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Why Leaves Change

by Sharon P. Flynt, Agent for Horticulture

Fall is one of the most beautiful seasons of the year, as tree leaves change colors to bright oranges, vibrant reds and eye-popping yellows. Trees that change color in the fall are deciduous trees. They go dormant in the winter to protect the tree from freezing temperatures and will generate new leaves in the spring.

Three factors cause the tree leaves to change color at this time of year: length of night, leaf pigments and weather. Length of night is the only constant of the three. Following the summer solstice in June, the daylight shortens in the Northern Hemisphere and nights become longer. It is the increasing length of night that triggers certain reactions in trees and leaves.

Chlorophyll, which produces the green color in leaves, and carotenoids, which gives us the orange, yellows, and browns, in conjunction with sunlight, are working all summer to produce food for the tree. After the solstice, night length steadily increases, causing excess plant sugars to build up, chlorophyll production to slow down and eventually stop in the leaf. When chlorophyll production ceases, the carotenoids pigments are unmasked and any anthocyanins in the leaf start producing the reddish, purple colors in response to bright light, giving the leaves their fall colors.

As time passes, a cell layer between the leaf petiole, where it connects to the stem of the tree, begins to close. Once that cell layer completely closes, the leaf drops, closing off any openings into the tree and protecting it from winter's freezing temperatures and harsh winds.

Fall color vividness depends on temperature and moisture. Sunny, warm days, cool nights and soil moisture in early fall produce the most color. This combination of moisture and temperature produce a vast array of color and that's why no two autumns are ever alike.

Stay Informed with 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!



for iOS



for android



Pumpkin Spice Anyone?

Are the ingredients at the Thanksgiving Table Really What They Say They Are?

While turkey is the center of many Thanksgiving meals, the side dishes and desserts deserve equal attention. Some of the common vegetables and fruits associated with Thanksgiving have interesting – if sometimes a bit misleading – histories or myths surrounding them. Below are a few questions (and answers) about sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and cranberries – staples for Thanksgiving.



Believe it or not - yams and sweet potatoes are entirely different plants! Sweet potatoes used for baking, pies, and fries come from *Ipomoea batatas*, or a vining member of the morning glory family. Plants produce edible underground storage structures called tuberous roots. Sweet potatoes are native to Central and South America and are available in a wide variety of colors. They are divided into dry or moist types. The moist, orange ones are most familiar to Americans.

Yams (*Dioscorea polystachya*) are also vining plants, but they belong to the yam family. Yams are native to Africa and Asia. Yams also produce a large underground storage structure (called tubers) that are often much larger than a sweet potato (up to 50 pounds). Believe it or not – all those cans of yams that we see in the grocery store in the US usually contain sweet potatoes – not true yams. True yams are popular in Latin American countries but rarely seen in the US.

Sweet potatoes have been grown in the US for a long time – they were popular in the south around the time of the Civil War. They were inadvertently called yams by slaves because they resembled the true yams that they grew in Africa. The common name of yam has stuck with sweet potatoes ever since.

What type of pumpkin is made into canned pumpkin? Sometimes, not all “pumpkin” is used for canned pumpkin puree! Instead, most canned pumpkin is actually made from butternut or other winter squashes. But before you complain to processors with emails about misleading consumers, this one is a little more complicated. Both pumpkin and squash are members of the cucurbit family. (The cucurbit family also includes cantaloupe, cucumber, watermelons, and gourds.) Pumpkin tends to be a general term that describes a round, hard fruit with yellow to orange skin. Therefore the common name of pumpkin is used for several different species of squash. *Cucurbita pepo* includes field pumpkins (pumpkins that we associate with jack-o-lanterns and Halloween) and acorn squash. *Cucurbita moschata* includes butternut and a few other pumpkins, with ‘Dickinson’ being a common variety used. *C. moschata* ‘Dickinson’ is also known as Kentucky Field Pumpkin.

Cucurbita maxima are the large-fruited squash like Hubbard squash and pumpkins like 'Big Max' or 'Dill's Atlantic Giant' (these are the super-sized pumpkins you see at the state fair). The final species is *Cucurbita mixta* which includes cushaw-type pumpkins. The primary squash/pumpkin used for pumpkin puree is a type of *Cucurbita moschata*, which includes butternut squash and Dickinson pumpkin, the most common commercially grown cultivar. While *Curcurbita pepo* is the species most commonly associated with the name pumpkin (and it is edible), it is not used for canned pumpkin puree because it tends to be more fibrous or stringy.



Dickinson variety to the right. Photo by The Spruce

Where are cranberries from? Cranberries (*Vaccinium marcorcarpon*) for the US market are grown primarily in Wisconsin, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oregon, and Washington. Cranberry is a low-growing, cold-hardy, evergreen shrub or groundcover that is native to swamps and bogs of northeastern North America. The fruit is often harvested by flooding the fields because the ripe fruit will float to the top. Native Americans used this native fruit for pemmican, juice, and a dye. Cranberries almost certainly showed up on the table at early Thanksgiving feasts.



What about pumpkin spice? While this certainly wasn't on the first Thanksgiving table, you see this ingredient in everything right now – lattes, desserts, candles, and even dog biscuits. Pumpkin spice seems to be the flavor and/or scent of fall. But did you know that pumpkin spice does not contain any pumpkin? The combination of cinnamon, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, and allspice exclusively make up the “pumpkin spice” flavor. Interestingly, all of these spices are from tropical plants that are commonly used for flavor pumpkin pie – hence the name pumpkin spice.



In a couple of weeks, when you are sitting at the Thanksgiving table, give thanks – not only to family, friends, and food – but also to the histories and stories associated with some of those tasty side dishes sure to be on your table and plate!

Bow Making

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

1:00 p.m

**Scott County
Cooperative Extension,
North Room**

Different ways to make a bow will be demonstrated. All materials will be provided at class



Thursday, November 14, 2024

5:30 p.m

**Scott County
Cooperative Extension,
North Room**

Limit One Class Sign up per individual
Class size is limited, please call 502 863 0984 to register



Wreath Making



- | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Dec. 7 | Saturday | 9:00 am |
| Dec 10 | Tuesday | 10:00 am |
| Dec. 11 | Wednesday | 1:00 pm |
| Dec. 3 | Tuesday | 5:30 pm |
| Dec. 12 | Thursday | 5:30 pm |
| Dec. 17 | Tuesday | 5:30 pm |

Limit One Class Sign up per individual
Class size is limited, please call 502 863 0984 to register

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Disabilities accommodated with prior notification

What's Out of the Garden for November?



Cushaw Pie

2 cups cooked and
mashed cushaw
squash
¼ cup butter
¼ cup sugar

½ cup brown sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon lemon
extract
1 teaspoon vanilla
extract

½ teaspoon nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground
cinnamon
1 9-inch graham
cracker pie shell

1. To prepare squash: Wash and remove rind from the squash. Cut flesh into 1 inch squares.

Steam squash cubes until tender. Drain and mash.

2. Preheat oven to 400° F. In a large bowl, mix together the cushaw, butter, and sugars. **Add** eggs, lemon extract, vanilla extract, nutmeg and cinnamon. **Mix** until smooth.

3. Pour mixture into pie shell.

4. Bake 15 minutes at 400° F.

5. Reduce oven temperature to 350° F and bake pie for an additional 45 minutes or until filling sets.

Yield: 8 slices

Nutritional Analysis: 250 calories, 13 g fat, 5 g saturated fat, 2.5 g trans fat, 70 mg cholesterol, 140 mg sodium, 33g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber, 3 g protein.

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



Kentucky Winter Squash

SEASON: August through October.

NUTRITION FACTS: Winter squash, which includes acorn squash, butternut squash, pumpkin, and other varieties, is low in fat and sodium and an excellent source of vitamin A and fiber.

SELECTION: Winter squash should be heavy for its size with a hard, tough rind that is free of blemishes or soft spots.

STORAGE: Store it in a cool, dry place and use it within 1 month.

PREPARATION:

TO STEAM: Wash, peel, and remove seeds. Cut squash into 2-inch cubes or quarter, leaving rind on (it will remove easily after cooking). Bring 1 inch of water to a boil in a saucepan and place squash on a rack or basket in the pan. Do not immerse it in water. Cover the pan tightly and steam the squash 30–40 minutes or until tender.

TO MICROWAVE: Wash squash and cut it lengthwise. Place it in a baking dish and cover the dish with plastic

Source: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

wrap. Microwave until tender, using these guidelines:

• **Acorn squash**— $\frac{1}{2}$ squash, 5–8 minutes;
1 squash, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ –11 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes.

• **Butternut squash**—2 pieces, 3–4 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes.

• **Hubbard squash**—($\frac{1}{2}$ -pound pieces)—2 pieces,
4–6 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes.

TO BAKE: Wash squash and cut it lengthwise. Smaller squash can be cut in half; larger squash should be cut into portions. Remove seeds and place squash in a baking dish. Bake at 400°F for 1 hour or until tender. Seeds can be toasted at 350°F for 20 minutes.

WINTER SQUASH

Kentucky Proud Project

County Extension Agents for Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Kentucky, Nutrition
and Food Science students

SEPTEMBER 2011

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Food and Environment

Growing Your Own

A beginner's guide to gardening

Garlic

Garlic is a flavorful garden vegetable used in countless recipes. In Kentucky, plant garlic in October and early November. Leave it in the garden for the winter, then harvest in early to mid-summer when leaves begin to turn yellow and brown at the tips.

Types

Garlic is most often grouped into hardneck and softneck types. Hardneck garlic also grows edible flower stalks called scapes with bulbils at the top. Bulbils are tiny garlic bulbs inside the flower head.

Varieties

Hardneck varieties are more cold hardy than softneck, but both perform well in Kentucky. Softneck varieties often store much longer than hardneck. Try these varieties, but others may also do well.

- **Music** (hardneck) is a very popular garlic with classic garlic flavor. It also stores well.
- **Bogatyr** (hardneck) forms smaller bulbs with outer skin that is purple striped.
- **Polish** (softneck) produces very large bulbs with white skin. It offers good storage and strong flavor.
- **Inchelium Red** (softneck) produces large bulbs with mild flavor that are excellent for storage.



Music garlic
Johnny's Selected Seeds



Garlic scapes
Jann Knappage, University of Kentucky



Garlic in the garden
Jann Knappage, University of Kentucky



Garlic bulbils
Ashley Adamant

How much to plant

A five-foot row should yield eight to 12 heads (bulbs) of garlic.

How and when to plant

Plant garlic in an open, sunny spot with well-drained soil. In Kentucky, garlic is planted in the fall, mostly in October through early November.

Garlic grows best with added nutrients. Starting in spring, add a slow-release fertilizer or compost, or use a water-soluble fertilizer according to the product label.



A clove of garlic, at right, separated from the head or bulb
Jann Knappage, University of Kentucky

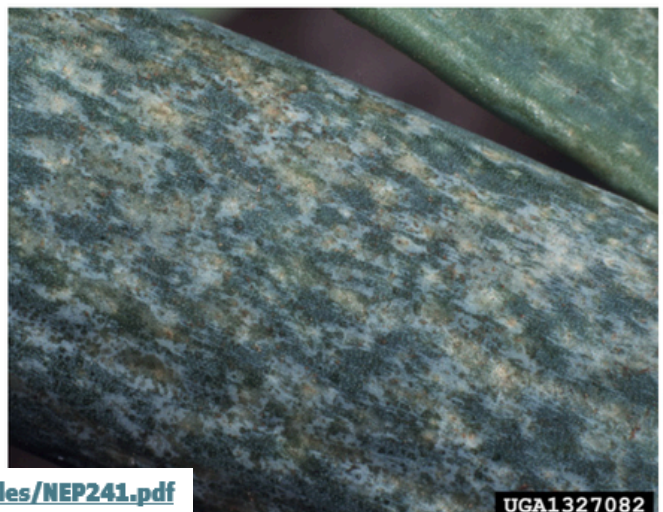
Garlic Planting		
Rows: 12 to 18 inches apart	Spacing: 6 inches apart	Depth: 1 to 2 inches
Safe Planting Dates		
Region	Earliest	Latest
Eastern Kentucky	Oct. 1	Nov. 1
Central Kentucky	Oct. 1	Nov. 7
Western Kentucky	Oct. 1	Nov. 15

There may still be time for you to plant a few cloves of garlic this year!

Pests and disease

If you see tiny, speckled holes or twisted leaves, you may have thrips. Onion maggots can also affect garlic bulbs if you grow onions or garlic in the same location for many years. Please see UK Cooperative Extension publication *Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky* (ID-128) at <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/ID/ID128/ID128.pdf> or contact your Extension agent for tips to control pests.

To see the complete publication of Growing Your Own Garlic link to GARLIC



Close-up of thrips feeding damage on leaf
Alton N. Sparks, Jr., University of Georgia, Bugwood.org, CC BY 3.0

<https://publications.ca.uky.edu/sites/publications.ca.uky.edu/files/NEP241.pdf>

or type the link above in you browser ↑

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Summary

Varieties

There are two types of garlic: hardneck and softneck. Both grow well in Kentucky. Music and Bogatyr are two recommended types. Softneck types store longer.

How much to plant?

A five-foot row should grow eight to 12 heads of garlic.

How and when to plant?

In Kentucky, plant garlic from October to early November and harvest the next summer. Plant cloves of garlic in well-drained, sunny soil. Space six inches apart and plant one to two inches deep.

Pests and diseases

Watch for thrips.

Harvesting

You can harvest garlic greens and scapes (flower stalks) regularly. Garlic bulbs are ready to harvest when the leaves yellow and tips turn brown. With care, remove bulbs from the soil. Place in a shaded area to dry for about two weeks. Once dry, braid or tie tops together for storage, or remove tops for storage. Keep some bulbs to plant next season.

Storing

Hang garlic in small bunches or store flat. Keep in a cool, dark, dry place. Dry garlic should keep for six to seven months.

Serving

Eat garlic cloves and greens raw or cooked. They are used in many recipes.

Clean up

The crop is harvested completely in summer. Little clean up is needed after harvest.

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