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## Start Your Tomatoes



### AND OTHER WARM SEASON VEGETABLES

Ready to get your hands dirty? April is the time to start seed indoors, so they are ready to transplant out in your garden in May. Learn how below.

#### Prepare:

- Pick a Container: You can use seed-starting trays, pots, or recycled containers as long as they have drainage holes.
- Choose a Seed-Starting Mix: Instead of regular potting soil, opt for a sterile, well-draining mix that contains no added fertilizer.
- Moisten the Mix: Wet the mix thoroughly before filling the containers, but make sure it's not too wet.
- Fill the Containers: Add the moistened mix to the containers, leaving a little space (half to a fourth inch) at the top.

#### Plant:

- Plant the Seeds: Sow the seeds at the correct depth—generally about 1/4 inch deep for small seeds and deeper for bigger ones. Gently tamp the soil down to ensure good contact between the seeds and the soil.
- Water Gently: Avoid moving the seeds around with a heavy stream of water by lightly misting the soil surface after sowing to prevent displacing the seeds around.
- Label the Containers: Write down the type of seed and the date you planted it on the labels for each container.

#### Germinate:

- Cover the Containers: Use a clear plastic dome or bag to keep humidity high while the seeds germinate.
- Keep it Warm: Place the seeds in a warm spot (between 70-80°F); try a seed-starting heat mat.
- Check Water: Ensure the soil stays consistently moist but not wet.
- Remove the Covers: Once the seeds sprout their seed leaves, remove the cover and move the seedlings to a bright area.

#### Care:

- Provide Light: Ensure the seedlings strong light from grow lights or a south-facing sunny window.
- Rotate: Frequently rotate the containers to help them grow evenly.
- Water Regularly: Maintain moisture in the soil without making it soggy. However, try to keep water off the leaves and ensure plants have some ventilation.
- Fertilize: After the seedlings grow their first true leaves, you may want to transplant them to bigger pots to grow them out until you can plant them outside. When watering, add half of the liquid fertilizer recommended on the label to your water.

#### Harden Off:

- Before moving the seedlings outdoors, gradually expose them to sunlight and a little wind on a sheltered porch or similar to help them adjust.

SOURCE: COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO SEEDLING CARE: NURTURING HEALTHY YOUNG PLANTS - PLANTPROPAGATION.ORG. [HTTPS://PLANTPROPAGATION.ORG/SEEDLING-CARE/](https://plantpropagation.org/seedling-care/)



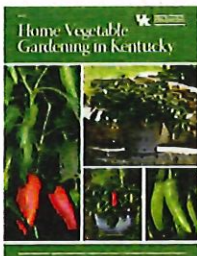
# More on Warm Season Seeds

**Tomatoes are not the only warm season crop you can start indoors now to get a jump on the season.**

Warm-season plants are often started from seed indoors and then transplanted outdoors; sweet corn and beans are exceptions. If you plan to start your vegetables from seed, follow the spacing and planting depth suggestions below or on the seed packets.

Crop	Weeks Seeding to Transplanting	Average Seedling Date	Seed Depth (in)	Seed Spacing		Soil Temp. (°F)	Average Days to Germinate and Emerge		Satisfactory Growth Temp.	
							High	Low	High	Low
<b>Warm Season</b>										
Cucumber <sup>3</sup>	3-4	April 1	1	2 seeds		95	3-6	75	70	
Muskmelon <sup>3</sup>	3-4	April 1	1	per 4" x 4" pot, thinned to 1		90	4-6	75	70	
Squash <sup>3</sup>	3-4	April 1	1			95	5-7	75	70	
Watermelon <sup>3</sup> (seeded)	4-6	Mar. 25	1			85	4-6	75	70	
Watermelon <sup>3</sup> (seedless)	4-6	Mar. 25	1			90	4-6	75	70	
Tomato	4-7	Mar. 15	½	10	2	80	7-9	70	60	
Eggplant	6-8	Mar. 10	¼	10	3	80	7-9	75	70	
Pepper	6-8	Mar. 10	¼	10	2	80	8-10	70	65	

Warm-season plants, which are considered very tender, are those most people associate with vegetable gardens, such as cucumbers, peppers, pumpkins, squash, tomatoes, and watermelons. Annual flowers like begonia, salvia, zinnia, marigold, and cosmos belong in this group. These plants are susceptible to frost, which can severely damage or kill them, and do not thrive in cool soils. It's best to wait until the first week of May to plant them outdoors in your garden when temperatures should be in the 70s during the day and no colder than 55°F at night. For more information on seed starting, refer to our ID-128, Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky.



[Click here for ID - 128](#)

or scan the QR code with a smart phone to the right →



## STAY INFORMED WITH WEATHER ALERT

**Spring weather can be unpredictable at times and rapidly change. To help you keep up with temperatures and approaching storms, download the app for UK WEATHER ALERT.**



The Weather Alert app, created by Meteorologist Matt Dixon with UK Ag Weather Center, has a two-fold priority: 1) heighten awareness during extreme weather conditions and 2) to empower KY Farming operations with valuable insights for management and production-related decisions.

Some may think it is only for those with farming operations, however, it is a great app to have in general with its quick notices and great radar. Especially if you have friends and family all over the country, you can put in their address and see what's going on in their world!





Every year, Early Blight, a common fungal disease affecting tomatoes and potatoes in Central Kentucky, is a recurring issue. Gardeners will say, "I had to give up growing tomatoes. The leaves always dried up and fell off, and the tomatoes (if any) were spotty." Many report that Early Blight and other diseases appear annually in their gardens. That's why some feel like giving up and never growing tomatoes again. However, don't give up yet, Early Blight and others can be managed through preventative measures and early intervention.

Symptoms of Early Blight (fungus) - Leaves have dark brown spots with concentric rings or target board pattern in the spots; disease begins on lower foliage and works up with severely affected leaves shriveling and dying; similar spots can occur on stems and fruits; can be confused with other leaf spot diseases, but this is most common.

What can you do?

To begin with, make sure you are using a few time-honored, research-based practices in your gardening space. Maintain proper fertility. If you haven't already, take a soil sample and bring it for testing. The UK soil lab will report whether fertilizer is needed or if the pH level requires adjustment.

Pick and destroy affected leaves as they appear. Early Blight overwinters in the soil and debris, so clean out your raised beds and gardens as the season progresses, and certainly remove all debris in the fall.

Rotate your tomatoes to different areas; do not grow them in the same place every year. Not planting them in the same place every year is called crop rotation, and it is an essential and beneficial factor in preventing disease. Problems with diseases, insect pests, and soil fertility can increase when the same crop is planted in the same area year after year.

Switch up your tomato varieties and consider starting new seeds from tomatoes resistant to Early Blight and other diseases. If you have always started your own seeds, which you've saved from year to year, it could be the seeds. Seeds can harbor diseases, keeping you constantly in the disease cycle. Try some new varieties and buy new seeds.

**MOST RECOMMENDED:** Choose to grow a variety that is resistant to Early Blight. (see below)

The last option is to spray with fungicide: Spray foliage with fungicide at the first sign of disease and as needed (weekly during hot, humid weather). Thereafter, use chlorothalonil and mancozeb.

or fixed copper every few weeks or after a rain. **MAKE SURE TO READ THE LABEL FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS - THE LABEL IS THE LAW.** Good coverage is required. Using a fungicide will help prevent Early Blight from getting out of hand, but it does not cure the disease. Also, consider planting a second tomato crop in midsummer (July/August) for fall crops when Early Blight/disease pressure is lower.

A few early blight-tolerant seed varieties are now available, although you will probably have to order online to find the seeds. (Check out sights like Johnny's, Burpee's, Seeds of Change, etc. to find them.) Some Early blight-resistant tomatoes are Valentine Hybrid T, Plum Regal Hybrid, Stellar Hybrid T, and Defiant Hybrid.

Also, these may not be resistant to Early Blight (check individually) but have resistance to other diseases: Mountain Magic, Mountain Fresh Plus F1, Bush Celebrity Hybrid, Big Beef Hybrid, and Celebrity Hybrid.





**Martin-Gatton**  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment

**MAY 3**

**FREE!**



**9am to Noon**

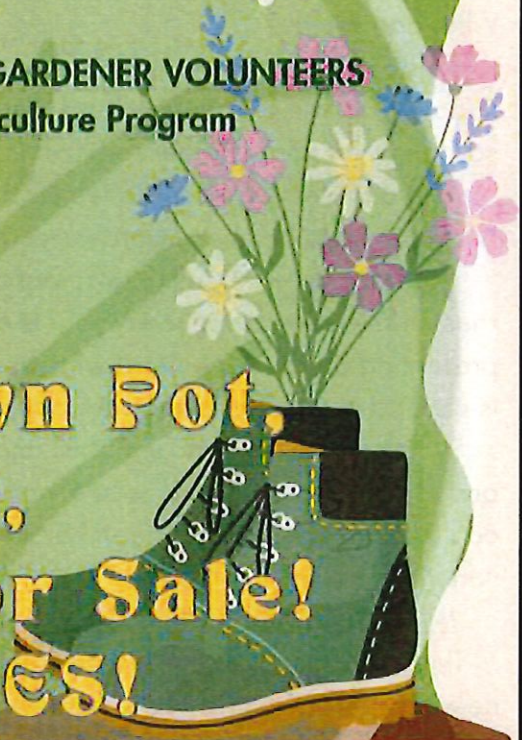
# Garden Expo

*Growing Together*

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

**SCOTT CO. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEERS**  
Scott County Cooperative Extension Horticulture Program

**Soil,  
Herbs,  
Paint Your Own Pot,  
Vendors,  
Plant Starts for Sale!  
DOOR PRIZES!**



**NEW LOCATION THIS YEAR!**

**Georgetown's NEW Downtown Pavilion  
behind the old Georgetown City Hall**



**100 N Court St, Georgetown, KY**

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Lexington, KY 40506



Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.



# Dijon Chicken Asparagus Roll Ups

<b>3 tablespoons</b> Dijon mustard	<b>2 teaspoons</b> black pepper	<b>4 skinless, boneless</b> chicken breast halves (about 5 ounces each)
<b>½ cup</b> low fat mayonnaise	<b>½ teaspoon</b> salt	<b>4 slices</b> skimmed mozzarella cheese
<b>1 lemon</b> , juiced (approximately 3 tablespoons)	<b>16 spears</b> fresh asparagus, trimmed	<b>1 cup</b> panko bread crumbs

**Preheat** oven to 400 degrees F. **Grease** an 11-by-7-inch baking dish. In a bowl, **mix** together the mustard, mayonnaise, lemon juice, thyme, salt and pepper; set aside. **Place** asparagus in a microwave safe dish and **microwave** on high 1-1½ minutes. **Place** chicken breasts between two sheets of heavy plastic (a re-sealable freezer bag works well) on a firm surface. **Pound** the chicken breasts with the smooth side of a meat mallet to thickness of ¼ inch. **Place** one slice of cheese and four asparagus spears on each breast. Tightly **roll** the chicken breasts around the asparagus

and cheese. **Place** each, seam side down, in the prepared baking dish. **Apply** a coating of the mustard mixture to each chicken breast and **sprinkle** each with the panko crumbs, **pressing** the crumbs into the chicken to secure. **Bake** 35 minutes or until the chicken temperature is 165 degrees F. For crisper chicken, **place** roll-ups under the broiler for 1-2 minutes on high.

**Yield:** 4 servings

#### Nutritional Analysis:

370 calories, 10 g fat, 3.5 g saturated fat, 115 mg cholesterol, 1060 mg sodium, 2 g fiber, 2 g sugars, 41 g protein.



## Kentucky Asparagus

**SEASON:** April through May.

**NUTRITION FACTS:** Asparagus is a good source of vitamin A and folate. One-half cup of fresh, steamed asparagus has 22 calories, 2 grams of protein and 4 grams of carbohydrate.

**SELECTION:** Choose bright green stalks with tightly closed tips. The tenderest stalks are apple green in color with purple-tinged tips.

**STORAGE:** Fresh asparagus will keep 1 week or more in

the refrigerator. Store upright with cut ends in water or with cut ends wrapped in wet paper towels in a plastic bag.

**PREPARATION:** One pound of asparagus will yield 4 one-half cup servings, about six spears per serving. Wash asparagus thoroughly in cool, running water. Eat asparagus raw or lightly boil, steam, stir-fry or grill. Overcooked asparagus will be mushy. Try seasoning it with herbs, butter or Parmesan cheese.

#### KENTUCKY ASPARAGUS

Kentucky Proud Project  
County Extension Agents for Family  
and Consumer Sciences  
University of Kentucky, Dietetics  
and Human Nutrition students  
March 2017

Source: [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)

Buying Kentucky Proud is easy. Look for the label at your grocery store, farmers market, or roadside stand. <http://plateitup.ca.uky.edu>



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Save the Date!

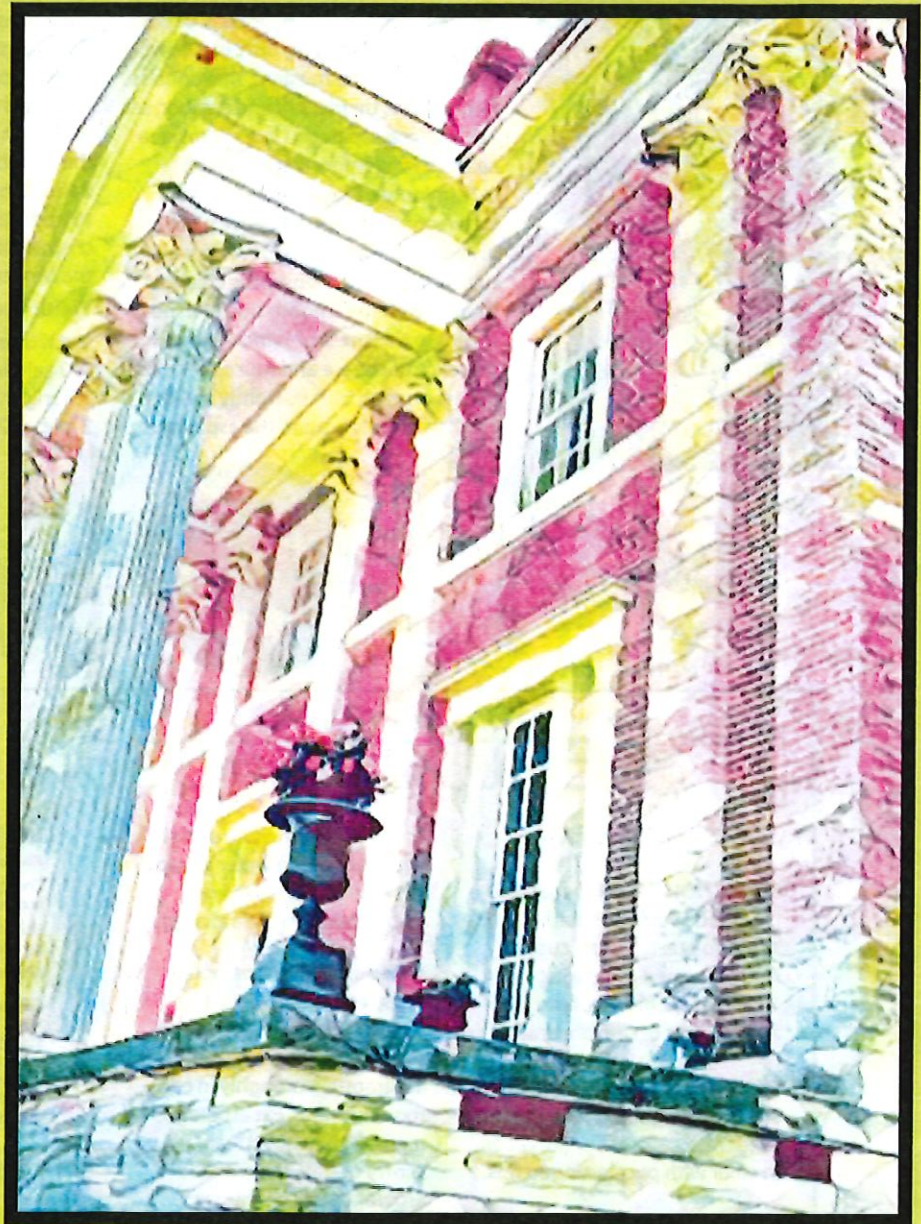
*Coming this June*

A Summer  
Garden  
Party  
at

*Ward  
Hall*

Sunday  
June 8th

12 Noon -  
5:00 P.M.



More Information to Come in May

**Cooperative  
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Agriculture and Natural Resources  
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Community and Economic Development

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