Have You Tested Your Soil?

We are starting to receive lots of soil samples this time of year for gardens and pastures. You may want to plan ahead since it takes 2-3 weeks to get the results back on your samples. You will need a pint of DRY soil to be tested. If you don’t want to come by and get a box before you take your sample, just fill a sandwich size Ziploc bag COMPLETELY full of soil and bring it by the Extension Service. If the soil is not dry, spread it out on a newspaper in your house for a day and it will dry.

There is no charge for this service since the taxes on your fertilize pay for it.

Have you sprayed your fruit trees yet? If not, it’s that time. For information on spraying or any other horticulture questions, contact the Sevier County Extension office.
When to Prune

Most plants can be pruned safely at almost any time of the year. There may be a period of time when pruning is preferred due to flower or berry production (see Table below), but the survival of the plant being pruned will not be jeopardized if not pruned at that time. Many people have the idea that late winter or early spring is the time to prune plants. This is true for orchard crops which are being pruned for the specific purpose of increasing the fruit yield and maintaining size. Also, orchard workers have more time on their hands at this time to do the time-consuming task.

The best way to determine when a plant should be pruned is by timing it in relation to its flowering period. If the plant is spring blooming and primarily grown for its blooms, such as forsythia or dogwood, pruning should follow the bloom period. Pruning prior to blooming will remove some of the blooms. Spring blooming plants actually initiate their blooms in the fall prior to the spring they bloom. Summer blooming plants such as rose-of-sharon or crapemyrtle bloom on the current season’s growth and should be pruned in the spring just prior to bud break.

If the plant is not grown for flowers, the best time for pruning is usually dependent on when the plant will recover from pruning the fastest. Severe pruning should be delayed until just before growth starts in the spring so that you do not have to look at the bare stubs any longer than necessary. Heavy pruning of all plants should not be attempted in late summer or early fall due to the possibility of stimulating late season growth which will not have the opportunity to harden off before winter sets in. Storm damaged plants should be pruned as soon after the damage occurs as possible.

Some shade and flowering trees tend to bleed heavily if pruned in the late winter or early spring. This plant sap contains sugars, minerals and other growth compounds needed for the initiation of growth in the spring. This bleeding is usually not harmful to the tree but is unsightly. Because of this bleeding problem, these plants should be pruned in the late spring or early summer after the foliage is on the tree. At this time, the foliage will use the plant sap and the cut surface will heal over more quickly. Plants such as maples, elms, willows, birches, beeches and dogwood fall into this group of heavy bleeders.

Pruning According to Season of Bloom

| Spring Flowering Trees and Shrubs Best Pruned Immediately After Flowering: |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Azaleas, Beautybush, Crabapple, Deutzia, Dogwood, Doublefile Viburnum, Flowering Cherry, Flowering Quince, Forsythia, Hawthorn | Lilacs, Magnolia, Mock Orange, Redbud, Shadbush, Shrub Honeysuckles, Shrub Roses, Smoketree, Spring Blooming Spireas, Snowball Viburnum |

| Summer Flowering Trees and Shrubs Which Should be Pruned Before Spring Growth Begins: |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Beautyberry, Chaste Tree (Vitex), Crapemyrtle, Glossy Abelia, Hybrid Tea Roses | P.G. Hydrangea, Mimosa (Silk Tree), Rose-of-Sharon, Summer Blooming Clematis, Summer Blooming Spireas |

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<th>Trees or Shrubs Which May be Pruned Before or After Bloom:</th>
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<td>Cotoneaster, Pyracantha, Snowberry, Tea Viburnum</td>
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Get Your Free Publication on Pruning From Your Extension Service

Extension offers a free guide on pruning. Most of what you need to know can be found in our publication MP167 Pruning Ornamental Plants. You can find this publication online at www.uaex.edu/counties/sevier and click on Publications in red at the top of the page. Then click on Online Publications Order System - To search, order printed copies or print PDF’s of all Extension publications, select this link. Enter your Zip Code and click on Continue.

In the search box where it says Enter Keyword, type in MP167 and enter. Then click on the name of the publication and it will pull it up in .pdf format.

If you can’t access the publication online, call the Sevier County Extension office (870) 584-3013 and ask for the publication Pruning Ornamental Plants.
Kale

Kale are cabbage-like plants native to the eastern Mediterranean or to Asia Minor. Their wild forms have become widely distributed from their place of origin and are found on the coasts of northern Europe and Britain. Apparently, all the principal forms of kale we know today have been known for at least 2,000 years.

Kale (also known as non-heading cabbage and broccoli) are hardy cool-season greens of the cabbage family rich in vitamins A and C. Although kale tolerates summer heat, it grows best in the spring and fall. The highly curled, bluish-green leaves (some varieties have plain leaves) do not form a solid head.

Flower-like cultivars of kale are quite colorful. They are planted as an accent or as pot plants. The leaves develop their highest color under cool fall weather. In addition to serving as ornamentals, kale plants are used for greens as a garnish or in salads and may be cooked in place of cabbage.

Planting Time

Plant kale any time from early spring to early summer. Planting in late summer provides harvest from fall until the ground freezes hard in winter.

Spacing and Depth of Planting

Sow seed 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep in rows. Thin the seedlings to 8 to 12 inches apart. The seedlings may be transplanted.

Care

Kale are relatively easy to grow, requiring only normal cultivation and watering. They can be treated like collards or mustard greens.

Harvesting

The lower leaves may be individually picked when they are small and tender (8 to 10 inches or shorter). The entire kale plant may be cut. Quality is improved by frost, and the plant can withstand a light freeze. Late summer planting usually gives best results. Kale can be harvested until a severe freeze in the winter.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Will new leaves develop if the small leaves at the center of the plants are removed?
A. No. Removing the apical meristem prevents further growth.

Q. Are ornamental kales edible?
A. Yes, they are edible but are more highly valued for their ornamental value.

Kale—the Superfood

Kale — Rich in vitamin K, which is essential for blood clotting, kale also contains lutein, a nutrient that reduces the risk of cataracts and other eye disorders. One serving of cooked kale has nearly triple the amount of lutein that a serving of raw spinach has. One cup of cooked kale contains: 2.5 grams of protein, 354% of your RDA for vitamin A (beta-carotene), 89% of your RDA for vitamin C, 1328% of your RDA for vitamin K, and 27% of your RDA for manganese.

Kale Avocado Salad

- 1 bunch kale, shredded (stems removed)
- 1 cup tomato, chopped (try sweet cherry tomatoes)
- 1/2 avocado*
- 1-2 tablespoons olive oil or hemp seed oil (go for less if you can)
- Juice from 1/2 lemon
- 1/4 – 1/2 teaspoon Celtic or Himalayan sea salt, to taste
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne (optional)

- For extra yummy...add 1-2 sheets untoasted nori (edible seaweed) snipped up with scissors into little bits
- Optional toppings: raisins, pine nuts, hemp seed nuts, sesame seeds

In mixing bowl, toss all ingredients together. Mash everything together (with hands) to create marinated/wilted effect on kale. This makes it much tastier and easier to digest.

*Avocado is also one of the superfoods. Once reviled for their high fat content (a medium avocado has 22 grams of fat), avocados have regained favor as a good source of glutathione, an antioxidant that improves overall hormone function.

For a video on how to make this salad, go to: http://happyfoody.com/2008/02/12/raw-kale-avocado-salad/
Check Out Our New Website!

We are excited about our NEW WEBSITE that just launched February 26, 2014 at www.uaex.edu/counties/sevier. This has been two years in the making and we encourage you to use it in accessing information on our programs. You will find our Calendar of Events, publications, newsletters, and many other services we offer. To access the Calendar of Events to find our upcoming programs, just click on Event Calendar at the top of the page in red. You can view the calendar in several views including monthly. Click on the + by locations and then on the + by Counties P to Y and choose Sevier County to see our local upcoming events. Click on the name of the event for more information about that event. We will be updating it regularly. Please bookmark our website in your browser so you will have easy access to it at any time.

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