



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Happy post-holiday time!

This time of year, I think back to my college days and my undergrad advisor, Bruce Hamilton. Doc, as we all called him, was chronically overcommitted, generally disorganized, and a constant thorn in the side of the university administration (of course we all loved him for that.) In fact, he was always so late with his Christmas cards (they usually showed up around the end of January) he just threw in the towel and started sending out Groundhog Day cards!

But aside from being a bit unconventional, Doc always preached the value of challenging assumptions. His lessons were right in line with my parents' teachings – if it seems too easy . . . too good to be true . . . it probably is.

It was in this spirit that I launched into my academic career of teaching and researching, and challenging assumptions. And so, it seemed that horticultural mythbusting would make a perfect theme for Yew Dell in 2024.

Whether it's the gravel in the bottom of your planted containers (nope!), adding sand to your soil to improve drainage (not so fast, buster), or native plant roots growing deeper than those of exotics (I'll just let you mull that one over on your own for a bit . . .) there are so many bad but generally accepted garden myths out there that busting them is a full time job. Of course, it doesn't help that the motherload source of all myths-inneed-of-busting, social media, makes it easier than ever to just click and perpetuate.

But if you're starting to feel a little overwhelmed by all this, fret not. You're not in this alone. There are great sources of excellent and reliable information out there. Your local cooperative extension service is always a great place to start. Our own University

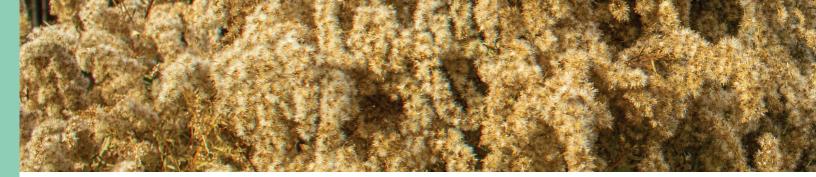
of Kentucky has endless resources online and in person that are all easy to find. Whether your question is about plants or bugs or fertilizers, university sources are a great place to start.

And of course you – our Yew Dell supporters – have access to one of the best groups of garden mythbusters on the planet in our own Yew Dell staff. There's nothing they/we love more than to topple a long-standing myth – to not just tell people that a particular myth has been busted but why it got busted in the first place. Whether it's a plant walk, lecture, workshop, or an emailed question (horthelp@yewdellgardens.org) we're here to help. And if you're on the grounds and come across one of our staff, just step right up and ask. We're here to help . . . to bust!

Happy Gardening!









POLLINATOR AND FLOWERING PLANT COEVOLUTION- VIRTUAL

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY I • 6:00-7:30 PM MEMBERS \$25 / NON-MEMBERS \$35

Join us for this fascinating workshop with Alissandra Ayala, biology graduate student from University of Louisville, as she discusses how pollinators and flowering plants evolved separately – yet together – for the benefits of each partner.

Zoom login will be sent before the session. As this is a virtual workshop, friends and family can watch together under one login.

THE BOTANY OF BEER

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28 · 6:00-7:30 PM TO BE HELD AT WEST SIXTH NULU 817 E. MARKET STREET #101, LOUISVILLE 40206

MEMBERS \$50 / NON-MEMBERS \$60

Our popular The Botany of... Series continues, this time with the focus on Beer! Paul Cappiello, our Executive Director, will lead a deep-dive discussion on the natural history of beer. Next, we'll meet with a West Sixth brewer to learn about their brewing process, before enjoying a flight of their beers and bar-focused foods.





WINTER BIRDS AND BACKYARD BIRD COUNT- IN-PERSON

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10 · 12:00-1:30 PM

MEMBERS \$25 / NON-MEMBERS \$35

Carolina Villalona, biology graduate student from University of Louisville, leads this discussion of winter bird behaviors while getting participants ready for the global bird tracking initiative, Great Backyard Bird Count (#GBBC), taking place February 16-19. Carolina will talk about bird basics, and include an introduction to Merlin and eBird apps for identifying and counting birds. You'll use the apps for recording birds in your own backyard or neighborhood! Weather permitting, we'll take a walk around the gardens to practice our bird tracking skills.

NOTE: Workshop will switch from in-person to virtual with inclement weather, and participants will receive a guest pass to visit our gardens.





Scan the QR code to register & for more info.

Register right away- classes may fill quickly or be canceled if early enrollment is too low.

All listed programs are scheduled to be in-person unless otherwise noted.

CLASSES AND EVENTS



SEED STARTING

SATURDAY, MARCH 16 · 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM MEMBERS \$60 / NON-MEMBERS \$70

Jeff Margreiter, Nursery and Greenhouse Manager, leads our almostspring workshop for those brand-new to seed starting or folks who want a refresher. In the 90-minute session, Jeff will talk about germination potting mix (specific to this early stage), light requirements, sowing depth, and watering techniques, among other topics.

Workshop will be a blend of lecture and hands-on, where participants will both plant seeds AND transplant starts to get a sense of the full cycle. You will "take the greenhouse home" with a reusable seed flat, tray, and dome, as well as small pots with your transplants. You'll need a sunny indoor spot for successful growth.

We'll reschedule with inclement weather.



BOTANICAL PAPER MAKING

SATURDAY, MARCH 23 · 12:00 - 1:30 PM MEMBERS \$35 / NON-MEMBERS \$45

Join our hands-on paper making workshop with botanical artist, Briahna Michalsky. She will demonstrate and assist participants in making botanical papers that can be used for greeting cards or other joyful purposes. Fees include all supplies. This workshop is appropriate for adults and families, and children are welcome to register if accompanied by a ticketed adult.

BOTANICAL BODY POLISH WORKSHOP

SUNDAY, APRIL 14 · 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM MEMBERS \$35 / NON-MEMBERS \$45

Tonya Tate, creator of Nature's Bath – famous for its luxury bath and body products for all-natural skin care solutions – leads our workshop where you'll make your own unique botanical body polish. Tonya will explain the benefits of different kinds of salts and essential oils, then each participant will blend a personalized body polish with their chosen salts, essential oils, and botanicals. What a lavish treat for yourself or a loved one!



NEW THIS SPRING! YEW DELL'S HEIRLOOM TOMATO PRE-ORDER



Save the date now to check your inbox on March 13. We will send access to our new heirloom tomato pre-order in our online plant market. Select from an incredible list

of heirloom tomatoes and a time to pick up in May. There is a limited supply and time to order- so make your choice early! Scan the QR code to sign up for our Notes from the Nursery for more information.



MARCH 30 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM **INCLUDED WITH ADMISSION** The best day of the year is Opening Day! We can't wait to welcome you back to the Gardens to see what's blooming. While you're here, shop our traditional hellebore and spring ephemerals plant sale, stop by Martha Lee's Kitchen to check out our Spring menu, or sign up for any or all of our special workshop series listed below! **BACK TO BASICS - HORTICULTURE 101** SATURDAY, MARCH 30 FEED THE SOIL, NOT THE PLANTS PRUNING BEST PRACTICES IT AIN'T JUST DIRT 10:30 - II:30 AM II:30 AM - I2:30 PM 12:30 - 1:30 PM MEMBERS \$25 / NON-MEMBERS \$35 MEMBERS \$25 / NON-MEMBERS \$35 MEMBERS \$25 / NON-MEMBERS \$35 It's time to totally rethink how you Often underappreciated and rarely Whether it's pruning for shape, yield, approach the fertilizer question in examined closely enough, your soil structure or overall plant health, a few your garden. Join our staff for a is a bit like the foundation of your basic rules will demystify the often deep dive into creating healthy soils confusing questions about pruning. house. If it's not in good shape, that naturally feed your plants just Bring along your pruners (if you have nothing you build on top of it will be

some) for a walk and talk and prune.

worth much. Spend some time in the

garden with us as we dig deep & help set you up for a great season in your

own garden.

it.

what they need, just when they need

It's become as routine as pulling on your garden boots . . . Hauling out the rototiller at season's end to clean up the vegetable garden, tilling up the garden bed in spring to prepare for planting – it's almost automatic.

But is it best practice?

Anyone who's ever stuck a spade in hard earth knows that tilling before planting makes that planting so much easier. It breaks up the soil and leaves behind a nice, fluffy matrix that allows trowel planting to proceed without the inevitable palm-of-the-hand blister formation. The rototiller is also a great tool for incorporating compost and fertilizer. It creates a kind and happy place for newly emerging roots. What could possibly go wrong?

Ever hear of the dust bowl?

Ok, the rototiller wasn't entirely to blame for the Grapes of Wrath. Economic conditions, catastrophic drought, etc. all played their part. But overworking the soil left acres of farm soil exposed, unsecured by plant roots and subject to massive wind erosion.

The lesson learned . . . overworking the soil is one of the surest ways to destroy soil health.

A soil is an ecosystem. There are mineral parts and organic bits. There is the air/gas exchange system. There are soil bacteria, fungi, and a billion other living things down there – all of which are essential to maintaining a healthy soil ecosystem. And overworking the soil can be tremendously damaging to that system.

Soil Structure

We sometimes forget that the sand, silt, clay, and organic bits that make up the solid parts of the soil, aggregate into a macro-structure that is essential to soil health. Drainage and aeration are all improved by that macro-structure. That structure can take years to form and is quickly degraded or destroyed by tilling.

Hardpan Formation

Over-tilling the garden soil causes the finest soil particles to filter down through the soil horizon where they accumulate in an impenetrable hardpan just below the till layer, destroying both drainage and aeration.

Soil Fungus Disruption

The least visible and most voluminous organism in a healthy garden soil is the massive network of fungal hyphae that invades every nook and cranny of the soil, helping to break down organic matter, facilitate water and nutrient absorption by plants, and feed other essential soil microbes. Sure, the fungal network can quickly regrow, but wouldn't it be better to simply leave it in place to start with?



The Answer - No Till Gardening

Sure, I get it. At the risk of letting my garden geek flag fly here, is there anything more satisfying (at least in the garden!) than looking out over a nicely tilled garden bed? But maybe we need to acknowledge, just as dust bowl farmers did so many years ago, that a nice, clean-looking field may not be the best approach. The answer to our soil challenge may be to eliminate or at least reduce the use of the rototiller in the garden. Maybe this is the spring to go no till. Drop a few inches of well-processed compost on the surface of the garden and rather than tilling it in, just plant into the compost. I think you'll be surprised how well it works. And your soil will thank you.



Notes from the Nursery and Gardens

By Sayde Heckman and Jeff Margreiter

Our mission at Yew Dell is to not only showcase the beauty of plants and nature but also to inspire visitors to find their own connection to gardening- and that's often seeing cool, colorful, and unique plants in our perennial gardens, patios, and containers. We're able to accomplish this with our gardens and nursery departments working closely together. Since the tremendous nursery expansion that we started back in 2018, we've been able to propagate and grow thousands of plants – plants we'd never have been able to find – to enhance the gardens, test new varieties and introduce tremendous diversity to the collections.

Starting with Inspiration

Our goal is to showcase the best the plant world has to offer, and to do that we rely on the collective wisdom, experience, and creativity of our knowledgeable staff and volunteers. They keep their eyes peeled throughout the year for new introductions and chance inspirations and then craft them into the next dynamic, fun and experimental displays for our visitors to enjoy. With that inspiration, we get to work on selecting plants for the next year of displays.

December-January

Debate

To start the process, we create a shared PowerPoint file that is accessible to all our horticulture staff- each slide being a specific garden space with photos of proposed plants.

And over time we gradually whittle down all the suggestions to a plant list for the following year. As you can imagine, this generates some pretty intense discussion - Is this a great garden plant but difficult to produce in the nursery? Will it be in bloom for longer than two seconds and will the colors clash with our stone work, etc.? Each display may have a couple of plants we have grown before, but many are new experiments.



Last season Joseph's Coat Alternathera 'Red Thread' and 'Little Ruby' was the subject of much debate but in the end, 'Little Ruby' turned out to be the better spreader in the walled garden planting.

Of course the winter debates are only half the story. It's the performance the following season that tells us whether which pick (or who!) was on the right side of the "discussion." But regardless of which plants are winners and which are losers, we learn a great deal by throwing new plants into the mix each year.

Ordering

Quantities

Once the plant list is set, we have to figure out how many of each we need the nursery staff to grow. To help with this, each year's statistics are tracked in our plant records database (IrisBG) so we create a historical record to aid future efforts. Of course when we find a new favorite, the nursery crew is happy to produce some extras so area gardeners can buy them for their own gardens.



lypes

Before we place an order, we have to consider which way we want to start each plant.

- Cuttings: Vegetative cutting propagation ensures clonal uniformity which is critical for some plants such as coleus.
- Seeds: Many plants are easily grown from seed and we LOVE growing plants from seed. It's also tremendously economical.
- Plugs: Young, well-established plugs provide us with plants not readily available to us from seed or cutting.

Timing

Once all the homework is done, the seed, plugs and cutting orders are placed to arrive between mid-January and mid-March.

Data

Sayde's favorite thing! After order confirmation, the information goes into our IrisBG plant database and Shopify (nursery and Plant Market tracking) systems. Both are used to create garden plant signage, sale tags, online plant market descriptions, and educational content.



February-March

Arrival & Getting Started

Cuttings, plugs, and seeds all arrive in various ways and are either stored or planted right away. All cutting and seed propagation begins in our super-efficient glass greenhouse.

- Cuttings are inserted in cell trays with a potting mix and placed under intermittent mist until they produce roots
- Plugs are taken from their flat and placed into larger pots filled with a soilless potting mix and fertilizer
- Seeds are started in plug trays filled with a fine-textured germination mix.

March-April

Transition

Before transplanting seedlings, rooted cuttings, and purchased plugs into final production pots, we first print out tags with the name, unique barcode, and price for each plant.

- Plants are moved to larger pots depending on the plant's mature size or use in the garden.
- Repotted plants move into our large production house and a continuing orchestra of watering, pinching, spacing, and magic plays out as we gear up for a new season in the gardens!



May

Planting Time!

Welcome to Kentucky! We plant our annuals after Derby in hopes we've escaped the danger of a killing freeze. Planting involves removing and composting the 18,000-ish bulbs in our annual Big Bloom display, and then planting the new annual/tropical displays. Volunteers are a huge part of this effort and are involved in every step over the course of the season.

May-October

Garden Care

- Add compost and slow-release fertilizer at planting time
- Hand water thoroughly for the first one-two weeks after planting
- Install a soaker hose irrigation system with a programmable timer (annuals LOVE water) for the remainder of the season
- Pinch, place and tweak as needed

Debrief

Throughout the seasons, we watch the performance of each variety, combination and bed in our crazy Kentucky climate, listen to our visitors' observations, and start making plans for the next year!

So, at this point you're probably wondering "WHY in the world does Yew Dell plant annuals?!" Well there are many reasons.

- They provide us the ability to completely change areas of the garden each year
- Annuals make people happy with seasons of vibrant foliage and flower color
- To experiment with a variety of plants so you, the home gardener, can learn from our mistakes
- Provide new and unusual annuals in our gardens and our plant sales to diversify the local plant palette
- Have fun with our community of staff & volunteers with new exciting projects, volunteer workdays, and experiences every year

The final benefits of planting annuals are that you don't have to feel bad when they die, because they're supposed to and if they aren't exactly what you were hoping for this season, you get to try again next spring!



Castle Gardens Campaign Update



It seems like we've been talking about this project forever. But dirt is finally starting to fly! **Yew Dell's ambitious \$5 million garden project is moving forward!**

Fundraising continues (we're currently at \$4.1 million in commitments) so if you've been sitting on the sidelines, now's the time to get on board. We're planning to break ground in March so this is the time to help us hit our goal. If you've already contributed, Thank You! There's still time to talk your friends into joining the effort!

RELOCATING EXISTING PLANTS

But formal spring groundbreaking won't mark the first spade of soil to be disturbed. Our horticulture team is already at work digging and saving some existing plants. Some of those plants will be relocated. Some will be held in the nursery for replanting into the new garden. Some will (gasp!) end up in the burn pile. It's quite a process!



NEW PAVING STARTS

One of the key features of this project is re-routing of visitor traffic. Rather than direct visitors into the back side of the castle and garage door of the Klein house (now our Administrative Office), the new circulation pattern will guide visitors through the visitor center and straight ahead, across the front of the Klein house. This new pattern will encourage visitors to experience more of the arboretum and other parts of the property and will also provide a much-improved approach to the front of the Castle and new gardens.

NEW DIGS FOR BRIDES AND MEETINGS

And the entrance isn't the only place to see new paths and paving. As part of our realignment of several facilities for this project, we're making major renovations to the former Klein-Koehler house located below the Rounsavall Pavilion. This wonderful structure will replace the Castle as a space for wedding preparation and meetings. It will give wedding parties a more private space for their activities and will free up the Castle for visitors during busy weekends.



But of course, we have to connect that building with the rest of our paved circulation system. New, hard-surface paths are being created to connect this newly renovated space to the rest of the gardens.

We are so close to reaching our goal and have a few remaining naming opportunities. If you're interested in helping us create and manage the Castle Gardens, scan the QR code or contact us at **502-241-4788**



WINTER HOURS AT YEW DELL

JANUARY 2 - MARCH 29

TUESDAY - FRIDAY

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM











SUNDAYS DURING OUR OPEN SEASON

12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Starting March 31 to mid-December, we allow leashed, well-behaved dogs on most Sundays for Hounds on the Grounds.

Check our website for blackout dates.

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Misting To Create Humidity

The dry winter air in your house is tough on some tropical house plants. Most of them like a whole lot more humidity in the air. But misting your houseplants once a week is not likely to do much good. To provide enough moisture in the air to make a difference, your plants would likely have to live in your bathroom shower stall . . . and you'd have to take three showers a day. The good news is that most common house plants have become popular/common because they're tough as nails.

Instead: Use the first knuckle test to know when to water house plants. Insert your finger into the potting mix up to the first knuckle. If it feels cool, you're plant is probably fine. If it doesn't feel cool, it could probably use a drink.

Want to know what's happening at Yew Dell?

Scan the QR Code to sign up for our monthly Garden eNews!

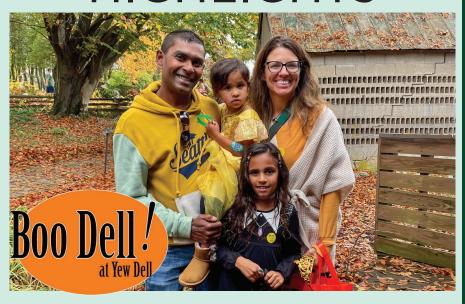


MEET OUR NEW STAFF!



Over the year, we will introduce you to the newest additions to the Yew Dell family.

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS



With the support of our sponsors **LG & E and KU Foundation**, **Liberty Federal Credit Union**, and **Dean Dorton**, visitors enjoyed a SPOOK-tacular Boo Dell at Yew Dell! Thank you to our community partners for providing stops on our trail of treats, entertaining guests, and supporting the gardens. We also want to thank everyone who attended!



We are thankful for another successful Yuletide – made possible with the support of our sponsors **Wilson & Muir Bank and Trust Co.** and **Limbwalker Tree Service**. We appreciate our community partners who displayed a tree and made the season a little brighter for our guests. And of course, thank YEW for including Yew Dell among your list of holiday traditions!

Thank You 2023 Corporate Sponsors

All of us at Yew Dell Botanical Gardens would like to thank our corporate partners who generously sponsor and provide in-kind support to our gardens and events. We could not grow without your help.

Baptist Health La Grange **Barlow Wealth Partners Bluegrass Motorsport Bob Ray Company** Brown Forman **Clore Station Dean Dorton** Digs Home and Garden **Dinsmore Shohl Dwyer Designscapes East &Westbrook Construction** First Financial Bank **Gettelfinger Family Foundation Glenview Trust Company** INgrid Design Kentucky Artisan Distillery **Kentucky Select Properties** Kroger Lenihan Sotheby's Realty LG&E and KU Foundation **Liberty Federal Credit Union** Limbwalker Tree Service Mercedes-Benz of Louisville **Natural Products** Oxford Garden Parthenon **PNC Private Bank** Stites & Harbison StockYards Bank & Trust The Print Refinery Today's Woman **United Direct Solutions Welch Printing** Wilson & Muir Bank

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHTS

Each month, we select a volunteer (or group) who has gone above and beyond in their contribution to Yew Dell. Join us as we thank

these marvelous Volunteer Spotlights from the past year!



SPALDING UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP



Yew Dell was very excited to continue its partnership with Spalding University's Auerbach School of Occupational Therapy this past fall semester! Doctoral candidate Katie Kutrubis dedicated her Capstone Project to working alongside staff and volunteers to expand the abilities of our team to identify and modify tasks to reach the abilities of volunteers of all ages and physical or cognitive abilities. Thank YEW Katie!







MEADOWLARK MONTESSORI

Volunteering can start at any age! Earlier in the fall, we had a wonderful group of young volunteers from Meadowlark Montessori help clean up the Serpentine Garden! When we complimented them on their dedication and teamwork the response was "Well yeah, we're a squad!" Thank YEW Meadowlark!

Sign up for our Volunteer eNews to receive more information!

WELCOME 2023 NEW VOLUNTEERS!

Yew must be new! Below is a list of all of our new volunteers who volunteered at least once after attending orientation (as of the completion of this Newsletter). Welcome to the Yew Dell community!

Jacob Acevedo • Angela Bartley • Cindy Briscoe • Audrea Caguoia • Diane Campbell • Katie Clifford
Paula Cohn • Lizzie Darling • Natalie Decker • Christian Dospil • Henry Downs • Jan Eastburn • Carol Evans
Bethany Farmer • Toby Fletcher • Jim Gerdes • Karen Graves • John Hajj • Evanthi Hettiaratchi • Judy Hoge
Katie Kutrubis • John Lanning • Ben Moseley • Pountious Phillips • Marianne Rasmusson • Germaine Russo
Kate Stephens • Fran Troje • Stephanie Virg • Brad Whetzel

BUDDING GARDENER



A GUIDE FOR GARDENERS OF ALL AGES

Attracting Birds to your Garden in the Winter

Now that it's winter, many of the plants and insects that birds eat in other months have gone dormant. Can you help the birds in your garden survive the winter?

Here are some easy ideas:

Create a brush pile with branches and logs with open spots to provide shelter to our bird friends.



Place a shallow bird bath in a sunny spot to provide fresh water. You'll want to replace the water every day or two, and replace regularly if it freezes.

Birds are missing out on fresh berries, fruits, and insects during the cold months. Attract birds to your garden by feeding them! There are a variety of bird feeders available — tube feeders, hopper feeders, and suet feeders — and each attracts different types of birds.

You can buy bird feeders, or you can make one out of a water bottle and sticks, chopsticks, or wooden spoons. Try to place the feeders where other wildlife can't get to them.



one out of oden r wildlife

Merlin Bird

Once you've attracted your birds, track them from February 16-19 as part of the **Great Backyard Bird Count!** Our Winter Birds and Backyard Bird Count Workshop on February 10 (see page 2 for information) will provide details on how to participate.

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PLANT MARKET DATES

DON'T MISS THESE OPPORTUNITIES TO ADD SOME NEW PLANTS TO YOUR OWN GARDEN!

ONLINE PLANT RELEASES

FEBRUARY 7: SHADE PERENNIALS

MARCH 6: SUN PERENNIALS

APRIL 3: TRESS, SHRUBS, ANNUALS

NEW THIS YEAR HEIRLOOM **TOMATO PRE-ORDER**

MARCH 13: ORDERS OPEN

MAY: PICK UP

IN-PERSON SALES

MARCH 30: OPENING DAY

Hellebores and Spring Ephemerals

APRIL 27: SPRING PLANT SALE

Everything!

SCAN THE QR CODE TO SIGN UP FOR PLANT MARKET UPDATES









