



**CLEVELAND COUNTY
EXTENSION**

THE NEW HORT THYMES

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

March 2021



Garden Frost Bite

February brought on some very cold temperatures for Oklahoma. As the snow melts, we may start to wonder what's going to happen to our garden plants. Hopefully perennials and emerging bulbs were heavily mulched before the storm. Some evergreen plants have turned entirely brown after exposure to the frigid temperatures. There may be some plants in the garden that are half and half. The healthy foliage on the bottom was insulated by snow, while the top was exposed.

It's possible that these damaged plants we'll lose their leaves or needles. Hopefully the damage was not severe enough to totally kill the plants and plants will put on new leaves this spring. We're just going to have to wait and find out! The good news is that temperatures look to be warming up and we can get outside to prepare our gardens.

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2021 Oklahoma Proven Selections

Every year, faculty at the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture at Oklahoma State University select plants that can withstand the difficult environmental conditions found throughout Oklahoma. The program is called Oklahoma Proven. The program's goal is to encourage gardeners to select plants that are tolerant of Oklahoma's environmental stresses. These are the selections for 2021:



Tree

Teddybear® Southern Magnolia

Magnolia grandiflora 'Southern Charm'

Southern magnolias are the southern belles of evergreen plants producing large, fragrant, creamy white flowers, traditionally found on large estates of the south. In the urban landscape the species is too big. Enter 'Southern Charm' also known as Teddybear® a dwarf, compact version of the species.

Teddybear grows 16 to 20 feet high and 10 to 12 feet wide in an upright pyramidal form. This tight growth habit makes it suitable for smaller gardens, screens, avenues, and specimens, as well as large planters and containers. Teddybear leaves are deep green, glossy above with a dense reddish-brown fur on the underside. It is not too finicky about soil types, but grows best in deep, nutrient-rich, acidic well-drained soil. Once established, it grows best with regular moisture, but will tolerate brief periods of drought. It grows best in full sun and benefits from organic mulch.



Shrub

Virginia Sweetspire

Itea virginica

Virginia sweetspire is a native shrub to eastern Oklahoma. It is a mound-shaped, slender-branched, deciduous shrub generally 3 to 6 feet tall and wide. Small, white fragrant flowers bloom in spring to early summer in 4-inch spires that droop with the arching branches. Flowers open from base to tip, so it appears to bloom for a long time. Leaves turn red to purple in fall and persist well into the winter.

Plants are found growing in moist to swampy areas and along stream banks, in acid soils, but they are not too picky about soil type. Plants grow in shady areas as an understory plant, but it grows best if it receives full sun for at least part of the day.



Perennial

Prinz Heinrich Japanese Anemone

Anemone hupehensis var. *japonica*

Prinz Heinrich Japanese anemone is excellent for late summer to early fall color. It grows in part shade or protected areas. It prefer fertile, consistently moist soil that is neutral to slightly alkaline with good drainage. In full sun and dry conditions, the foliage will

often become burned; avoid wet soils, particularly in winter. In too much shade the flower stems tend to flop.

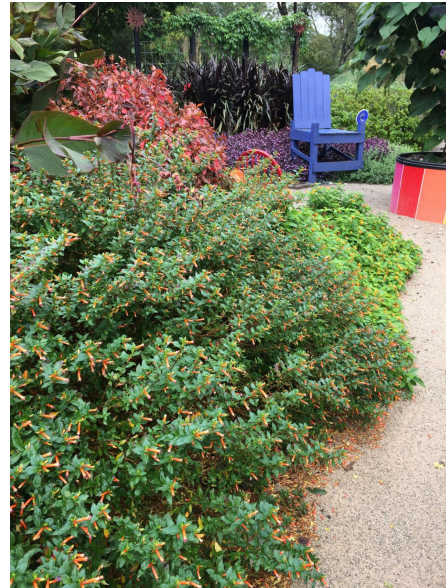
Foliage is a dark green, softly pubescent beneath, and 3-parted. Flowers are semi-double, rosepink, with narrow overlapping tepals surrounding a central cluster of golden-yellow stamens. Flowers are produced on long, upright, wiry but graceful branching flower stems well above the foliage. The plant grows about 28" high and spreads by rhizomes.



Annual Cuphea

Cuphea spp.

Cuphea is a genus of many plants native to warm temperate and tropical regions of the Americas. Depending on the species and cultivar, they go by several common names such as firecracker plant, cigar flower, Mexican-heather, bat flower, bunny ears, and false heather. Cuphea is a tender perennial grown as an annual in Oklahoma. It is low maintenance and is known for its tolerance to heat and drought. Plant foliage is bright green to blue-green and glossy. Although flowers are small, they are abundant and provide a spectacular show all summer long with no need to deadhead. Plants come in a variety of forms with a variety of flower colors that are vivid and produce a sweet nectar that attracts pollinators.



[Click here](#) for past year's Oklahoma Proven selections.

Rain Barrels Available for Order

Rain barrels capture water from roofs and hold it for later use. The stored rain barrel water can be used to water lawns and gardens, wash cars, and other similar activities. Using a rain barrel is a great way to conserve water in the home and protect the water quality within the watershed.

The City of Norman is now taking orders for COSWA Rain Barrels. Interested parties can order rain barrels online to be picked up at the Lindsey Yard (668 E. Lindsey) on April 2, 2021 from 4pm to 6pm or April 3, from 9am to 1pm. Orders are due by March 28, 2021. You do not have to be a City of Norman resident to participate in the program.

[Order Rain Barrels Here](#)

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March Plant of the Month



Daffodils

A bright and cheery spring bloomer

Daffodils are an easy to grow spring blooming perennial. They require well-drained soils and prefer to be in full sun to part shade. Plant bulbs in early to mid fall for a bright pop of color in early spring. Bulbs should be planted at two to three times as deep as the bulb's height. Flower stems can be removed after blooming, but do not cut foliage until it begins to yellow. Foliage should be kept undisturbed so that bulbs can store up energy for next year.

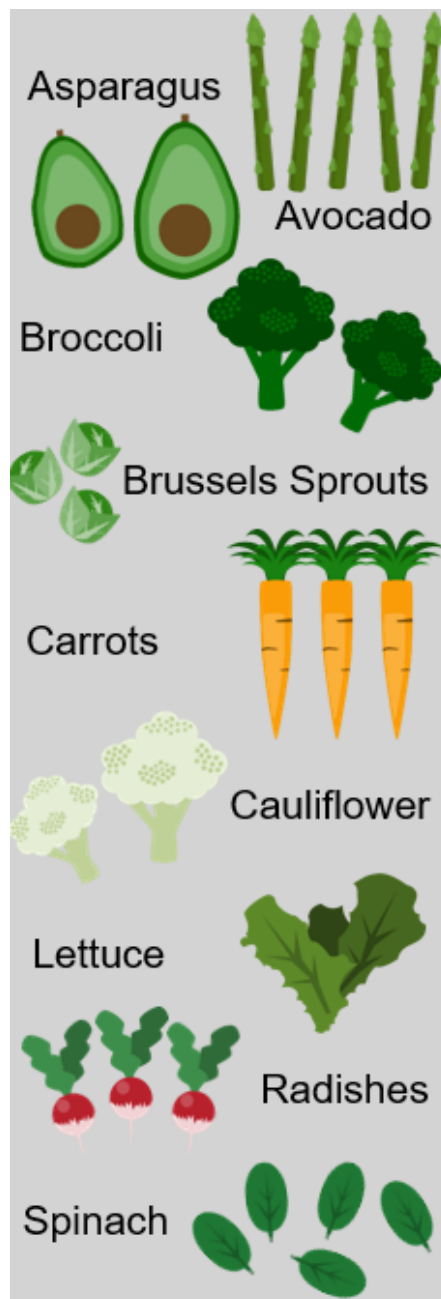
There are many species and varieties of daffodils, ranging from white to yellow to orange. Their most recognizable characteristic is the trumpet or cup surrounded by six petals.

Garden Tips for March

- Cultivate annual flower and vegetable beds to destroy winter weeds
- Begin removing mulch from perennials to allow foliage to emerge and the soil to warm up
- Prune roses before growth starts
- Prune spring flowering plants, like forsythia or winter jasmine, immediately following their bloom period
- Divide and replant overcrowded perennials
- Mow or cut back old ornamental grasses before new growth begins
- Pay attention to the forecast and protect tender transplants as needed
- Get a soil test and amend garden beds based on recommendations
- Start warm-season vegetable transplants indoors towards the middle of March
- Plant cool season vegetable transplants
- Continue to plant strawberries and other small fruit crops
- Remove winter mulch from strawberries in early March
- Prune lateral canes from blackberries to mitigate harboring diseases and insects
- Dormant oil can still be applied to control mites, galls, overwintering aphids, and scale insects
- Avoid excessive walking and working in the garden when soils are wet
- Remove excessive thatch from warm-season lawns
- Fertilize cool-season lawns on the basis of soil test results
- Complete an irrigation check up and ensure that there are not broken heads or inefficient spray patterns

Eat Seasonally

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



Upcoming Events

Sensory Container Gardens

Date & Time: April 6th, 6:00pm to 9:00pm

Location: Mid-America Technology Center, 27438 OK-59, Wayne, OK 73095

In this workshop, students will learn about the mental health benefits of gardening and create their very own sensory container gardens. We'll upcycle unique planters and fill them with plants that have distinctive taste, smell, touch, sound, and visual characteristics. This project will foster mindfulness with a take home container garden that connects you to your nerves... [read more](#)



2021 Food For Thought Garden Series: What A Plant Wants

Date & Time: April 13th, 5:00pm to 6:00pm

Location: Cleveland County Fairgrounds, North Room, 601 E Robinson, Norman, OK 73071

Achieving green thumb status can seem like a mysterious magic. If you understand how plants work, it becomes more of a science. In this kick off for the Food for Thought workshop series, we'll explain how to keep plants happy through... [read more](#)



2021 Food For Thought Garden Series: Let's Get Dirty

Date & Time: April 20th, 5:00pm to 6:00pm

Location: Cleveland County Fairgrounds, North Room, 601 E Robinson, Norman, OK 73071

Not only do we need to understand how plants work, we also need to understand soil and how it supports life. Soil is much more than just! In this second Food for Thought class, we'll discuss soil nutrients, soil testing, and appropriate amendments... [read more](#)



2021 Food For Thought Garden Series: Make Your Bed

Date & Time: April 27th, 5:00pm to 6:00pm

Location: Cleveland County Fairgrounds, North Room, 601 E Robinson, Norman, OK 73071

In-ground, raised beds, containers... There are a lot of places to put your garden plants! In this workshop, we'll explain how to select a site for your garden and bed construction. We'll also discuss materials that can be used and some other... [read more](#)



2021 Food For Thought Garden Series: Garden To Grub

Date & Time: May 4th, 5:00pm to 6:00pm
Location: Cleveland County Fairgrounds, North Room, 601 E Robinson, Norman, OK 73071

The soil has been amended, the beds are built, and the plants are in the ground. Now what? In this section of our Food for Thought garden series, we'll discuss how to keep the plants alive along with some other season-long strategies... [read more](#)



2021 Food For Thought Garden Series: Quit Bugging Me

Date & Time: May 11th, 5:00pm to 6:00pm
Location: Cleveland County Fairgrounds, North Room, 601 E Robinson, Norman, OK 73071

We're not the only ones who want to eat our delicious garden vegetables. Garden pests can be just around the corner, ready to sweep in and attack our hard work. In this workshop, we'll discuss how to recognize pest damage and strategies to prevent the from getting to the garden... [read more](#)



2021 Food For Thought Garden Series: Fruity And Nutty

Date & Time: May 18th, 5:00pm to 6:00pm
Location: Cleveland County Fairgrounds, North Room, 601 E Robinson, Norman, OK 73071

Growing your own food extends beyond the vegetable garden. Fruit trees can be a valuable addition to the landscape. It take a few years to reach production, so it's important to assess your commitment level before getting started... [read more](#)



2021 Food For Thought Garden Series: What's The Buzz?

Date & Time: May 25th, 5:00pm to 6:00pm
Location: Cleveland County Fairgrounds, North Room, 601 E Robinson, Norman, OK 73071

Over 90% of all known flowering plants, and almost all fruits and vegetables, require pollination to produce crops. Between honeybee colony collapse disorder and the cline of monarch butterflies, pollinators have become a major interest for... [read more](#)



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