Washington County Cooperative Extension Service

# The Hoe Truth Newsletter

## Helping You Grow

HORTICULTURE

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March 2024

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## New Pesticide Labeling and Endangered and Threatened Species

Over the next years and decades, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will begin to add endangered and threatened species protections to pesticide labeling. This will occur as new products are approved or during the registration review process. I have seen several herbicide labels that now list the new endangered species protection requirements. The goal of EPA's Endangered Species Protection Program (ESPP) is to carry out EPA's responsibilities under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) in compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), without placing unnecessary burden on agriculture and other pesticide users. All pesticide products that EPA determines "may affect" a listed species or its designated critical habitat may be subject to the ESPP.

If the pesticide label directs you to use an Endangered Species Bulletin, then you are required to obtain a product-specific bulletin found in the Bulletins Live! Two system

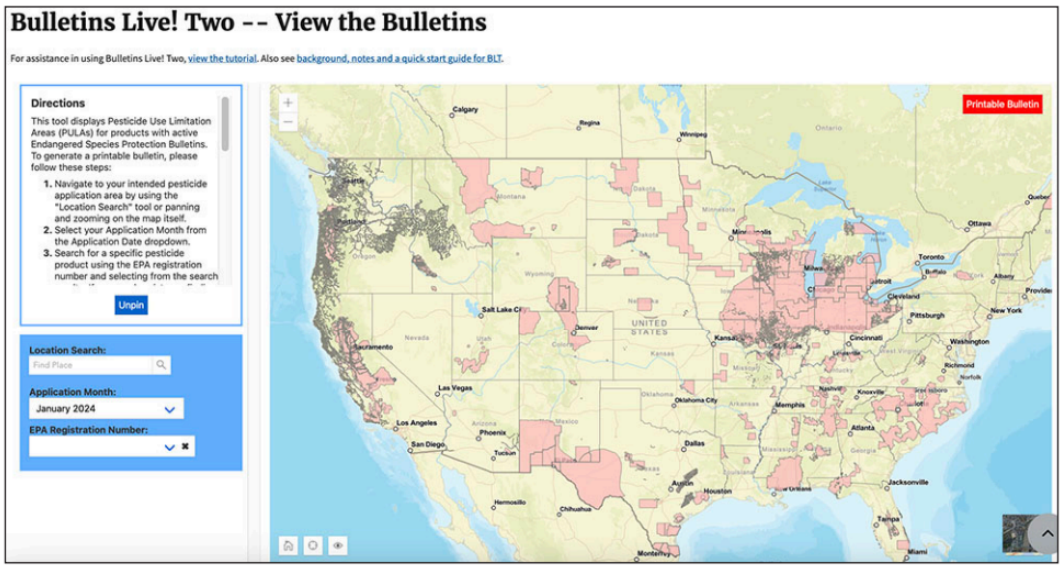


**Figure 1.** When directed by the label, applicators must visit the Bulletins Live! Two website to identify use limitations for the product and area of application no earlier than 6 months prior to application.


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Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.

# To Do's For March

- Now is a good time to plan your flower and vegetable garden layout. Look through garden catalogs and landscaping books. Plan on using plants that you have experience with and new varieties, and always try to buy plants that are disease resistant. Check local nurseries for cultivar availability. Generally locally grown plants are better and you get to look at the plants before you buy them.
- March and April are good months for planting fruit crops. When planting apples choose more than one variety for pollination and fruit set. There are several apples that are good and disease resistant in Kentucky, such as Liberty, Redfree, Enterprise, and my personal favorites Pristine and Williams Pride. For a more complete list call me at the office.
- It is also a good time to plant thornless blackberries (Apache, Arapaho, Prime Ark 45, Triple Crown), raspberries (Bristol, Jewel, Mac Black, Brandywine, Royalty, Prelude)
- March and April are also good months for planting trees and shrubs.
- Early March is a good time to prune summer-flowering trees and shrubs such as clethra, beautyberry, butterfly bush, golden raintree, mimosa, and only the following hydrangeas (Annabelle, Hills of Snow, Peegee). Do not prune mop head types of hydrangeas or they will not bloom this year.
- It's a good idea to start spraying fruit trees for diseases as well. Apply liquid lime-sulfur spray on peach and plum trees anytime before the buds start to swell. This single spray will almost completely control peach leaf curl and plum pocket. Two diseases that cause premature defoliation each year and can weaken trees over time.
- You can also spray raspberry and blackberry with a liquid lime sulphur spray to help control anthracnose. This will not control it completely, however it will help and additional sprays during the growing season will be needed.
- A dormant spray of copper sulfate should be applied to apple and pear trees by the first of April to improve control of fireblight. Be sure to spray the entire tree. A streptomycin sulfate spray (if available) during the growing season will also help.

# New Pesticide Labeling and Endangered and Threatened Species

no earlier than 6 months prior to using the product (https://www.epa.gov/endangered-species/bulletins-live-two-view-bulletins). On this website, the applicator will need to indicate the area of application and EPA registration number(s) of the product(s) they will use in order to generate a bulletin. Applicators must follow any restrictions on these bulletins, as well as on the pesticide labelling for the application area, pesticide product, and application month. When referenced on a pesticide label, bulletins are enforceable use-limitations under the FIFRA. Often, there may not be any geographically specific use limitations for the product you are applying even if your label directed you to this website because either: 1) EPA has not yet completed the process of identifying whether additional geographically specific use limitations are needed, or 2) There are no additional geographically specific use limitations required for the time period and location you plan to apply the pesticide product.

EPA continues to complete Endangered Species Act consultations and update the 'Bulletins Live! Two' system with additional geographically specific use limitations that may be applicable to your pesticide product in the future. Therefore, before you apply a pesticide, check to see if new or additional directions for the product have been added to 'Bulletins Live! Two.' It's important to note, you have a 6-month window to obtain a bulletin before you apply a pesticide (e.g., you can obtain a bulletin January 1 to July 1 if you plan to apply the pesticide on July 1). If the product will be used again the following year, a new bulletin must be obtained.

# Starting Seeds Indoors

If you are like me you probably start at least a few plants from seed for your vegetable or flower garden. Each year I get questions on how to start your own plants and it is good to refresh our memories sometime so I have put together ten things to consider when starting seeds at home.

**(1.)** Buy quality seed from a reputable dealer. Look on the back of the packets of seeds, somewhere usually at the bottom it will have a packed by date. It should have the current year's date which would be 2011 for this year's growing season. If you save seeds or have seeds from previous years, storage is the key to longevity. Many seeds can be viable for up to 10 years if stored properly. Contrary to popular belief the freezer is not the best place to store seeds. Actually, the refrigerator is the best place. Seeds need a cool (not cold) dark place with low humidity.

If you have old seed it's easy to do a germination test. Simply dampen a paper towel, place ten seeds on the towel, fold it and put it in a zip lock bag and place it on the top of the refrigerator. Seeds should sprout in a few days. Count the number that sprouted, if 6 out of ten germinated then you have a 60% viability rate and you should increase the number of seeds you sow accordingly.

**(2.)** Only use a high quality germination mix. Ideally it should be fine and not clumpy or hard. This is one area where cheaper is not better. Many of the name brands such as jiffy mix etc. are good enough. If you have larger seeds such as tomato the jiffy pellets work great.

**(3.)** It is always a good idea to use wide flat containers for seed starting. It reduces the amount of soil you will have to use and it will be a little more forgiving if you over water. Regular trays you buy plants in are fine but be sure to wash them with a 10% bleach solution and rinse them well before using. Peat pellets will relieve some of the issues with containers but they will dry out much faster.

**(4.)** Firm seeds in after sowing. It is imperative that they make good contact with the soil. Dry pockets can dry out newly emerged roots quickly thus killing a seedling before it really gets started. Be sure to mist them in well. Maintain moisture but be sure not to have the media dry or soggy, just moist.

**(5.)** Cover trays with plastic wrap or a humidity dome sold at a large department store, you can guess which one. Keep in mind not to put these in direct sun and don't make it air tight. With a cover the sun can heat up the flat too much and if the wrap is sealed down it can lock in too much moisture. Just leave the corner unsealed or if you are using a humidity dome turn it to one side or the other to allow some air exchange.

**(6.)** Keep seed warm to encourage germination. The top of the refrigerator is a good place but remember the plants will stretch quickly upon germination, so just as soon as you see one starting to come up move the flat to light. Another way to warm the flat is to place it on a heating mat for germinating. There are several to choose from but the cheapest ones are for one flat and keeps the temperature of the flat around 70 degrees which is adequate for most seeds. Remember if you are going to place your flats somewhere to keep them warmer than the actual temperature they will dry out faster than they would otherwise.

**(7.)** The most important aspect of starting seeds indoors is light. Most people get disgusted with starting seeds indoors because their plants stretch from lack of adequate lighting. Once your plants germinate they are going to need the sunniest window you can provide and that may not be enough. You can provide additional light by hanging a fluorescent light or grow tube over them to increase wave length. Using grow lights is another way to grow plants if you don't have adequate window space or exposure. The lights should be hung as close to the plants as possible without touching

# Gardeners Wheelbarrow Series 2024

Fill This Registration Out and Return To The Extension Office, Circle if you will be attending the Morning or Evening Sessions If Applicable And Total At The Bottom

***Attention!!! If An AM Or PM Session Doesn't Have At Least 5 To Register For That Session It Will Be Canceled Via One Call***

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ~~Feb. 15th~~ | ~~AM~~ | ~~PM~~ | ~~Composting 101~~ | ~~Free!~~ | |
| ~~Feb. 22nd~~ | ~~AM~~ | ~~PM~~ | ~~Growing Root Vegetables In Kentucky~~ | ~~$5.00~~ | |
| ~~Feb. 29th~~ | ~~AM~~ | ~~PM~~ | ~~Terrific Tomatoes~~ | ~~$5.00~~ | |
| Mar. 7th | AM | PM | Culinary Herbs From Seed | $5.00 | FULL |
| Mar. 14th | AM | PM | Abundant Asparagus | $10.00 | |
| Mar. 21st | AM | PM | Opulent Onions, Lovely Leeks, Shallots | $10.00 | |
| Mar. 28th | AM | PM | Bodacious Blackberries | $20.00 | |
| Apr. 4th | AM | PM | Popular Perennials | $25.00 | |
| Apr. 11th | AM | PM | Photogenic Phlox | $20.00 | |
| Apr. 18th | AM | PM | Heavenly Heirlooms | $5.00 | |
| Apr. 25th | AM | PM | Prizewinning Pineapple Lilies | $10.00 | |
| May 2nd | AM | PM | Captivating Crinum Lilies | $15.00 | |
| May 16th | AM | PM | Lavish Lilacs | Free! | |
| May 23rd | AM | PM | Dynamite Dahlias | $20.00 | |
| May 30th | AM | PM | Classy Citrus | Free! | |
| June 6th | AM | NA | Horticulture How To: Living Wreaths | $10.00 | FULL |
| June 13th | AM | PM | Glorious Gladiolas | $5.00 | |
| June 20th | AM | NA | Horticulture How To: Draped Containers | $5.00 | FULL |
| June 27th | AM | PM | Ticks and Tick Borne Diseases | Free! | |
| July 18th | AM | PM | Fall Vegetable Gardening | $5.00 | |
| July 25th | AM | NA | Horticulture How To: Windchimes | $5.00 | |
| Aug. 8th | AM | PM | Weed Identification and Control | Free! | |
| Aug. 22nd | AM | PM | Irresistible Iris | $10.00 | |
| Sept. 5th | AM | PM | Colorful Conifers For Kentucky | Free! | |
| Sept. 26th | AM | PM | Glorified Garlic | $10.00 | |
| Oct. 10th | AM | PM | Alternative Spring Flowering Bulbs | $10.00 | |
| Oct. 24th | AM | PM | Dennis' Favorite Trees | Free! | |
| | | | Basic Registration For Any and All Classes | $5.00 | $5.00 |
| | | | Total From Above | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | **TOTAL** | | |

# Winter Preparation Gives Gardeners a Jump on Spring

As winter draws to a close, it is time for vegetable and flower gardeners to start preparing for the spring planting season, said Rick Durham, associate extension professor for consumer horticulture at the University of Kentucky. The vegetable growing season is fast approaching for some areas of the state. Gardeners can plant peas as early as late February in western Kentucky, and they can plant cabbage, broccoli, lettuce, spinach greens and onions as early as mid March, he said.


Central Kentucky gardeners can start planting peas in early March and eastern-area gardeners can begin planting in mid March. One of the things vegetable gardeners can do during the late winter is to have their soil tested. If the soil test indicates a nutrient is lacking, gardeners can add it to the soil. This is especially true if a pH change is needed. Nitrogen, which is the most commonly needed nutrient, is an exception to late winter nutrient application. It should be added just before or during planting, he said. Late winter and early spring is also the time to incorporate organic matter into gardens, which enhances the soil's productivity, Durham said. Organic matter can be obtained from either commercially available sources that include composted manure and other composted products, such as leaf mold, or compost produced by gardeners since the last growing season. Gardeners should apply compost up to two to three inches deep in their garden and then work it into the soil until it reaches 10 to 12 inches in depth.

Gardeners should also remove debris from their beds to prevent potential pest problems in the spring.

"Debris can serve as an overwintering place for pests, both insects and diseases," Durham said. "Insects and their eggs can be hidden in the debris, and the diseases can produce spores once they begin growing again, which can infest gardens."

Those with flower gardens may already be seeing signs of spring as bulbs, such as tulips and daffodils, start to send up shoots. Many other garden perennials will begin showing signs of growth soon.

"As the plants begin to grow, if you mulched a lot in the fall, pull the mulch back around the crown of the perennial," Durham said. "If you didn't mulch in the fall, you should mulch this spring."

Unlike perennials, most annuals shouldn't be planted until after Derby Day, or the first of May, to prevent damage from a late spring freeze. By Katie Pratt

# Starting Seeds Indoors

them. Usually 14-16 hours a day is adequate but it won't hurt if you leave them on all the time. Plants don't need to sleep.

**(8.)** Another problem many people have is spindly or weak plants. While this usually is from lack of light there are a few things you can do to strength the plants. If you are growing in a window turn the plants a quarter turn each day to keep them upright. Rub your hands across the tops of the plants a couple of times per week. This will simulate wind and cause the stems to become more rigid and less likely to stretch as much. You should do this even if you are growing under grow lights.

**(9.)** Feed your plants. Proper nutrition is the key to developing good transplants. Most seed starting mixes contain a small amount of fertilize to get the plants started but it's not enough to really get them growing well. Once the first set of true leaves emerges it's time to give them half strength water soluble fertilize on a once or twice weekly basis.

**(10.)** How many of you started plants indoors only to watch them cook as soon as they went outdoors. Remember, if not acclimated plants will sunburn just like people. To harden off your plants place them in direct sun for a couple of hours one morning and gradually increase their exposure form 1-2 hours to 2-4 hours and so on. After about a week your plants will be hardened off and ready for the garden.

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Cooperative Extension Service

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## New Potato and Asparagus Soup

**2 tablespoons** olive oil
**2** medium size, boneless, skinless chicken breasts
**1** medium diced onion
**1 teaspoon** salt
**½ teaspoon** garlic powder
zest and juice of 1 lemon
**2 cups** new potatoes
**3 cups** vegetable broth
**1 cup** low fat milk
**1 pound** fresh asparagus
**½ cup** reduced fat sour cream
Fresh ground black pepper

1. **Pour** oil into a large saucepan over medium heat.
2. **Remove** fat from chicken breasts and cut chicken into ½ inch pieces.
3. **Cook** chicken and diced onion in the oil for about 5 minutes or until chicken is done and onions are golden.
4. **Stir** in salt, garlic powder, lemon zest, and ½ of the lemon juice.
5. **Cut** potatoes into ½ inch chunks, leaving the skin on.
6. **Add** potatoes and vegetable broth then simmer, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are tender.
7. **Stir** in the milk.
8. **Trim** and cut asparagus into 1 inch pieces and add to mixture.
9. **Simmer** over medium heat, partially covered and cook until the asparagus is tender, about 15 minutes.
10. **Stir** in ½ cup sour cream and season with salt and pepper to taste.

**Yield:** 8, 1 cup servings.

**Nutrition Analysis:** *270 calories; 7 g fat; 2 g saturated fat; 0 g trans fat; 30 mg cholesterol; 760 mg sodium; 36 g carbohydrate; 4 g fiber; 8 g sugar; 16 g protein.*

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers' market, or roadside stand.

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