

UT Extension Sequatchie Co.

Horticulture and Gardening Monthly News & Notes

March 2023

2023 Dates

- March 18, 2023, Tennessee Tree Day, and Soil Test Saturday, Sequatchie County Extension office. See below.
- March 25, 2023, Bledsoe, Soil Test Saturday at the Farmers Market
- May 5-7, 2023, Valley Fest
- August 12, 2023, 4-H Poultry Show 9:00 AM
- August 19-26, 2023, Sequatchie County Fair

Vegetable Gardening Series

Gardening basics and more for the beginner and the experienced gardener

- 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.

Soil Test Saturdays

Planning A Garden This Spring? Then Consider a Soil Test.

The University of Tennessee Extension Sequatchie County and the Sequatchie Valley Master Gardeners are hosting two "Soil Test Saturdays" in March.

Cost \$20 per sample for testing and shipping.

- March 18, 2023, from 9:00 AM till Noon Central at the UT Extension Sequatchie office 170 Church St, Dunlap, TN.
- March 25, 2023, from 9:00 AM till Noon Central at the Pikeville Farmers Market, 3150 Main St, Pikeville, TN.
Master Gardeners and Extension staff will be on hand to assist with samples and ship them. They will also be able to answer soil fertility-related questions at these events. The cost of the test is \$20.00 per sample which includes testing and shipping and handling fees.

Need more information visit the website at <https://sequatchie.tennessee.edu/soil-test-saturdays/>

Sheldon D. Barker • 423.949.2611 • sdbarker@utk.edu • Sequatchie County

[Facebook](#) • [YouTube](#) • [Instagram](#) • [website](#)

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

Japanese Cornel Dogwood Provides Bright Mid-Winter Blooms

Submitted by Sue Hamilton, Director Emerita of the UT Gardens



The landscape can be dreary in January and February, so trees or shrubs that offer a bit of cheer with winter blooms can be a welcome addition to almost any yard or garden. Underused in the landscape, the Japanese cornel dogwood is just such a plant. In midwinter it defies the gloom with showy clusters of yellow flowers.

The Japanese cornel dogwood's exfoliating bark also adds interest to the winter garden with its rich grays, browns, and oranges.

Native to Japan and Korea, *Cornus officinalis* usually grows as a large, spreading, multi-stemmed, deciduous shrub or a small tree up to 15-25 feet tall. A deciduous plant, with pale yellow to reddish-purple fall foliage, the Japanese cornel

dogwood is effective in the landscape when used in foundation plantings, shrub borders, woodland gardens, bird gardens or naturalized areas. The plant prefers full sun to partial shade and tolerates a range of soil types. In the

The showy yellow flower clusters of 'Sunsphere' Japanese cornel dogwood are a great antidote to a dreary winter day. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Northam.

autumn, like other dogwoods, showy red fruits (drupes) decorate this plant. Technically these drupes are edible, but most would find them astringent.

Japanese cornel dogwood is just one of about 30 to 50 species of dogwood, including our more familiar native flowering dogwood tree *Cornus florida*. Although it resembles the Cornelian cherry dogwood (*Cornus mas*), the Japanese cornel dogwood grows with a slightly more open habit, flowers a bit earlier and has more attractive bark than Cornelian cherry dogwood.

Several great cultivars of Japanese cornel dogwood are available on the market including 'Sunsphere' which flowers slightly earlier than others in the species; 'Kintoki' known for its heavier bloom; 'Lemon Zest' which has larger flowers than most selections; 'Issai Minan' which flowers well as a young plant; and 'Morris Arboretum' which has heavy bloom and a slightly longer flowering period. Tennessee nursery owner and University of Tennessee horticulture alumnus Mike Stansberry introduced the Sunsphere selection. He named it for the Knoxville Sunsphere, a landmark architectural tower that was constructed as part of the 1982 World's Fair. East Tennessee is home to Stansberry's Beaver Creek Nursery.

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.



Gardening Tips

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

Lou Erickson

April Tips

Vegetable Garden Tips

- Finish site preparation if not completed. Use proper pre-plant fertilizer. extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/W346-C.pdf
- Finish direct seeding and transplanting cool season crops to prevent them from maturing under hot summer conditions. A 35-day lettuce direct seeded April 1 will need until May 15 to mature. Even early maturing broccoli and cabbage transplants usually take at least 45-50 days from transplanting.
- Harvest may begin on the earliest seeded leafy crops or root crops.
- Begin purchasing transplants of warm-season crops. Select plants that are stocky and show good green coloration and no signs of pests or diseases.
- It is common to seed some direct seeded warm-season crops a bit before the frost free date (beans, corn). Be cautious of soil temperatures, though, especially if you are seeding untreated seeds or supersweet corn.
- Transplants of warm-season crops can be planted in Tennessee in April after frost free dates. However, soil temperatures support root growth, and sometimes early transplant dates are not all that helpful due to cool soils.
- Harden off your transplants before placing them in the garden. extension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/W346-B.pdf

Lawn Tips

All Grass Types

- Crabgrass typically germinates during early to mid-April, so make sure initial PRE herbicide applications have been made before germination.
- Complete an irrigation audit if applicable to make sure there is adequate coverage and everything is running properly.

Tall Fescue

- Apply fertilizer if needed.
- Mow according to one-third rule.

Bermudagrass/Zoysiagrass

- Consider mowing lawn and collecting clippings to remove dormant biomass, which will accelerate green-up process by facilitating soil warming.

Winter Freeze

December had its share of extreme cold and many plants in the landscape suffered damage – be patient and see what the plant does. Visit <https://sequatchie.tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/89/2023/03/Handling-the-Holiday-Freeze-in-Your-Lawn-Landscape.pdf> for more details. There is a video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXCLZajsIOE>