

# UT EXTENSION SEQUATCHIE CO.

## HORTICULTURE AND GARDENING MONTHLY NEWS & NOTES

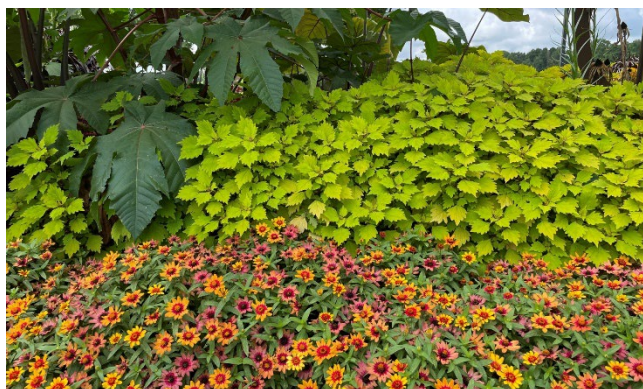
### APRIL 2022

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## UT Gardens Plant of the Month

### Colorful Favorites! Featuring Profusion and Zahara Series

Submitted by Celeste Luckey Scott, UT Extension Madison County



**The soft contrasts of color and leaf forms create a pleasing display at the University of Tennessee Gardens in Jackson. Featured here are zinnia 'Profusion Red Yellow Bicolor', Flamethrower™ Salsa Verde Coleus, and castor bean. Photo Credit: Celeste Luckey Scott**

Zinnias are a longtime favorite of home gardeners. They come in a wide variety of colors and flower forms ranging from single, to fully double, cactus flowered, and even crested. They are easy to grow from seed, relish full sun, are loved by pollinators and have a long vase life for cut stems. They also are tough and drought tolerant, requiring little to no additional watering once established. What more could a gardener ask for than a flower that has attributes like these? How about disease resistance?

The typical garden zinnia, *Zinnia elegans*, falls short in one category, disease resistance. It is susceptible to a wide range of foliar diseases including powdery mildew, cercospora leaf spot, alternaria leaf spot and bacterial leaf spot. Some *Z. elegans* cultivars claim resistance to these diseases, yet none can compare to the clean foliage offered by the hybrid Profusion and Zahara series. These series are hybrids of *Z. elegans* x *Z. angustifolia*, which incorporate desirable

attributes from each parent. *Z. angustifolia*, commonly known as the narrow leaf zinnia, has natural resistance to foliar disease and passes that trait along, while *Z. elegans* provides an array of flower color and larger blooms up to 2.5 inches in diameter. There are some tradeoffs, however. The hybrids have a compact growth habit of only 1 to 1.5 inches height similar to that of *Z. angustifolia*. This change in stature shifts its use in the garden from that of a striking mid-border cut flower to a non-stop flowering front-border plant.

Profusion and Zahara have been recognized through the years for their endurance and performance in the landscape as All-America Selection (AAS) winners. In the early 2000s 'Profusion Orange', 'Cherry' and 'White' each received AAS recognition. In 2010, 'Zahra Starlight Rose', 'Double Zahara Fire,' and 'Double Zahara Cherry' were recognized, followed by 'Profusion Double Deep Salmon' and 'Profusion Double Hot Cherry' in 2013. Most recently, 'Profusion Red', and 'Profusion Red Yellow Bicolor' received AAS winner award status. This broad color range allows makes for a very versatile plant in the landscape and containers.

Zinnia in general do not look particularly attractive to shoppers in cell packs or small containers, and for this reason may be difficult to find at local garden centers. However, they are very easy to start from seed and can even be direct-seeded outdoors once soil temperatures rise and all threat of frost has passed. The University of Tennessee Gardens, Jackson, grew 'Profusion Red Yellow Bicolor' in 2021, and it was phenomenal all the way until frost. The older blooms faded to shades of orange and pink while the new growth simultaneously produced new flushes of vibrant yellow-red blooms. All three UT Garden locations grow at least one example of these outstanding Profusion and Zahara zinnias during the summer months.



# Gardening Tips

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

Lou Erickson

## May Tips

May is the month when landscapers and gardeners are rewarded for their spring efforts with lush beauty and the promise of a glorious summer. Jason Reeves, curator of the University of Tennessee Gardens, Jackson, took some time from working in the Gardens to offer these tips for keeping your landscape and gardens beautiful and productive:

- Direct seed sunflowers in your garden and stagger their planting by every week or two through July so you have flowers until frost.
- Fertilize strawberry plants after their fruit has been harvested with 2 lbs. of 10-10-10 per 100 sq. ft.
- Keep an eye on watering everything which is newly planted. It doesn't take much for new little transplants to dry out and die before they have a chance to get established. Check every day for adequate moisture until plants take off and start to grow.
- Thin (pick off) excess fruits from apple, pear, and peach trees to a ratio of one fruit per 6-8 inches of branch.
- You can still direct seed easy-to-grow vegetables. Beans, peas, corn, and okra are some easy direct-sow vegetables, while dill, basil, and cilantro are some easy direct-sow herbs. If you prefer to get your garden green quickly, gardening shops have plenty of young plants available for sale.
- Here are some suggested planting dates for the vegetable garden:
  - Beans, Bush or Pole Snap – Apr 10 - Jun 20
  - Beans, Bush or pole Lima - May or June
  - Cantaloupe - May
  - Corn, Sweet - Apr 1 - June 1
  - Corn, Super Sweet - Apr 15 - June 1
  - Cucumber, Pickling - May
  - Cucumber, Slicing - May or June
  - Eggplant - May
  - Okra - May 5 - May 20
  - Peas, Field - May or June
  - Pepper, Sweet - May or June
  - Pepper, Hot - May or June
  - Potato, Sweet - May
  - Pumpkin - May
  - Squash, Summer - May or June
  - Squash, Winter - May or June
  - Tomatoes - Apr 10 – Jun 10
  - Watermelon – May

## Flowers and Shrubs

- As the days get hotter and your pansies show stress, remove them and replace them with summer annuals.
- Azaleas often show symptoms of lace bug and spider mite infestations during the hot months of summer. This damage can be prevented by a one-time, early application of the systemic insecticide imidacloprid. This insecticide should be poured in liquid form around the root system as the flowers fade, spreading the active ingredients throughout the plant tissue where it remains effective through the growing season. Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub Insect Control is a common brand that contains this safe and effective insecticide. Always follow label directions when applying any pesticide.
- Be sure to mow your lawn at the correct height. For turf-type fescues and bluegrass, have your mowing height to 2 ½ inches. The higher you cut your lawn the deeper the roots will grow helping it survive dry spells. Do not lime or fertilize your fescue or bluegrass lawns until late summer.
- Be sure to train new vines onto trellis or posts with the aid of twine. Plastic twine should be used to support the weight of the vine throughout the growing season.
- Caladiums and vinca need warm soil. Caladium tubers will rot in cool soil, and vinca will be disease-prone or exhibit stunted growth. Night temperatures should regularly be above 60 degrees F before planting them.
- Deadhead or prune back spent flowers on your perennials. This will manicure your garden and can stimulate reblooming of delphinium and columbine as well as other perennials.
- Plant butterfly weed (*Asclepias*), parsley, dill, rue, and pipevine to encourage butterflies in your garden. The foliage of these plants provides food for the caterpillars.
- You can selectively prune spring-flowering shrubs such as azalea, forsythia, weigela, lilac, beauty bush, and mockorange to control their growth or improve their shape as well as increase their bloom next year.

# Tennessee's Inaugural Food Waste Awareness Week is April 4-9

## UT Extension Encourages Tennesseans to Rethink Food Habits



**Tennessee's Inaugural Food Waste Awareness Week encourages all Tennesseans to explore ways in which they can help end food waste in Tennessee. Visit [getfoodsmarttn.com](http://getfoodsmarttn.com) for more information.**

**Photo courtesy of TDEC.**

Have you ever paused to consider how much food goes to waste in your household? The amount may surprise you. The USDA estimates that more than one-third of the food available in the United States is never eaten. This year, University of Tennessee Extension is partnering with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) and others to encourage Tennesseans to be better stewards of their food resources.

During the week of April 4-9, 2022, Tennessee's inaugural Food Waste Awareness Week will take place across the state with both virtual and in-person opportunities to participate. This free event is available to everyone and the goal is to increase awareness about issues surrounding food waste and to inspire Tennesseans to take action.

"The United States Environmental Protection Agency states that more food is placed in landfills than any other material," said Ashley Cabrera, creative services coordinator with TDEC's Office of Sustainable Practices. "Reducing this waste requires action by all, including farmers, businesses, institutions, and consumers. Throughout the week, we will provide opportunities for participants to learn best practices and take action to help end food waste in Tennessee."

"We are excited to partner with TDEC for this inaugural event," said Kristen Johnson, assistant professor, and UT Extension nutrition specialist. "The USDA estimates that the average family of four spends about \$1,500 on food that they never eat. We want to provide help to prevent this money loss and reduce food waste. Meal planning, buying a manageable amount of food, and making sure to use the food before it spoils are all good practices."

The week-long event will have daily themes and various opportunities to get involved, including a statewide food drive. For this, more than 40 county Extension offices across the state, with staff from both UT and Tennessee State University, will host food drives to ensure their neighbors are fed and food is kept out of landfills. To conclude the week, breweries and bakeries have partnered in Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, and Knoxville to host events featuring a limited-release specialty craft beer made from repurposing unsold bread. These family-friendly gatherings are available to anyone.

For more information on how to participate in Tennessee Food Waste Awareness Week, find a donation center, or locate an event near you, visit [getfoodsmarttn.com](http://getfoodsmarttn.com) and follow TDEC and UTIA/FC Extension on social media. To find nutrition classes through UT Extension and resources to help you reduce food waste and plan meals, visit [utextension.tennessee.edu](http://utextension.tennessee.edu).

Through its land-grant mission of research, teaching and extension, the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture touches lives and provides Real. Life. Solutions. [utia.tennessee.edu](http://utia.tennessee.edu).

## UT Gardens, Crossville, to Host Spring Plant Sale May 7 A Variety of Plants Will Be Available for Purchase



Plants such as this Echinacea, which attract pollinators and add color, will be among those available at the Spring Plant Sale. Photo courtesy UTIA.

With spring approaching, you can keep your garden thriving with plants from the annual Spring Plant Sale at the University of Tennessee Gardens, Crossville. This year, the sale offers new, award-winning, pollinator plants and several other on-trend plants. Staff horticulturist Shalena Durkot and Master Gardeners will be available to assist in your selection to meet your garden goals.

The date for the sale is May 7 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (CDT). Cash and checks will be accepted at the sale and admission is free.

With a \$35 donation, you can become a member of the UT Gardens. The donations help support many of the activities and beneficial research taking place at the UT Gardens, Crossville.

Member benefits include receiving the UT Gardens magazine twice

a year along with reciprocal admissions benefits at more than 300 gardens across the United States. For more information on the program, or to become a member, visit our [website](#).

The UT Gardens, Crossville, is part of the UT Plateau AgResearch and Education Center, located at 320 Experiment Station Road, Crossville. To find a downloadable list of the plants available at the Spring Plant Sale, click [here](#).

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## House Cleaning

### Is it necessary to clean birdhouses out at the end of the season?

Well, that depends check out this article online at;

<https://nestwatch.org/connect/blog/to-clean-or-not-to-clean-your-nest-box/>

## 2022 Master Beekeeping Basics classes planned

Interested in keeping bees, then the Master Beekeeping Program might be for you. Plans are underway for a class in Van Buren County – Spencer, TN May 5-6 from 8:30 am - 5:00 pm, central.

Registration is now open - the link: [tiny.utk.edu/mbp\\_basic](http://tiny.utk.edu/mbp_basic).

Other sessions planned:

- May 12-13: Madison County – Jackson, TN
- May 26-27: Blount County – Maryville, TN
- June 23-24: Fentress County – Jamestown, TN
- July 14-15: Washington County – Jonesborough, TN
- July 21-22: Maury County – Spring Hill, TN

## Sequatchie County Fair

Dates for the 2022 Sequatchie County Fair will be September 10-17, 2022 more details to come.

## Master Gardeners of Hamilton County Third Saturday Classes

<https://mghc.org/public-classes/>

NOTE: Due to the pandemic classes are currently being held via Zoom and Facebook. You can register for the upcoming classes using the registration link. Each month you will get a reminder about the upcoming class. [Zoom Registration Link](#)

Past presentations may be viewed on the [MGHC Facebook](#) page or the [MGHC Youtube channel](#).

## Cumberland County Master Gardeners 2022 Flower, Lawn, and Garden Show

April 22 and 23

Crossville, TN

Theme: Tennessee Smart Yards

Using proven horticultural practices, Tennessee Smart Yards' mission is to help communities across the state meet their landscaping needs while also helping to conserve and protect our state's water resources.

<https://www.ccmga.org/2022-flag-show>