



May 2020

# THE NEW HORT THYMES

**CLEVELAND COUNTY  
EXTENSION**

Serving Cleveland County, Oklahoma with the most up to date gardening, lawn, landscaping, and horticulture information.



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## 2020 Master Gardener Class Registration is Open

If gardening has become one of your favorite quarantine past times, you might want to consider signing up for the 2020 Master Gardener Class! Master Gardeners help members of the community develop their horticulture knowledge and assist the Cleveland County Cooperative Extension Service in distributing this research based information. The class meets for 12 weeks on Fridays, starting August 7<sup>th</sup>, from 9:30am – 3:00pm. State specialists from OSU speak on topics like soil health, home fruit and vegetable production, entomology, and landscape design.

If you are interested in the class, please email [courtney.dekalb@okstate.edu](mailto:courtney.dekalb@okstate.edu). Registration is \$200 per individual.

We are living in unique and difficult times and the Cleveland County Horticulture program recognizes that future face-to-face events are not guaranteed. We want to be able to offer this programming to our community, so in the event that face-to-face events are cancelled, we will explore a virtual option.

# Color Your Food With Edible Flowers

Tired of the same old green salads? Wanting to add some color to your quarantine baking? Or maybe spice up a cocktail? Then look no further than the garden. While it may seem like just a fun trend, edible flowers are nothing new. Flowers have been used in cooking as far back as Ancient Egypt. They have remained a staple of many cultures throughout the world. If you're interested in adding flowers to your diet, here are some good ones to try:



## Borage

*Borago officinalis*

Borage is a sprawling annual that is native to the Mediterranean region. The flowers are bright blue and star-shaped. It is best grown in moist, well-drained soil. Borage tastes similarly to cucumber with a hint of sweetness. The flowers have been used in salads since The Elizabethan Age. Borage is a great addition to the garden regardless, as it attracts bees and butterflies.



## Calendula

*Calendula officinalis*

A close relative of marigolds, calendulas have daisy-like flowers that range from bright yellow to orange. These plants prefer full sun and well-drained soil. They may begin to decline in Oklahoma heat, but if kept watered, they will come back for a re-bloom in the fall. It is sometimes referred to as “poor man’s saffron”, as calendula does taste like saffron when sautéed. Add to soups, salads, or rice dishes.



## Lavender

*Lavandula angustifolia*

Most often thought of as a remedy for sleeplessness and anxiety, lavender also produces edible flower buds. Slightly perfumed-tasting, the buds can be sprinkled over cocktails, champagne, or dessert. Plant lavender in a light, somewhat sandy soil. Root rot can be an issue if the soil does not drain properly. It is a semi-woody perennial. Purple flowers appear as spikes in late spring to early summer. The foliage can also be used to flavor dishes.



## Nasturtium

*Tropaeolum majus*

Nasturtiums are warm weather annuals with a climbing habit. They have parasol-like leaves and funnel-shaped flowers that come in red, orange, and yellow. Nasturtiums are great for beginner gardeners as they are tolerant of most soil types and can handle some neglect. Flowers have a peppery flavor. It is a great addition to salads and stir fries. Unripe seed pods are also edible and have been used in the place of capers.

# Prepare for Leaf Spot of Red Tip Photinia

Last summer, the Cleveland County OSU Extension Office received a lot of questions regarding leaf spot on red tip photinias. Red tip photinias are a popular landscape shrub used for screening. Photinia leafspot, caused by the fungus *Entomosporium mespili*, is one of the most damaging diseases of this plant. The wet and cool weather we saw last year caused a larger than average amount of shrubs to become infected with the fungus. The disease starts with circular, bright red spots that eventually coalesce into large purple blotches. In severe infections, the plants will defoliate. This is particularly frustrating for people who use red tip photinias for sound barriers or privacy hedges.

When combatting garden diseases, it's important to remember that prevention is the best strategy. There aren't really any curative actions that can be done once infection begins. To prevent the spread of the fungus, prune out the infected areas. This will increase the airflow within the shrub and decrease the humid microclimate that the fungus thrives on. The fungus overwinters in fallen leaves, so make sure to rake those up from the base of the plant. Also avoid overhead irrigation to minimize leaf wetness. If planting new photinias, do not plant them too close. Again, we want to maximize airflow.



Fungicides are an effective way to prevent the disease. It is best to apply these early in the season before the flush of new growth. Remember, fungicides are preventative not curative, so it's important to treat before symptoms appear and before the environment becomes conducive for fungal reproduction. The table below lists products that are available for treatment.

Fungicides Available for Treatment of Photinia Leaf Spot	
Product Name	Rate per Gallon
Advanced Garden™ Disease Control (Bayer)	1.5 tbsp
Fung-Away Systemic Fungicide (Green Light)	1-4 fl oz
Garden Disease Control (Ortho)	1.5 tsp
Garden Fungicide (Safer®)	4 fl oz
Immunox® Multi-Purpose Fungicide	1 fl oz
Liquid Systemic Fungicide (Ferti-lome)	3 tbsp
Remedy (Bonide)	2.5 tbsp

We cannot predict what May's weather will bring, but proper preparation is key for healthy red tip photinias. If the photinias are too far gone or it's too much trouble to take the precautions, then consider replacing it with cherry laurel, juniper, or viburnum.

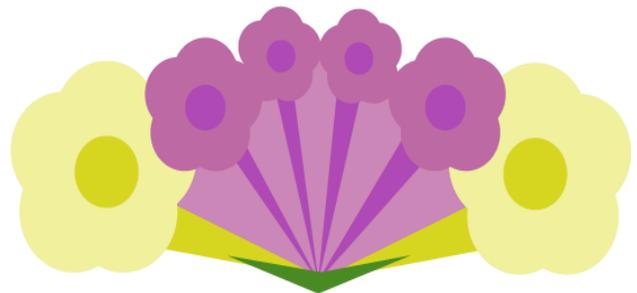


## May Plant of the Month: Lantana

A showy tropical plant that butterflies love

*Lantana camara*, or commonly referred to as lantana, is a popular tropical that can be used as a bedding or container plant. Lantana tolerates poor soil, but it must be well-drained and planted in full sun. It's rough foliage can be a skin irritant, but it makes up for that with its colorful blooms. Lantana blooms are clusters of small, tubular flowers. This makes them very enticing for butterflies, as the tubular shape makes it easy to feed on nectar and the clusters offer a sort of landing pad. Blooms come in yellow, pink, orange, red, white, and purple, often mixed in the same flower cluster.

Most lantana varieties act as annuals in Oklahoma and will die with the first frost. There are a few perennial varieties available.



**Cluster** /kləstər/: a group of similar flowers occurring closely together

## Garden Tips for May

- Annual bedding plants can be planted for summer color
- Soak newly planted bedding annuals and trees, unless rainfall is abundant
- Plant summer bulbs, like cannas, dahlias, colocasia, caladiums, and gladiolus
- Continue planting warm season vegetables, like watermelon, cantaloupe, cucumber, eggplant, okra, and sweet potatoes
- Keep harvesting cool season vegetables
- Cover new transplants with buckets or milk jugs when hail is in the forecast
- Ensure containers have adequate drainage before filling with plants
- Use mulch to reduce weed pressure and increase moisture retention in the garden
- Begin scouting for insect activity in the garden
- Keep an eye out for fungal issues, which can be common in wet springs
- Prune and fertilize azaleas immediately after blooming
- Be conscious of storm damage to trees and rehabilitate as needed
- Fertilize cool-season and warm-season lawns
- Bermudagrass, buffalograss, and zoysiagrass can be over-seeded in Mid-May; do not over-seed if a pre-emergent herbicide was recently used
- Check the irrigation system for leaks and effective coverage; this could save money later in the summer
- Dollar spot disease and spring dead spot symptoms begin to appear in lawns – consider revising fertilizer programs if these diseases are prevalent

## Eat Seasonally

In-season produce is fresher, cheaper, more nutritious, and better for the environment. These are some of the seasonal crops for May:

Apricots



Artichokes

Asparagus



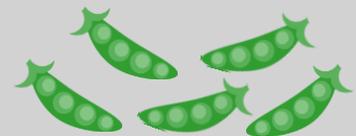
Beets

Cherries



Lettuce

Peas



Spinach

Strawberries



# Upcoming Events

## May 7<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm to 8:00pm – Intro to Home Gardening Webinar

Have you ever wanted to start a vegetable garden but weren't sure how to get started? This class will cover how to convert areas of your yard into production gardens, how to improve the soil, how to build raised beds, and when to put the plants in the ground. Season-long tips for success will also be discussed so that the harvest can continue into the summer.

The webinar is free, but registration is required.  
To register, email [courtney.dekalb@okstate.edu](mailto:courtney.dekalb@okstate.edu).



### About the editor...

Courtney DeKalb-Myers has been the Cleveland County horticulture educator since August 2018. Her position handles homeowner inquiries, master gardener advisement, and other horticulture education programming throughout the state. She is originally from Norman, Oklahoma and developed a passion for gardening at a young age. She went onto study horticulture at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater with an emphasis in entrepreneurship. After graduating from OSU, she moved to Raleigh, North Carolina to attend NC State for graduate school. Her research was heavily focused on vegetable production, specifically processing tomatoes for a local salsa product. The emphasis on local products motivated her to move back to Oklahoma and she is so excited to now serve the town that raised her.

