

UT Extension Sequatchie Co. Horticulture and Gardening Monthly News & Notes

January 2023

Vegetable Gardening Series

Gardening basics and more for the beginner and the experienced gardener

Are you new to gardening, or an old hand looking for new ideas? This series of classes will cover four basic topics related to vegetable gardening:

- The January 19, 2023 - Vegetable Gardening Basics class will discuss site selection, soil testing, how to find information and resources, and much more.
- The February 16, 2023 - Straw Bale Gardening Basics class will cover how to prepare straw bales and some tips for Straw Bale Gardening.
- March 16, 2023 - The Gardening with Containers and Raised Beds class will examine growing vegetables in raised beds and containers. A great way to grow vegetables in small areas or on a small scale.
- April 20, 2023 - Growing Tomatoes, we will cover one, if not the most, frequently grown vegetable in the garden, with tips on how to have a prize-winning tomato.

All classes are at 6:00 PM CST and will be at the Sequatchie Co. Fair Building, 103 Heard St. Dunlap, TN

Contact the UT Extension office at 949-2611 or email sdbarker@utk.edu for more information.

Sponsored by the Sequatchie County Fair and UT Extension Sequatchie County these classes are free to the public.

Recent Publications

- [D 183 Tennessee Smart Yards](#) - Authored by Andrea Ludwig, Department of Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science
- Indoor Plant series - Authored by Natalie Bumgarner, Department of Plant Sciences, and Mark Garrison, UT Extension
 - [W 1128 A - Selecting Indoor Plants for the Home or Office](#)
 - [W 1128 B - Caring for Indoor Plants](#)

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Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development.
University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.
UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

UT Gardens Plant of the Month

Versatile Witchhazels Feature Fall and Winter Blooms and Bright Fall Colors



The rich and varied blooms of witchhazel shrubs and trees add color to fall and winter landscapes, as do their bright fall foliage. Cultivars of these “everything plants” can offer fragrance, too.

We all want something to look at in our gardens year-round. Blooms at unexpected times can bring a world of joy to the garden, and among the plants that offer them are witchhazels (*Hamamelis spp.*). There are many types of witchhazel shrubs and trees you can grow. Each one is a cool season favorite with fringed, often sweetly fragrant blooms. Many species also have nicely colored fall foliage adding to their appeal.

Ranging in both habit and size, witchhazels vary in form from a dense rounded to a wide spreading shrub, or as upright multi-stemmed vase-shaped tree. While best grown in moist, well-drained, acidic soils, witchhazel is adaptable and tolerant of heavy clay. Plants can be grown in sun or shade, but increased sunlight with adequate moisture improves their flower display. Witchhazel has low maintenance demands as well as good pest and disease resistance. Pruning is not required but can be done in spring after flowering to control shape, size, and removal of any suckers from the rot stock.

Although serious disease and insect problems are rare, Japanese beetles, leaf gall aphids, and powdery mildew can occur on occasion.

There are plenty of places witchhazel can fit in the home garden. Plant as a single specimen, add to a mixed border or use in group plantings. Overall, this is an easy and worthwhile plant to add to your landscape.

The following is a list of the more common species and hybrids and recommended cultivars. Most grow between 10- and 15-feet high and thrive in USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 5 to 8. Witchhazels can be found growing in all three locations of the University of Tennessee Gardens.

H. virginiana (common witchhazel): A fall blooming favorite among native plant lovers. Grows 20 to 30 feet in the wild with cultivars in the 10- to 15-foot range. Fragrant, yellow blooms October to December. Golden fall foliage.

- ‘Harvest Moon’ – Notable for its tendency to drop its leaves before it flowers, unlike most other native varieties which flower with the leaves still attached making the blooms less visible.
- ‘Little Suzie’ – Compact, slow growing to 4 to 5 feet in 10 years. Blooms at an early age, more densely than the species.

H. vernalis (vernal/Ozark witchhazel) has the smallest flowers of all the species but makes up for size with the most intense fragrance. Grows 6 - to 10 feet tall with wider spread. Yellow to red blooms January to March. New leaves emerge bronze to reddish purple with golden fall foliage.

- ‘Amethyst’ – deep red purple flower best backed by some lighter color.
- ‘Quasimodo’ – Dwarf, growing slowly to 4 to 6 feet. Fragrant, orange blooms. Leaves smaller than species, blue-green turning yellow in fall.

H. mollis (Chinese witchhazel) & *H. japonica* (Japanese witchhazel) have been crossed to produce the hybrid *H. x intermedia*. Cultivars of this hybrid have gained popularity due to their wide range of flower colors like orange, red, pink, and purple opening in January to mid-March.

- ‘Aurora’ – Two-toned long petals with yellow tips and an orange base.
- ‘Angelly’ – Vigorous upright-spreading form with clear bright yellow flowers.
- ‘Arnold Promise’ – Large, clear yellow fragrant flowers.
- ‘Aphrodite’ – Copper-red with reddish fall foliage.
- ‘Diane’ – Red flowers with leaves turning shades of yellow, orange, and red in fall.
- ‘Feuerzauber’ – Excellent coppery orange-red flowers. Orange-red fall color.
- ‘Gingerbread’ – Deep burnt-orange flowers. Yellow fall foliage.
- ‘Jelena’ – This prized hybrid has a sweet fragrance and showy copper flowers in winter with rich, orange-red foliage in fall.
- ‘Wisley Supreme’ – This cultivar of *H. mollis* has sweet-scented, pale yellow flowers often opening as early as Christmas.



Gardening Tips

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

Lou Erickson

February Tips

Want to start your garden from scratch? Now is a good time to start various annuals and vegetables from seed. Hamilton says starting seeds is fun, and it's a great way to introduce youngsters (and the young at heart) to gardening. Seed starter kits are available in a variety of styles. Just follow the seed packet or seed catalog instructions on timing and method.

- Deciduous shrubs and trees are still dormant enough to transplant this month, once the buds have begun to swell, I would recommend waiting until fall.
- Mid to late February is a good time to fertilize trees, shrubs, and evergreens. Use an acid type fertilizer to feed evergreens, conifers, broad-leaf evergreens, rhododendrons, azaleas, and camellias. Use an all-purpose fertilizer to feed roses and other deciduous trees and shrubs. If you use dry type fertilizers, be sure to water it in thoroughly.
- You can prune evergreens for size and shape. Prune hydrangeas during the last week of the month. Avoid pruning flowering shrubs such as forsythia, quince, spirea, azalea, and other early spring flowering shrubs since they have already produced their buds last fall, and pruning them now will result in the loss of flowers. After pruning, dispose of clippings to prevent disease or insect spread.
- Soon after February 15 is the time to plant new roses, or move old roses.
- Strawberries can be planted as soon as they become available.
- Cane fruits (raspberries and blackberries), except for everbearers should have all the canes which produced fruit last year removed.
- Give your asparagus beds a light covering with rich compost.
- Prepare soil for planting potato crops. Plant them in areas that have previously been overgrown with perennial weeds. You can reduce the chances of weeds reoccurring and help to break up the soil by planting potatoes in rows three feet apart.

Trees And Shrubs

- Plant burlap bagged, bare-root, and container trees and shrubs during the entire month when the ground is not frozen or likely to freeze.
- Plant Southern Magnolia and Cherry Laurel towards the end of the month, or else wait until March.
- Plant hardy woody vines like Clematis and Wisteria during periods of mild weather when the ground is not frozen.
- Plant hardy ground covers whenever the ground is not frozen. These should be heavily rooted plants, not a transplanted runner.
- It is best to plant shrubs when the soil is not too wet. If planting is necessary when the soil is wet, use dry peat moss as a soil amendment. It will absorb excess moisture and make it easier to prepare a good mix for planting.
- Continue to prune all dormant, deciduous, and evergreen trees this month as needed. Both light and heavy pruning are OK but do not prune trees when the sap is frozen. Also, never remove the central shoot or leader of a shade tree; you will ruin its natural shape.
- Prune spring flowering trees like Dogwood, Bradford Pear, and flowering peach, pear, and cherry trees, but do so sparingly and selectively. Remove any crossed branches, damaged or diseased wood, and bad growth. Remember that buds for spring blossoms are already present on the branches from last summer. Pruning them will reduce the number of flowers on the tree.
- Heavy structural pruning of evergreen shrubs like boxwood or Burford Holly can be done in February.

Fruits

- Plant burlap bagged, bare root, and container grown fruits all month. This includes fruit trees (peaches, apples, cherries, pears, etc.) bush fruits (blueberries), semi-bush fruits (raspberries, blackberries), and vine fruits (grapes, muscadines).
- Plant nut trees this month.
- Begin to plant figs and strawberries at the end of the month, after the danger of hard freezes has passed.
- Finish pruning fruit trees as soon as possible this month. Use the Open Head or Basket method of pruning for peaches, plums, apricots, and nectarines. Use the Modified Leader method for pruning apples, pears, and cherries. Flower buds are already set on last summer's growth. Be sure to leave plenty of this growth for flowers and fruits. After pruning, fertilize your trees.
- Continue to prune and train semi-bush fruits like blackberries and raspberries. Train last season's growth onto wire or trellises. You must keep these fruiting canes separate from the new growth which will grow this summer and bear fruit next year.
- Continue to prune grapes and muscadines and train them onto a one or two-wire fence.
- Fertilize fruit trees as the buds begin to swell. Use a 15-15-15 fertilizer or a complete organic fertilizer like Tree Tone at a rate of one-half pound per year of age of the tree. Use a maximum of 15 pounds on apples and pears and five pounds on peaches, nectarines, and plums. This is usually done once a year.
- Fertilize nut trees if you haven't already. Use a 15-15-15 or complete organic fertilizer, except with Pecans. Pecans need a special Pecan fertilizer with zinc, or an organic fertilizer that has zinc in it (which Tree Tone has).
- Begin fertilizing grapes and semi-bush fruits with 15-15-15 or an organic fertilizer. Use about two pounds per vine on established, producing grapes. Use one pound per plant on young (one to three year old) semi-bush fruits, and two pounds per plant for older semi-bush fruits. This is usually done once a year.
- Apply a recommended dormant spray on tree fruits, semi-bush fruits, and grapes if you have not done so already. Spray only when the material will be dry before it freezes and before the buds begin to swell.
- Wait until after you have pruned to spray fruits.
- Water newly planted fruit trees thoroughly, even if the ground is wet, to settle in the soil around the roots.
- Be careful when mowing orchard areas, not to hit the bark of fruit trees with the mower. Any damage to the bark provides an entrance for borers.
- Keep fruits mulched with pine straw to prevent weeds and grasses from competing for water and fertilizer.

Roses

- Continue to plant bare root roses when the ground is not frozen. Before planting, trim long or broken roots and cut stems back to a healthy bud. Container grown roses can be planted now through April.
- Begin pruning roses in late February. Hybrid Tea, Floribunda, Grandiflora, and other "everblooming" types should be pruned severely to force healthy new growth. Climbing cultivars should be pruned by thinning out older canes, leaving the long, young branches which produce the best blossoms.
- Do not fertilize established roses until after they have been pruned.
- Apply lime sulfur as a dormant spray on roses in early February if you did not do so in January. Spray at a time when the material will not freeze before it dries. This will control over-wintering spores of major diseases.
- Do not be concerned if new leaves which have emerged on top of canes during the winter are damaged by dormant sprays or cold weather. You will be removing them during major structural pruning in March.

Flowers

- Plant hardy biennials and perennial roots like Chrysanthemum, Purple Cone Flower, and Shasta Daisy whenever the weather is mild. Plant in well-drained soil. Most perennials need sweet (alkaline) soil. Check instructions and apply

dolomitic limestone or one meal if suggested. However, do not apply lime in areas near broadleaf evergreens like azaleas and camellias. Mulch plants heavily with pine straw to prevent their heaving out of the ground in a late freeze. Finish seeding hardy annuals, biennials, and perennials like Foxglove, Purple Cone Flower, and Shasta Daisy inside or in the greenhouse.

- Plant pansies in the garden all month when the weather is mild. Sweet Peas can still be planted in February. Plant them in trenches whenever the weather is mild. Continue to plant peonies and iris this month.
- Repot large geranium and Begonia which are to be set outside on terraces and decks when the danger of frost is over. They need time to start growing and become beautiful before moving outside.
- Fertilize annuals, biennials, and perennials with 15-15-15 or a complete organic fertilizer like Garden Tone or Plant Tone. Fertilize every six to eight weeks after with either 5-10-15 or a complete organic fertilizer.

Vegetables

- Plant Irish potatoes and hardy lettuce like Black Seeded Simpson at the end of the month or in March when the threat of severe cold has passed.
- Continue to plant garlic cloves and onion sets this month. Onion plants may also be planted this month.
- Start the following inside as soon as possible in early February: Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Collard, Lettuce, and Onion. These can be planted outside in March after the danger of a hard freeze has passed.
- Lime gardens with dolomitic limestone if you didn't do so last month and soil test indicates the need. Apply at a rate of 50 pounds per 10000 square feet or as the soil test advises. Do not lime areas where you are going to grow Irish Potatoes.
- Fertilize as you plant with 15-15-15 or with a complete organic fertilizer like Garden Tone. Application is at a rate of approximately one pound per 10 feet of row.
- Winter weeds growing in care vegetable areas can be eradicated with Roundup (wait at least 2 weeks after application before planting), however, if you cover the bed up with autumn leaves 3 inches deep, you can prevent the winter weeds from growing in the bed in the first place - and it is better for the soil too.

UT Institute of Agriculture Announces 2023 Field Day Schedule Nineteen Events Showcase Diversity of Research and Outreach



KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture plans to host nineteen in-person field days in 2023. Most of the events will take place on UT AgResearch campuses across the state. One event, Turf Tuesdays, will be held weekly and online.

Field days are traditional events for the AgResearch and Education centers, dating back to their inception. It's a time for producers, members of the public, and other research and extension personnel to see projects and facilities up close. Attendance at these events can range from several dozen people to thousands.

Carrie Castille, senior vice chancellor and senior vice

president of the UT Institute of Agriculture, is excited to see another year of research and education in action. "Our dedicated faculty and staff work year-round to improve the lives of people in Tennessee and beyond. Through our field day events, people can get a front-row view of new techniques and initiatives that can add long-term value to their lives and work," she says.

Topics in 2023 will be of interest to consumers, homeowners, land managers and producers. They range from precision livestock and crop production technologies, gardening, forestry, fruit production and much more.

"It's going to be a wonderful year of informative field days and we are excited to introduce two new events to the 2023 schedule," says Hongwei Xin, dean of AgResearch at UTIA. "Agriculture is multi-layered and the largest industry in

Tennessee. To meet the various agriculture needs across the state, we've added Fall in the Gardens: Plant Sale and Garden Talks at our West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center and Fall in the Foothills at our East Tennessee Center to the list of field days. As always, these events will provide agricultural professionals and enthusiasts with life-improving applications."

The events will begin in February and continue through October, as listed below. Times are subject to change and will be posted on utia.tennessee.edu accordingly.

- Horse Management – February 7, 5 p.m. EST, Brehm Animal Science Arena, UTIA Campus, Knoxville
- Horse Management – February 13, 5 p.m. CST, Western Region, location TBD
- Horse Management – February 14, 5 p.m. CST, Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center at Spring Hill
- **Fruits of the Backyard – June 13, 8 a.m. CDT, Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center at Spring Hill**
- Weed Tour – June 21, 8:30 a.m. CDT, West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center at Jackson
- Green Industry Day – June 27, 8 a.m. EDT, UT Gardens and Brehm Animal Science Building, UTIA Campus, Knoxville
- Tobacco, Beef and More – June 29, 8 a.m. CDT, Highland Rim AgResearch and Education Center at Springfield
- **Summer Celebration – July 13, 8 a.m. CDT, West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center at Jackson**
- **Steak and Potatoes – August 24, 8 a.m. CDT, Plateau AgResearch and Education Center at Crossville**
- **Fall Gardener's Festival – August 29, 8 a.m. CDT, Plateau AgResearch and Education Center at Crossville**
- **UT Arboretum Butterfly Festival – September 9, 10 a.m. EDT, Forest Resources AgResearch and Education Center at UT Arboretum in Oak Ridge**
- Cotton Tour – September 13, 8 a.m. CDT, West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center at Jackson
- Precision Livestock Technologies: Beef and Forage Systems – September 26, 8 a.m. CDT, Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center at Spring Hill
- **Fall in the Gardens: Plant Sale and Garden Talks – October 5, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. CDT, and October 6, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. CDT, West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center at Jackson**
- Northeast Tennessee Beef Expo – TBA, 7:30 a.m. EDT, Northeast Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center at Greeneville
- Woods and Wildlife – October 19, 7 a.m. EDT, Forest Resources AgResearch and Education Center at UT Arboretum in Oak Ridge
- Beef Heifer Development School – October 20, 8:30 a.m. CDT, Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center at Lewisburg
- Fall in the Foothills – October 20-21, 11 a.m. EDT, East Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center, Little River Animal and Environmental Unit in Walland

Tennessee Turf Tuesdays will take place every Tuesday online. You can find more information at tiny.utk.edu/TurfTuesday. The date for the Northeast Tennessee Beef Expo will be announced soon.

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.