

# HORTICULTURE 2025 NEWSLETTER

#01 JANUARY 6, 2025



## Announcements

Happy New Year!

I hope you all enjoyed the holiday season. Here's to a wonderful 2025 with new gardening adventures as we grow together.

Each year we request reader feedback on our Horticulture Newsletter. We use this information to adjust our content to better serve you. Please take a moment to share your K-State Horticulture Newsletter experiences to help us make improvements to this resource. Follow the link below to complete a brief survey. All responses are anonymous. Thank you!

[Horticulture Newsletter Needs Assessment](#)



### Sowing Success: Research-Based Gardening for Beginners

Wednesday, January 8th 12:00PM -1:00PM CST

Start your gardening journey with our essential guide to growing your own vegetables! Join Scott Eckert, Harvey County Horticulture Agent, to learn practical advice on growing a thriving garden in the face of a challenging climate and Kansas soil conditions. Whether you have a large backyard or a small garden plot, this webinar will empower you to cultivate fresh produce!



Register Here!



Please register for this free Zoom Webinar at:  
[ksre-learn.com/KStateGardenHour](https://ksre-learn.com/KStateGardenHour)



**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

Register to attend this free webinar here:  
<https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/consumer-horticulture/garden-hour/>

## Video of the Week: Home Hydroponics



Grow fruits and vegetables year-round with home hydroponics. Learn the basics of hydroponics with Shawnee County Horticulture Agent, Lane Wiens.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WN6roFaohCE>

## Horticulture Newsletter 2024 Index

All of the articles published in the 2024 Horticulture Newsletter have been indexed according to subject. Lori Dickey has undertaken the time-consuming task of linking all of the articles in one document which can be found at the Horticulture Newsletter website. Thank you, Lori!

[Horticulture Newsletter Website](#)

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**VEGETABLES****Extension Master Gardener Tomato and Pepper Variety Trial**

Many of our K-State Extension Master Gardeners participated in the 2024 Tomato and Pepper Variety Trial project. Each participating county was required to grow 11 varieties of tomatoes, 14 varieties of sweet peppers and 13 varieties of hot peppers. The recorded growth data and made evaluations throughout the growing season. The following report highlights the procedures followed and a summary of the results.

[2024 Master Gardener Tomato and Pepper Variety Trial Report](#)**Starting Onions Indoors**

If grown from seed, onions need to be started indoors 10 to 12 weeks prior to the transplant date. Onions are typically planted in mid- to late-March to avoid the summer heat. Place seeds  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1-inch apart in a tray filled with seed-starting media. Keep the tray in a warm location (75-80 degrees F) until seeds germinate. When the seedlings are one to two-inches tall, move the tray to a cooler location (60-65 degrees F). Provide adequate light and use a water-soluble, general-purpose fertilizer no more than once per week when seedlings reach two to three inches in height.

**Starting Garden Transplants from Seed**

It's not too early to begin gathering seeds for the spring garden. Select seeds from reputable sources to ensure high quality, healthy seeds.

Starting transplants for the vegetable garden typically requires four to eight weeks from seeding to transplant date. Visit the [Kansas Garden Guide](#) where you can find the Average Expected Planting Calendar to know when the best start date is for seedlings intended for transplanting into the garden.

Always use a disease-free, soilless planting media or seed-starting mix for seeds. The containers for seed-starting can be individual cups, trays or even recycled containers as long as they have drainage holes in the bottom. Fill the container with a couple inches of media and then lightly cover the seeds with the mix after planting. Keep the soil moist until the seeds germinate and keep the containers under lights in a warm location. When the seedlings have grown two to four small leaves, they are ready to be transplanted into small pots. This will allow them to continue growing until it's time to transplant into the garden.



It's important to give plants time to harden off before transplanting. This should typically be started about ten days before the transplant date and involves gradually acclimating the seedlings to the outdoor conditions by reducing the amount of water the plants receive while slowly increasing their exposure to the outdoor conditions. This prevents the plants from experiencing transplant shock so they can continue normal growth when they are transplanted.



## FLOWERS

### Forcing Paperwhites

A member of the *Narcissus* genus, paperwhites are spring bulbs that are easy to force into bloom. Begin with healthy bulbs from a reputable source. Store bulbs in a cool, dry location until planting.



Choose a clear, shallow dish (approximately three-inches deep) that does not have drainage holes. Add a one-inch layer of washed gravel or decorative stones to the base. Place the bulbs on top of the rocks and use additional gravel or stones to hold them in place. The tops of the bulbs should remain visible. Fill the container with enough water to keep the base of the bulbs wet.

Keep the container in a cool, dark location initially to promote root growth. Then move it to a south-facing window until the bulbs begin to bloom. Keep flowers in a cool location away from direct sunlight to prolong the bloom period. Paperwhites can be expected to bloom within 8 weeks of planting.

#### Important Notes:

- Maintain the water level at the base of the bulbs throughout their growing period.
- Paperwhites can be forced in a moist, soilless mix as well. Use a container with drainage holes and plant the bulbs so the top third is visible.
- Paperwhite bulbs should be placed within one-inch of each other in the container.
- The linear leaves of paperwhites often fall over. They can be propped up with decorative supports or grown in a taller, glass container to hold them upright.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Monitor Indoor Plant Temperatures

Now is a good time to check on houseplants to ensure they aren't getting too cold. Plants next to windows or near exterior doors are at the greatest risk. Many houseplants including: Chinese evergreen (*Aglaonema*), flamingo flower (*Anthurium*), croton (*Codiaeum*), false aralia (*Dizygotheca*), and ming and balfour aralia (*Polyscias*) are highly sensitive to cold temperatures.



Most houseplants prefer temperatures above 50 degrees F though some require the temperature to be over 60- or 65-degrees F. If necessary, move plants away from the windows or door entrances to reduce cold temperature exposure.

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK



### Pruning Pyracantha

*We have some giant pyracantha shrubs that are about 10 years old. They are doing great and are low maintenance but are getting to the edge of the planter boundary and encroaching on the sidewalk bordering it. Will they tolerate heavy pruning? What time of year should that be done?*

In general, it is recommended to remove no more than one-third of the shrub when pruning. However, pyracantha can tolerate a heavy "rejuvenating" pruning as needed. Plants can be cut to about 6-inches from the ground in early spring before new growth begins.

### Contributor:

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For questions or further information, contact your local extension agency.

This newsletter is also available on the World Wide Web at: <http://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html>

The web version includes color images that illustrate subjects discussed. To subscribe to this newsletter electronically, send an e-mail message to [hortsupport@ksu.edu](mailto:hortsupport@ksu.edu) listing your e-mail address in the message.

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