

Sequatchie Valley Master Gardeners

A Program of the University of Tennessee Extension Sequatchie and Bledsoe Counties

December 2024

Gardening News and Notes

Reminder

As we near the end of the year, don't forget to record your hours.

- 426 hours reported thus far valued at \$12,750

Agriculture and Natural Resources Programs for 2024

Winter Bird Feeding

December 17, 2024 — 6:00 PM Central,
Sequatchie County Fair Building, 103 Heard St, Dunlap
RSVP email sdbarker@utk.edu, call 949-2611 or
online @ <https://forms.gle/AnZHBBztgVtdrrpy5>
Free!

Tennessee Tree Day

Saturday, March 15, 2025
You will be able to reserve trees later this month. Check out
<https://www.tectn.org/tennesseetreeday.html> for more
details.

**The Extension Master Gardener
Program is a program of the
University of Tennessee
Extension**

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UT Gardens Plant of the Month

December

From Alaska to Tennessee, Weeping Blue Alaskan Cedar Stands Out in Landscape

Submitted by James Newburn, managing director, UT Gardens, Knoxville



The Weeping Blue Alaskan Cedar displays a striking profile in the landscape. Photo courtesy UTIA.

Would a plant native to Alaska be able to survive in Tennessee? The answer is yes, and quite nicely, too. Weeping Blue Alaskan Cedar *Callitropsis nootkatensis* 'Gluaca Pendula' (syn, *Xanthocyparis nootkatensis*, *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*) is a beautiful evergreen conifer (cone-bearer) tree with drooping branches that rivals the weeping willow in graceful appearance.

The tree is native to southeastern Alaska to the Pacific Northwest and higher elevations of the Cascades. In the wild, it can typically become quite large, up to 90 feet or more. In cultivation it can reach 30 feet tall over the course of 35 years and continue growing. It likes full sun yet might respond well to a bit of afternoon shade in the most blazing of sites. Being

native to Alaska, it is very cold hardy (zones 4-7), and yet it is unbothered by the Tennessee heat and humidity.

Weeping Blue Alaskan Cedar grows in a dramatic conical form. The central leader (or trunk) climaxes in a fragile looking tip that appears to be reaching for the sun. It is hardly fragile, however. On sturdy yet flexible and slightly arching branches grow branchlets that are almost vertical to the ground. If it is well-drained, it is not picky about soil, except being too wet, of course.

Located so it can be seen against the sky or a light background, this tree is a perfect specimen plant. It will stand out with its unique blue-grey, blue-green foliage (glauca) and its pendulous (pendula) branches. Several in a row can be utilized as an effective screen, both functionally and aesthetically. With branches swaying in the wind, it becomes a terrestrial borealis.

When planting, choose a small specimen perhaps four to six feet tall. This allows it to grow into the landscape and year after year become more spectacular. It can be seen in three of the State Botanical Gardens of Tennessee sites, Jackson, Crossville, and Knoxville. It might be a long way from Alaska to Tennessee, but this Weeping Blue Alaskan Cedar does just fine here.

The UT Gardens includes plant collections located in Knoxville, Crossville, and Jackson, Tennessee. Designated as the official botanical garden for the state of Tennessee, the UT Gardens are part of the UT Institute of Agriculture. The Gardens' mission is to foster appreciation, education, and stewardship of plants through garden displays, educational programs, and research trials. The Gardens are open during all seasons and free to the public. For more information, see the Gardens website: utia.tennessee.edu/state-botanical-garden.



Gardening Tips

"Gardening requires lots of water - most of it in the form of perspiration."

Lou Erickson

January

It's hard to get motivated to do much of anything outdoors, but there are things you can do this month and into February to be ready for spring.

Garden Planning

- Design and plan the spring garden space. Early planning allows time to research plants' habits and performances. Review notes and photographs from the previous year.
- On warm days, take a look at the bare bones of your garden structure. See where plants can be placed, which plants might need to be moved, and write down your thoughts and ideas for future reference when the planting season begins.
- Continue to feed the birds!
- If your winter landscape is a bit dull, consider what plants you could add to make it more interesting. Plants with berries can brighten a winter landscape, and some have interesting bark and foliage. A great accent plant is the contorted filbert or Harry Lauder's Walking Stick. This twisted and gnarled plant is most attractive without its foliage. Hollies are loaded with berries, and so are many nandinas. Nandinas also have the advantage of red winter foliage. Some sasanqua camellias are still blooming, and the Mahonia will start to bloom in a month. If you are thinking of adding to your landscape, make sure you use plants that can add interest in every season.
- Needs some help planning here are some great publications:

Fruits and veggies

- Prune Grapes.
- Prune Fruit trees and spray them with Lime Sulphur and Dormant Oil to prevent insects and diseases.
- Spray Copper Spray to prevent Peach Leaf Curl.
- If you had terrible insect problems in your vegetable garden this year, particularly grubs, squash vine borers, and other soil insects, tilling your garden in the winter can help to control them. Many of these insects burrow down in the ground and spend the winter in a larval stage. Tilling can bring them closer to the surface and low temperatures can help to kill them. Don't do this if the ground is too wet, but if the soil is workable, this can help to start the season off clean.

Lawn care:

- Stay off frozen grass.
- If you see greening up occurring in your warm-season lawns such as Bermuda, zoysia, or St. Augustine, that means winter weeds are establishing themselves. Using a 2,4-D, broadleaf weed killer, can stop them in their tracks before they get large, bloom, and set seeds.

- You may not have gotten to all the fallen leaves raking can still be done this month. Shredded leaves can be added as a mulch to flower beds or even the vegetable garden.

Through its mission of research, teaching, and extension, the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture touches lives and provides Real. Life. Solutions. ag.tennessee.edu

2025 Tentative Dates

- Feb 1, 2025, MG Meeting – Pikeville
- March 15, 2025, Soil Test Saturday and Tennessee Tree Day - Dunlap
- *April 26, 2025 MG Meeting – Dunlap
- May 3-4, 2025 Valley Fest – official dates not announced yet
- *July Tomato Tasting – Pikeville
- November 1, 2025 MG Meeting – Dunlap
- *Tentative dates to be discussed at the February Meeting

2025 Programs

Watch for emails with dates, times, and locations

- January 2025 Tree Fruits
- January 28 – April 29, 2025, Master Gardener Intern Class, Mornings, location to be determined
- March 2025 – Growing Sweet Corn
- April 2025 – Wildlife Damage Management for lawn, garden, home
- April thru. May 2025 - Master Backyard Poultry
- Other topics planned
 - Seed collecting and Seed storage
 - Houseplants
 - Tree ID Walk (Fall/Winter ID)