

Adam Watson, Agriculture Extension Agent

For the safety of our clients and staff, the Washington County Extension Office is until further notice closed to public access. Extension staff are still working and can be reached by phone or e-mail. Please dial (423)753-1680 for immediate assistance. E-mail addresses for each Washington County Extension staff member can be found by clicking [here](#). You're always welcome to reach me, Adam Watson, by email watson@utk.edu or by cell 423-430-6711.

Consider following us, [UT Extension-Washington County](#), on Facebook to see up to the minute info on educational opportunities such as webinars and videos. Join Washington County Extension as we transition to alternative delivery methods in response to Covid-19.

Still a Little Early for Tomatoes

Two weeks ago I was at a grocery store and I saw some very nice looking tomato plants for sale. While the plants were healthy, and even reasonably priced, I wasn't tempted to buy them as it is just too early to plant such a frost sensitive vegetable in the garden.

I'll admit we had some beautiful and nearly hot weather towards the end of March that can make you want to jump into gardening, but for our region early May is considered the safe planting time for frost tender vegetables such as tomatoes due to the potential for late spring frosts.

It's even true that with some frost events plants can be protected with coverings such as floating row covers or even bed sheets. However, in the event that a cold front moves in, options outside of high tunnels, green houses, and the like simply prove to be insufficient.

I'd like to suggest that instead of risking frost damage stick with those vegetables that are more tolerant of possible frosts. The cole crops such as cabbage and broccoli can be planted now. Short season crops like radishes that are ready in about 35 days from emergence are a good choice.

Take a look at the [Tennessee Home Vegetable Garden 2020 Calendar](#) for reminders of timely tasks in the vegetable garden.

Don't Cut Back Those Daffodils!

I hope that everyone is enjoying the display being provided by daffodils and other spring bulbs that are bursting into bloom. Don't forget that many of these flowers are great as cut flowers in arrangements so take advantage of this and bring some indoors.



After the blooms are gone and the foliage is left some gardeners are tempted to cut these plants back to the ground, but it's best if this isn't done. It's important to remember that the spring bloom is only possible if the plant can store sugars produced from photosynthesis. Photosynthesis requires green leaves, or foliage, to take place so if we remove the foliage of spring bloomers we reduce the size, and may even prevent, next year's blooms.

As the plants foliage begins to yellow and dieback it is then acceptable to cut these plants back to the ground. In our area, the foliage starts to yellow usually in late May or June. Once the foliage dies back it is also the proper time to divide clumps of daffodils that may be crowding each other.



WALK ACROSS
TENNESSEE

WASHINGTON COUNTY
UTEXTENSION
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Walk It Off Washington County: Walk Across Tennessee is a team-based walking program. The teams are encouraged to cumulatively walk the equivalent of the length of Tennessee (about 500 miles) or more, over a six-week period. Team members do not have to walk together. Some may prefer to walk outside, while others walk on a treadmill. The team who walks the farthest “across Tennessee” will win, but everyone who participates will take home a healthy habit – walking for fitness.

Getting Started:

STEP 1: Form a team of 4 members.

STEP 2: Team Captain will fill out a team [REGISTRATION](#)

Questions? Email us at Ltimbs1@utk.edu

Key Dates and Deadlines:

WALKING CHALLENGE: Monday, April 6th - Sunday, May 17th

REPORTING DEADLINES: Captains will report mileage for their team each Wednesday by noon via "Weekly Mileage Reporting Form". For reporting purposes, the week will begin on Monday and conclude on Sunday.

WINNERS ANNOUNCED: Mark your calendars! Tuesday, May 19th 2pm. Via Zoom Video Conference. Link will be sent to captains.

Prizes: 1ST-3RD PLACE PRIZES: The top three teams that walked the most miles will win great prizes.

PRIZE DRAWING: Every team that walks 500 miles or more will have their name in the drawing for great prizes.

Mileage Calculator

[CONVERT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TO MILEAGE](#)



Seed Saving 101 Webinar

April 23, 2020 6:30-7:30 pm

Are you interested in saving seeds, but not sure where to start? Then this is the webinar to watch. UT Extension Washington County Agriculture Agent, Adam Watson, will introduce the basics of seed saving to gardeners and give you the knowledge to start saving seeds this season.

[Register Here](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. If you have never participated in a Zoom meeting, I recommended you join 15 minutes before start time to allow for the application to download.

Timely Tips for the Vegetable Garden

- Rotate your vegetable crops based on families. One way to reduce diseases in the garden is not replanting a crop, or a related crop, in the same garden spot as last year.

Crop family	Common home garden crops
Apiaceae	Carrot, celery, parsnip
Chenopodiaceae	Beet, spinach, chard
Cucurbitaceae	Cucumber, squash, pumpkin, watermelon
Poaceae	Corn
Malvaceae	Okra
Brassicaceae	Broccoli, mustard, Brussels sprouts, kale, collards, kohlrabi, turnip, cabbage, cauliflower, radish
Solanaceae	Tomato, potato, pepper, eggplant
Alliaceae	Chives, garlic, leek, onion
Fabaceae	Beans, peas, edamame
Asteraceae	Lettuce, sunflower, endive

- Space plants properly. Proper spacing allows plants room to grow and allows air to circulate around the plant reducing leaf wetness and thereby preventing many diseases. Consider using trellising to increase vertical growing space. Read plant tags, seed packets, or consult resources such as [Guide to Spring-Planted, Cool-Season Vegetables](#); [Guide to Warm-Season Garden Vegetables](#); [Growing Vegetables from Seed](#); [Fall Vegetable Gardens](#).
- Water the roots not the leaves! Wet leaves create an environment ideal for growing diseases. Limiting irrigation methods to applications that focus on the soil and not the foliage of the plant reduce the opportunity for diseases problems.

- Protect Pollinators! Using insecticides anytime when flowers are present should be done with caution. Always read and follow all label instructions in regards to protecting honey bees and other pollinators.

TALKIN' TRANSPLANTS: What Every Gardener Should Look For

What transplants should I buy? Tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts are all commonly transplanted. Cucumbers, muskmelons, watermelon and summer squash can be grown or purchased as transplants, but sometimes direct seeded crops perform just as well in the garden.

Where should I buy transplants? Purchase transplants from garden centers that you trust. Proper handling and care of transplants will pay dividends in your garden through the season as healthier plants transplant better. Plus, there are several diseases that can be seed-borne, so you want to buy plants from growers who buy high-quality seeds and grow in an environment that reduces disease potential.

What should I look for in transplants? Choose stocky plants that are free from all signs of insects or disease and do not have damaged or yellow leaves. Transplants should be a healthy green color to indicate they are not nutrient deficient. Also, choose plants that are not too old or stunted. Very mature transplants may not produce well after transplanting. This is not the time to shop for bargains because transplant health often directly impacts garden performance.

For questions about your home and garden please feel free to contact me, Adam Watson, Agriculture Extension Agent watson@utk.edu or by cell 423-430-6711. Emailing pictures is a great way to get questions answered while travel is currently curtailed.

Washington County Extension-206 West Main Street Jonesborough, TN 37659-1230
Office Phone: (423) 753-1680

REFERENCES MADE TO COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS OR BRAND NAMES IS WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT NO DISCRIMINATION IS INTENDED AND NO ENDORSEMENT IS IMPLIED. BE SURE TO READ AND FOLLOW ALL PESTICIDE LABEL INSTRUCTIONS.

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.