



March 2019

THE NEW HORT THYMES

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



Cleveland County Extension Office

Address

601 E Robinson St
Norman, OK 73071

Phone

405-321-4774

Email

courtney.dekalb@okstate.edu

Website

www.oces.okstate.edu/cleveland

Social Media

Facebook: /clevelandcountyhort

Twitter: Coming soon!

Instagram: Coming soon!



Survival of the Fittest

Icy weather can separate the weak from the strong

You never really know what's going to happen in Oklahoma – winter can last until the middle of April, there will be two weeks of spring, and then the scorching temperatures of summer will set in. Although we haven't had any bad ice storms yet, cold temperatures remind us how winter can weigh on trees.

If you're planning to plant a tree this season, avoid trees that succumb to breakage during icy conditions. Branches from weak trees can fall on cars, roofs, or power lines. In the case of silver maples, it's not a question of when branches will break off, it's a question of which direction. This is also the situation with Bradford pears and Lombardy poplars. These trees are often selected because they grow quickly; but quick growth leads to weak limbs and broken branches. The wounds created from these breaks are a great place for fungus and bacteria to enter the internal system of the tree, creating additional problems for other seasons.

So remember to be patient with slower growing trees – they're developing the strength to hold up.

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2019 Oklahoma Proven Selections



Every year, faculty in 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 and 2019 is its 20th year anniversary. The program's goal is to encourage gardeners to select plants that are tolerant of Oklahoma environmental stresses. These are the selections for 2019:

Tree

'Vanderwolf's Pyramid', Limber Pine

Pinus flexilis

'Vanderwolf's Pyramid' limber pine is an evergreen tree with a pyramidal habit that typically grows 20-30 feet tall and about 10-15 feet wide. The specific epithet and common name is in reference to the flexible (limber) branches/twigs. 'Vanderwolf's Pine' is noted for its closely spaced, twisted, silvery blue green needles. Limber pine is generally considered to be an adaptable, low-maintenance tree with few problems. Limber pine is native to North America and is considered resistant to pine wilt disease.

- Exposure: Full sun or light shade
- Soil: Tolerates wide variety
- Hardiness: USDA Zone 4-7



Shrub

DoubleTake™ series, Flowering Quince

Chaenomeles speciosa

Flowering quince in the DoubleTake™ series are hardy, deciduous shrubs reaching 4 to 5 feet high and at least as wide. Plants in the Double Take™ series produce a profusion of early spring double flowers that resemble camellias. This is a dense, broad-rounded, thornless shrub. Bold double flowers (to 2" diameter) bloom before the leaves fully unfold in an early spring bloom and come in colors of scarlet, orange, pink, and peach. Plants do not produce fruit. Oval to oblong, glossy dark green leaves provide an attractive look through the summer. Prune lightly after spring blooming when needed. Double Take™ flowering quince is very drought tolerant once established.

- Exposure: Sun to part shade
- Soil: Tolerates wide variety of soils, but prefers well-drained
- Hardiness: USDA Zone 5-9



Perennial

Rattlesnake Master

Eryngium yuccifolium

Rattlesnake master is a native species to the tall grass prairies. Leaves of rattlesnake master are parallel-veined, bristly edged, sword-shaped, medium green leaves (to 3' long) resembling those of yucca. Flowers are greenish-white and tightly packed into globular, 1" diameter heads resembling thistles.

Rattlesnake master prefers dry, sandy soils, but tolerates clay and shallow-rocky soils. Plants tend to open up and flop in overly fertile soils or in anything less than full sun. This is a taprooted plant which transplants poorly and is best left undisturbed once established.

- Exposure: Sun, part shade
- Soil: Tolerates about any soil
- Hardiness: USDA Zone 4-10



Annual

Graffiti® series, Star Flower

Pentas lanceolata

Considered to be the most uniform in habit and bloom time, Graffiti® comes in several colors, pink, purple, bright red, rose, and white and grows to 16" high and 12" wide.

Graffiti® plants are very heat- and drought-resistant and make great cut-flowers. Tightly clustered flowers packed full of nectar make Graffiti® pentas a great attractant for butterflies and hummingbirds.

Like all pentas, Graffiti® prefers soil that is not too rich and on the dry side. Heat, sun, and good drainage will have the plants blooming prolifically all summer long.

- Exposure: Full sun to part shade
- Soil: Moderately moist, well-drained soil
- Hardiness: Use as an annual



For more information and past years selections, see <http://www.oklahomaproven.org/>

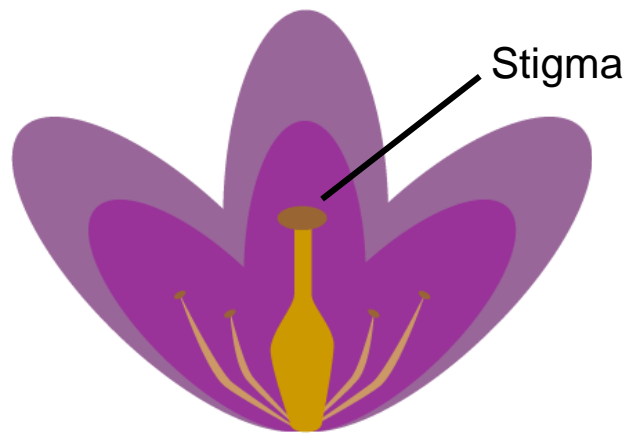


March Plant of the Month: Crocus

An early spring bloomer braves the cold with vibrant colors

Most gardeners are desperate for some color in their landscapes by this point in the winter. So when the spring blooming crocuses pop up, it comes as quite the relief. Crocuses can be planted in October or November before the first freeze. Plant them in well drained soil; they will rot with too much moisture. The individual plants are not very large, so consider planting them in groups to create a showy effect.

There are many species of crocus. Saffron crocus, *Crocus sativus*, has been cultivated for hundreds of years. The stigmas are harvested and used to flavor cooking. Stigmas are the top part of the pistil, the female portion of the flower, where pollen germinates. Each flower produces a very small amount of saffron, making it laborious to harvest. Though do note – saffron crocus is an autumn flowering crocus. Wait until the fall to harvest all those stigmas.



Stigma /nōd/: the part of the pistil where pollen germinates

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 no 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:

Asparagus



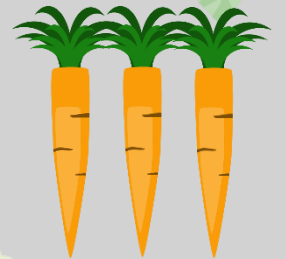
Avocado

Broccoli



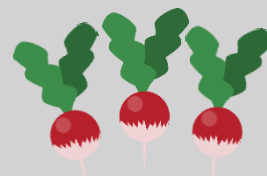
Brussels Sprouts

Carrots



Cauliflower

Lettuce



Radishes

Spinach



Upcoming Events

March 2, 10:00am to 12:00pm – Spring Garden Workshop

Pioneer Library System, 225 N Webster Ave, Norman, OK 73069

Start out with these tips for a lovely spring garden! Local garden enthusiasts, novice and experienced, are invited to join us as we highlight some basic topics of prepping for a glorious spring garden. Bring your questions and leave with helpful answers at this fun and informative event.

This workshop will feature guest speaker Courtney DeKalb-Myers, a Horticulture Educator from the Cleveland County OSU Extension Service, and a seed swap for trading between participants or to pick up seeds donated by local stores at no charge, while supplies last.

Registration is not required to attend.

March 23, 10:00am to 11:30am – Including Vegetables in Your Landscape

Cleveland County OSU Extension Office, Classroom “C”, 601 E. Robinson St., Norman, OK 73071

Foodscaping is growing food alongside your flowers within the landscape. You’ll be shown various vegetables and fruits that can be grown and see examples of different gardening zones around your house. This program is geared toward the new gardener. However, experienced gardeners might find the concept interesting and be able to incorporate some of the ideas into their home landscape. This program is presented by Kay Holder, a Master Gardener, a member of the American Horticulture Society, and the Oklahoma Iris Society.

This class is free and no reservations are required.

April 20, 10:00am to 2:00pm – Plant Party in the Garden!

Cleveland County Master Gardener Demo Garden, Cleveland Fairgrounds, 601 E. Robinson St., Norman, OK 73071

Join the Cleveland County Master Gardeners for their annual plant sale! Come shop for beautiful annuals, hardy perennials, and tasty edible plants while supporting this local volunteer organization.

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.

