

GARDEN MATTER

July - 2019

The Official Publication of Laclede County Master Gardeners



Laclede County Master Gardeners

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2019 Laclede County Fair Schedule

Mills Center Horticulture Exhibits

Friday July 5 2 PM – 4 PM Set Up

Lynn Boulware
Sheila Buechler
Peggy Graydon

Saturday July 6 Check In

10 AM – Noon
Bonnie Williams

Need Two Please

Noon – 2 PM

Cindi and Roy Storts

Need 2 please

Sunday July 7 1 PM to 3 PM Check In

Donna Jeffries
Bonnie Williams

Need two please

Wednesday July 10 9 AM – 10 AM Remove Dead Flowers

Donna Jeffries
Teresa Sugden

Friday July 12 9 AM – Noon Check Out and Take Down

Victoria Bench
Lynn Boulware
Sheila Buechler
Donna Jeffries

Gardening by Month - July

Monthly Tips and Tasks

Category	Week				Activity
	1	2	3	4	
Ornamentals	x	x	x	x	Provide water in the garden for the birds, especially during dry weather.
	x	x	x	x	Remove infected leaves from roses. Pick up fallen leaves. Continue fungicidal sprays as needed.
	x	x	x	x	While spraying roses with fungicides, mix extra and spray hardy phlox to prevent powdery mildew.
	x	x	x	x	Newly planted trees and shrubs should continue to be watered thoroughly, once a week.
	x	x	x	x	Fertilize container plants every 2 weeks with a water soluble solution.
	x	x	x	x	Keep weeds from making seeds now. This will mean less weeding next year.
	x	x	x	x	Keep deadheading spent annual flowers for continued bloom.
	x	x	x	x	Perennials that have finished blooming should be deadheaded. Cut back the foliage some to encourage tidier appearance.
	x	x			Plant zinnia seed by July 4th for late bloom in annual border.
	x	x			Spray hollies for leaf miner control.
	x	x			Prune climbing roses and rambler roses after bloom.
	x	x			Apply final treatment for borers on hardwood trees.
	x				Apply no fertilizers to trees and shrubs after July 4th. Fertilizing late may cause lush growth that is apt to winter kill.
	x				Hot, dry weather is ideal for spider mite development. With spider mite damage, leaves may be speckled above and yellowed below. Evergreen needles appear dull gray-green to yellow or brown. Damage may be present even before webs are noticed.
		x	x		Fall webworms begin nest building near the ends of branches of infested trees. Prune off webs. Spray with Bt if defoliation becomes severe.
		x			Divide and reset oriental poppies after flowering as the foliage dies.
			x	x	Semi-hardwood cuttings of spring flowering shrubs can be made now.
			x	x	Summer pruning of shade trees can be done now.

				x	Powdery mildew is unsightly on lilacs, but rarely harmful. Shrubs grown in full sun are less prone to this disease.	
					x	Divide bearded iris now.
			x			Don't pinch mums after mid-July or you may delay flowering.
Lawns	x	x	x	x		Water frequently enough to prevent wilting. Early morning irrigation allows turf to dry before nightfall and will reduce the chance of disease.
				x	x	Monitor lawns for newly hatched white grubs. If damage is occurring, apply appropriate controls, following product label directions.
Vegetables	x	x	x	x		Blossom-end rot of tomato and peppers occurs when soil moisture is uneven. Water when soils begin to dry; maintain a 2-3 inch layer of mulch.
Category	Week				Activity	
	x					To minimize insect damage to squash and cucumber plants, try covering them with lightweight floating row covers. Remove covers once plants flower.
		x				Dig potatoes when the tops die. Plant fall potatoes by the 15th.
			x	x		For the fall garden, sow seeds of collards, kale, sweet corn and summer squash as earlier crops are harvested.
			x	x		Set out broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower transplants for the fall garden.
			x			Sweet corn is ripe when the silks turn brown.
			x			Keep cukes well watered. Drought conditions will cause bitter fruit.
			x			Harvest onions and garlic when the tops turn brown.
				x		Sow seeds of carrots, beets, turnips, and winter radish for fall harvest.
	x	x	x	x		Cover grape clusters loosely with paper sacks to provide some protection from marauding birds.
	x					Prune out and destroy old fruiting canes of raspberries after harvest is complete.
	x					Blackberries are ripening now.
		x	x			Apply second spray to trunks of peach trees for peach borers.
			x	x		Early peach varieties ripen now.
					x	Thornless blackberries ripen now.

July Pests and Problems Continue to monitor for plant bugs on phlox and treat if required. Mildew is another common problem of phlox. Aster yellows is distinctive and can affect many different plants.



**Help
Wanted!**

**Two Warm Bodies Badley Needed
From Noon til 2 p.m. Saturday - July 6th
Call Extention 532-7126 to Volunteer**

Best Household Remedies for Insect Bites



Don't let bug bites stop you from enjoying the outdoors with these helpful home remedies.

Nothing spoils a lovely day in your garden paradise more than itching and irritation the morning after. You've gotten an insect bite, and as backyard bug bites are want to do, it's probably driving you crazy and got you wondering what can help with the itching. The good news is there are plenty of remedies to help make those bug bites feel better. Even better is that many of these remedies require items you probably already have around your home.

Sweet as Honey



Honey is renowned for its anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties so while you probably already reach for this home remedy to treat coughs and sore throats, you can also use it to help with itching. So don't discount [the bees](#) in your yard as pests. Not only are they great pollinators, but the honey they produce offers relief from the pain caused by other bugs. Plus, silly as it may sound, honey's natural sticky, viscous feel will act as a safeguard against you constantly scratching your itch and making the irritation worse.

Baking Soda Paste

Baking soda has so many [practical purposes](#), so every kitchen should be stocked up with it. A simple baking soda paste, as in so simple you just add water, can help your bite's itching subside. Take a small quantity of both, and just slowly add water to the baking soda as you mix it. Eventually you'll reach a consistency that's like toothpaste. Apply this paste to the bug bite and let it sit for about ten minutes. Wipe it off gently, and you'll be feeling some relief.

Onion Slice

It may sound eye-watering, but a slice of freshly cut onion can help with your insect bite. You'll want to leave the onion slice directly on the affected are for at least a few minutes to allow the onion juices to bathe the bite. Once you remove the slice, gently rinse the area with cool water. This home remedy can help to take the irritation and itch out of your bite. Even better is that you don't have to use a particular type of onion. It just needs to be fresh.

Garlic Salve



Garlic, like onions, are a nice remedy you can grow yourself, but unlike onions, you don't want to apply freshly cut garlic to your insect bite. Putting sliced, raw garlic in direct contact with your bite will end up hurting more than helping. Instead, the best solution is to make a garlic salve. Mince up a clove or two and then add it to some liquid coconut oil that's at room temperature. Mix it up really well, and apply it to your bite. Let it sit for about 10 minutes before wiping it off. Follow up with a cool washrag. Don't have coconut oil in your kitchen? Another great option is an [unscented lotion](#) that you can use to mix the garlic with.

Chamomile Tea Bag



You've probably used chamomile tea to aid a sore throat or even to help puffy eyes, but it's also great for bug bites. Unlike when making tea for drinking, you'll want to steep the tea bag in cold water instead of hot. Put your mug in the refrigerator for about a half hour to chill it even further. Take the tea bag out of the water and remove enough of the water that it doesn't drip on you. Apply the tea bag to the bite for ten minutes before removing it. Save this teabag, since it can be reused if the bite starts bothering you again. You can even make your own tea bags using [chamomile flowers](#). Another way to speed up the first application is putting it into the freezer. Just make sure that you don't forget about it or you may have a frozen tea bag in the middle of the water that you can't use right away.

Oatmeal For the Win

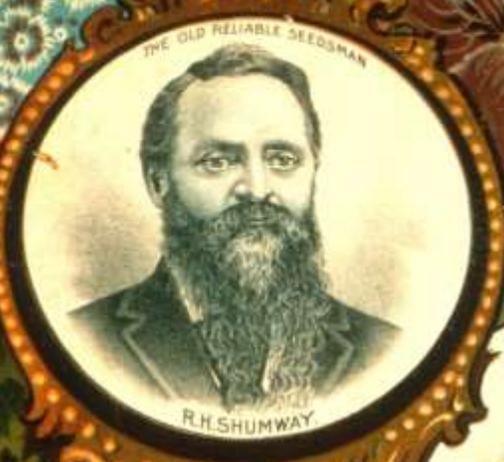


Oatmeal is an excellent way to handle bug bites and other skin irritations that are common in the summer, such as rashes. You can mix up a small batch of paste in the same manner as the baking soda paste. Apply the paste for about ten minutes, then remove with a washcloth.

Have more spots than just a small bowl of oatmeal paste will handle? That's fine. You can always take an oatmeal bath. There are even some great brands available packet sizes that are perfect for adding to a bathtub. Try looking for them in the bath and personal hygiene aisles. Stay soaking in the tub for about 20 minutes, rinse, and pat yourself dry. [Cleaning your bathtub](#) after may not be

the easiest, but you'll feel so much better afterward.

These home remedies will help you beat insect bites that bother you and your family. Check around your kitchen and bathroom for these items to see which is going to be the most effective for your bug bites. You'll be happy to no longer be scratching thanks to a more natural touch.

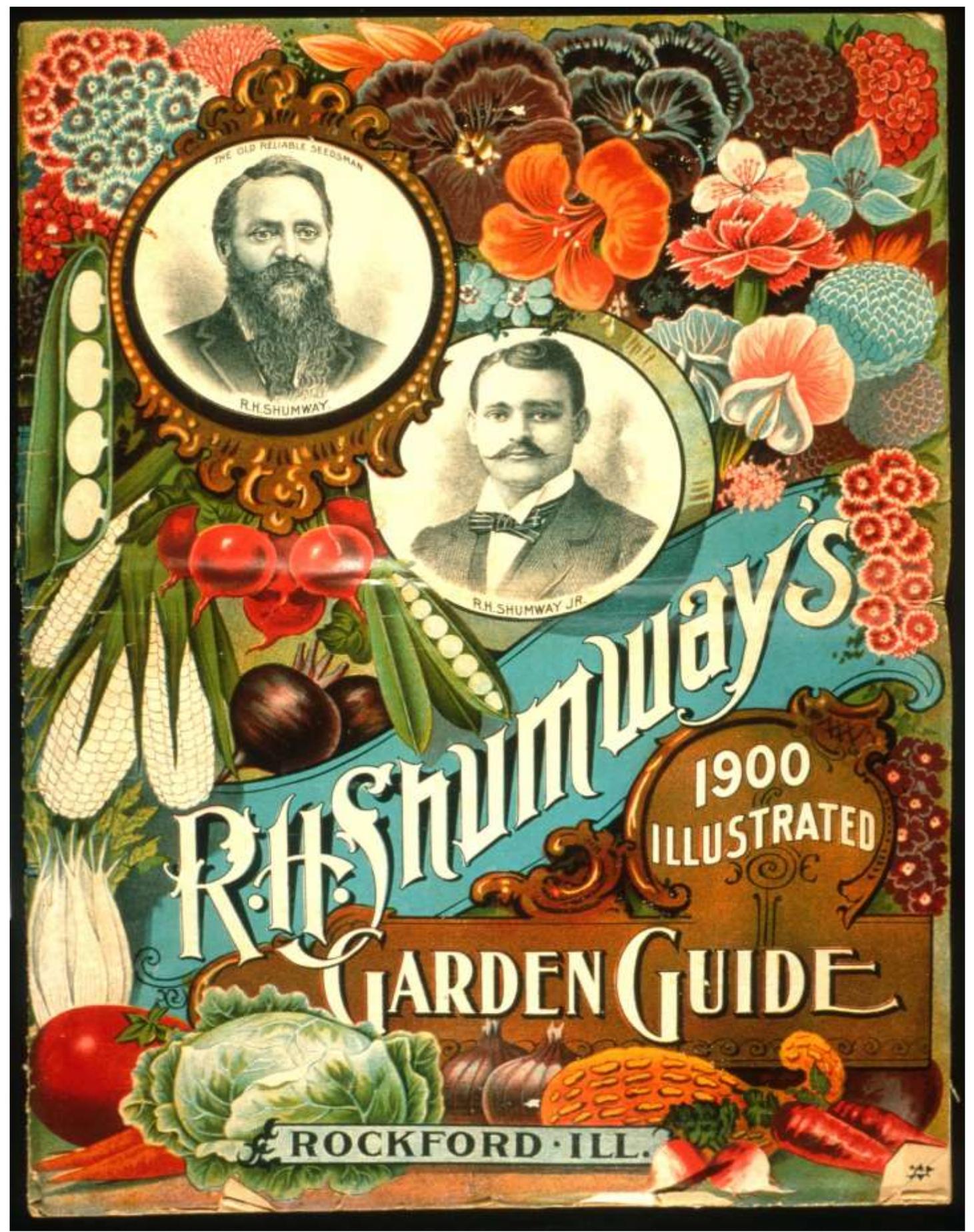


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GARDEN GUIDE

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Wet Spring Adds Importance to Side-Dressing

The term "side-dressing" is not widely used outside of the gardening world. I strongly suspect that nine out of ten people randomly stopped in a public setting would have no idea what it means. To gardeners, however, the term is quite familiar and refers to the practice of placing fertilizer in a band along-side rows of plants, or around the perimeter of individual plants in an attempt to boost lagging soil fertility.



The extremely wet spring we have experienced in Missouri has reduced the fertility level of garden soils due to nutrient leaching. Additionally, our garden plants remove nutrients from the soil as they grow. There are several ways to counter this reduction in soil nutrients and to maintain better plant growth throughout the coming summer. Side-dressing is one of the solutions to the problem and can give garden plants a needed boost in growth and productivity.

One of the fertilizer elements that quickly is leached from the soil but also is very critical for good plant growth is nitrogen. Side-dressing with a nitrogen fertilizer or a complete fertilizer high in nitrogen usually is beneficial about four to six weeks after planting. Compounds such as ammonium nitrate, urea, ammonium sulfate and calcium nitrate contain high levels of nitrogen and are often used for the purpose of side-dressing. If these fertilizers are not available, a complete fertilizer high in nitrogen can be used. Beware of lawn fertilizers, however. Most are high in nitrogen but may be "weed and feed" in formulation. The herbicides contained by the latter should not be applied to garden plants.

As mentioned above, side-dressings are normally applied close to the soil surface. The soluble forms of nitrogen found in compounds such as ammonium nitrate or urea move into the root zone easily as a result of rainfall or irrigation. If mulch has been applied, pull it back and apply the side-dressing beneath it along the row. Push the mulch back into its original place after the fertilizer has been applied. Ammonium nitrate and similar fertilizers are applied at a rate of about one pound per 100 feet of row (or 100 square feet of bed area). Side-dressings should be placed at least six inches away from the main plant stem to avoid burning. A strip along each side of the row is considered ideal. If the planting has not been mulched, incorporate the fertilizer application lightly into the soil with a garden hoe or rake. Garden fertilizers lower in nitrogen (e.g. 12-12-12) should be applied at about three pounds of fertilizer per 100 feet of row or square footage of bed.

Another method to avoid nutritional problems caused by leaching involves the use of slow (or timed) release fertilizers. As their name implies, slow release fertilizers release the nutrients they contain over time, making it possible to fertilize only once during the growing season.

The most popular slow release fertilizers used today release their nutrients by osmotic action in resin-coated types, or by bacterial action in organic types. Although the initial cost of some of these slow-release materials might be higher, the need for extra labor is eliminated. Slow-release fertilizers vary greatly in analysis, rate of release and use. Some are formulated to be effective for several weeks to months; others last for an entire growing season. Read and follow label

directions carefully when using slow-release fertilizers. Using excessive amounts can lead to soluble salts injury, since there is no way to leach slow-release fertilizers from the soil.

Blood meal and cottonseed meal are among organic slow release choices that are good source of nitrogen for side-dressing. The nitrogen content for blood meal is about 12 percent while that of cottonseed meal is about seven percent. Therefore, one would side-dress with blood meal at the rate of about two pounds per 100 feet of row, while cottonseed meal should be applied at about three pounds per 100 feet of row (or 100 square feet of bed area).

Plants are good indicators of their nutritional status. Therefore, watch how plants grow to gauge their need for additional fertilizer. Response to nitrogen sources normally occur within about one week, given soil moisture is adequate. Thus, applications can easily be made at the time growth seems to be slowing. Applying excessive fertilizer (especially nitrogen) can be counterproductive. For example, tomato should not be over-fertilized with nitrogen early in the life of the plant. The result will be lush vegetative growth and poor fruit set. Additionally, blossom-end rot problems may increase later. Instead, wait until plants begin setting fruits before applying additional nitrogen.

The following table lists general recommendations for the timing of side-dress applications to

Cucumber, cantaloupe, pumpkin	One week after blooming begins; repeat three weeks later
Onions (mature)	Two to four weeks after planting
Peas, beans	After heavy blooming and pod set
Peppers, eggplants	After first fruits sets
Potato (Irish)	When plants are 4-6 inches tall
Spinach, kale, mustard and greens	When plants are about one-third grown
Sweet corn	When plants are 8 to 10 inches tall; again one week after tasseling
Sweet potatoes, watermelons, herbs	Side-dressing not recommended. Excessive amounts of nitrogen will reduce yields or lower quality, or both.
Tomato	When plants begin to set fruits; repeat every two to three weeks

popular garden vegetables:

Table credit: Gregg Eyestone, Kansas State University Extension

Avoid applying excess nitrogen to flowering annuals, especially those that are not flowering. The result is likely to be lush vegetative growth and poor, delayed flowering. However, many species of flowering annuals (e.g., petunia) benefit from side-dressing with nitrogen every six to eight weeks during the growing season. The same compounds recommended for vegetables can be used on flowering annuals.

Flooding unlikely to affect Japanese beetle populations

Invasive Japanese beetle adults have begun to emerge in central Missouri. Adult beetles feed on over 300 host plant species including natural weeds, shrubs, hardwoods, and cultivated crops such as corn, soybean, ornamentals, and fruit, often resulting in economic injury. Recent flooding throughout the state is unlikely to affect Japanese beetle populations. Beetle grubs overwinter in the upper 5-15 inches of soil and resume feeding on grass root in the spring prior to adult emergence.



Although standing water on agricultural fields can reduce oxygen availability and enhance the spread of disease, it is unlikely to suppress over all beetle populations levels. During the 1940, wide scale flooding on the east coast did not affect the beetle abundance. Furthermore, adults will emerge from grasses not effected by flooding.

Adults will continue to emergence throughout early summer, with peak populations typically occurring in July. Adults can cause severe defoliation in soybean. Economic thresholds are based on defoliation. During vegetative growth, chemical applications should be considered at 30% defoliation, and 20% during reproductive stages. Japanese beetles often form aggregations in field edges, therefore border treatments may provide sufficient management, however, interior of fields should also be scouted. Late planted soybeans may reach thresholds earlier as these plants will be smaller.

Adult beetles also consume corn silks, resulting in reduced pollination and ear fill, however foliage feeding does not cause injury. Insecticide applications should be considered when silks are present, and three or more beetles are present per ear and pollination is less than 50% complete.

Researchers at the University of Missouri are currently investigating an attract-and-kill strategy to manage Japanese beetles while reducing insecticide applications. This technique uses lures containing pheromones and plant volatiles to attract adult beetles to a specific area where they can be killed.



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From 10 am til Noon Saturday - July 6th
Call Extention 532-7126 to Volunteer

Lightning Bugs, June Bugs and Sweet Tea

Summer in the South means many things, however most of us who are a certain age summer means lightning bugs, June bugs and sweet tea.

Long summer days used to mean playing outside until dark and dark came late. No one huddled indoors under the air conditioning watching tv or playing on the computer. Summer nights meant the humidity dropped to an acceptable 50% and when the sun set there were still many things that we could do. Soda pop was reserved for special occasions and tall glasses of iced tea (always sweet) waited on the porch and it wasn't uncommon to go through a gallon in the evening. Everyone was active all day and the sugar in the tea was never an issue.



Lightning bugs are fun for kids

Lightning bugs started their nightly show at dusk and it was a contest to see who could catch the most in a Mason jar with holes poked in the lid. The holes in the lid were an

important part of lightning bug catching hardware since we wanted to make sure that they could breathe. Never mind that the insects don't breathe in the same way that humans do, we still had to have those holes poked with an old-fashioned ice pick in a used canning flat held on with the ring. We chased and caught lightning bugs for hours and then carried them indoors to have a night light in our rooms. We turned them loose the next morning and probably caught some of the same ones the next evening. There were plenty of open spaces, fields and pastures for them to live and very few chemicals were used that killed them. It is only recently that lightning bug numbers have dwindled to an alarming low. Here in west Kentucky, we still have a nice showing each summer, although the numbers are smaller than in the 1960's.

Lightning bug facts

These fascinating creatures are among several species of bio-luminescent insects that produce visible light. They store the chemicals and enzymes needed to produce the flashes in their bodies and mix it with oxygen to create the light. These flashes are unique to each species and the observer (and potential mates) can recognize which one they are seeing just by watching the flight pattern or counting the flashes. Females wait in the grass in one spot while flashing their 'come hither' lights directing the males to a rendezvous. Once mated, the females lay their eggs and die shortly after. Lightning bugs do not bite or sting and the light they emit has no heat. That's why they are irresistible to kids. They fly slowly and are easy to catch in cupped hands. Some species of fireflies also have bio-luminescent eggs that flash when disturbed and the larvae (known as glow-worms) also emit light. Fireflies are **pollen eaters** and do not do any harm to flowers, grasses or trees.

Lightning bug lore

These unique little insects are special to many cultures around the world. They are believed to hold the souls of the departed in Japan. Another Asian legend was that fireflies were the souls of warriors that had fallen in battle. Native Americans believed that the fox tried to steal fire from the fireflies and set his tail on fire with some bark. He gives the hawk the flaming bark as he left the village, who scattered the embers as he flew away. That's how the Apache people first received fire. The Victorians, who were experts at celebrating death and mourning believed that if a firefly came into a home that someone would die.



June bugs mean summer is here

June bugs did not have the same allure as the lightning bugs, however we still liked them because they meant that summer was officially here, and they also made good fishing bait. We saw two different beetles that we called June bugs here in western Kentucky. We saw striped ones and brown ones at night and the bigger, metallic green ones during the day. The night-time June bugs often arrived in May and while their numbers

were the highest in early summer, they stayed around most of the season. The big, bumbling, clumsy beetles were attracted to the light over the garage door every evening and there were a couple of fat toads that lived under the porch steps that were well fed on June bugs. When they inevitably hit the garage door and fell to the ground, the toads were always waiting to slurp them up with their long, sticky tongues. There are over 100 species of scarab beetles that people call June bugs.

June bug lore

Many cultures with June bug lore believe that the presence of June bugs represent someone with a tough personality and not easily crushed by life's troubles. On the opposite side of this, the term 'crazy as a June bug in May' describes someone who acts irrationally, probably because the June bugs seem irrational when they bumble around the lights at night.

June bug facts and how to deal with the larvae

It is unknown why certain insects are attracted to night-time lights. Most often it is the males, although in a few species both genders flock to the light. Often, they fly around the lights all night until they drop to the ground, exhausted. A popular theory is that they rely on a light source, such as the moon or the sun to navigate, however scientists really do not know why they have this behavior. June bugs flock to lights in such numbers that they often interfere with outdoor activities, bumbling and bumping into guests and family members on patios and in pools. June bugs do not bite or sting, however they do have prickly, stiff hairs on their legs that might pinch a bit if they land on you. The real problem with June bugs is the larval form. These grubs (which are also great fish bait) live in lawns and turf grass and cause damage by eating the roots. Damage appears as brown patches of dead grass and turf that is easily pulled with no roots attached. The grub population also attracts moles and armadillos and they can wreck a lawn with their tunnels and digging. A natural way to rid your lawn of these grubs is by broadcasting Hb nematodes across the lawn. The nematodes are tiny, microscopic worms that burrow into the grubs and kill them from the inside. If you go this route, then do not use the poisons that are available on the market, as they will kill the nematodes you've just bought too. Summer in the South means bugs and humidity and you can either choose to embrace it or move. I grew up in a time where summer evenings were for sitting on the porch with a glass of sweet tea and your neighbors, or kids playing hide-and-seek or catching lightning bugs. Even now, the sight of fireflies blinking as I drive down the highway brings back fond memories and I head home to sit in my porch swing with a tall glass of sweet tea and enjoy the show in my front yard.

Recipe of the Month

Blueberry Cream Pie



Are you sick of too-rich cakes and pies? If so, Blueberry Cream Pie is for you. It's got just the right mix of creamy pie and fresh fruit.

What You'll Need

- 1 cup sweetened condensed milk
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 cups whipped cream or whipped topping
- 1 -1/2 cups fresh blueberries, rinsed and dried
- 1 (9-inch) graham cracker pie crust

What to Do

1. In a large bowl, combine sweetened condensed milk and lemon juice; mix well. Fold in whipped cream then gently stir in blueberries until thoroughly combined.
2. Pour into pie crust, cover and freeze overnight, or until set.

Notes

To give this extra homemade flair, garnish with additional whipped topping and a few fresh blueberries. And if you're up to it, make your own graham cracker crust. (Recipe courtesy of Mr Food.)



WE WANT YOU!

**Two Warm Bodies Badley Needed
From 1 p.m. til 3 p.m. Sunday July 7th
Call Extention 532-7126 to Volunteer**

Growing Daisies in the Perennial Garden



Daisies are a garden favorite and are probably one of the most well-known flowers in the world. Even a five year old can recognize a daisy. However, many people do not know that there are several types of daisies with an interesting history.

We're all familiar with the iconic yellow center surrounded by white petals. Daisies grace not only our gardens, but things like clothing, key chains, jewelry, human names, pet names and dinnerware, just to name a few. In fact, I even had a cow named Daisy when I was a kid. Daisies are a universal symbol of happiness and they are frequently part of both cottage gardens and more formal displays.

Daisy lore and history

Humans have had a love affair with daisies for thousands of years. There are even cave carvings that have been dated to 3000 B.C. that depict daisies. The ancient Romans grew them and used them medicinally as a treatment for wounds. They extracted the oils and soaked bandages in it to promote healing without infection. They actually are anti-inflammatory and antibacterial, so the Romans were correct in adding it to their herbal pharmacy. They treated boils and hemorrhoids with the oils and tea made from the flowers and leaves was a diuretic, soothed sore throats, eased coughs and colic as well. The Norse associated the daisy with their goddess Freya. She was their goddess of love, beauty and fertility and even today, mothers in Scandinavia are often gifted with daisies. Much later, in the Victorian Era daisies took on another love-related task when someone created the well-known verse and petal-pulling activity of 'he loves me-he loves me not '. The name daisy actually comes from the Old English 'days eye'. Since the flowers close at night and open when the sun comes up each morning, they believed them to be the eye that looks upon the day. They were also considered a symbol of fidelity and were a popular flower in wedding bouquets, and still are to this day. In fact, my own bridal bouquet consisted of red roses and daisies.

Some daisy species are invasive

Originally native to Europe, daisies were carried world-wide by travelers and immigrants, so now every continent except Antarctica has a daisy. However, they are not loved by many ranchers and farmers. The Scots called them *gools* and the unfortunate farmer who had too many growing on his land was taxed higher than his gool-free neighbors. Daisies, especially the ox-eye daisy

(*Leucanthemum vulgare*) are considered an invasive weed in many parts of the world. Several states in the U.S., provinces in Canada and Australia have them on their **noxious weed** lists. It seems that cattle will graze pastures but leave the daisy uneaten. Apparently, they don't like the taste. When the pastures are grazed short and the daisies left to seed, that just makes more daisies for the cattle to avoid. **Deer** abstain from daisies as well, so that is a good thing if Bambi considers your garden his personal buffet. However, the daisy produces huge amounts of seeds that can remain viable for decades and that means that it is difficult to eradicate daisies from farmland and pastures once they gain a foothold. Horses and sheep will eat daisies and a good percentage of the seeds survive the passage through their digestive tracts and are pooped out with their own little pile of fertilizer elsewhere on the farm, so the daisy manages to survive and flourish despite the battles that farmers wage against it.

Growing daisies in the garden

Regardless how farmers feel about the daisy, it is beloved by gardeners. Depending on which species or variety of daisy you choose, gardeners can have daisies growing in Zones 3a to 11, so there is a daisy for just about everyone. Ox-eye daisies are the hardiest, Shastas have bigger flowers and tend to stay in well-mannered clumps and English daisies (*Bellis perennis*) prefer cool summers. However, all daisies thrive under the same conditions. A sunny, **well-drained** bed, ample moisture while establishing and a light mulch during growing season will make for happy daisies since the root systems are shallow, rarely going deeper than six inches. If starting from seed, prepare the bed with finely tilled soil and scatter the seeds across the top. Do not cover the seeds. Daisies need light to germinate. Once the seeds have sprouted, thin to about eight to ten inches apart. Shasta daisies (*Leucanthemum x superbum*) will form tight clumps with underground rhizomes and other species will send out creeping, underground runners. Divide clumping daisies every three to five years. Lift the whole rootball and gently tease the plants apart. Re-set back in the garden at least twelve inches apart to give them room to fill in.

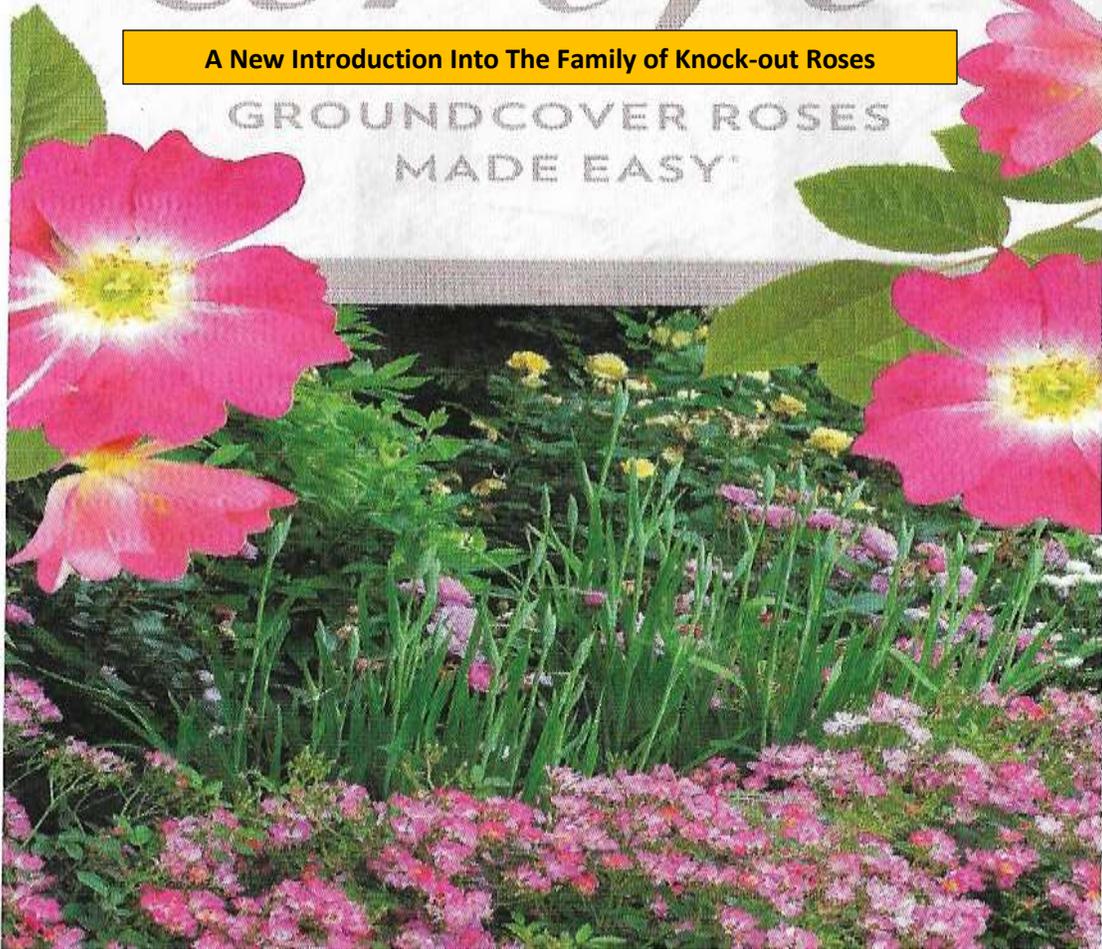


Dead-head spent blooms back to the first new bud to prevent seedlings and to encourage more flowers. They will continue to bloom after their first big flush, however the show won't be quite as big. Daisies withstand drought quite well, however the bloom quantity will suffer. For the best show, make sure that they have at least one inch of water each week. **Aphids** are probably the worst pests to plague daisies. In most cases, a blast of water will dislodge the critters, however if the infestation is large, a good organic solution is to dust them with flour. It will gum them up and they will simply fall to the ground and die. Insecticides will just harm the butterflies and honeybees that love to land on the flowers. Whichever daisy you choose, they will add joy and happiness to your garden. They ask for very little and give back so much.

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Starting a small lawn from seed

Starting a small lawn from seed, while not faster, can be cheaper than using sod. It is not as hard or laborious as most people think; and with a few tips, a healthy green lawn can be right around the corner; nay, right in your front yard!

Selecting the proper grass

One of the benefits of starting your lawn from seed is that you get a wide variety of grasses to choose from. You can pick the best grass for your area, climate, and intended lawn use. Rest assured there will be plenty of choices at the store, so be sure to **ask yourself some questions** before you go to the lawn and garden store:

- **What will I be using the lawn for?** Will you be using the lawn mainly for family gatherings with volleyball and croquet games? To impress the neighbors? A walkway to your precious gardens? Some grasses tolerate being walked on better than other, so it is important to decide how much "treading" your grass will receive.
- **What is the sunlight like all day long?** It would be good to watch the intended lawn location for several full days. Is the patch in full sun all day or does it get morning shade and full afternoon sun?
- **What is the natural moisture level of the area?** Some grasses require a lot of water and will not do well in drier areas, while other grasses may not like high humidity or lots of rain. Look for low spots where excess water might collect and be aware of any steep sloping points in the area.
- **What part of the country am I in?** There are warm-season grasses and cool-season grasses. Generally the southern United States requires warm-season, while the central and northern US calls for cool-season. Cool season grasses include Fescue, Bluegrass, and Rye, while warm season varieties include Bermuda, Centipede, Zoysia and St. Augustine grasses.[1]
- **What is the square footage of the area I want to seed?** Trust me, you don't want to show up at the lawn and garden store without a clue of how much seed to buy. Measure your square footage before you set out to shop and save yourself some time.
- **And lastly, what kind of grass is successful in my neighborhood?** You could live in a microclimate of your area. If you research what grass has been successful in your area, you will likely have fewer headaches down the line.

Also important:

- **When to seed?** Seeding a lawn is easiest in spring for warm season grasses and in early fall for cool season grasses.[2] It can be done any time of year that it is warm enough to work the ground, but you might have varying results. Trying to start grass from seed in the heat of mid-summer will always be a challenge. Local experts in your area should be able to help you pick the best time of year for your seed type and location.

Once you answer all of these questions, go to a store that has a good selection of grass seed and a helpful staff to ask questions of. There are many different types of grass, some intended for heavy traffic, others for full shade or sun, and others still contain a mix of types for varied usage. Make sure

you buy enough grass seed for your square footage as well as some extra for goofs or patching down the line. If you are unsure of how much to buy, check out this [grass seed calculator](#).

While you are at the store, pick up enough bags of topsoil or compost to cover the area with about an inch or two of material. This is an extremely important part of the process and creates a hospitable environment for the grass seed.



Preparing the area

Because this is a tutorial about starting a *small* lawn, you can probably do this whole process by hand. However, if you are starting a larger area of lawn than say, 20 by 20 feet, then you may want to rent some equipment from your local hardware store. You could use a roller, a tiller, and a seed spreader, but in all truthfulness, you can do this process with a rake, a hoe/pitchfork, and some elbow grease.

You'll want to clear the area of weeds, rocks, and stray debris. Use a hoe or a pitchfork to loosen the existing soil so that you can evaluate and clean it as needed and so that it will be loose for the seed. If there are any severe low or high spots, try to even them out now as you don't want water to collect or run off at a high rate; moreover, you don't want to sprain your ankle in a low spot during that family croquet game! You'll want to make sure the top layer (2 to 3 inches) of soil are loose, and if not you can make up the depth by adding more topsoil.

Add topsoil and/or compost in an even layer over the area using a rake. You'll want the loosened soil, including what you loosened earlier, to be about 3 inches thick. Use the added soil to fill in low spots and to generally level the ground to an acceptable grade if there is an existing incline.

By hand or using a seed spreader, distribute the seeds at the rate suggested on the packaging.

Rake the seed into the top of the soil so that it won't blow or wash away. You don't want to rake the seeds in any deeper than a quarter-inch. Once the seed is evenly spread and raked in, using a light spray, water the seed in well. You want an even spray to pack the soil and seed down, but not enough to flood or wash away the seed.

Water, water, water

After the seed is spread, you will want to water at least two times a day. You don't want the seed to dry out for extended periods of time because that can prolong germination or make the seed

unviable. In about 2 weeks, you will start to see tiny sprouts. Some sections of your lawn will sprout before others, so don't worry that it didn't work. Keep watering at least once daily to keep the new roots moist. Be sure to water in the morning or in the evening to avoid the hottest times of day so that the grass is not scorched and you aren't fighting major evaporation.

If you are not seeing germination in certain sections after several weeks, you can reseed. Make sure that you rake in a little extra topsoil and the seed.



Some things to consider

Spots in your lawn may be harder to start from seed than others. For example: around tree roots, in areas of extreme shade or sun, or in a hellstrip (the small strip of grass between a sidewalk and the street). In these areas, you'll need to watch the seed and moisture levels more carefully as it may take a while to start healthy growth.

Hopefully, you'll be able to start your lawn in the first try using seed, but if not, there are products available that will help with tricky spots in your lawn. Products such as Scott's Patchmaster, can be used for small tricky areas or for larger areas along the hellstrip that won't get going. This particular product contains grass seed, fertilizer and a biodegradable mulch to help retain moisture. Other products such as Greenview Grass Seed Accelerator will provide fertilizer and mulch without seed to aid in starting lawns. Both are available at big box hardware stores for about \$10 a bag.

A fertilizer may also be applied when you seed or as you see sprouts. You can find many different brands, but what you are looking for is called a "starter fertilizer." They generally will have a higher middle number in the NPK number designation. After the lawn has been established, you may want to switch to a maintenance fertilizer.

Enjoy!

Hopefully with these tips you will be successful at starting a new and lush lawn. If you choose the right kind of grass to grow and prepare your lawn correctly, it will be less of a struggle to maintain, water, weed, and enjoy in the future. Good luck!

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Benefits of Cucumbers!



1. Relieves joint pain (arthritis/gout)
2. Reduces Cholesterol
3. Aids in Weightloss
4. Promotes Digestion
5. Prevents Headaches
6. Fights Cancer
7. Rehydrates & Remineralizes the body
8. High silica content for silky hair
9. Cures Diabetes
10. Controls blood pressure



Scouring Rush, a Remnant of Ages Past



Three hundred million years ago, the Equisetums were part of an extensive phylum of plants (Calamophyta) containing many genera.

Distinguished by their straight stems with branches or leaves arranged in regular whorls, many of the plants grew nearly 100 feet tall. The only genus still present is the lowly and sometimes weedy *Equisetum*, and all that remain are mere remnants of the group's past glory.

Scouring rush is native to several parts of the world, including Eurasia, Canada, and the United States. *Equisetum* gets its name from the Latin *equus* meaning "horse" and *seta* meaning "bristle" or "animal hair." This rhizomatous, bamboo-like evergreen perennial usually occurs in damp or wet places such as riverbanks, wet meadows, marshes, and woodlands. Growing 3 to 5 feet tall, the plants are easily recognized by their hollow, segmented, rough surface with ashy gray bands marking the segments. The stems can be up to one-half inches in diameter at the base, but they narrow down as they extend upward from the ground. Early in the growing season a whorl of almost unnoticeable scale-like leaves clasps the stem at each node, but these leaves are usually shed as the season progresses.

Horsetail rush is a non-flowering plant. Even though we call this equisetum "scouring rush," it is not a rush at all. Nor is it a fern. It is the only surviving genus of primitive vascular plants that have been found in fossil records dating back to more than 350 million years. We call them fern allies because they are non-flowering, seedless plants that reproduce by spores. Spores are produced in sharp-pointed cones (strobili) about one-inch long on the tips of fertile stems.

The giant equisetums went the way of the dinosaurs but can be found in fossil records, and they are a constituent in the coal we use for fuel. The ones with which we are familiar are much smaller. A handy key can be found in the internet for those interested in identifying the [different species](#).

Culture

Grow horsetail rush in full sun to part shade. Although it tolerates a wide range of soils, it grows best in medium to wet places and can even grow in up to four inches of standing water. Gardeners are urged to grow this very aggressive plant in containers to restrain its creeping rhizomes. Once it



becomes established it is almost impossible to eradicate. Even a tiny piece of rhizome left in the ground will generate a new plant. It can cross property boundaries and end up annoying your neighbors as well, so it is best to keep this plant contained.

Historic Uses

Because of the high silica content in the stems, early Americans made use of them in their daily lives. As a matter of fact, early settlers planted scouring rush and soapwort (*Saponaria*

officinalis) at the edge of a nearby stream. With the silica-filled stems of the scouring rush and the sudsy roots of the soapwort, they had what they needed for cleaning their pots and pans.

Clarinet players sometimes use an equisetum called "Dutch rush" to make reed adjustments. Although this equisetum is available for purchase in music stores, a bit of specialized knowledge about how to use it is needed. Special aging and curing is required before it is usable. Extensive directions about how to prepare and use it as a reed-fixing tool are available on various websites.

Medical uses have been made of the plant. Native Americans used it to stop bleeding, and more recently it has been found to be an effective diuretic. Plants are somewhat toxic to livestock and should be removed from areas where they graze.

The attractive stems are of interest to floral designers who use them in floral designs. Many designers grow it in their gardens so that the stems are always available. Stems dry well and can be purchased in bundles at markets where floral supplies are sold.

Other Species

According to expert [Earl J.S. Rook](#), most of the equisetums can be found in two main subgenera:

1) *Equisetum* subgenus *hippochaete*, the scouring rushes, which include *Equisetum hyemale* (tall scouring rush), *E. laevigatum*, (smooth scouring rush), *E. scirpoides* (dwarf scouring rush), *E. variegatum* (variegated scouring rush) and

2) *Equisetum* subgenus *equisetum*, the horsetails (mostly unknown in North America), which include *E. arvense* (field horsetail), *E. fluviatile* (water horsetail), *E. palustre* (marsh horsetail), *E. pratense* (meadow horsetail), and *E. sylvaticum* (wood horsetail). In addition, two hybrids are known: *E. x ferrissii* and *E. x mackaii*. The [GRIN website](#) adds *E. telemateia*, *E. x nelsonii*, and *E. ramosissimum* to the list. In all somewhere around 20 species have been identified (depending on the authority consulted), and almost anywhere in the world a species can be found.

Because of the aggressive nature of equisetum, many find reason to remove it from their property. Guidelines for its management and information on controlling the plant can be found on [Texas A&M University's website](#).

How Pumpkin Patches and Corn Mazes Are Grown



Pumpkin farms may include corn mazes, farmer's markets, petting zoos, and, of course, pumpkins!

October is a great time to visit a farm that offers a pumpkin patch. Not only are the fields ablaze with orange, you'll likely find other fun activities to enjoy including farmer's markets, pumpkin chuckin' contests, hay rides, corn mazes, and more.

A Brief Pumpkin History

Pumpkins belong in the Squash family (Cucurbitaceae) along with watermelons, cucumbers, and squash. If the idea of both a **watermelon being a squash** and a squash being a squash is too messy for you, family members are also known as cucurbits and **includes zucchini** which grow all over the world. Modern day squashes we're used to can trace their heritage back to wild cucurbits growing in Central America.

Archaeological evidence reveals these wild relatives existed as far back as the Pleistocene, when woolly mammoths and mastodons roamed the North American continent. Scientists have picked through fossilized mastodon dung that is some 30,000 years old and located seeds of these ancient fruits. No B.C. BS.

With the arrival of early humans, these prehistoric bitter-tasting fruits probably served a more utilitarian purpose as containers than a food source. The bitterness is attributed to the presence of cucurbitacin, a chemical that made the fruits unpalatable to most creatures.

These ancient humans were also good gardeners and by **spreading seeds throughout the Americas**, several different lineages of domestic squash arose. Selective cultivation produced less bitter fruit and sweeter tasting flesh, thus enabling humans to grow these ancient fruits for food.

When early European explorers returned to Europe, they brought with them squash, maize, tomatoes, and **other plants** native to North and South America. It's believed *Cucurbita pepo* is the

cultivated species from which squash and pumpkin varieties and cultivars arose but this is still a subject of debate.

Growing Pumpkins

Pumpkins are a **long season crop that does well** in spacious, well drained areas that get full-sun since they're going to spread. Longer vines can reach 30 feet so don't mistake these for container or patio plants! Planting sites for these heavy feeders should include aged manure and compost. Though the vines like to sprawl, they can trail over barren ground, sidewalks, or gravel, as long as the growing hill has good rich and well drained soil. The planting hills, in tight spaces, might include everything from tires to raised beds to 5-gallon buckets.

Because pumpkins have a long growing season, generally around 75-100 frost-free days, the timing of their planting is critical. You want to avoid frosts and excessive soil moisture, especially in spring. Pumpkins don't like the cold, so if your harvest is going to **send them through cold weather**, cover your plants to prevent damage from frosts.

Seeds are sown directly in the soil once the temperature reaches at least 70 degrees, or start the seeds indoors and harden them off before planting outside. If the temperatures drop, protect the plants with covers. Check your zone or extension service for planting dates.

Pumpkins also need a fair amount of deep watering but avoid soaking the leaves and fruits which may rot if the sun doesn't dry off the foliage. Viruses and non-beneficial insects can also do a lot of damage, so vigilance is key when growing pumpkins.

Pumpkins have both male and female flowers; some early flowers may not form fruits because they are male flowers or because the male flowers haven't opened yet to provide pollen for fertilization. Bees are the primary pollinators, so maintaining a healthy pollinator garden is also critical to growing the best pumpkins.

A Pumpkin for Any Shape and Size



The number of pumpkin varieties is astounding. Grown for edibility, decorations, or jack-o-lanterns, pumpkins come in all sorts of shapes, sizes, and even colors. There is the 'Casper' variety that is ghostly white and 'Blue Doll' and 'Jarrahdale' varieties that are bluish. 'Harvest Jack', 'Jack O' Lantern', 'Connecticut Field', and 'Autumn Gold' are grown for Halloween carving pumpkins, while

others such as 'Baby Bear' and 'Baby Pam' are grown for eating. And if you really want to go jumbo, there's 'Dill's Atlantic Giant' that produces fruits that can weigh over 100 pounds!

If space is a problem, miniature varieties such as 'Jack-Be-Little' or 'Baby-Boo' take up less space and may be trellised along fences.

Pumpkin Patches, Hay Rides, and Corn Mazes



In addition to growing fields of pumpkins, many farms utilize their land for extra fall attractions. Some farmers offer hay rides, picnic areas, or market items such as eggs, vegetables, meat, or crafts for sale in addition to the pumpkins.

Based upon labyrinths and hedge mazes of Europe, some which date to the ancient Greeks and Romans, the modern mazes involves a pattern cut into a field of corn or, at times, sorghum. Farmers come up with their own ideas or work with specialized companies to create these intricate mazes. Varieties of corn that produce strong stalks are selected over those with higher yields.

The first corn maze in the United States was created in 1993 in east-central Pennsylvania. "The Amazing Maize Maze" covered over 3 acres and had nearly 2 miles of pathways. The image of a giant dinosaur – Cornelius the Cob-asaurus – was the centerpiece of the design.

Back then, corn mazes were cut into ankle-high fields of corn with simple tools such as string, pin flags, compass or GPS, mowers, and tape measurers. Transferring the image of the maze from graph paper to field might take several weeks to create. Today, GPS equipped mowers can download a corn maze file and cut the pattern in a day or two. There are even GPS controlled seed planters that will skip the open walkways when the seed is first being planted.

During the growing season, farmers weed out unwanted plants or pull up stray corn plants growing in the walkways. At times, the corn may be planted in double rows to maximize the "wall" effect between the rows.

To help visitors navigate their maze, farmers provide either paper maps or let maze-goers use aerial images on their smartphones to find their way through the design. A fun and popular fall activity, some mazes stay open during the evening to create a nocturnal challenge!

To find a nearby corn maze, visit www.cornmazesamerica.com.