

Horticulture Tips

April 2004

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Oklahoma State University

Garden Tips for April

David Hillock

Fruit and Nut

- Don't spray insecticides during fruit tree bloom or pollination may be affected. Disease sprays can continue according to schedule and label directions. (F-7319)
- Avoid using Sevin on apple trees until 30 days have passed from bloom, or fruit is near the size of a quarter.
- Control cedar-apple rust. When the orange jelly galls are visible on juniper (cedar), following a rain, begin treating apple and crabapple trees with a fungicide. (F-7319, F-7611)
- Fire blight bacterial disease (F-7615) can be controlled at this time. Plant disease-resistant varieties to avoid diseases.
- Continue spray schedules for disease prone fruit and pine trees.

Tree and Shrub

- Proper watering of newly planted trees and shrubs often means the difference between success and replacement.
- Remove any winter-damaged branches or plants that have not begun to grow. Prune spring flowering plants as soon as they are finished blooming. (F-6404, F-6409)
- Control of powdery mildew disease can be done with early detection and regular treatment. Many new plant cultivars are resistant. (F-7617)
- Leaf spot diseases can cause premature death of foliage and reduce plant vigor.

Flowers

- Most bedding plants, summer flowering bulbs, and annual flower seeds can be planted after danger of frost. This happens around mid-April in most of Oklahoma. Hold off mulching these crops until spring rains subside and soil temperatures warm up.
- Harden off transplants outside in partial protection from sun and wind prior to planting.
- Let spring flowering bulb foliage remain as long as possible before removing it.

Vegetables

- Wait a little longer for it to warm up before planting cucurbit crops and okra.
- Plant vegetable crops in successive plantings to ensure a steady supply of produce rather than harvesting all at once.
- Cover cucurbit crops with a floating row cover to keep out insect pests. Remove during bloom time.
- Watch for cutworm damage and add flea beetle scouting to your list of activities in the vegetable garden.

Landscape - General

- Hummingbirds arrive in Oklahoma in early April. Get your feeders ready using 1 part sugar to 4 parts water. Do not use red food coloring.
- Keep the bird feeder filled during the summer and help control insects at the same time.
- Lace bugs, aphids, spider mites, bagworms, etc. can start popping up in the landscape and garden later this month. Keep a close eye on all plants and use mechanical, cultural and biological control options first.
- Be alert for both insect pests and predators. Some pests can be hand picked without using a pesticide. Do not spray if predators such as lady beetles are present. Spray only when there are too few predators to be effective.
- Schedule a group tour of the Oklahoma Gardening Studio Gardens in Stillwater between the first of May and late October!

Lawn

- Warm-season grass lawns can be established beginning late April from sprigs, plugs or sod. (F-6419)
- Warm season grasses can be fertilized 4 times per season using 1 pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. in each of 4 applications. Apply 1 pound in April, May, June and September. Water in nitrate fertilizers. (F-6420)
- Mowing of warm-season lawns can begin now (F-6420). Cutting height for bermuda, buffalo and zoysia should be 1 to 1 1/2 inches high.
- Damage from Spring Dead Spot Disease (SDS) becomes visible in bermudagrass (F-7665). Perform practices that promote grass recovery. Do not spray fungicides at this time for SDS control.
- Grub damage can be visible in lawns at this time. Check for the presence of grubs before ever applying any insecticide treatments. Apply appropriate soil insecticide if white grubs are a problem (F-7306). Water product into soil.

Winecups, a Native Perennial with Excellent Drought Tolerance

David Hillock

Winecups or poppy mallow (*Callirhoe involucrata*) is native to the plains of Oklahoma and is also found in western United States and northern Mexico. It is a full sun plant and very drought tolerant. In fact, it develops a carrot-like taproot with age making it difficult to transplant once it is established. The leaves of Winecups are deeply lobed and a nice medium to dark green. The flowers are deep reddish-purple in a cup shape appearing in early summer and continuing to bloom throughout the growing season. It grows only to about 6 to 12 inches high but will easily spread to 3 feet. It will reseed itself, thus seedling of Winecups may pop up in other areas of the garden. During hot dry summers, Winecups may go dormant but will surely return the following spring. Cut it back in late winter/early spring. Winecups has few pests, at least none that are serious. Winecups grow quickly and is useful in the front of sunny borders, in a rock garden or spilling over a wall.

Melon Pest Manager – A Pest Management Information and Pest Advisory Resource for Oklahoma Cucurbit Production

Jim Shrefler

Where can Oklahoma growers who produce watermelon, cantaloupe and other cucurbit crops go to quickly find timely information about managing insects, diseases and weeds? The answer is "Melon Pest Manager". This Internet site can be accessed at www.lane-ag.org . While pest management information for these crops can be found in numerous sources, Melon Pest Manager is a resource that is specific to the pest problems commonly found in Oklahoma. It is designed to provide the most up-to-date information in a readily accessible format.

What kind of information can be found at "Melon Pest Manager"? The resource is designed to provide several types of information that is needed for managing pests in melon crops in a sound manner. For example, information on insect, weed and disease identification can be found on the site. A unique aspect of Melon Pest Manager is that it is intended to be a source that provides the most current information available. As the growing season progresses, information on insect activity and disease incidence will be posted to help keep growers alerted to what is happening across the state with cucurbit pests. Likewise, information such as changes in pesticide approvals that pertain to cucurbit production will be provided as that information becomes available.

Much of the information on Melon Pest Manager is derived from Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Publication E-853, Cucurbit Integrated Crop Management. An online version of the publication may be accessed from the website. The publication provides current information on many aspects of cucurbit production in Oklahoma. For questions about Melon Pest Manager, call your County Cooperative Extension Office or the Lane Ag Center at (580) 889-7343.

Tomato Cages

David Hillock

Tomato cages are very beneficial to the production of your tomatoes. Not only do they provide a support for indeterminate types to sprawl upon, but they also keep the fruit off of the ground and provide better air circulation through the plants thereby reducing chances of disease development. By encouraging vertical growth you can also grow more in smaller spaces.

Though manufactured cages are available for purchase, you can build your own. Any strong material can be used including wooden stakes or wire fencing/mesh. Wooden stakes about 6 feet long should be used. Tie the plant to the stake as it grows. Wire fencing/mesh cages should be about 18 to 25 inches in diameter and 3 1/2 to 5 feet tall. Use concrete reinforcing mesh, 10-gauge wire frame or other sturdy wire mesh that has openings of at least six inches. These larger openings allow you to reach in and harvest fruit more easily. Cut and bend the mesh into cylinders fastening the ends together. Snip off the bottom one or two rungs. By cutting off the bottom one or two rungs, the cage can be pushed into the ground at least six inches deep around each plant.

Garden Planting Guide for Warm Season Vegetables

<u>Vegetable</u>	<u>Time to Plant*</u>	<u>Days to Harvest</u>	<u>Method of Planting</u>
------------------	-----------------------	------------------------	---------------------------

Bean, Lima	April 15-30	90-120	Seed
Beans, Green or Wax	April 10-30	50-60	Seed
Beans, Pole	April 10-30	60-90	Seed
Cantaloupe	May 1-20	80-100	Seed or Plants
Cucumber	April 10-30 or later	50-70	Seed or Plants
Eggplant	April 10-30	80-90	Plants
Okra	April 10-30 or later	60-70	Seed
Pepper	April 10-30 or later	90-110	Plants
Pumpkin	April 10-30	90-120	Seed
Southern Pea	May 1-June 10	85-100	Seed
Squash, Summer	April 10-30 or later	40-60	Seed or Plants
Squash, Winter	May 15-June 15	110-125	Seed or Plants
Sweet Corn	Mar. 15-April 15	80-100	Seed
Sweet Potato	May 1-June 10	100-120	Plants
Tomato	April 10-30	70-90	Plants
Watermelon	May 1-20	90-120	Seed

*These dates indicate planting times from southeast to northwest Oklahoma. Specific climate and weather may influence planting dates. For Cool Season Vegetables, the soil temperature at the depth where the seeds are planted should be at least 40°F.

MASTER GARDENER CORNER

David Hillock

Southeast Regional Master Gardener Conference/Cruise, June 20-28, 2004

It's not too late to "**Come Ride the Gardening Wave**" with the Southern Region Master Gardeners, **June 24- 28, 2004**. We will board the Carnival Holiday in New Orleans for a Caribbean cruise. We depart at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday and return to New Orleans by 8:00 a.m. Monday morning. Two days at sea will focus on gardening programs on board with specialists from the southern states. Gardening topics will cover the southern region with ideas on landscaping as well as maintenance, and edible gardening. A stop in Cozumel will give you options for a garden tour or you can shop, snorkel or visit the ruins.

This is a great opportunity to visit with Master Gardeners from 13 southern states, plus relax and enjoy a tropical holiday. Leaving out of New Orleans gives us a more central location for the region, so travel to and from New Orleans is on your own. The prices quoted are for your room (double occupancy) all meals, port charges and we have added all gratuities. The only additional costs will be optional tours, your souvenirs and any alcoholic beverages. You will notice there is a slightly higher rate for Master Gardeners versus those just cruising – (family and friends). This will cover all program materials, hand-outs, etc. This cruise is open to non-master gardeners, and we encourage you to bring guests. There is always plenty to do on a cruise, and they won't be bored while you attend gardening sessions. We will leave the evenings open for you to enjoy on-board entertainment.

Please note there is a \$50 non-refundable deposit to hold a room. Visit our cruise website at www.poetravel.com to find out more information about cruise pricing, trip itinerary, shore excursions, payment schedules, travel insurance and more.

Register today at www.poetravel.com, click on Meetings & Incentives...then go to Master Gardener Cruise or call Teresa at Poe Travel 1-800-727-1960 / 501-376-4171. Poe Travel hours of operation: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. CST / Monday – Friday.

2004 Oklahoma MG Continued Training Summer Conference, June 4, 2004

The summer continued training conference is shaping up to be a good one. Our keynote speaker will be Associate Editor **Sarah Kinbar** from Garden Design Magazine. Sarah will be presenting "**50 Ways to Add Wow to Your Garden: Lessons from Garden Design's Golden Trowel Program**".

As a floral designer, Sarah learned how to work with design principles, color combinations and contrasting textures to create arrangements with stunning visual impact. Her interest in designing with plant material was inspired by her mother, who came to the United States from Holland and brought with her a sensitivity and talent for growing things.

In 2002, Sarah traded her florist's knife for a keyboard, and went to work for Garden Design magazine. As associate editor, she has built relationships with landscape architects and garden designers around the United States, traveling to see their gardens and reporting on those gardens in the magazine. She also edits the Dirt department, which includes stories on garden books, garden-oriented festivals and events, new casual furniture designs, the spring garden shows and gifts for gardeners, and profiles historic and contemporary landscape designers.

Other speakers include **Melynda Hickman**, natural resources biologist for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, who will speak on **Landscaping for Wildlife: A Guide to the Southern Great Plains**; **David Keathly - The Tall Grass Prairies**; **Dr. Lou Anella - internet resources such as okPLANTid and okPLANTtrees**; and **Al Sutherland on Mesonet - A Weather Toolkit for Homeowners**; and a discussion panel of horticulture specialists to answer your gardening questions.

Registration packets should be arriving in your mailboxes early May. We are doing our best to keep registration low and affordable. Registration will include a one-year subscription to Garden Design Magazine.

Hope to see you all there! To learn more about the conference contact David Hillock, Master Gardener Coordinator, Oklahoma State University, Dept. of Horticulture & Landscape Architecture, 360 Ag Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078. E-mail: hillock@okstate.edu; phone: 405-744-5158.

Upcoming Horticulture Events

2004 Texoma Spring Garden Fling

April 16-17, 2004

Bryan County Fairgrounds Community Building, Durant

The Bryan County Master Gardeners will host the 2004 Texoma Spring Garden Fling on April 16 and 17. Also called "The Grow Show", the Friday/Saturday event will feature presentations and exhibits covering various yard and garden topics. There will be free garden seed samples and door prize drawings. Seminars will be offered on various yard and garden topics throughout each day of the show. Seminars are scheduled to be held each hour beginning at 10:30 a.m. each day and continuing until 6:30 p.m. on Friday and until 4:30 p.m. on Saturday. Seminar topics will include various aspects of pest control in the yard and garden, growing good peaches, herb gardening, xeriscaping, water gardens, roses, wild flowers, and hummingbirds. The event will be held at the Bryan County Fairgrounds Community Building which is located on South 9th Street. For more information, call the Bryan County Extension Office at (580) 924-5312.

Regional Pecan Production Meeting

April 15, 2004

Red River Pecan Plantation, Arkansas

A regional pecan production meeting is scheduled for April 15 at the Red River Pecan Plantation in Arkansas. The meeting is free to the public, but advance registration before April 9 is requested. To register, contact Gerald Alexander in the University of Arkansas' Hempstead County Extension Office, 400 S. Washington St., Hope, AR 71801, or call 870-777-5771.

Strawberry Plasticulture Seminar

April 20, 2004

Noble Foundation, Ardmore

A strawberry plasticulture seminar will be held at the Noble Foundation in Ardmore on April 20 from 6 to 8 p.m. Call Steve Upson at 580-223-5810 for more information.

Spring Dead Spot Conference

April 28, 2004

OSU Botanical Gardens, Stillwater

Turfgrass and Nursery Field Day

May 20, 2004

OSU Botanical Gardens, Stillwater

Integrated Pest Management for Landscape Professionals

May 25, 2004

OSU, Stillwater Campus

State Master Gardener Conference

June 4, 2004
Pioneer Technology Center, Ponca City

OPGA Annual Meeting

June 11-13, 2004
Idabel

***Oklahoma Gardening* Summer Gardenfest**

June 12, 2004
OSU Botanical Gardens, Stillwater

The keynote speaker will be Landscape Architect Tim Thoelecke from Garden Concepts, Inc. in Glenview, Illinois. His presentation will be on "Garden Makeovers."

Greenhouse Production Shortcourse

June 15-17, 2004
OSU-Oklahoma City Campus

Horticultural Therapy Conference

Date - TBA
Stillwater

Multi-State Plant Materials Conference

September 22-23, 2004
Holiday Inn, Stillwater

Nursery/Greenhouse Trade Show and Convention

October 8-9, 2004
Cox Convention Center, Oklahoma City

Tree Care Issues Conference

November 3, 2004
OSU Botanical Gardens Educational Building, Stillwater

For more information about upcoming events, please contact Stephanie Larimer at 405-744-5404 or steph@okstate.edu.