

TAYLOR COUNTY HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2023

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Sincerely,



Kara Back

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Raised Garden Beds

By: Karen Redford

Raised garden beds are becoming very popular now, and like everything else, they have their pros and cons. First, there is the cost of the bed overall. You have multiple options available. Today there are kits available. You can build one from wood, metal, brick, blocks, and you even have the option of cloth bags. The raised metal one is starting to be the most popular. They are a little more pricey than other materials, but in the long haul they will last longer, so you can get many more years of use from them. Wooden raised beds will last 7-10 years if you use pressure treated lumber.

The metal beds come in different depths; some are 17 inches tall up to 32 inches tall or taller. It can be costly to fill them. You can help cut the cost of the soil, by starting to first place cardboard down to help with weed control. Then you can use a layer of tree limbs, and small logs to help fill up space. Then a layer of grass clippings, and dried leaves. Do not forget to throw in your kitchen scraps you have been saving in advance for this! This is also a useful source of nutrition for soil. Add a layer of compost, which is like liquid gold, then your topsoil.

Raised beds are more expensive to fix, but they do have some good benefits. First, there is less bending, and less kneeling. (My favorite part.) The soil drains better, and stays a little warmer. Another benefit is if you are limited in space, you can usually put a raised garden bed anywhere. A third benefit is if your ground is mostly clay, very rocky, or just poor soil, you can put in whatever soil you need. For instance, if you are planting blueberries, they need a lower pH level than other plants. If you put them in a raised bed, you can control the type of soil your certain plants need.

Raised beds also are easier to weed, and people tend to keep them cleaner, than having to bend and kneel. You can reach normally from side to side, and you do not have to use a tiller. Pest and smaller animals, like rabbits or dogs digging up your plants will not be as bad either. The more information I gain on using raised garden beds, I believe the hardest part would be, is to talk my husband into trying it! He is trying his best to talk me into crocheting instead of gardening. He thinks it would be easier on him! Be blessed, and Happy Gardening!



September 2023

Upcoming Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Farmer's Market 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM
3	4	5	6	7 Kokedama Class 5:30 PM	8	9 Farmer's Market 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM
10	11 Busy Bloomer Garden Club 1:00 PM	12	13	14	15	16 Farmer's Market 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM
17	18	19	20	21 Chemical Container Rinse & Return 8:30 - 4:00	22	23 Farmer's Market 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM
24	25	26 "Sewing" a Garden Series Garden Gloves 5:30 PM	27	28 Kokedama Class 1:30 PM	29	30 Farmer's Market 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

TO RSVP FOR THE CLASSES CALL THE EXTENSION OFFICE AT 270-465-4511

Yellow-Legged Hornets Discovered in Georgia, First in U.S.

About Yellow-Legged Hornets

Most Americans are not familiar with the yellow-legged hornet, since it is a non-native species to the United States. The Georgia Department of Agriculture, along with the United States Department of Agriculture Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service, recently confirmed the species near Savannah, Georgia.

These hornets are native to the southeastern regions of Asia and are known for their relentless appetite—specifically feeding on other insects. The yellow-legged hornet is not as large as the infamous northern giant hornet that made national headlines in 2021. However, they are just as deadly to their prey.



“This species is not established, but it does pose just as much threat as the murder hornets people heard about a couple year s ago,” said Katelyn Kesheimer, an Alabama Extension entomologist. “The main threat of the yellow-legged hornet pertains to the honey bee industry in our region.”

Yellow-legged hornets are natural predators that can wipe out colonies by focusing on their concentrated source of food until it is entirely consumed. They live communally and have the same life cycle as native hornets and wasps. Female hornets will overwinter and emerge in spring. Colonies can grow large by summer and have the potential to contain thousands of hornets. “Its legs are distinctively yellow,” Kesheimer said. “Their size and yellow legs are the best identifiers of this hornet.”

“Like other hornets, they hunt and kill other insects — and occasionally carrion — but their large, coordinated populations make them a serious pest of honey bee colonies,” Rowe said. “After finding an apiary, the yellow-legged hornet colony focuses on this source of meat and quickly decimates the honey bees to feed their young. They are the wolves of the air.”

Yellow-legged hornets have unique nests comparable to traditional baldfaced hornets. They behave similarly to Alabama’s native hornets by their hunting habits and ability to create oval-shaped paper nests. Rowe said regular hornet nests have circular openings near the bottom. These non-native cousins have slot-like openings in the same area.



There is no reason to sound the alarm and stock up on bug spray just because of this first discovery of the yellow-legged hornet. At the time of this publication, there are no confirmed colonies of this species. However, Alabamians should be on the lookout because of the occurrence’s proximity. Rowe said this precaution especially applies to the beekeeping community.

“Beekeepers should definitely keep a sharp eye on their apiaries,” he said. “Yellow-legged hornets are not the only species to monitor. Native wasps and hornets could also attack bees, especially in stressed conditions such as intense heat.” Kesheimer said this insect, just like other hornet species, can sting humans and pets. It is likely that the pain level is no different than a typical hornet sting. Those with anaphylactic allergies should treat a yellow-legged hornet strike as if it were a wasp or other hornet and take all necessary precautions.

Contact Extension

The best defense against invasive species is education and identification. To help properly identify suspected species, a sample should be photographed or submitted to local Extension offices. Experts will subsequently study the photos and samples to positively identify the species.

Source: <https://www.aces.edu/blog/topics/forestry-wildlife/yellow-legged-hornets-discovered-in-georgia-first-in-u-s/>

Repotting Plants

When repotting a plant inspect the plant's roots. If the pot is root bound it, is time to repot the plant into a larger container. Repot to larger containers gradually. For example, if you are moving a plant from a 4-inch pot, repot the plant into a 6-inch pot. The reason you don't want to repot the plant into too large of a pot is because if a plant has too much soil surrounding its root ball, it may cause the roots to rot. The plant cannot use all the water in the soil.

Also, check the planted depth of the plant and make sure it is ok. Many times the plant stems are planted 1/2-inch too deep. Remove the extra soil and plant at the correct depth.

Make sure all pots have drainage holes. Before adding soil to the pot, use a piece of window screen to cover the hole so soil doesn't fall out. Use planting medium (potting soil) all the way to the bottom of the pot. This will give the plant maximum room for root growth.

Source: House Plants A Guide to Choosing and Caring for Indoor Plants, by: Lisa Eldred Steinkoph

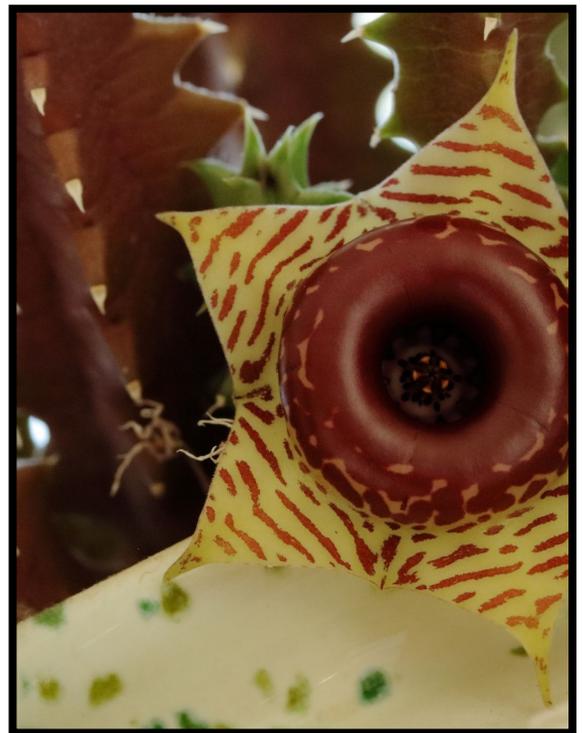


Lifesaver Plant

This type of succulent gets its name from the flower it produces. The center of the flower actually looks like a lifesaver. It is not hard to grow and will bloom if it is growing in bright light. A south or west window will provide plenty of light for this plant to bloom. The flower is about one inch across.

This succulent needs to be on the dry side but it doesn't need to dry out completely especially when it is flowering. This year for me I am watering about once a week. However, I have planted mine in terracotta which dries out much faster than plastic. Planting the lifesaver plant in cacti soil helps in water drainage too.

The 3 - 4 inch plant can spread out as wide as the container it is planted in. A short, wide container with drainage works very well. Stem cuttings will root in moist potting medium after the cuttings are allowed to callus over for a day or two.



Source: House Plants A Guide to Choosing and Caring for Indoor Plants, by: Lisa Eldred Steinkoph

Kokedama Class



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

AT 5:30 P.M.

OR

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

AT 1:30 P.M.



SPOTS ARE
LIMITED!
Call the Extension
office at
270-465-4511 to
RSVP

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The Art of Kokedama

Kokedama originated with the Nearai bonsai method, an art form centuries old. It refers to plants grown so compact and tightly that, when removed from a container, they hold well-grown roots and soil, forming a compact ball. The root balls are then wrapped in moss and held together with twine or wire. The Japanese words "koke" (moss) and "dama" (ball) perfectly describes the appearance of wrapped plants, whether root bound or newly potted specimens.

Kokedama can be employed with established houseplants, cuttings of house plants or seasonal plants. Plants can be displayed on trays, from simple clay saucers to vintage china cups or bowls or any interesting vessel. Some kokedama enthusiasts love topping their plants with a cloche, both for aesthetic appeal and to conserve moisture. Another popular method of display is hanging the moss wrapped plants, whether a simple wrapping of twine or a retro macrame plant hanger.

Key is to meet the plant's watering needs and prevent damage on surfaces from the moistened moss ball. Plants which tolerate drier conditions are ideal, as are kokedama with room to hold a bit of soil encased in the moss. Misting is a good technique for keeping moss moist. Kokedama thrive in humid environments such as a bathroom. Plants can be soaked at the sink or a bit of water can be added to the saucer or vessel holding the moss ball.

You may be considering re-potting a root bound plant and choose instead to wrap it in moss. A well rooted cutting of common pothos can be wrapped with a bit of soil and suspended, allowing it to trail in front of a bright window. A pretty succulent you plan to over-winter can be wrapped in moss making it look fresh for its indoor display.

Potting soil works fine for most plants wrapped in moss. A serious bonsai enthusiast may take on the challenge of growing a tree or shrub as kokedama. If you are working with such a plant, one that has higher watering needs, or is particularly root bound, add about 1/3 bonsai soil (akadama) or clay cat litter. Mix the soils together and pack around the root ball of the plant. Gather moistened sheet moss around the ball and wrap the moss with twine. Give everything a good squeeze and find the perfect place to display your plant.

Source: <https://extension.psu.edu/the-art-of-kokedama>



Kokedama Amaryllis 'Mount Hope' and Aeonium 'Kiwi'. Photo credit: Carol Papas

Gardening by Month - September

Ornamentals

- Continue planting evergreens now.
- Cuttings of annuals can be taken now to provide vigorous plants for overwintering.
- Herbs such as parsley, rosemary, chives, thyme and marjoram can be dug from the garden and placed in pots now for growing indoors this winter.
- Except tulips, spring bulbs may be planted as soon as they are available. Tulips should be kept in a cool, dark place and planted in late October.
- Begin readying houseplants for winter indoors. Prune back rampant growth and protruding roots. Check for pests and treat if necessary. Houseplants should be brought indoors at least one month before the heat is normally turned on.
- Perennials, especially spring bloomers, can be divided now. Enrich the soil with peat moss or compost before replanting.
- Divide peonies now. Replant in a sunny site and avoid planting deeply.
- Lift gladioli when their leaves yellow. Cure in an airy place until dry before husking.
- Poinsettias can be forced into bloom for Christmas if they are moved indoors now to a sunny windowsill. Each night, they must be kept in a cool, dark place where there is no light for 14 hours. This must continue until proper color is achieved in 6-10 weeks.

Fruit

- Pick pears before they are fully mature. Store in a cool, dark basement to ripen.
- Bury or discard any spoiled fallen fruits.
- Pawpaws ripen in the woods now.
- Check all along peach tree trunks to just below soil line for gummy masses caused by borers. Probe holes with thin wire to puncture borers.

Lawns

- Cool-season lawns are best fertilized in fall. Make up to 3 applications between now and December. Do not exceed rates recommended by fertilizer manufacturer.
- If soils become dry, established lawns should be watered thoroughly to a depth of 4-6 inches.
- Begin fall seeding or sodding of cool-season grasses. Seedbeds should be raked, dethatched or core-aerified, fertilized and seeded. Keep newly planted lawn areas moist, but not wet.
- Lawns may be top-dressed with compost now. This is best done after aerifying.
- Newly seeded lawns should not be cut until they are at least 2 or 3 inches tall.

Miscellaneous

- Autumn is a good time to add manure, or compost to garden soils for increasing organic matter content.
- Monitor plants for spider mite activity. Reduce their numbers by hosing off with a forceful spray of water.
- Seasonal loss of inner needles on conifers is normal at this time. It may be especially noticeable on pines.

Vegetables

- Egyptian (top-setting) onions can be divided and replanted now.
- Sowing seeds of radish, lettuce, spinach and other greens in a cold frame will prolong fall harvests.
- Keep broccoli picked regularly to encourage additional production of side shoots.
- Pinch out the top of Brussels sprout plants to plump out the developing sprouts.
- Harvest herbs now to freeze or dry for winter use.
- Tie leaves around cauliflower heads when they are about the size of a golf ball.
- Pinch off any young tomatoes that are too small to ripen. This will channel energy into ripening the remaining full-size fruits.
- Sow spinach now to overwinter under mulch for spring harvest.

Southern Rust in Corn: A Late Season Confirmation

By Kiersten Wise, Plant Pathology Extension Specialist

Southern rust of corn, caused by the fungus *Puccinia polysora*, was confirmed in Kentucky on August 8. As of August 14, the Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory has confirmed the disease in several counties across the state including Taylor County. With our current weather conducive for disease development, it will not be surprising to see additional confirmations in the coming week. Southern rust is typically confirmed in mid-July in Kentucky, so this is a later than normal confirmation, and much of the corn in Kentucky, particularly western KY, is likely past the growth stage where there will be a positive economic benefit of a fungicide application. Previous research from southern states indicates that fungicides may be needed to protect yield while corn is in the tasseling through milk (VT-R3) growth stages. Once corn is past milk (R3), fungicides are likely not needed to manage the disease. If fields have already received a fungicide application this year at tasseling/silking (VT/R1), they are not likely to need a second application of fungicide. Fields that were sprayed pre-tassel (V10-V14) should be scouted carefully to determine disease presence and progression and determine if an additional fungicide application is needed.

Very late planted fields of high-value corn that is still pre-tassel should be scouted to determine if the disease is present before deciding on a fungicide application. Fungicide application may be beneficial in certain fields of late-planted corn, but this should be determined on a case-by-case basis.

More information on timing of fungicide applications for southern rust can be found in Table 2 of the Crop Protection Network publication *Southern Rust*. The efficacy of specific fungicide products for southern rust are described in the updated fungicide efficacy table for management of corn diseases, which is developed by the national Corn Disease Working Group and posted on the Crop Protection Network website.

It will be important to scout and monitor fields over the next few weeks and submit samples to the Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (PDDL) through local county Extension agents if you suspect you have southern rust in a field.

Southern rust is first observed as raised, dusty orange pustules on the upper surface of the leaf (Figure 1). Pustules will typically be present only on the upper surface of the leaf. The disease is easily confused with common rust, which produces pustules on both sides of the leaf. Common rust (*Puccinia sorghi*), can be found sporadically in Kentucky corn fields and is not economically important to manage, so it is important to distinguish between the two diseases before applying fungicide. If southern rust is suspected, the fastest way to get a diagnosis through the PDDL is to submit samples through county agents. Confirmations of southern rust will be posted on the cornipmpipe website. On the map, red counties/parishes indicate that southern rust has been confirmed by university/Extension personnel.



Figure 1. Southern rust on corn



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Easy Cheesy Eggplant

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 3 cups cubed eggplant | ½ teaspoon dried basil |
| 2 medium tomatoes, sliced | ¼ teaspoon garlic powder |
| 1 large onion, sliced | 8 ounces shredded mozzarella cheese |
| ¼ cup melted butter | ½ cup whole wheat bread crumbs |
| ¼ cup applesauce | 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese |
| ¼ teaspoon salt | |

Peel eggplant and slice into ½ inch cubes.

Layer eggplant, tomatoes, and onions in a casserole dish.

Mix butter and applesauce and pour ½ over the vegetable mixture.

Sprinkle with the salt, basil, and garlic powder.

Cover and bake for 20 minutes in a 450° F oven.

Remove from oven and top with

mozzarella cheese, whole wheat bread crumbs, and Parmesan cheese. Pour the remaining butter and applesauce mixture over the cheese.

Bake an additional 10 minutes, uncovered.

Yield: 12, ½ cup servings

Nutritional Analysis: 120 calories, 7 g fat, 170 mg sodium, 6 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 6 g protein.

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