

# Taylor County Horticulture Newsletter

## December 2024



### Amaryllis



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*Kara Back-Campbell*

Kara Back-Campbell  
Extension Agent for Horticulture

Congratulations! You received an amaryllis bulb kit for Christmas. Now what? Amaryllis blooms are gorgeous! They can come in many colors such as red, white, peach, pink, and variegated. They will live for many years. If you keep your amaryllis inside it will stay green all year long. Unlike if they are growing outside, where they would need to be dug up and stored during the winter. Your kit should include soil, a bulb, and a pot. My soil was in a disk that had to be hydrated by water. Let the disk absorb water on its own. Do not force the disk down into the water. Once the soil has been hydrated, plant the bulb where one third of the bulb is above the soil line. Make sure the pot has proper drainage holes. The pot also should be only 1-2 inches larger than the bulb in diameter.

Water the newly planted bulb until water starts to run out of the drainage holes. Set it in a warm, sunny area. Water again when the top 2 inches of soil feels dry. If you notice the plant looks spindly, it either needs more light or less water. Rotate the pot so the plant grows evenly. In 4-6 weeks you should see a bloom. When the plant starts to bloom, remove it from direct sun to maximize the blooms. They will continue to bloom for a few weeks. When the blooms fade, return to its original warm, sunny spot. When flower stalk turn yellow, cut it. Cutting when still green will rob the plant of energy and food storage for next year's blooms. Fertilize the bulb every 3 weeks with an all-purpose houseplant fertilizer. Bonus if you inspect your bulb and find it has produced additional bulbs. I found two on an amaryllis I bought so instead of just one I received three. Merry Christmas!



# December

## Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5 Christmas Ornaments 10:30 AM & 1:30 PM	6	7
8	9 Busy Bloomer Garden Club 12:00 PM	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 4-H Horticulture Group 3:30 PM	18	19 4-H Entomology Club 3:30 PM	20	21
22	23	24	25 	26	27	28
29	30	31	 Office Closed 			
 Office Closed 			 <h3>Holiday Hours</h3> <p>Our office will be closed  <b>Wednesday, December 25, 2024 -</b>  <b>Wednesday, January 1, 2025.</b>  <b>Our office will reopen on Thursday, January 2.</b></p>			

For questions or to RSVP for classes, call the Extension Office at 270-465-4511.



# How Poinsettia Diseases Can Ruin the Holiday



Poinsettia are commonly used as holiday decorations in public and personal spaces. No holiday décor is complete without at least one. However, numerous plant diseases can act as a Grinch to steal holiday cheer. Proper plant selection and maintenance are important for disease-free poinsettias that will last well into the New Year.

## Poinsettia Selection

Inspect all plant parts prior to purchase. Development of disease symptoms may occur over long periods of time. Early symptoms are easy to overlook, as they are often small and underdeveloped. Assess bracts (colorful, flower-like structures) and leaves for spots and damage. These spots can be the start of diseases like scab and Botrytis blight. Both of these diseases can cause tan to gray-brown spots on bracts and leaves (Figure 1) and ultimately result in plant dieback and defoliation.

Stems can also become infected by disease-causing pathogens. Bacterial diseases (bacterial soft rot and bacterial canker), as well as fungal diseases (Botrytis blight, scab and Rhizoctonia root and stem rot) can damage stems. Lesions often develop on stems near the soil line (Figure 2). Since stem infections limit plants' ability to move nutrients and water, symptoms such as wilting, dieback, and defoliation may be observed.

If plants can be removed from the pot, inspect roots for damage and decay. Pythium root rot, black root rot, and Rhizoctonia root and stem rot can all impact roots. They result in black or gray, fragile roots that can become mushy (Figure 3). When roots are damaged, upper plant parts cannot be supported, resulting in wilting and dieback.

## Plant Maintenance & Disease Management

- Maintain plant health and vigor with proper nutrition, light, and watering practices.
- Remove plants from decorative pot covers. These may hold water.
- Drain saucers immediately after watering. Do not allow plants to sit in water. Overly wet soils can lead to root rot disease.
- Remove and destroy any leaves or plant parts that are dead, discolored, or deteriorating.
- Avoid crowding. Space plants to increase air circulation.
- Dispose of any plants that show disease symptoms.
- Once plants become infected, management options are limited.
  - Root and stem rots cannot be treated or cured.
  - Leaf spots and blossom symptoms can be managed by removing infected plant parts and maintaining plant health. The life the plant can often be extended through the holiday season.

If disease is severe, the plant should be discarded, especially in situations where additional plants are at risk for infection.

By Kim Leonberger, Plant Pathology Extension Associate, and Nicole Gauthier, Plant Pathology Extension Specialist

Figure 1



Figure 1: Leaf spot symptoms caused by scab. (Photo: John Hartman, UK)

Figure 2

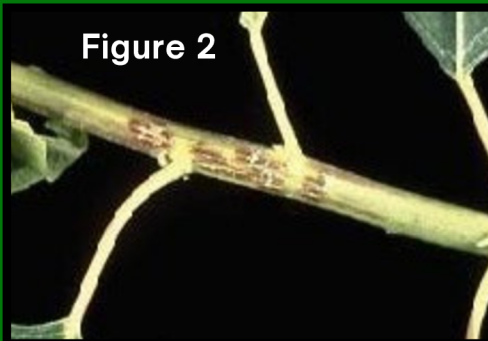


Figure 2: Stem lesion caused by bacterial stem canker disease. (Photo: Cheryl Kaiser, UK)

Figure 3



Figure 3: Blackened, rotted roots as a result of black root rot disease. (Photo: Cheryl Kaiser, UK) **3**



# Christmas Ornaments



**Thursday, December 5  
10:30 AM & 1:30 PM**

Taylor County Extension Office  
1143 South Columbia Avenue

Spots are limited!  
Call (270) 465-4511 to RSVP.

*\*An equal opportunity.*



## BUSY BLOOMER GARDEN CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY

**Monday, December 9 | 12:00 PM**

Taylor County Extension Office  
1143 South Columbia Avenue  
Campbellsville, KY

Bring a  
\$10 gift!

Please RSVP before Thursday, December 5, by calling (270) 465-4511 so we are able to provide a number for the caterer.



## 4-H HORTICULTURE CLUB

HAND PAINTED CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS



& OTHER HOLIDAY CRAFTS

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17 | 3:30 PM**

FREE FOR YOUTH 9-18 YEARS OLD.  
REGISTRATION REQUIRED ON EVENTBRITE.

*\*An equal opportunity.*



## Taylor County 4-H Entomology Club



**Thursday, December 19 | 3:30 PM**

Taylor County Extension Office  
1143 South Columbia Avenue

This is a free program for youth 9-18 years old.  
Registration is required on eventbrite.

*\*An equal opportunity.*





# Tulips - Plant Now For Spring Color



*Written by Ailene Foster, Taylor County Master Gardener*

Tulips can add beautiful color to your spring garden in an array of eye catching colors, from white to black and all the colors inbetween. But you have to plan in advance if you want an envious parade of awesome color blooming in your garden.

For spring blooms, tulips should be planted in the fall when the weather cools down and starts drifting into winter with temperatures between 40 and 60 degrees. Bulbs can be planted mid-October to early December because they need to hibernate 12 to 16 weeks before warm weather arrives and they start to grow. Try to plant after a frost, but before the ground freezes. Planting bulbs is hard work so planting after a light rain makes digging easier.

Tulips come in an array of colors. Choose your color scheme before you start to plant. Some varieties have single, double, or peony-like petals. Choose a variety that will bloom throughout the spring season from March well into May.

Tulips love sun, so choose a spot where they will get 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight. Select an area that drains well and will not be soggy. Dig a hole four times deeper than the bulbs you are planting. You can place more than one bulb per hole; three to five bulbs is ideal. Place bulbs tapered side up with roots on the bottom. Fertilizer is not needed. Overplanting ensures that you have a garden full of beautiful blooms come spring.

Be mindful of squirrels and deer that like to eat your bulbs. You can spray the bulbs with animal repellent to deter chipmunks, squirrels, and other digging rodents that consider your bulbs a tasty treat.

After the blooms are spent, the plant needs its leaves to make food for the next year, so do not remove the foliage until about eight weeks after the flower stage or when the stem turns yellow/brown and can be easily separated from the bulb.

Choose your bulb, choose your garden spot, and happy planting!



## Random Gardening Tips



*Written by Karen Redford, Taylor County Master Gardener*

Here are a few gardening tips I thought were interesting. Some you may have heard before, but if you are like me, I can always use a refresher course.

When trimming a plant that may have a fungus, or disease, keep a small 2-3 ounce spray bottle around filled with rubbing alcohol to clean your clipper blades with after cutting. This helps prevent the spread of disease to other plants.

Save your used plastic milk jugs. They have many uses for gardening purposes. You can cut the bottom out of it and then turn it upside down and cut the top down to the handle. Place this over the weed that you are going to use a weed killer on to keep the spray from hitting plants that you are not aiming at.

You can use plastic milk jugs as a protector for small plants during the spring cold spells. Cut the bottom out of it and it will make a mini greenhouse.

To help slowly water a plant, punch a small pinhole in the bottom part of the jug and it will trickle water out slowly without water runoff.

If you have new plants you are wanting to water more than the surrounding established plants, you can cut the bottom and the top part off from the plastic jug or bucket to make a hollow tube to put in the soil around the new plant. Push it down in the soil around the new plant. You can water and keep the soil moist without watering established plants.

Looking for a portable planting border? Use cement blocks and fill in the cavities with annual plants that won't get very tall. You can paint the blocks the color you prefer and they are easy to move when you want something different and change things around.

Make a compost bin from a plastic garbage can on wheels with a locking lid. Drill quarter sized holes all over it, including the lid and the bottom, then fill it with kitchen scraps and yard clippings. Turn the mixture over with a shovel every now and then. You will have 30 gallons of compost before you know it to use on your garden.

Use old nylon stockings to dust your garden with wood ash or powder fertilizer. Cut the leg of the stocking off and fill it up and then shake it over your plants. It's a good way to spread it over your plants.

Hope this will be helpful to you. May you have a Merry Christmas and be blessed and a blessing to others. **5**



## Chicken and Brussels Sprouts One Pan Meal

**2** skinless, boneless  
chicken breasts  
(about 1 pound)  
**1 tablespoon** olive oil  
Salt and pepper to taste

**12-14** Brussels sprouts,  
trimmed and quartered  
**1 cup** sliced fresh  
mushrooms  
**1** red bell pepper, diced,  
about 1 cup

**1** medium yellow onion,  
diced, about 1 cup  
**2** cloves garlic, minced  
**½ cup** half-and-half  
**¼ teaspoon** nutmeg  
**¾ cup** Parmesan cheese

**Preheat** oven to 425 degrees F.  
**Cut** chicken into bite-sized pieces.  
**Heat** oil in a heavy, oven-safe skillet  
or pan over medium heat. **Add** chicken  
and sauté 3-4 minutes. Lightly **season**  
with salt and pepper. **Add** vegetables  
and **stir** gently to combine. **Cook**  
3-5 minutes until vegetables are tender.  
**Remove** from heat. If skillet or pan  
is not oven-safe, transfer mixture to a  
baking dish. In a small bowl, **combine**  
half-and-half, nutmeg and salt and

pepper to taste. **Pour** mixture over  
chicken and vegetables. **Sprinkle** with  
Parmesan cheese. **Bake** 25-30 minutes  
until lightly golden on top. **Serve** hot.

**Yield:** 6, 1 cup servings

**Nutritional Analysis:**

220 calories, 9 g fat, 3.5 g saturated fat,  
0 g trans fat, 70 mg cholesterol,  
340 mg sodium, 11 g carbohydrate,  
3 g fiber, 4 g sugars, 23 g protein.



Plate it up!

