



# Tennessee Home Fruit and Vegetable Garden

2026 CALENDAR



# 2026 Tennessee Home Fruit and Vegetable Garden Calendar

## Tennessee Extension Home Fruit and Vegetable Workgroup

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This calendar has been developed to assist you in formulating a plan of action to support your success in the vegetable garden and home orchard. Utilize the calendar to schedule various planting, harvesting and management practices. However, there are many other excellent resources available from UT Extension that will be an asset to you in planning and managing your garden, so they are linked within this calendar. And this calendar is also available online as a fillable pdf (Home Fruit and Vegetable Calendar). We hope this calendar is one step in your successful fruit and vegetable journey.



# Getting the most from your 2026 Home Fruit and Vegetable Calendar

## Step 1. Be aware of climate and temperature trends in your specific location.

The dates listed in the calendar are averages for different regions of the state. Within those regions, there is still a range in temperature and length of growing seasons. So, it is always good to be familiar with the local climate data to most usefully adapt dates from this calendar as in the table below.

More detailed information can be found by consulting [frost-freeze probability tables](#). This National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) publication will allow you to look at frost/freeze probability data for all stations in Tennessee.

	Bristol	Chattanooga	Clarksville	Crossville	Dyersburg	Jackson	Knoxville	McMinnville	Memphis	Mountain City	Nashville
Last Spring Frost*	May 3	April 17	April 27	May 10	April 15	April 18	April 22	April 28	April 9	May 26	April 21
First Fall Frost*	Oct. 6	Oct. 21	Oct. 4	Oct. 4	Oct. 16	Oct. 13	Oct. 17	Oct. 6	Oct. 30	Sept. 18	Oct. 10

*\* The values reported here are the most conservative because they are dates where there is only a 10% chance of a frost occurring after (spring) or before (fall) these dates.*

## Step 2. Utilize the full selection of UT Extension publications and resources for home gardeners.

Check out [Uthort.com](http://Uthort.com) or the UT Extension publications catalog to find all of these publications and more.

[W 346-A Site Selection and Soil Testing](#)

[W 346-B Garden Planning, Plant Preparation and Planting](#)

[W 346-C Managing Plant Nutrition](#)

[W 346-D Plant Management Practices](#)

[W 346-E Building and Using Raised Beds](#)

[W 346-F Season Extension Methods](#)

[W 346-G Stewardship in Soil Management](#)

[W 346-H Growing Tomatoes](#)

[W 346-I Harvest and Storage](#)

[W 661 Conventional and Organic Garden Products](#)

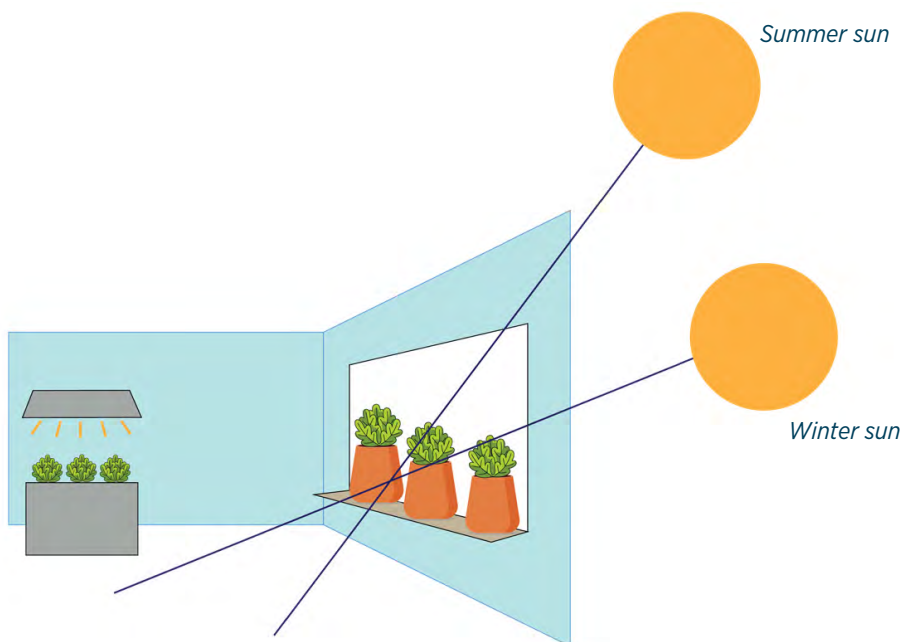
[W 316 Home Vegetable Garden Disease Control](#)

[PB 595 You Can Control Garden Insects](#)

[PB 1622 Disease and Insect Control in Home Fruit Plantings](#)

## TASKS FOR JANUARY

- Check out this calendar as a fillable pdf to keep records through the year. [Home Fruit and Vegetable Calendar](#)
- Place orders for bare-root fruit crops after making selections for your location and needs. [Fruit Supplier List](#)
- If you plan to graft trees/vines, collect and store scion wood.
- Work on your garden layout and planting plans for this year. These plans should be based on a rotation among vegetable plant families as well as any pest and disease issues that were seen the prior year.
- Test germination on any remaining garden seed to ensure viability.
- Gather materials for producing transplants (see March). These should include new or sanitized and pathogen free substrate. See [Garden Planning, Plant Preparation and Planting \(W 346-B\)](#)
- Order seeds for your 2026 garden, especially those for transplants. Check out UT trial results to support your selection. See [Tennessee Home Garden Variety Trial Report \(W 1313\)](#) In some parts of Tennessee, seeds for cool-season spring transplants will need to be started in January (see transplant tips in March).



## January Can Be Great for Planning AND Production with Indoor Growing

Vegetable gardening doesn't just happen in the great outdoors, it can also take place indoors! If you are considering growing food indoors, here are some important tips and resources to get you started:



- Proper light is essential and even spots that receive lots of sunlight through windows are likely to need supplemental lighting at least some of the year for best food crop production (see diagram on left). There are several good ways (phone apps or inexpensive meters) to measure the light your indoor site is getting to know how much you need to add for best production.

- Indoor growing can take place in a container just as you would on a porch or patio or you can grow in a range of small-scale hydroponic systems. Whether DIY or plug-and-play, hydroponics can be a fun and productive tool for indoor growers.

- With enough light, you can grow a range of food crops indoors. But the best place to begin is with microgreens, leafy crops or herbs. Once you have success with these crops, consider some fruiting options, such as very compact tomatoes.

- Vegetable gardening can be a year-round adventure with great options for spring, summer, fall and winter crops. Growing both indoors and outdoors can enable food growing all year.

- Check out the new indoor food growing pub at: [tiny.utk.edu/W1288-B](https://tiny.utk.edu/W1288-B)

# JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b> Research any new cultivars to try this year and check out the UT Garden trial report at <a href="https://uthort.com">uthort.com</a> .	<b>2</b> Review cultivars and crops that performed well last year in your garden.	<b>3</b> ○ FULL MOON
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Six weeks until early date to plant kale in West TN. Seed soon if using transplants.	<b>6</b> When considering fruit plant purchases, those from tissue culture are lower in disease risk.	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Test germination of left over seed from last year.	<b>9</b> Prepare seed order for remaining cool-season and warm-season seeds for transplants.	<b>10</b> Remember that many diseases can be prevented by ordering disease-free seed.
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Prepare your garden plan—by hand or digitally.	<b>16</b> Make sure to follow a rotation of crop families.	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> ● NEW MOON	<b>19</b> These green colored squares remind you to keep track of your garden.	<b>20</b> There are several record sheets at the end of this calendar. There are also boxes on each month.	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Purchase or gather materials to prepare transplants.	<b>27</b> Be sure to purchase pathogen free media and clean containers for transplants.	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Remove or bury any mummy berries from blueberry plots to reduce disease.	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Pollinator tips:</b> Winter direct seeding is an option for cool season hardy annuals such as sweet pea, bachelor buttons and poppies.		<b>Notes on weather:</b>		<b>Notes on new cultivars to try:</b>		

## TASKS FOR FEBRUARY

- Now is the time for dormant pruning on many fruit crops. Make sure to remove any diseased wood while pruning for production.
- Dormant sprays are also an important early season fruit practice.
- Seed cool-season crops for transplanting if needed. Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and similar crops will need approximately 8 weeks from seeding to transplanting. A late March or early April planting will require an early February seeding. See [Cole Crops for Tennessee Gardens](#) (D 59)
- Gather scion wood for grafting fruit trees if still dormant (this varies by year and region).
- Order remainder of garden seeds for the 2026 garden. Direct seeded crops can be ordered later, but early ordering provides the best selection.
- Seed the earliest of warm-season transplants. An early May transplant date will require a February or early March seeding.
- If conditions allow, you may prepare soil for early seeded cool-season crops. Allow plenty of time for cover crops to decompose. See [Soils and Cover Crops in Tennessee Gardens](#) (W 346-G)

## Join in on the Tennessee Home Garden Variety Trial

There is no better way to create the research foundation for garden crop and cultivar selection for Tennessee gardeners than to do the research together with Tennessee gardeners!

Our Home Garden Variety Trial Program does just that by enabling home gardeners to select crops of interest, get seeds mailed to them and then grow the crops in their gardens. At the end of the season, our faculty research team at UT collects the data and prepares a report to share the results with gardeners across the state. Here are some of the top performers and our 2024 trial report:

[Tennessee Home Garden Variety Trial Report](#)

We invite you to join us!

Get all the information to join with us in the 2026 trial at:

HGVT trial page [website](#)



## Selecting Tree Fruits for Backyard Success

Producing tasty and bountiful tree fruits is often the goal of many small-scale growers, but these crops can be tricky and frustrating without good knowledge and preparation. Here are some tips for success for tree fruits generally and some of the most common crops specifically.

- Tree fruits require soil that is well-drained and deep enough for good rooting (at least 2-3 ft). High fertility isn't needed but access to water and irrigation can be very important.
- Select and then order crops and cultivars that are well-suited to our area and your site. Don't just purchase fruit trees at the box store on a whim! Often those are not very suitable in terms of disease resistance or climate.
- Select cultivars that are resistant to some of the most common and damaging diseases. That would be cedar-apple rust and scab for apples as well as fireblight for apples and pears. Bacterial leaf diseases are one of the most important diseases to select for resistance when buying peaches.

Apple cultivars with good resistance for Tennessee to consider include: Enterprise, Liberty, Freedom, Redfree, CrimsonCrisp, Pristine, GoldRush and more. Check out all the info on these and more in our home apple and pear selection pub: [tiny.utk.edu/W 895-D](http://tiny.utk.edu/W 895-D).

Pear cultivars with some fireblight resistance to consider include: Magness, Potomac, Moonglow, Ayers, Honeysweet, Warren and more.

Peaches: Try Contender, Intrepid or Carolina Gold for yellow peaches with some resistance to bacterial spot. More at: [tiny.utk.edu/W 895-F](http://tiny.utk.edu/W 895-F).

Thinking seriously about starting with some of these tree fruits in your own growing area? Well, it isn't too late to order plants. Check out our simple to use [fruit crop decision guide](#) to get you thinking about what would be most successful for you and then utilize the [supplier list](#) to find listed cultivars.

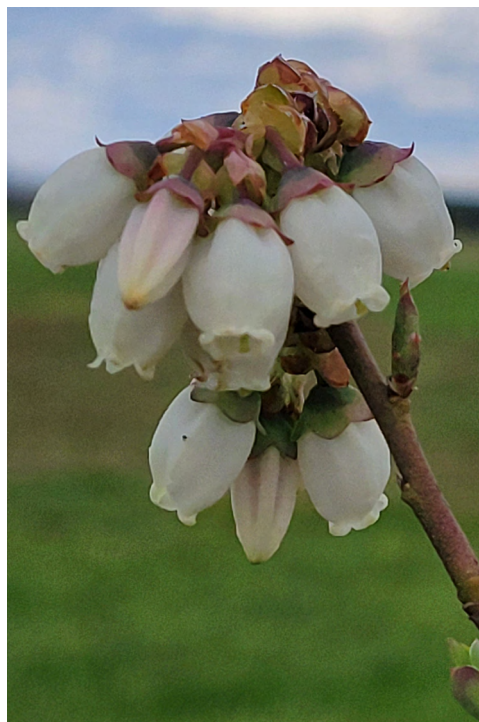


# FEBRUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b> ○ FULL MOON	<b>2</b> Use dormant oil sprays on your fruit trees to combat scale and other pests.	<b>3</b> Prepare garden soil in West TN if not too wet. Early seeding can be easier in raised beds.	<b>4</b> Six weeks until early date to plant kale in East TN and cabbage/broccoli in West TN. So, seed transplants now.	<b>5</b> Eight weeks from frost-free date in much of West TN. Seed warm-season transplants now.	<b>6</b> Six weeks until early date to plant cole crops in East TN. Seed transplants now.	<b>7</b> Could direct seed peas, mustard, kale and collards in West TN if soil can be prepared.
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Monitor transplants closely to ensure that they are not over or underwatered.	<b>10</b> Great time to do a soil test and amend your garden in preparation for planting.	<b>11</b> Eight weeks from frost-free date in much of Mid-TN. Seed warm-season transplants now.	<b>12</b> Pruning fruit trees can reduce disease pressure and increase potential production.	<b>13</b> Make sure that young transplants are not stretching. This could indicate low light or high N.	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Prepare seed order for warm-season direct seeded crops.	<b>17</b> ● NEW MOON Prepare garden soil in Middle and East TN if dry enough.	<b>18</b> Could direct seed peas, mustard, kale and collards in much of Middle TN.	<b>19</b> Eight weeks from frost-free date in much of East TN. Seed warm-season transplants now.	<b>20</b> Dormant prune blueberries and cut 10-20% of older canes each year to renew fruiting wood.	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Make sure to store bareroot plants carefully if they arrive early.	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> For caneberries, remove any remaining canes that fruited the previous season, then thin the rest.	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Pollinator tips:</b> Order bare-root trees for early spring planting. Consider native trees that can support pollinators with pollen and nectar sources as well as host plant foliage. Redbud, Dogwood, PawPaw, Spicebush, Oak, Maple, Willow and more!			<b>Notes on weather:</b>			

## TASKS FOR MARCH

- Plant fruit trees or plants. Make sure to prevent bare-root stock from drying out prior to installation.
- Remove straw protection from strawberry plants before bloom.
- Assemble your spray materials to prepare for fruit season.
- Seed the remainder of warm-season transplants. Tomato transplants need 6-8 weeks, so a March seeding means May transplants. See [Garden Planning and Transplants \(W 346-B\)](#).
- Prepare garden soil if conditions allow. Remember that if you are tilling in a cover crop, a few weeks may be needed to decompose the cover crop material. See [Managing Garden Soils \(W 346-G\)](#).
- Seed or transplant cool-season crops. Hardy cool-season crops are usually seeded or transplanted 4-6 weeks before the frost-free date while less cold hardy cool-season crops are usually started 2 weeks prior. See [Frost and Freeze Charts](#).
- Install row covers or low tunnels over early season transplants to increase day and night temperatures and support season growth. See [Season Extension Methods for Gardeners \(W 346-F\)](#).
- Don't forget to harden off any transplants to reduce stress and loss once placed in the ground.



## Tips and Tricks for Transplants

- **Start with a pathogen free soilless media.** Germination mixes are designed to start your seedlings off disease-free. They drain well while still holding enough moisture to support germination and early growth. Most are made from peat or coconut coir combined with perlite.
- **Follow suggested temperatures for germination.** A common germination issue is lower than ideal temperatures. Warm-season crops such as tomatoes, peppers and eggplants germinate slowly when they are too cold. This also weakens the seedlings, making them more prone to disease. Placing the seed trays on top of a fridge or freezer or using seedling heat mats are both affordable ways to raise soil temperature.
- **Light is critical.** Most indoor locations don't have enough light to grow hardy seedlings. Watch your seedlings for color and stem thickness (are they stretching?). Supplemental fluorescent or LED lighting can be key.
- **Don't overwater.** Growing media should be allowed to dry out slightly (but not completely) between watering. Air movement and light are important in managing moisture and preventing disease.

## Strawberry Selection for Success

Strawberries can be harvested in a year or less and can be grown in small spaces, raised beds and containers. Select a well-drained site that hasn't recently been planted with vegetables and purchase high quality bare-root or plug plants from a reputable supplier.

There are two main types of strawberries. Short-day/June-bearing strawberries produce a single large crop during a few weeks in the late spring-often May or June in TN. Their flowers are set the previous year under late summer/fall short-day conditions. Some common cultivars are 'Earliglow', 'Allstar' and 'Flavorfest'. Everbearing/Day-neutral strawberries, on the other hand, produce fruit at multiple times throughout the growing season because flowers are initiated continuously. While they typically yield less overall than short-day types, they are commonly grown in greenhouses or tunnels to extend the harvest season. Some popular examples including 'Tribute', 'Albion' (image on left) and 'Seascape'.

Our [supplier list](#) can be a great tool to find listed cultivars.





# MARCH 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Plant or seed lettuce outdoors in West TN. Plant Irish potatoes in West TN. Also direct seed beets.	<b>3</b> ○ FULL MOON Site selection is essential and good drainage is a must!	<b>4</b> Early date to plant seed potatoes in East TN.	<b>5</b> Could direct seed peas, mustard, kale and collards in East TN if soil can be prepared.	<b>6</b> Time to transplant cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli in West TN.	<b>7</b> Keep track of crops on the record sheet at the back of the calendar.
<b>8</b> Plant blueberry and brambles when dormant in winter/early spring.	<b>9</b> Watch for signs of maturity in cool crops such as radish to prevent harvesting too late.	<b>10</b> Early to mid-March is the best time to plant asparagus. They prefer a 50°F soil temperature.	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> For a ¼ transplant date, this would be the seeding date for warm-season transplants.	<b>13</b> Carrots can be planted in most of the state in March.	<b>14</b> Row covers or low tunnels can be a great way to push early season crops.
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Early date to transplant cabbage, broccoli in East TN.	<b>17</b> Direct seeded cool-season leafy crops should still be mature in late April or early May.	<b>18</b> ● NEW MOON Be prepared for succession seeding of cool-season crops.	<b>19</b> This is a good time to plant bareroot or dormant trees.	<b>20</b> Fertilize blueberry bushes at bloom, repeat in 6 weeks. Write down dates fertilized below.	<b>21</b> Tree fruits are fertilized about a month after bud break.
<b>22</b> Use your soil test results to add pre-plant fertilizer applications to the garden.	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Peas and potatoes should be all seeded by late March in West TN.	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Remember that a cover crop needs a few weeks to break down before planting.	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Remove mulch on strawberries and place between rows. Monitor the weather in case a need to frost protect arises.				
<b>Notes on crops:</b>		<b>Notes on weather:</b>		<b>Pollinator tips:</b> Early spring can be great time to plan for flowering and pollinator support crops and species. With a plan for both food crops and pollinator crops, you can ensure that spring seed and materials orders have everything you need.		

## TASKS FOR APRIL

- Finish site preparation if not completed. Use proper pre-plant fertilizer. [See Managing Soils and Fertility \(W 346-C\)](#)
- Finish direct seeding and transplanting cool-season crops to prevent them from maturing under hot summer conditions.
- Harvest may begin on the earliest seeded leafy crops or root crops.
- Begin purchasing transplants of warm-season crops.
- Be ready for early spraying on fruit trees for disease protection.
- It is common to seed some direct-seeded warm-season crops a bit before the frost-free date (beans, corn). Be cautious of soil temperatures, especially if you are seeding untreated seeds or supersweet corn.
- Transplants of warm-season crops can be planted in TN in April after frost-free dates. However, soil temperatures support root growth and sometimes early transplant dates are not all that helpful due to cool soils.
- Harden off your transplants before placing them in the garden. See [Garden Planning, Preparation and Planting \(W 346-B\)](#)

## Getting Started with Container Gardening

1. Select a site on your porch, patio or balcony that has good light. Fruiting crops needs 6-8 hours of sunlight while leafy crops needs 4-6.
2. Make sure the container is adequately sized (see chart below) and of a material that matches your crop and management preferences. For example, media in terra cotta pots dry out more quickly than in plastic.
3. Use a high-quality potting mix with a good balance of peat, pine bark, compost, perlite or other materials to support good drainage and water retention while not adding pathogens.
4. Check out our new small space pub for more info: [tiny.utk.edu/W1288A](http://tiny.utk.edu/W1288A)

Crop	Min Size
Beets, Swiss chard, lettuce, mustard/turnip greens, onions, garlic, radishes, dwarf cherry tomatoes, basil, cilantro, parsley	1 gallon, 6"-9" depth
Cherry tomatoes, peppers, compact eggplant, bush beans, carrots, bush peas, turnips, kale, collards, small cabbage, strawberries	3 gallon, 12"-18" depth
Cucumbers, determinate tomatoes, compact summer squash, bush winter squash, cabbage, broccoli/cauliflower, peppers, dwarf okra	5 gallon, 12"-18" depth
Indeterminate tomatoes, potatoes, compact blueberries and raspberries	5 gallons or larger, 18"-24" depth

## Composting and Food Safety in the Garden

Composting is the carefully managed biological breakdown process of organic matter. The benefits of compost include recycling organic materials and plant debris, supporting soil quality and plant growth through building up soil microbes and nutrient cycling.

Small-scale composters should be very careful to avoid composting any manure materials because of the food safety risks for food gardens or any materials with the potential to spread disease or those with herbicide residues. Small compost piles or bins are not able to reliably attain the temperature or duration needed to kill potential human pathogens in the same way possible in commercial compost systems.



Items to keep OUT of your compost pile	The reason why
Meat, bones, etc.	Attraction of scavengers, potential host for foodborne pathogens, unpleasant odors
Animal manures	Food safety risks, uncertain nutrient composition
Pet wastes	Food safety risks
Cheese, oils, other fats	Attraction of scavengers, potential host for foodborne pathogens, unpleasant odors
Plants with disease	Risk of disease spread due to incomplete composting
Weeds that can grow from pieces of roots or stems	Risk of spread
Grass clippings (if treated with herbicides)	Some herbicides can remain active through the composting process

# APRIL 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			<b>1</b> ☉ FULL MOON Prepare mulched beds ahead of time if using plastic mulch.	<b>2</b> Don't forget to also prepare irrigation if using plastic mulch.	<b>3</b> It could be a good time to plant beets in East TN.	<b>4</b> Direct seeding of early beans and sweet corn could begin in West TN.
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Nearing the end of dates to direct seed lettuce and spinach.	<b>7</b> Determine how much pest control materials remain from previous year.	<b>8</b> If buying transplants, look for stocky, dark green seedlings with no sign of pest or disease.	<b>9</b> Remove nearby wild brambles to lower the risk of pest and disease pressures.	<b>10</b> Direct seeding of early beans and sweet corn could begin in Middle TN.	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> Nearing the end of dates to direct seed kale in West TN.	<b>13</b> Many warm-season transplants can be placed in soil in Middle TN.	<b>14</b> Make sure to transplant at a time when the soil temp is warm enough for good root growth.	<b>15</b> Make sure to follow soil test recommendations for pre-plant.	<b>16</b> Blackberries are fertilized once when primocanes emerge and once following harvest.	<b>17</b> ● NEW MOON	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Late spring planting of fruit is possible, but the stress will be higher as temps warm. Water well!	<b>21</b> Okra can be seeded in West TN if soil temps reach mid-60s. Warm soils are essential for okra!	<b>22</b> Stone fruit fertilizer can be applied in two halves. Early and later, to adjust for fruit lost to late frosts.	<b>23</b> Control early weeds to combat insect, disease pressures.	<b>24</b> Remember: Don't apply insecticides during bloom to protect pollinators on fruit crops!	<b>25</b> When was that last frost this year? Make sure to note it!
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> April is the time to plant turnips in East TN.	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>		Keep track of the spring rains using the weather blocks at the bottom of the page.
<b>Notes on crops:</b>		<b>Notes on weather:</b>		<b>Pollinator tips:</b> If possible in your nearby landscapes or flowering plant areas, delay spring cleanup of stems and leaves to ensure survival of sheltering insects. A useful rule of thumb is to wait until you would plant tomatoes to do cleanup.		



## TASKS FOR MAY

- Keep on the regular control sprays for fruit crops (see June).
  - Harvest cool-season crops and scout for pests/disease (see below).
  - Seed succession plantings of beans and sweet corn.  
See [Sweet Corn for the Garden \(D 61\)](#).
  - Prepare for early season fertilization on small fruits-blueberries and blackberries are often fertilized about a month after bud break.
  - Prepare beds for transplants. Black plastic can warm the soil and speed early growth. Make sure that irrigation is provided if plastic mulch is used. Sometimes natural mulches, such as straw, are applied a few weeks after planting as they can reflect light and slow soil warming.
  - Continue transplanting warm-season crops. Peppers and eggplants prefer even warmer soil conditions than tomatoes and are often planted later. Make sure that young transplants are watered in and given a starter fertilizer solution to support early growth.
  - Set up your irrigation system as transplants are placed in the garden. Drip irrigation is best to maintain dry leaves and reduce disease risks.
  - Set up stakes, trellises, cages and support systems for your plants. It is best to have these set up at or soon after planting.
- Don't let weeds get started in the garden.  
See [Garden Plant Management \(W 346-D\)](#).

## Getting Started with Scouting

Properly controlling pests and diseases in the garden and orchard relies upon preventative cultural and spraying practices. But, it also depends on close observation to be able to quickly address any issues that crop up.

- Do it frequently, at least once or twice a week.
- Inspect in a Z pattern if large, or every plant if you have a small garden.
- Make sure to check the interior of the plants and the underside of leaves, don't just glance over the plants.
- Look for signs of insects and patterns of disease.
- Know your friends from your enemies. Be able to ID beneficial insects.
- Take a hand lens, markers and bags for samples and a camera.
- Do your own research on [pests \(PB 595\)](#) and [diseases \(W 316\)](#) but don't be afraid to send in samples to your [local Extension office](#) or the [UT Soil, Plant and Pest Center](#).

## Getting Started with Scouting

Our gardens and landscapes are complex ecosystems that contain plant-feeding pests and their natural enemies that manage those pest populations. It is important that we know how to identify these beneficials that are working for us in protecting our plants with two key types.

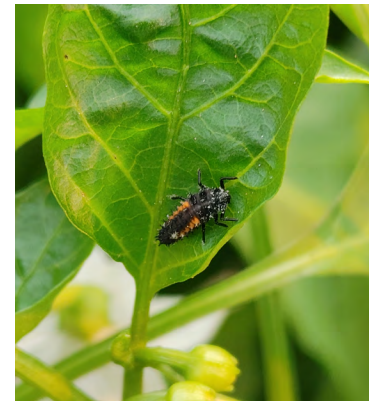
**Predators:** These beneficials can range from spiders and lacewings to assassin bugs and lady beetles that all eat pests. Be sure to understand the life stages of these predators as many adults may look drastically different than their immature stages. In fact, the immature stage, called larvae, (think teenagers) of these lady beetle predators are actually the most voracious feeders! On the upper right is an adult eating an aphid and in the middle is a larvae lady beetle.

**Parasitoids:** These beneficials include parasitic wasps and parasitic flies that control pests in another interesting way. They lay eggs inside the pest that incapacitate and eventually kill the pest through their feeding and using their host (the pest) as a source of support. One common example are the beneficial wasps that lay eggs inside hornworms. The parasitized caterpillar (shown on bottom right) ceases feeding and will later die as a result of the parasitoid feeding.

Tips to conserve and protect beneficials:

- Plant a variety of flowers or other crops that have a wide bloom period through the growing season
- Provide water and shelter (leaf litter, brush piles, etc.)
- Scout often and only apply pesticides when pest populations reach damage thresholds
- Use pesticides that are specific and lower risk to pollinators while strategically spraying during dusk or dawn

More information can be found at:  
[tiny.utk.edu/beneficials](http://tiny.utk.edu/beneficials)



# MAY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Record your favorite cool season crops this year at the end of the calendar.	<b>Pollinator tips:</b> After danger of frost, consider incorporating buckwheat as a summer annual cover crop or even between rows to not only encourage pollinators, but help to suppress weeds and mobilize phosphorus within soil. Irises, phlox, Columbine and azaleas are blooming for pollinators.				<b>1</b> ○ FULL MOON Remember, it is about soil temps not just air temps.	<b>2</b> Seedless watermelons and supersweet corn will germinate poorly if soil is too cool.
<b>3</b> Do your cool-season leafy crops need any fertilizer side-dressing?	<b>4</b> Direct seed cucumbers in West and Middle TN.	<b>5</b> In many parts of TN, heat-loving plants such as peppers, eggplant could wait to be transplanted.	<b>6</b> Be ready to harvest cool-season crops at the peak of their quality.	<b>7</b> This is the early date for seeding okra in East TN.	<b>8</b> Succession planting could also be done for zucchini or cucumbers.	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> Direct seed cucurbits in East TN.	<b>11</b> Remove weeds from strawberry canopy to improve airflow throughout season.	<b>12</b> Install bird netting over blueberries and caneberries to prevent birds from stealing your berries!	<b>13</b> Sweet potatoes are often one of the last crops to be planted.	<b>14</b> Continue succession seeding of corn and beans.	<b>15</b> Plan for weed control continuously through the season.	<b>16</b> ● NEW MOON
<b>17</b> When you do see diseases or insects, make sure to record them at the end of the calendar.	<b>18</b> Good irrigation in the first year is critical for establishment of new fruit crops.	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Harvest strawberries often. Remove and dispose of damaged berries to lower disease risk.	<b>21</b> Some gardeners wait until soil warms to install straw mulches.	<b>22</b> Be scouting on a regular basis to prevent getting caught off guard by pests/diseases.	<b>23</b> Plan for fertilizing your blueberries. They prefer NH4 nitrogen sources.
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Preventative sprays for vegetable diseases may need to begin in May.	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> Have some common insecticides and fungicides on hand.	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> ○ FULL MOON	<b>Notes on crops:</b>		<b>Notes on pests:</b>		<b>Notes on weather:</b>	

## TASKS FOR JUNE

- Scout for any issues with pests or diseases at least weekly. Continue cover sprays for fruit trees (see [PB 1622](#)) and if conditions support disease infection or if you see signs of disease, a protective spray program may be needed for vegetables. See [W 661](#).
- Tip pruning of caneberries as well as early picking of small fruits.
- Be on the lookout for maturity in the first corn and bean plantings (see maturity details in July). See [D 58](#).
- Manage soil after cool-season crops are removed. Those areas may be a location for a summer cover crop such as buckwheat to prevent weed growth and add organic matter.
- If a warm-season crop is planted immediately after cool-season crops are removed, make sure to follow a crop rotation.
- Apply fertilizer to blueberries and other small fruit.
- Some of the latest warm-season crops to be planted are often watermelons and pumpkins as well as sweet potatoes.
- Make sure your irrigation system is functioning well and manage weeds.
- See [Garden Plant Management \(W 346-D\)](#).



## Volunteer Research Spotlight – Maury County EMGs Conduct Trials at the Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center

In Middle Tennessee, the population is growing and with it the need for small-scale food production information. Teaming up to trial new techniques and showcase methods, the Maury County Master Gardeners have collaborated with the Middle Tennessee Research and Education Center and UT and TSU researchers to install a new demonstration with raised beds that have vegetable and flower variety trials as well as different irrigation methods on display. Check these out at the Fruits of the Backyard Field Day this month!

## Getting Started Using Fungicides in the Garden and Orchard

- Protective fungicides are the main tool, so it is important to have sprays applied before infection windows, cover well with the spray and follow recommended spray intervals.
- Few garden fungicides have strong curative properties; focus on prevention.
- Fungicides can't replace sanitation, rotation and disease resistant cultivars. Use these practices together for the best effect.

Always follow the label and ensure that pollinators are protected.

Active ingredient/trade names	Important Notes
<b>Bacillus subtilis</b> – Serenade Garden Disease Control, Cease	Organic. These products contain live bacteria and can generally be used up to the day of harvest.
<b>Captan</b> – Captan	Protective fungicide for many fruits.
<b>Chlorothalonil</b> – Daconil, Bonide Fung-onil, Ortho Garden Disease Control	Best used as a protectant. Specific crops, mixing rates, as well as pre-harvest intervals and max. # of sprays per year are on label.
<b>Copper (Copper sulfate, fixed copper)</b> – Bonide Liquid Copper Fungicide, Monterey liquid copper, Camelot O	Organic. Some formulations are easier to get in solution and spray. Specific crops, mixing rates, as well as pre-harvest intervals and max. # of sprays per year are on label.
<b>Mancozeb</b> – Dithane, Manzate, Bonide Mancozeb Flowable w/ Zinc	Best used as a protectant. Specific crops, mixing rates, as well as pre-harvest intervals and max. # of sprays per year are on label.
<b>Myclobutanil</b> – Immunox, Monterey Fungi-Max	Protectant with some curative activity. Pay close attention to label and listed crops.
<b>Neem oil</b> – Garden Safe Fungicide 3I, Monterey Neem Oil	Organic. Botanical extracts with insecticidal activity. Sprays should always be made to avoid flying bees and other pollinators.
<b>Potassium bicarbonate</b> – GreenCure, Milstop, Agricure	Organic. Specific diseases controlled or suppressed are on the label.
<b>Sulfur</b> – Bonide Sulfur Plant Fungicide, Yellow Jacket Special Dusting Sulfur, Espoma Earth-tone 3n1 Disease Control	Organic. Some sulfur products are mixed with an insecticide (Earth-tone 3n1 also contains organic pyrethrin), so sprays should be made to avoid flying bees and other pollinators.

[Pest and Disease Control Options for Vegetable Gardens \(W 661\)](#)

[Pest and Disease Control Options for Home Fruit \(PB 1622\)](#)



# JUNE 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Pollinator tips:</b> Consider planting a row of summer flowering annuals like zinnia, marigold, nasturtium or sunflower in the vegetable garden. They can provide resources that can attract additional pollinators for the crop.						
	<b>1</b> Keep scouting for pests and disease. Check leaf undersides and interior leaves.	<b>2</b> Fertilize and irrigate blueberries as needed to promote plant vigor and fruit.	<b>3</b> Early beans may be close to harvest in many areas. Some can mature in only 50-55 days.	<b>4</b> Succession planting of beans should be nearly done in West TN.	<b>5</b> Keep an eye out for cool-season crops to harvest.	<b>6</b> Strawberry harvest may be nearing the end of the season.
<b>7</b> Watch out for early blight on your tomatoes.	<b>8</b> Keep an eye on plant health and be ready with fungicide.	<b>9</b> Do the strawberries need renovation for future productivity?  Also plan to fertilize.	<b>10</b> Harvest summer squash when the skin is still glossy.	<b>11</b> Watch for ripe blueberries! And, watch for insect pests. Spray only if observed.	<b>12</b> Be ready for side-dressing many crops that are setting fruit.	<b>13</b> Many warm-season crops, such as corn, many cucurbits can still be succession planted.
<b>14</b> ● NEW MOON	<b>15</b> Keep your eye on the blackberries. Early cultivars may be close to ripe!	<b>16</b> Soft tip blackberry primocanes when 8-12 inches over the top trellis wire to encourage laterals.	<b>17</b> Succession planting of beans should be nearly done in East TN.	<b>18</b> Keep track of when you apply fertilizer and how much you apply.	<b>19</b> Enjoy the longest gardening evening of the year!	<b>20</b> Make sure to keep track of anything you spray. A record sheet is found at the back.
<b>21</b> Keep an eye out for mature sweet corn. A 70-day cultivar seeded in April could be ready!	<b>22</b> A summer cover crop of buckwheat can work well behind a spring cool-season crop.	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Still time to get some okra seeded.	<b>26</b> Time your pumpkin planting to mature in early to mid-fall. August pumpkins are less exciting.	<b>27</b> A 100 day pumpkin seeded on June 30th would be estimated to mature around October 10th.
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> ○ FULL MOON	<b>30</b> If there have been frequent rains or lots of moisture, more protective fungicides might be needed.	<b>Notes on crops:</b>		<b>Notes on weather:</b>	

## TASKS FOR JULY

- Keep blueberries and blackberries picked frequently for best quality and to reduce pest issues.
- Continue cover sprays for fruit trees. See [PB 1622](#).
- Pick tomatoes, beans, corn and other warm-season crops
- Manage irrigation as needed but try to reduce leaf wetness and overhead watering. For tips, see: [Garden Plant Management \(W 346-D\)](#).
- Staking or pruning to support or remove limbs or branches with fruit touching the ground can reduce disease and food safety risks.
- Manage vegetable nutrition through proper side dressing and in-season fertilizer applications. See application rates in [Getting the most out of your garden soil test \(W 804-D\)](#)
- Scout frequently for insect or disease issues and spray as needed. See June for suggestions and review [Disease Management in the Garden \(W 316\)](#).
- Select cool-season crops and cultivars for fall and make a seed order. Some cool-season crop transplants may need to be seeded in July.
- Pumpkins should be seeded according to maturity. A 100-day pumpkin seeded on July 1 would be estimated to mature Oct. 11.

## Matchmaking in the Garden – What is the Research Behind Companion Planting?

There is buzz around the term ‘Companion Planting’, but what does the research say? Here are some quick facts and further reading.

Planting crops together or in succession can have some practical benefits:

- Being time and space efficient by practicing succession planting. Plus, these methods can reduce weed populations due to close plantings that reduce the opportunity for weeds.
- Carefully selecting different crops with different rooting patterns can encourage better use of water and nutrients throughout the soil profile. Also, legumes or other cover crops are great tools for soil building.
- Some flowers and herbs have been demonstrated to be able to repel pests due to scent or attract predators or parasitoids to reduce populations of damaging insects. Flowering plants can also provide support for more general predators that can reduce pest populations.
- Some southern research has even shown that pepper yields can increase with flower plantings nearby due to increased pollinator activity. (Montoya et al., 2020)
- There are no silver bullets to solve all our pest issues, but exciting research is teaching us more about the possibilities! [tiny.utk.edu/companion](http://tiny.utk.edu/companion)

## Timing is Everything - Proper Harvesting Tips

Warm-season Vegetables	
Beans, snap	While pods snap easily (as opposed to being tough and flexible) and seeds are still green.
Corn, sweet	Kernels should be filled out nearly to the end of the ear and milky if crushed. Silks dried down.
Cucumber	When seeds are small, flesh is still firm, and color is green.
Eggplant	When fruit is still shiny and the color has not dulled. Edible from 1/3 grown until full grown.
Muskmelon	When melons can be lifted and the vine pulls away from the fruit with little resistance (slips).
Okra	When pods are 2 ½ to 3 ½ inches long and tender.
Pepper	When full size and firm. Green is immature and fruit will color to red, yellow, or orange and contain more sugars when ripe.
Potato, sweet	After reaching desired size, but before moist and cool fall soil conditions reduce quality and storage life.
Squash, summer	When skin is still tender and glossy and the large end (zucchini) is 1 to 2 ½ inches in diameter.
Squash, winter	When rind has hardened and is not easily scratched.
Tomato	When uniformly colored (pink to orange) but still somewhat firm.
Watermelon	When tendrils next to fruit die back and the rind on the underside of the fruit turns from white to a creamy yellow.



# JULY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			<b>1</b> A six week old transplant for an August 22nd planting would be seeded today.	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Keep an eye out for mature sweet corn—you must hurry to beat the varmints!	<b>4</b> Keep scouting—don't get too busy with harvests.
<b>5</b> Don't forget to get those late pumpkins seeded soon.	<b>6</b> Don't let the weeds get ahead of you. Annual weeds that go to seed only create future issues.	<b>7</b> Have you seen any of those pesky tomato/tobacco hornworms?	<b>8</b> Watch the irrigation and make sure growing plants receive the correct moisture.	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Keep on picking! It may be nearing peach time in TN! Best peaches are mid-July to mid-Aug.	<b>11</b> Record those harvests on the record sheets at the back of the calendar.
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Do you have enough seed for a late planting of summer squash or cucs?	<b>14</b> ● NEW MOON	<b>15</b> Remove floricanes of blackberry after fruiting to lower disease risk. Also, time for fertilizer.	<b>16</b> Don't let disease get ahead of you. There is still much harvest time left if plants are healthy.	<b>17</b> Make sure to follow pre-harvest intervals listed on pesticide labels.	<b>18</b> Keep a record of your sprays and track their efficacy for future reference.
<b>19</b> Look up some new recipes to try with your summer harvest!	<b>20</b> Make sure that you have enough seed for fall cool-season crops.	<b>21</b> In many parts of TN, late July will be the time to start fall cool-season transplants.	<b>22</b> Practice good sanitation. If it is damaged/diseased remove it and place far from other crops.	<b>23</b> Irrigate fruit crops as needed for the rest of the year to prevent stress.	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Make sure that you have enough seed for fall cool-season crops.	<b>28</b> Are your Brussels sprouts planted? Long season cool crops may actually need planted soon.	<b>29</b> ○ FULL MOON	<b>30</b> Order plugs for fall strawberry plantings.	<b>31</b> Do not fertilize blueberries after July to prevent growth that can be at risk of winter injury.	
<b>Pollinator tips:</b> Provide an easily accessible water source for insects and pollinators. This could be as simple as intentionally leaving behind puddles when watering or designating a shallow dish of rocks as a pollinator puddler.		<b>Notes on crops:</b>		<b>Notes on weather:</b>		



## TASKS FOR AUGUST

- Keep late blueberries picked as well as keep watch for tree fruit.
- Keep picking warm-season crops. Proper picking times are critical to enjoy the highest quality in home vegetable crops (see July). Timely picking supports the highest level of production. See [Harvest and Storage in the Garden \(W 346-I\)](#).
- Practice proper canning, freezing or drying to preserve garden produce for later use.
- Don't let the weeds get ahead of you and produce seeds.
- Late plantings of summer squash can be done this month.
- Keep an eye on soil moisture levels, irrigation and any need for side dressing for fruiting crops.
- Prepare soils for fall cool-season crops and maintain crop rotations.
- Transplant fall cool-season crops that take the most days to mature.



### Backyard peaches in Tennessee – Possible, but not as easy as they look!

Fresh peaches are often one of the first things that come to mind when considering home fruit production, but they are one of the most challenging crops to grow in Tennessee due to disease, pest and environmental issues. Because of early bloom time, stone fruits can especially be tough in the cooler parts of the state due to late frosts. Stone fruits are technically fruits that have a seed pit surrounded by fleshy tissue. The term is used to describe the *Prunus* genus that includes peaches, nectarines, plums, cherries, almonds, apricots and more. Peaches, plums and sour cherries are the main crops grown with any success in Tennessee.



### Volunteer Research Spotlight – Cumberland County EMGs Conduct Trials at the Plateau Research and Education Center

Applied research is the foundation for helping gardeners select and manage their garden crops for success. It isn't just UT AgResearch and Extension members who are growing the trials that our teaching and publications are based on! Our Extension Master Gardener Volunteers also play a huge part in applied research. In Crossville, at the Plateau Research and Education Center, the CCMGA members helped install and then managed a tomato and pepper trial that looked at different mulching methods (bare soil, straw and plastic) as well as organic and conventional techniques. Each week, they managed plants, applied prescribed sprays and took data on plant health and performance so this real life information could support other vegetables gardeners like you! Check out the trials at the Fall Gardener's Festival this month

One of the most important elements to understand is whether the chill hours are well matched to the site. Chill The chilling requirement for a plant is defined as the number of hours, generally between 32 and 45F, needed from the onset of dormancy in fall until the plant can resume normal growth and fruiting once weather becomes favorable the next year. A minimum of 850 chilling hours is generally recommended for stone fruits in Tennessee. Selecting cultivars with resistance to common diseases is important to enable successful harvests. In stone fruits, bacterial leaf spot resistance may be found in several cultivars. "Resistance" does not mean "immunity" and timely sprays will be required for successful fruit production.

**Peaches:** Try Contender, Intrepid or Carolina Gold for yellow-fleshed cultivars with some resistance to bacterial spot and more than 1000 chill hours. China Pearl is a white flesh cultivar with 1100 chill hours and resistance to bacterial spot. For info on these cultivars and more, check out our new publication: [tiny.utk.edu/W895F](https://tiny.utk.edu/W895F).

# AUGUST 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Pollinator tips:</b>  While planning for the installation of cool-season cover crops, consider flowering species like crimson clover and/or white clover that will provide early season nectar and pollen sources for pollinators. Black-eyed Susans and coreopsis are in bloom for pollinators.						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> If you are buying fall transplants, look for young, actively growing plants.	<b>4</b> Make sure you have the seed for directed seeded cool-season crops.	<b>5</b> Side dress matted row strawberries with nitrogen to promote good fruit bud development.	<b>6</b> When should you plant fall crops? Ex: a broccoli transplant that will mature in 60 days.	<b>7</b> <b>8</b> Nashville first avg. frost is 10/28. 60 days + 10 for slower fall growth. We can plan to harvest a couple weeks after frost. 70 days back from 11/11 is 9/2. Or 7/22 to grow a 6-week-old transplant.	
<b>9</b> Transplants for many fall crops in East TN are planted in early to mid-Aug.	<b>10</b> Get those 'best of show' crops ready for the county fair!	<b>11</b> Direct seeded fall cool-season crops will require attention and water for best germination.	<b>12</b> ● NEW MOON Continue irrigating perennial plants even if fruit production has stopped.	<b>13</b> How can you determine when to plant fall crops? Example: a lettuce that will mature in 35 days.	<b>14</b> <b>15</b> Nashville first average frost is 10/28. 35 days + 10 for slower fall growth. We can plan to harvest for a couple weeks after frost, though. Count back 45 days from 11/11. Aim for about a 9/27 seeding.	
<b>16</b> Keep on scouting and manage weeds and sanitation. It can help this year and next year!	<b>17</b> Plan your cover crops for fall and make sure you order enough seed.	<b>18</b> Consider cover crops for between rows of your fruit orchard.	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Winter squash is ready to harvest when rind hardens. Does it scratch with your fingernail?	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Remember, don't compost diseased plant material and weeds.	<b>28</b> ○ FULL MOON	<b>29</b> Record any disease issues and how well disease is controlled by any applied sprays.
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Continue irrigating through autumn to prevent drought stress.	<b>Notes on crops:</b>		<b>Notes on weather:</b>		

## TASKS FOR SEPTEMBER

- Keep picking warm-season crops. Canning, freezing and drying are all options for preservation. See [Harvest and Storage of Garden Crops \(W 346-I\)](#).
- Don't let those late season weeds get ahead of you and go to seed.
- Keep an eye on soil moisture levels and manage pests as some of the warm-season fruiting crop harvests come to a close.
- Later planted beans, tomatoes, summer squash and other warm-season crops may require frequent attention in scouting and pest management to ensure good yields.
- Make sure that fall cool-season crops are properly watered and fertilized. Germination and early growth of leafy crops and brassicas requires even moisture and appropriate nitrogen levels. See [Root Crops for Tennessee Gardens \(D 70\)](#).
- Transplant and direct seed fall cool-season crops. Keep in mind that days to harvest estimate often need to be lengthened in the cooler and lower light days of fall. See [Leafy Crops for Tennessee Gardens \(D 68\)](#).
- Many fall cover crops are best seeded in September to get good stands and winter cover – even spring bloom for some!



## Fall Planting and Crop Rotation

Many pathogens infect related plants, so rotation ensures the same families are not planted in an area too often. Rotation is most effective against pathogens that survive in soil or on crop remains for a short period of time. It is recommended to rotate away from a crop family for 3 years-called a 4-year rotation. See [Disease Control in the Garden \(W 316\)](#).

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

## Leafy Crops for Fall Gardens in Tennessee

Summer gardening can be tiring and sweaty, but fall can provide a great opportunity to relax a bit with [leafy crops](#) in containers or raised beds.

- Leaf lettuce -multiple plantings can be direct seeded from August through October. Try old favorites like Green Star, Two Star, Tropicana, Starfighter, New Red Fire or a range of mixes.
- Small head lettuce - if you have been frustrated by spring lettuce, give fall a try with some fun bibb/ buttercrunch or oakleaf types that can be harvested as small heads. For bibb, try Nancy, Skyphos, or Red Cross. For oakleaf, try Panisse, Sandy or Oscarde.
- Romaine lettuce - For small heads, try Breen or Dragoon or Salvius, Green Forest, or Winter Density for dark green, open heads.
- Kale is very cold hardy and tasty from your own garden. Scarlet and Redbor are great color, Prizm is a nice, compact size or try Black Magic, Toscano or Lacinato for tender and tasty dark green leaves.
- Arugula can be a tasty option that germinates fast, grows quickly and can add a zippy, nutty taste to fall salads.



# SEPTEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		<b>1</b> Early fall is often the driest time of the year in TN. Be prepared to meet crop water needs.	<b>2</b> Begin selecting fruit cultivars to plant in the fall, dormant in the winter, or in early spring.	<b>3</b> Keep an eye out for pests/disease on your cool-season crops. Row covers can reduce insects.	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Keep track of how much and how often watering is needed. Without rain 1-2in/week is an estimate.
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Brassicas, lettuce and many fall crops are fast growing and may need a fertilizer sidedressing.	<b>8</b> Make sure that there is sufficient water for fall cool-season crops.	<b>9</b> Have you seen any of those pesky armyworms? If so, record it!	<b>10</b> ● NEW MOON	<b>11</b> Vetch and other legumes benefit from early fall seeding while rye can be sown later.	<b>12</b> Containers can also be a great way to produce a bit of fresh produce for late fall.
<b>13</b> Most cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower should be transplanted by mid-Sept in West TN.	<b>14</b> Many cover crops may produce best in East TN with a September seeding.	<b>15</b> Want a few leafy crops for fall without managing a whole garden? Build a small raised bed.	<b>16</b> September through November are the times to plant garlic across TN.	<b>17</b> In fact, here in TN, we can grow both hardneck and softneck garlic. See November for info.	<b>18</b> Remove warm-season crops as they finish producing to lighten the load of fall cleanup.	<b>19</b> If the plants were healthy, it could be a great time to being a compost pile.
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> It's getting close to the end of seeding for fall leafy crops in Middle and East TN.	<b>22</b> A row cover or low tunnel can add a couple of weeks to the fall season.	<b>23</b> Watch for high temps under cover on very warm September days.	<b>24</b> To assure good growth and fruit set in spring, maintain healthy foliage on fruits crops to frost.	<b>25</b> Soil tests should be taken 6 months before planting caneberries.	<b>26</b> ○ FULL MOON
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>			
<b>Notes on crops:</b>		<b>Notes on pests:</b>		<b>Pollinator tips:</b> Late season nectar sources are critical for beneficial insects. Be careful not to mow down native late summer/fall flowering species like Goldenrod, Aster, Ironweed and Partridge Pea.		

## TASKS FOR OCTOBER

- Continue picking any remaining warm- or early cool-season crops. See [Garden Crop Harvest and Storage \(W 346-I\)](#).
- Keep an eye on soil moisture levels and manage pests as warm-season fruiting crop harvests finish and cool season begins.
- If you are participating in the Tennessee Home Garden Variety Trial, be sure to send in your evaluations soon. See [Home Garden Vegetable Trial](#).
- Ensure that fall crops are properly watered and fertilized. As temperatures cool, less water will be needed.
- Seed/transplant fall cool-season crops with shorter days to harvest.
- October is still a great time to seed cover crops. See [Soil Stewardship in the Garden \(W346-G\)](#).
- Take soil tests and make adjustments to pH as recommended.-



## From the Garden to the Landscape: Consider Stepping Up your Stewardship with Tennessee SmartYards

Are you looking for ways to have a biologically diverse landscape and protect natural resources while supporting wildlife? [Tennessee Smart Yards](#) is an educational and yard certification program for Tennesseans that teaches the “how to” aspects of stewardship to create healthier, more environmentally sound landscapes and communities. You don’t have to be an expert gardener or landscaper to create a Tennessee Smart Yard. All it takes is a willingness to learn and a desire to act. Maintaining a Tennessee Smart Yard mutually benefits the environment and the homeowner by providing natural and functional beauty.



## Season Extension Practices for Tennessee

Season extension is a great set of tools for gardeners to improve growth, productivity and survival in their fall garden crops!

### • Raised beds

Raised beds can warm up quicker and drain faster in the spring to support early season gardening. Soil temperatures can impact germination as well as root growth and water and nutrient uptake. It is also easy to add row covers and low tunnels to raised beds.

### • Transplants

Transplanting older plants into the garden rather than direct seeding enables plants to be grown when outdoor conditions would prevent or slow growth.

### • Mulches

Mulches (dark ones) can increase soil temperatures by absorbing solar radiation. They can also maintain more moderate moisture.

### • Floating row covers

These are nonwoven plastic films or agricultural fabrics that can be applied directly over crops. They increase air and also soil temperatures by trapping sunlight. Because of their light weight and permeability, they do not need structural support. Tomatoes and peppers have tender growing points that may need protection from abrasion by floating covers. Plus, these covers can also reduce insect feeding by excluding the pests.

### • Low tunnels

Low tunnels cover crop rows and are supported by 2’ to 3’ tall wire or plastic hoops and stretched tight to create the appearance of a miniature greenhouse. Tunnels can be made of agricultural fabrics or lightweight clear polyethylene plastic. Vents help prevent overheating (see image at top of page). See [Season Extension for Tennessee Gardens](#).

# OCTOBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Pollinator tips:</b> Many species of flowering plants important for pollinator support should be seeded in the fall. Prepare the ground during midsummer by sequentially removing vegetation. Seed can be drilled in or lightly incorporated. Many native flowering perennials will benefit from a period of stratification (cold and moist) that enhances germination the following spring.				<b>1</b> Be on the lookout for fruit from late-seeded warm-season crops.	<b>2</b> Also be on the lookout for first frosts in parts of East TN.	<b>3</b> Keep good notes on the cultivars that did well or not as well in your garden this year.
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Getting close to the end of the time to direct seed fall crops in West TN.	<b>6</b> Many cover crops can still produce well in East TN if planted in mid-October.	<b>7</b> You don't have to seed the whole garden in cover at once. Cool-season sections can be last.	<b>8</b> October is a great time to take soil samples. Take 10-15 sub-samples about 6 inches deep.	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> ● NEW MOON
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Remember, cool season veggies can survive frost but may not grow and produce much fall yield when planted too late.	<b>13</b> Make sure to clean up warm-season crops to prevent disease spread.	<b>14</b> Bring your tools in from the garden. Clean them well.	<b>15</b> Extend the life of your tools with proper sharpening and oiling.	<b>16</b> Make sure that late season crops have adequate (but not excessive) water and nutrients.	<b>17</b> What were your favorite peppers and tomatoes this year? Make sure to write the varieties down.
<b>18</b> Have you had a frost yet? Write it down in the record sheet in the back of the calendar.	<b>19</b> Sometimes the taste of brassica crops is better after being exposed to a bit of frost.	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Review soil reports and make additions if needed to adjust pH for next year.	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Fall is a great time to address voles or other issues in fruit plantings.	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> ○ FULL MOON We are getting close to first frosts in many areas in West TN.	<b>27</b> Remove and dispose of floricanes that already fruited on caneberries.	<b>28</b> If apple scab, peach scab, or pear leaf spot occurred, rake and destroy leaves to prevent disease overwintering.	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Enjoy a homegrown jack-o-lantern for Halloween!
<b>Notes on crops:</b>				<b>Notes on weather:</b>		



## TASKS FOR NOVEMBER

- Finish the picking of remaining warm-season crops. If frost is approaching, unripe tomatoes can be harvested to slowly ripen.
- Make sure to remove crop and fruit debris from the garden and orchard that was diseased to reduce inoculum. Sanitation in home fruit is also crucial and discussed below with some key examples.
- Fall is a great time to set up a compost pile with the (disease-free) debris from your garden along with leaf and lawn clippings.
- Ensure that fall cool-season crops are properly watered, fertilized and harvested. As temperatures cool, less water will be needed.
- There are some [cover crops](#) that can still be seeded in November, so don't assume that a late fall crop prevents you from seeding.
- Fall is a great time to address rodent issues by maintaining bare soil under the trees, removing or crushing dropped fruit, mowing between trees and perimeters and using rodenticides if problem worsens.



### Shopping Season - Preparing Your 2026 Fruit Crop Order Do your cultivar homework, check out these UT publications:

[Blueberries](#)

[Strawberries](#)

[Blackberries](#)

[Apples and Pears](#)

[Grapes](#)

[Peaches, Plums and Cherries](#)

#### Know the terms:

**Bare-root:** Field-grown and dug before shipping. Can perform quite well but generally shipped in early spring and they need to be planted soon after arrival.

**Container:** Started in a field or greenhouse but moved to a container to continue growing and be sold. Useful to widen purchase and planting window but use care in selection and check for health of roots.

Make sure to purchase for a high-quality supplier: [Our fruit supplier list can be a great place to begin!](#)



## Garlic in the Garden

- Garlic is a monocot in the allium family planted as a clove (bulb) rather than seeds.
- It is planted in the late fall (Sept. through early Nov.) and harvested in early summer. Most varieties require 180-220 days to mature.

#### Sites and types:

- Choose a loose, friable soil (good organic matter) with pH between 6.0 and 6.5.
  - Try a slightly raised bed for good drainage during potentially wet TN winters.
- Tennessee is transitional between the hardneck and softneck growing regions, so we can try them all! Hardneck can produce larger cloves that may store longer than softneck. Elephant garlic (actually a leek) is also grown in Tennessee. Try several to find one or more that have the hardiness, flavor and size that you like best.

#### Planting and management in the garden:

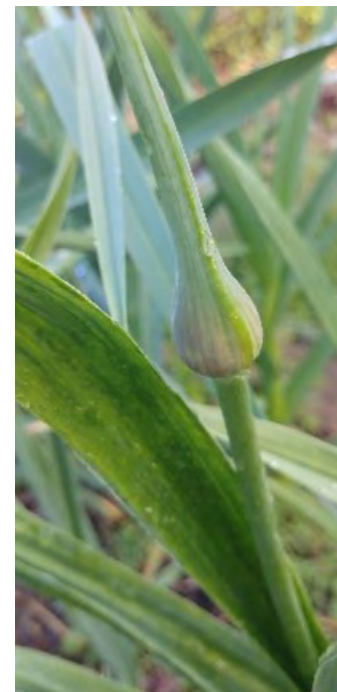
- Often planted in grids of 4" x 4" with cloves 1-1 ½ inches deep
- Winter crops can have lower pest levels, but do scout for disease/insects
- Control weeds: they can definitely reduce yields in garlic crops.

#### When to harvest and how to cure:

Pull some bulbs in mid-May to mid-June and look for segmented cloves with a tight outer skin. Should have 4-6 wrapper leaves (which are shells around garlic) when harvested.

For hardneck garlic, you will also want to remove the scapes (immature flower image on right) to enable the energy to be invested in the bulb. Cure in well-ventilated area out of the sun for about 6 weeks.

See [tiny.utk.edu/D75](https://tiny.utk.edu/D75)



# NOVEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Pollinator tips:</b>  Pests and beneficial insects alike use standing plant debris to overwinter. Remove weedy and diseased plant debris that can harbor pests and disease, but leave behind hollow stems of desirable landscape/ flowering plants to serve as overwintering habitat for pollinators. Witch hazel is a good late fall/early winter pollinator support tree.						
<b>1</b> Keep harvesting your various cool season crops.	<b>2</b> Even if its a mid-November seeding a cover crop like rye can still be a benefit.	<b>3</b> Did you get your garlic planted? It isn't too late!	<b>4</b> It may even be close to a first frost in Memphis by now!	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Keep notes on the crops and cultivars that performed well for you this year.	<b>7</b> Write those notes in the record sheets in the back of this calendar.
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> ● NEW MOON Clean up any stakes or debris from the garden.	<b>10</b> What were some of your pest issues this year?	<b>11</b> What were some of the disease issues you faced?	<b>12</b> Knowing your gardening challenges is great info to help select crops for next year.	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> There are many resistant varieties that can help you address disease issues.
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Prune and destroy all dead or diseased fruit tree limbs when dormant.	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Adjust soil pH well before planting blueberries. pH lowering sulfur can take months to fully take effect.	<b>19</b> Carrots can be stored in ground for a little while, but be sure to pull before the ground freezes.	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> ○ FULL MOON	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Happy Thanksgiving with some great home grown crops on the table!	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Notes on crops:</b>		<b>Notes on weather:</b>		

## TASKS FOR DECEMBER

- Harvest any remaining fall cool-season crops. Lettuce, chard and beets can be less cold hardy than kale and spinach in some areas.
- Take stock of the completed gardening season and make sure you have good records of problems encountered and control practices that worked well. Use the information from the completed season and rotation guidelines to plan for next year.
- Sort and count any remaining seeds to determine what may need to be ordered.
- While it may seem early, December can be a great time to order seeds for your 2027 garden, especially those you plan to grow as transplants (see January-March).
- Clean any remaining stakes, plants or debris from the garden (excluding any plants that you intend to overwinter or is intended to provide beneficial habitat). Try to rotate this overwintering area of the garden to make sure that every section receives a cover crop as often as possible.
- Clean, repair (if needed) and store your garden tools for next year.
- Make sure to do any sanitation that remains for home fruit.



Image credits: Mariusz Sobieski, Bugwood.org

## Fall and Winter Beneficial Insect Support

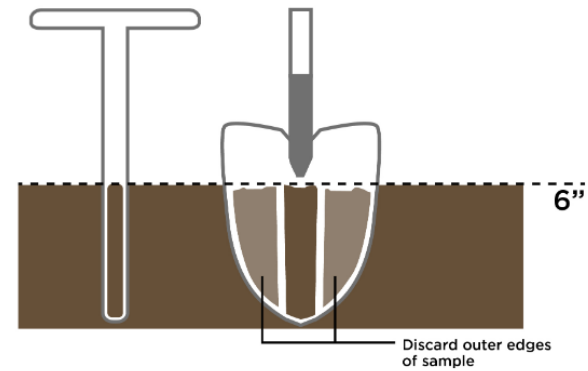
Supporting pollinators in the home garden usually starts with planting nectar-rich blooms and host plants, but the magic doesn't stop there, it can continue well into fall and winter! By thinking "beyond the bloom," gardeners can create cozy hideaways for bees, butterflies, beetles, and more. Many beneficial insects use hollow stems, leaf litter, bark, or soil as overwintering habitat, and a few easy shifts in garden chores can make all the difference. Try skipping a full fall cleanup, leave a mix of standing stems in different sizes, and leave whole leaves (not shredded ones) in select areas as a mulch layer. These simple changes not only sustain pollinator populations but also encourage natural pest control and add a little extra charm to the winter landscape.

## Supporting Next Year with Soil Testing and Amending

Fall is a great time to prepare for next year because future success begins with soil testing. Knowing what nutrients are in your soil and the current pH and how they can be adjusted is a crucial gardening foundation.

### Soil Sampling – Understanding soil nutrients and plant needs

- If your area is uniform, one composite sample can be made. Collect and combine 10 to 15 subsamples that represent the area.
- Check out this great [video tutorial](#) on soil sampling



- A shovel or spade or soil probe can be used to take a 6" deep sample (see image on right).
- Be sure to remove any grass, rocks and other debris from the sample. Mix all the subsamples together in a clean (non-galvanized) bucket/ container and allow them to air dry.
- Then send to the UT Soil, Plant and Pest Center yourself or work with your county Extension office who also has soil test boxes. Select all the crops you are planning to grow and consider other important add-on tests, like soil organic matter.
- Make sure to mark the crops you are growing and then utilize the soil report to add needed nutrients through proper fertilization. See [Getting the Most Out of Your Garden Soil Test report \(W804-A\)](#).

### Soil Amending – Improving physical and chemical properties

- Fertilization isn't the only thing to consider in managing your soil. Adding soil organic matter (leaves, mulches, composts) are vital to improving soil quality and supporting key functions like nutrient cycling, water holding, infiltration and preventing erosion.
- In addition to amendments, cover crops can improve soil physical properties and nutrient dynamics through their growth and contribute organic matter upon decomposition. Used well, amendments and cover crops can support sustainability for years to come. Read more at: [tiny.utk.edu/W346-G](https://tiny.utk.edu/W346-G)

# DECEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Pollinator tips:</b>  Utilize leaf litter as mulch in garden spaces. Many insects overwinter within the leaf layers which serve as insulation against winter weather. And, fall to winter application provide time for breakdown.		<b>1</b> It is seed catalog time. Don't be afraid to get some early orders in.	<b>2</b> It could be a great time to select and order bare root fruit for next year.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> You could even test germination (take % of 10-25 seeds) to confirm viability.	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Mulch strawberries when temperatures are expected to drop below 20 degrees F but only if they are dormant!	<b>8</b> ● NEW MOON	<b>9</b> Clean and store your tools for next year.	<b>10</b> It is a great time to service tillers and other equipment. Sharpen blades and change oil.	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Start to think about the garden plan for next year.	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Sort and count remaining seeds to prevent over-ordering for next year.	<b>17</b> Map out crop rotations for next year in light of any diseases or pests encountered.	<b>18</b> Mulch blueberry bushes to a depth of 5-6 inches when dormant.	<b>19</b> The gardening days get longer from here!
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> ○ FULL MOON	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>		
<b>Notes from this year:</b>				<b>Notes for next year:</b>		



# In-Season Nitrogen Fertilization for Vegetable Crops

Crop	Timing in season/fruit or plant size	Application rate/100-foot row, 36-inch centers			
		33-0-0 or 34-0-0 Ammonium nitrate	15.5-0-0 (calcium nitrate)	Bloodmeal, feathermeal (12-0-0)*	Soybean (7-1-2), cottonseed (6-2-1) meal or fish fertilizer (5-1-1)*
Tomato	1st fruits are 1" diameter	1 lb	2 lb	2.8 lb	5.7 lb
Pepper	1st fruits are 1" diameter	0.5 to 1 lb	1 to 2 lb	1.4 to 2.8 lb	2.8 to 5.7 lb
	Later in season (if needed)	0.5 to 1 lb	1 to 2 lb	1.4 to 2.8 lb	2.8 to 5.7 lb
Vine crops (Cucumbers, melons, pumpkins, squash)	Vines are 1 ft. long	0.75 to 1 lb	1.5 to 2 lb	2 to 2.8 lb	4.2 to 5.7 lb
Sweet corn	Plants are 12-18" tall	1 to 1.5 lb	2 to 3 lb	2.8 to 4 lb	5.7 to 8.5 lb
Okra, eggplant	3 to 4 weeks after seeding/ transplanting	0.5 to 1 lb	1 to 2 lb	1.4 to 2.8 lb	2.8 to 5.7 lb
	6 to 8 weeks after seeding/ transplanting	0.5 to 1 lb	1 to 2 lb	1.4 to 2.8 lb	2.8 to 5.7 lb
Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts	2 to 3 weeks after transplanting	1 lb	2 lb	2.8 lb	5.7 lb
	5 to 6 weeks after transplanting	0.5 lb	1 lb	1.4 lb	2.8 lb
Kale, collards, lettuce, spinach, mustard	3 to 4 weeks after seeding	0.5 to 0.75 lb	1 to 1.5 lb	1.4 to 2 lb	2.8 to 4.2 lb

*\*Natural or organic fertilizers will be available more slowly than chemical (often 1-4 months).*

**This calendar is also a fillable PDF to enable digital record keeping:**

[tiny.utk.edu/W436](http://tiny.utk.edu/W436)

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# Garden Climate and Management Overview

(Use this page as a summary of notes recorded in the separate month calendars)

Growing Season Events	Spring - Last Frost Date Any late frost events?	Fall - First Frost Date Length of growing season (days from last to first frost).	Extreme weather events	Other notes
General climate	Spring temperature trends	Summer temperature trends	Fall temperature trends	Winter temperature trends
Rainfall	Spring rainfall total	Summer rainfall totals	Fall rainfall totals	Other notes
Irrigation	Spring irrigation summary	Summer irrigation summary	Fall irrigation summary	Other notes
Soil management	Spring tillage	Summer cover crops	Fall cover crops	Other notes
Fertilization	Pre-plant fertilization	Side-dressing	Fertigation (fertilizer dissolved in irrigation)	Other notes

## Pest and Disease Management Records

(Use this page to keep records throughout the gardening season)

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