



Washington County Extension News

Fall Gardening



One of the common questions I am getting now is, "How late can I plant a fall vegetable garden?"

For several of the vegetables commonly planted for fall production, it is getting a little late. For cabbage, broccoli, squash and potatoes, the safe planting window has passed. We all know that frost is the determining factor and the success of planting those vegetables now depends on when that first killing frost arrives. The "Old Farmers Almanac" is forecasting a warm October for our area so you may get away with planting now.

Other vegetables that are safe to plant now are the leafy greens such as turnips collards, radish, kale, mustard, lettuce and spinach. These vegetables can handle some frost and some will survive a killing frost. Mid to late September is the end of the recommended planting window for those vegetables.

Another popular question right now is "When to dig and how to cure sweet potatoes?"

Usually, potatoes are ready to be dug when the vines die. Another way to determine readiness is to dig a few and see how easily the skin rubs off. If the skin is thin and rubs off easily, the potatoes are not ready to be dug. After digging, cull out any damaged potatoes and use them soon as possible.

Curing sweet potatoes will cause minor cuts and bruises to heal so that they do not deteriorate during winter storage. The best conditions for curing sweet potatoes is a temp of 45°-60°F and high humidity (85-95%) for two weeks. After curing, cull out any shriveled potatoes or any that appear to be rotting. These will spoil and cause the potatoes around them to rot in storage.

Once cured, store the sweet potatoes below 45°F and humidity around 90%. Do not allow them to freeze. In most homes the best location for sweet potato storage is the basement or garage. Exposure to light should be kept to a minimum to keep them from developing green spots and a bitter taste.

Remember, our average first frost is around October 15 and for those already planning the spring garden, average last frost is about April 25.

~John Hamrick, Ag Agent

September

- September 10-13 – TVA & I Fair- many 4-H judging competitions & shows
- September 8 – Honor Club 5:15 p.m.—Extension Office. *1 week later due to holiday.*
- September 20 – Sheep and Goat Load-out
- September 25 – 4-H Eastern Region Livestock Judging
- September 26 – First Time Homebuyer Education Class, Extension Office (*Pre-registration required*)
- September 29 – FCE Fall Conference, Knoxville
- September 29 – 4-H Honor Club Application Workshop- 4 to 6:00 p.m. Extension Office
- September 30 – Farm Days for Kindergarten Appalachian Fairgrounds, Gray, TN

October

- October 1 – Farm Days for 2nd graders— Appalachian Fairgrounds, Gray, TN
- October 6 – Cooking for 1 or 2, Johnson City Senior Center 11 a.m.
- October 13, 14, 20, 21 – Back to Basics Cooking classes for Adults, Farm Bureau Building 6:00 p.m. (*Pre-registration required*)
- October 24 – First Time Homebuyer Education Class, Extension Office (*Pre-registration required*)
- October 6 – Honor Club 5:15 p.m. Extension Office
- October 8 – Northeast TN Career Day
- October 9 – 4-H Honor Club Dinner & Initiation Ceremony 6:30 p.m.
- October 21 – Private Applicators must be recertified before this date
- October 25 – 6:30 pm WCCA Fall Meeting

November

- November 3 – Honor Club, 5:15 p.m. Extension Office
- November 7 – WCCA Fall Heifer and Bull Sale
- November 15 – Sheep and Goat Load-out
- November 21 – First Time Homebuyer Education Class, Extension Office (*Pre-registration required*)
- November 21-23 – Fall 4-H All Star Conference, Gatlinburg for 9-12 graders.



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Agriculture



Planning for success is a much needed approach to being a much more profitable producer in this day and time. Cattle prices are seeing returns that have never been experienced before. These high prices also warrant many questions as to how long will the high market last. Low inventories and high demand are the main drivers to these uncharted waters. Many economist are hesitant to make assumptions on the future cattle market but the next couple of years are promising. Livestock prices are high while grain markets are softening. Also, excellent growing conditions in the Midwest has allowed many analysts to predict a big corn and soybean harvest this fall. As we look forward, livestock as well as row crop producers should plan for goals and have marketing strategies so that if any markets shift then producers will be prime to continue being profitable.

~Anthony Shelton, Ag Agent



Beals Recipient of the First Richard Shadden Memorial 4-H Scholarship

Savannah Beals of Jonesborough received the first Richard Shadden Memorial Scholarship at the Tennessee 4-H Roundup held at the University of Tennessee at Martin. Beals received the \$250.00 college scholarship based on her 4-H accomplishments, academic achievements and financial need. The scholarship is provided by friends of Richard Shadden in his memory. If you would like to give so the amount can increase in future years contact the office or Tennessee 4-H Foundation.

~Ryan Hensley

Operation Christmas Child

Washington County 4-H Clubs were in the top 3% of Tennessee 4-H'ers in sending shoeboxes last Christmas. The 4-H Honor Clubs across the state have adopted the shoeboxes as their major service learning project this fall/winter. We are asking 4-H and FCE Members to pack a shoebox and drop it off at the Extension Office in Jonesborough or drop off items that we will put into boxes. Our theme is "every little bit helps" and TEAM – Together Each Accomplishes More! Our goals is to do between 200 to 300 boxes. We need the following: **TOYS:** Include items that children will immediately embrace such as dolls, toy cars, stuffed animals, kazoos, harmonicas, yo-yos, jump ropes, balls, toys that light up and make noise (with extra batteries), etc. **SCHOOL SUPPLIES:** pens, pencils and sharpeners, crayons, markers, notebooks, paper, solar calculators, coloring and picture books, etc. **NON-LIQUID HYGIENE ITEMS:** toothbrushes, bar soap, combs, washcloths, etc. **ACCESSORIES:** t-shirts, socks, hats, sunglasses, hair clips, jewelry, watches, flashlights (with extra batteries), etc. **A PERSONAL NOTE:** You may enclose a note to the child if your are turning in an entire completed box).

~Connie Goff Sharp
4-H Agent



Plastic Bag Collection



The Family and Community Education (FCE) Clubs of Washington County are doing a county-wide service project and would like your help. Do you have plastic bags laying around your house and you don't know what to do with them? How about dropping them off at the Extension Office or the Jonesborough Senior Center, in the designated box, to help the FCE ladies collect at least 500 lbs. or 40,500 plastic bags to reach their goal of attaining a bench from Trex Company. **What can be recycled?** Grocery bags, bread bags, case overwrap, dry cleaning bags, newspaper sleeves, ice bags, wood pellet bags, Ziploc® and other reclosable bags, produce bags, bubble wrap, salt bags, and cereal bags. **All plastic must be clean, dry and free of food residue.** Elizabeth Elizondo, FCS Agent