



# Horticulture Highlights

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Sevier County Extension Service

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Cooperative Extension Service University of Arkansas United States Department of Agriculture, and County Governments Cooperating

## Home Garden Planting Guide

### July

Basil  
Pak Choi  
Bok Choi  
Broccoli  
Cabbage  
Irish Potatoes  
Snap Beans  
Collards  
Tomatoes—Fall  
Southern Peas  
Cucumbers  
Pumpkins  
Winter Squash  
Summer Squash

### August

Basil  
Lettuce  
Kale  
Mustard  
Parsnips  
Carrots  
Beets  
Chinese Cabbage  
Cauliflower  
Broccoli  
Cabbage  
Cucumbers  
Collards  
Squash  
Snap Beans  
Southern Peas

The closer to the bottom of the box a vegetable is listed, the closer to the end of the month it should be planted. This planting guide was prepared for central Arkansas zones B and C. Adjust planting dates depending on your zone. Northern Sevier County = zone C, southern Sevier County = zone B.

## Sevier County Farmer's Market Now Open

Sevier County Farmer's Market opened June 14 this year. They are open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 7:30 to 11:00 am or until sold out.

They would like to have more vendors participating in the market so if you raise a garden or grow fruit, please consider taking your fruits and vegetables to the market to sell.

For information on how to market your vegetables, fruit, eggs,

homemade bread, jellies, etc. at the market, you may contact Marlene Bevill at (870) 386-7108 or [bmarlene4947@gmail.com](mailto:bmarlene4947@gmail.com) OR Angela Smith at (870) 642-2718 or [cartangel@windstream.net](mailto:cartangel@windstream.net).

You may also contact Dana Stringfellow at the Sevier County Extension Service at (870) 584-3013 or [dstringfellow@uaex.edu](mailto:dstringfellow@uaex.edu) for a copy of the Farmer's Market Guidelines, Participation Form, Price List, and Rules and Regulations.

## OKRA

### Planting Time

In the spring, plant okra seeds after all danger of frost, when the soil has warmed to 62 degrees F and about 10 days after tomatoes are transplanted. This is April 10-15 in southern Arkansas. Short day length, less than 11 hours, promotes flowering in most cultivars. Okra planted too late in the spring may remain vegetative until late summer or early fall. The cultivar "Clemson Spineless" is less sensitive to day length. Transplants of okra can be started four to six weeks prior to direct seeding in the garden. This will allow early and continued production.

### Spacing and Depth of Planting

Okra has a thick seed coat and does not germinate easily. Soak seeds in water at room temperature overnight to improve germination. Discard nonviable seeds that float after soaking. Sow seeds 1 inch deep in rows that are 3 to 4 feet apart. When the seedlings are 3 inches high, thin to 10 to 18 inches apart.

### Care

Okra grows well in any good garden soil. Prior to planting, apply one pound of a complete fertilizer, such as 10-20-10, per 100 square feet of row. Okra is quite sensitive to salt. Over-fertilization and poor drainage of soil or containers can damage the plants. Okra can become excessively vegetative if nitrogen levels are too high. Excess nitrogen fertilization results in poor yields and excessive vegetative growth. During a long growing season, apply additional fertilizer every four to six weeks. Use one pound of fertilizer per 100 square feet of row. Shallow cultivation near the plant keeps down weeds.

The flower on the okra plant blooms for only one day. Okra is generally self-pollinated, but it will be cross-pollinated by insects, such as bumblebees, when several varieties are grown in close proximity and blossom at the same time. For early harvests of okra, use black plastic mulch to warm the soil and plant transplants through the mulch when the soil is 60 degrees F or warmer.

### Harvesting

Cut the pods while they are tender and free of fiber, 2 to 4 inches

long for most varieties. Okra pods are ready for harvest four to seven days after the flower opens. Harvest pods every other day. Remove mature pods and discard, as they reduce the plant's production ability. The large pods rapidly become tough and woody. When the stem is too difficult to cut, the pod is too old to use. The plant bears until frost, and four or five plants will produce enough okra for most families.



Seed can be saved from open-pollinated varieties. Okra is self-pollinated, and flowers can be isolated by placing a paper bag over them for 24 hours while they are open. In early fall, allow several pods to mature and dry. The seed can be dried and stored for up to five years.

### Insects

Aphids may attack young leaves and developing flowers and fruit and are often controlled by natural predators such as ladybugs. Sucking insects, such as stinkbugs and leaf-footed bugs, attack the pods and cause them to become misshaped. Use suggested insecticides to control these insects. Okra pods can be invaded by corn earworms, but this is not a major problem unless you plan to save seed. Fire ants may attack young pods causing damage at the base and loss of the pod. Japanese beetles can damage the leaves, leaving only skeletonized leaves, in a short period of time.

### Diseases

Damping off of young seedlings is a problem early in the spring. It is caused by planting in soils that are too cold and using seeds that are not treated with a fungicide.

Southern blight is a soil-borne fungal disease that remains in the garden from one year to the next. It attacks the base of the plant and destroys the tissue. Remove any plants you suspect have this disease. Crop rotation is the most effective means of control.

The fungal vascular wilts caused by verticillium and fusarium are present in some soils. The best method of control for these diseases is crop rotation and disease-free seed.

## Annabelle Hydrangea Latin: *Hydrangea arborescens*

Wild hydrangea is a native deciduous shrub of the hydrangea family found in moist woodlands from New York to Florida and west to the adjacent corners of Oklahoma and Kansas. It grows 3 to 4 feet tall and spreads slowly sideways from underground stems. Clumps are often several times wider than tall.

The leaves are dark green, long-petioled and elliptical, in outline, and up to 6 inches long. In the wild, flowers appear in early summer in terminal clusters to 6 inches across. The inflorescence of wildlings consists of a band of dull white showy blossoms surrounding a central field of fertile, petalless flowers.

But in Annabelle, the flower head consists of all sterile florets, so it has a snowball look. Individual florets are about the size of a dime, but hundreds are produced on the inflorescence. Heads may be as much as a foot across but are typically smaller.

The story of Annabelle is one of a pass-along plant that was shared by several generations of gardeners before it was "discovered" and made available to the gardening world at large. It hit the nursery trade in 1962, made available by the late J.C. McDaniel, the long time plant breeder and professor of horticulture at the University of Illinois. McDaniel had seen the plant in an Urbana garden in 1960 and traced it back to the southern Illinois farming community of Anna where gardeners grew it all over town.

On inquiry, McDaniel found the plant had been discovered by Harriet Kirkpatrick in 1910. She was riding her horse through the woods of Union County (probably today what is part of the Shawnee National Forest) when she spied the plant and recognized it as something special. Later, she and her sister Amy returned and dug the plant up and took it to their garden on Chestnut Street in Anna. McDaniel named the plant for these two belles from Anna.

Harriet's son Hubbard re-counted the story of the plant's discovery to McDaniel. He said the family had tried to interest

Burpee Seed Company into introducing it, but they opted for an earlier blooming selection called 'Grandiflora,' which they marketed as "Snowhill." Time has proven Annabelle to be the better of the two.

Annabelle is easy to grow and dependable. It is hardy from zone 4 to 9. It does best in fertile, woodland soil that doesn't get too dry in the summer. It should be in shaded areas of the garden. It will grow in full sun, but like most hydrangeas, it wilts badly during the hottest part of the day.

*H. arborescens* and its cultivars flower on current season growth, so it's easy to control the size and spread of the plant. Plants can be cut to the ground during the winter and will still flower the following summer. Some recommend cutting the flowers as soon as they begin turning brownish; plants will then produce a second flush of flowers in late summer.

The mature inflorescences are easy to dry for indoor arrangements by stripping the leaves and hanging them upside down in bundles in a cool area. Annabelle is essentially trouble-free in the garden, but some supplemental watering may be needed during dry summers.

By: Gerald Klingaman, retired Extension Horticulturist - Ornamentals



## Pruning Hydrangeas by Janet Carson

The season of pruning is not the same for all hydrangeas. Some plants bloom on the new growth—*Hydrangea paniculata* and *H. arborescens*, so can be pruned before growth begins in early spring or as they are going dormant in the fall. Others bloom on the old growth, so should only be pruned after flowering; *Hydrangea macrophylla* and *H. quercifolia* fit into this category.

*Hydrangea paniculata* (panicle hydrangea) and *H. arborescens* (smooth hydrangea) require a totally different method of pruning and

are both much more forgiving if pruning is not done at a certain time. Other than pruning when flower buds are opening, you really can't mess these up too easily. The panicle (PeeGee) hydrangea can be formed into a tree, with very little pruning other than shaping done each year before growth begins in the spring. It can be pruned hard if needed, but do so before it begins to leaf out in the spring. *H. arborescens* or the smooth hydrangea (Annabelle) may or may not be pruned hard before growth begins. The smooth hydrangea will produce much larger blooms if pruned hard each

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## Pruning Hydrangeas continued

year, but many gardeners opt for smaller blooms on sturdier stems. Annabelle's branches often fall over under the weight of their blooms, especially after irrigation or a good rain. Pruning crossover branches and pruning for structure and support by cutting stems to a heading of 18 - 24 inches can give you a sturdier branch to support the blooms, but even then you may need some additional plant supports to keep the branches upright. Some gardeners in northern regions shear them to the ground each year in the fall, then mulch since the stalks would often be killed back anyway.

## Vegetable Gardening in Arkansas

The Cooperative Extension Service has a wonderful publication by Dr. Craig Anderson called Vegetable Gardening in Arkansas. You can order one of these books online for \$7 by going to [www.uaex.edu](http://www.uaex.edu) and clicking on **Publications** in red at the very top of the page. Out beside **Online Publications Order System**, click on **select this link** in red. Type in your **zip code** and click on **continue** and it will take you to the publications. Highlight **Enter Keyword:** in the box and type in **MPI28** and click on **Go** and it will bring up the publication for you to order.

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