry tomatoes, don't display 9 or 11 tomatoes, or a mix of cherry and other types. If they ask for one stem of a flower, don't display more than one.

Keep your entries uniform. The judges are looking for signs that you can grow a crop of that particular vegetable consistently well. If you display three tomatoes, try to select ones that are as uniform and similar in size and shape as possible. Anyone can get lucky and grow one good tomato.

Bring clean produce. Follow the fair book instructions on cleaning and preparing to display individual vegetables such as cabbage, onion, sweet corn, and potatoes. Some fairs don't want you to wash your potatoes, so read the instructions carefully. This often makes the difference between a red and blue ribbon. Some fairs ask that stems be left on tomatoes, while others fairs do not.

Display healthy produce. Judges are looking for any signs of disease or insect damage. Select the healthiest produce you have and check it carefully for any markings caused by pest damage. Look over your flowers well. Do not bring flowers with brown petals or signs of insect damage.

Pick it at the right time. Following directions in the fair book, harvest your vegetables when they are at the proper size. Extra large zucchini, cucumbers, and beans aren't tasty and won't win prizes. The same goes for produce picked at an immature stage such as winter squash.

Remember if you have flowers in your yard, vegetables in your garden, and fruit on your trees, grapevines, or in your berry patch, then you can exhibit. Support your local fair—exhibit your flowers and produce!

"Roses are red, Violets are blue; But they don’t get around Like the dandelions do.”
- Slim Acres
**HOMEMADE DEER REPELLENT**

Break 1 dozen eggs into a bucket, add 4 cubes of beef bouillon and fill the bucket with water. Cover and let sit until it stinks. Add 2 tablespoons of liquid soap. Put in spray bottle. Hold nose, spray around plant, not on the plant. Tip provided by: Theresa Herbert of Abear Garden Landscapes. University Of Missouri Extension does not guarantee that this remedy will work. You are at your own risk. All you can do is try it and see.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED VEGETABLE QUESTIONS**

Source: MU Guide 6400 by Dr. Lewis W. Jett

**How can I grow large pumpkins?** Choose a large-fruited variety such as 'Big Max', 'Atlantic Giant', or 'Burpee Prizewinner'. Remove all blossoms and fruit except one, so that all strength goes into the one fruit. Provide adequate space (150 square feet per plant), fertilization and moisture.

**My green beans have not emerged from the soil. Why?**
Beans should be seeded when soil temperatures reach 65 degrees Fahrenheit in Missouri, which varies, from mid-April (southern Missouri) to late May (northern Missouri). Green beans also make a good fall crop in Missouri. Also, snap beans will not emerge if the soil is crusted or too dry.

**My snap beans look healthy but aren’t forming bean pods. Why?**
Bean blossoms will abort (drop) from the plants in hot, dry weather. Also, too much nitrogen fertilizer or manure will prevent pods from setting. Beans do not need a lot of nitrogen. Bean pods will not set if the soil is waterlogged.

**My squash had formed small fruits, but they fell off the plant. Why?**
Fruit drop of squash will occur if the flowers have not been pollinated. Also, if the fruits develop a rot on the end, it could be the disease blossom blight.

**Why do cucumber vines suddenly wilt and die?**
Cucumbers are susceptible to bacterial wilt that is transmitted by striped and spotted cucumber beetles. The best method for control of this disease is to control the cucumber beetles. The slicing cucumber cultivar 'County Fair' has some tolerance to bacterial wilt.

**Why didn’t the ears on my sweet corn fill out to the tip?**
Poor tip fill can be cause by poor pollination. Hot, dry weather during silk ing inhibits good pollination. Rather than plant a single row of sweet corn in the garden, I would recommend planting several short rows. This will allow for better pollination.

**Why do eggplant fruits not ripen properly?**
Stunted plants from cool weather, flea beetle damage or poor, infertile soils will fail to develop a quality fruit.

**Why doesn’t my okra bear?**
Temperature extremes, either too hot or too cool, will prevent okra from setting. Poor soil fertility or drainage can aggravate the problem.

**Why aren’t my peppers setting fruit?**
Pollination can be reduced if temperatures drop below 60 degrees Fahrenheit or above 90 degrees. Too much nitrogen will reduce fruit set.

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**MASTER GARDENER TRAINING TO BE HELD IN KIRKSVILLE**

Master Gardener training classes will be offered Thursday afternoons from 1-4 p.m., August 26-November 11. Classes will be held at the Kirksville TCRC, 315 S. Franklin Street.

Classes will cover a wide variety of gardening topics including diseases, insects, soils & fertilizer, vegetables, fruit, trees & shrubs, pruning, organic gardening, flowers and lawn care. Cost for the training is $110 per person and includes: Missouri Master Gardener membership, completion certificate, official Master Gardener name badge, Grounds for Gardening manual, handouts and guides, and speaker fees. Additional person(s) from the same household will be $55 each (based on sharing one set of materials). The deadline for registering is Friday, August 20, 2010.

To be a Master Gardener, you must attend 30 hours of classroom training AND provide 30 hours of volunteer service your first year after training, and 20 hours of volunteer service each year thereafter. Master Gardeners are expected to assist with University of Missouri Extension horticulture programming efforts.

For more information or to register for the classes, contact the Adair County Extension Center at 660-665-9866 or email schutterjl@missouri.edu. Evening classes will be offered again in the future.
USING FIREWOOD ASH AS LIME OR FERTILIZER

Do you use a wood stove in your home? On July 31, 1790 the newly formed United States Patent Office issued its first patent – a process for making potash. Many people still refer to potassium fertilizer as “potash”. Many gardeners also know that wood ash raises soil pH. Just how valuable are those ashes you clean out of your wood stove?

One of the easiest ways to increase your chances of success in growing any plant in your garden or landscape is to submit a soil sample for analysis. Your University of Missouri Extension county office is one place you can take a sample of your soil for analysis. You will pick your “crop” when you submit the sample and receive in your results recommendations on how many pounds of fertilizer and lime to apply.

If your soil test results indicate that you need to add lime for the crop you selected, then your wood ashes are valuable. Wood ashes contain calcium and can be used to raise soil pH, similar to lime. Wood ashes are less effective per pound at raising soil pH than lime, and due to the variability of the source of the wood ash (the firewood) some wood ashes are less effective at raising pH than other wood ashes.

What about the potash? Yes, wood ashes do contain potassium. The potassium content is variable for the same reason the ability to raise pH is variable – different types of firewood. Denser hardwoods like hickory and oaks tend to have higher liming capacity and more potassium per pound of ash, while less dense softwoods like pine tend to have lower liming capacity and less potassium per pound of ash.

A review of University Extension publications results in an estimate of wood ashes having a fertility of roughly 0-1-3 in commercial fertilizer terms. This means only 3 pounds of potassium in 100 pounds of wood ashes. Extension publications estimate wood ashes to have about one fourth to one half of the ability of lime to raise soil pH. In other words, if your soil test calls for 100 pounds of lime per 1000 square feet on your garden, you would need to apply roughly 200 to 400 pounds of wood ashes per 1000 square feet.

There are some “watch outs” with wood ashes to keep in mind. First is safety. Wood ash particles are very small, and need to be handled with care to prevent inhalation and contact with eyes. Avoid spreading on windy days. Because of the small particle size of wood ash it has an advantage over commercial lime; it reacts much faster in the soil. As a result the pH of your soil will change almost immediately after wood ash is applied.

What if your soil test indicates your pH is already in the desired range for the plants you are growing? First, avoid the urge to apply wood ash as a way to add potassium to the soil, as that can raise pH too high. Consider applying the wood ash to other areas if they have a low pH, such as your lawn or wooded areas. If you compost, wood ashes can be used to raise the pH of your compost pile. If mixed well with nitrogen rich organic materials wood ashes can be composted.

Source: Max Glover, Plant Specialist, can be reached at the Shelby County Extension Center, 573-633-2640.

KIRKSVILLE GARDEN TOUR

A special tour of private Kirksville gardens is being offered Sunday, June 27, from 1-5 p.m. Advance tickets are available for $5.00 at the Kirksville Chamber of Commerce, Adair County Extension Center, and Tranquil Seasons. Tickets will be offered the day of the event at the Captain Thomas C. Harris House for $6.00. Tickets will have location listings of the gardens and directions.

One of the highlights of the garden tour will be an extensive daylily garden, featuring over 400 varieties, including some original hybrids. Another garden location includes a spacious acreage with a lake, a hibiscus garden, memorial walkway, many varieties of roses and ornamental grasses. At one garden stop, the resident owner and Master Gardener instructor will be on hand to discuss many gardening techniques, including propagation and greenhouse growing. Located on a small city half lot, there are a number of plantings around the house such as daylilies, hostas, Asian and hybrid lilies, peonies, irises, rudbeckias and a sunken rose garden. It also includes a greenhouse which features succulents and orchids. A garden with old-fashioned favorites is located at the historic Capt. Thomas C. Harris home. The restored 1875 mansion will be open to visitors, and light refreshments will be served.

Proceeds from the tour will help defray costs of producing an upcoming book, *Kirksville Gardens: The Gardens of Kirksville, Missouri and its Surrounding Area,* to be published later this year. If interested in submitting photos for the publication, please contact the Kirksville Chamber or Adair County Extension Center.
GARDEN TIPS FOR JUNE

ORNAMENTALS
- Watch for bagworms feeding on garden plants, especially juniper and arborvitae.
- Deadhead bulbs and spring flowering perennials as blossoms fade.
- Thin seedlings to proper spacings before plants crowd each other.
- Apply organic mulches as the soil warms. These will conserve moisture, discourage weeds, and enrich the soil as they decay.
- When night temperatures stay above 50°, bring houseplants outdoors for the summer. Most houseplants prefer a bright spot shaded from afternoon sun. Check soil moisture daily during hot weather.
- Apply a balanced rose fertilizer after the first show of blooms is past.
- Apply a second spray for borer control on hardwood trees.
- Plant tropical water lilies when water temperatures rise above 70°.
- Trees and shrubs may still be fertilized before July 4th.
- Softwood cuttings can be taken from trees and shrubs as the spring flush of growth is beginning to mature.
- Pruning of spring flowering trees/shrubs should be done after flowering.
- Continue spraying roses with a fungicide to prevent black spot disease.

VEGETABLES
- Repeat plantings of corn and beans to extend the harvest season.
- As soon as cucumber and squash vines start to “run,” begin spray treatments to control cucumber beetles and squash vine borers.
- Plant pumpkins now to have Jack-O-Lanterns for Halloween.
- Early detection is essential for good control of vegetable pests. Learn to identify and distinguish between pests and beneficial predators.
- Start seedlings of broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower. These will provide transplants for the fall garden. Set out Brussel sprouts transplants started last month. These will mature for a fall harvest.
- Soaker hoses and drip irrigation systems make the most efficient use of water. To minimize diseases, water with overhead irrigation early enough in the day to allow the foliage to dry before the nightfall.
- To maximize top growth on asparagus, apply 2 pounds of 12-12-12 fertilizer per 100 sq. feet, water well and renew mulches to conserve moisture. Stop harvesting asparagus when the spears become thin.
- Control corn earworms. Apply several drops of mineral oil every 3 to 7 days once silks appear. Sprays of B.T. are also effective.

FRUITS
- Oriental fruit moths emerge. Most serious on peaches where first generation attacks growing tips. Shoots will wilt. These should be pruned out.
- Thinning overloaded fruit trees will result in larger and healthier fruits at harvest time. Thinned fruits should be a hands width apart.
- Enjoy the strawberry harvest. Renovate strawberries after harvest. Mow the rows; thin out excess plants; remove weeds; fertilize, and apply mulch for weed control.
- Summer fruiting raspberries are ripening now.
- Begin control for apple maggot flies.
- Spray trunks of peach trees and other stone fruits for peach tree borers.
- Prune and train young fruit trees to eliminate poorly positioned branches and establish proper crotch angles.