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**UW**  
**Extension**  
Cooperative Extension  
Eau Claire County

**March  
2014**

### Inside this issue:

**How Does Oak  
Wilt Spread?** 2

**Getting Started  
with Herb  
Gardening** 3

**Gardening Tips** 4

**Upcoming Events** 6

# Green Pages



A newsletter for people interested in horticulture and  
natural resources in Western Wisconsin

## FROM THE DESK OF THE HORTICULTURE EDUCATOR

Upcoming opportunities to learn from the Horticulture Educator

### April 15—6:30PM **Altoona Public Library**

Vegetable Gardening Basics will cover soil amendment, what to plant and when, and weed management for vegetable gardens.

### June 13—1pm-5pm Traveling Plant Clinic at **Augusta Memorial Public Library**

Erin LaFaive will be on site to provide assistance with plant, disease, and insect identification.

### Sept. 8—1pm-5pm Traveling Plant Clinic at **Augusta Memorial Public Library**

Erin LaFaive will be on site to provide assistance with plant, disease, and insect identification.

### October 16—6:30PM **Altoona Public Library**

Composting and Lasagna Gardening

This presentation will provide information on how to create compost from common household kitchen scraps and yard waste. The same techniques to composting can be applied to a type of gardening called lasagna gardens.

### April until October —**Plant Clinic Hours**, weekdays and times *To be determined*

Erin LaFaive will be on site to provide assistance with plant, disease, and insect identification.

### June 23 until August 6—9:00AM-10:00AM **Summer Youth Gardening Program**

Mondays, North River Front Park

Tuesdays, McDonough Park

Wednesdays, North River Front Park

Youth learn about gardening and how to make nutritious snacks with fruits and vegetables.

Please contact me if you would like further  
information. [Erin.lafaive@co.eau-claire.wi.us](mailto:Erin.lafaive@co.eau-claire.wi.us)

*Erin LaFaive*

# How Does Oak Wilt Spread?

Oak wilt spreads both above and below ground.

## Underground

Most oak wilt moves from diseased trees to healthy trees through roots that have become interconnected (root grafts). Most root grafts form between oaks of the same species; grafts between red and white oaks are very rare. In general, red oak roots graft more than white oak roots.

## Overland

Oak wilt can also spread above ground by sap-feeding beetles called picnic or nitidulid beetles.

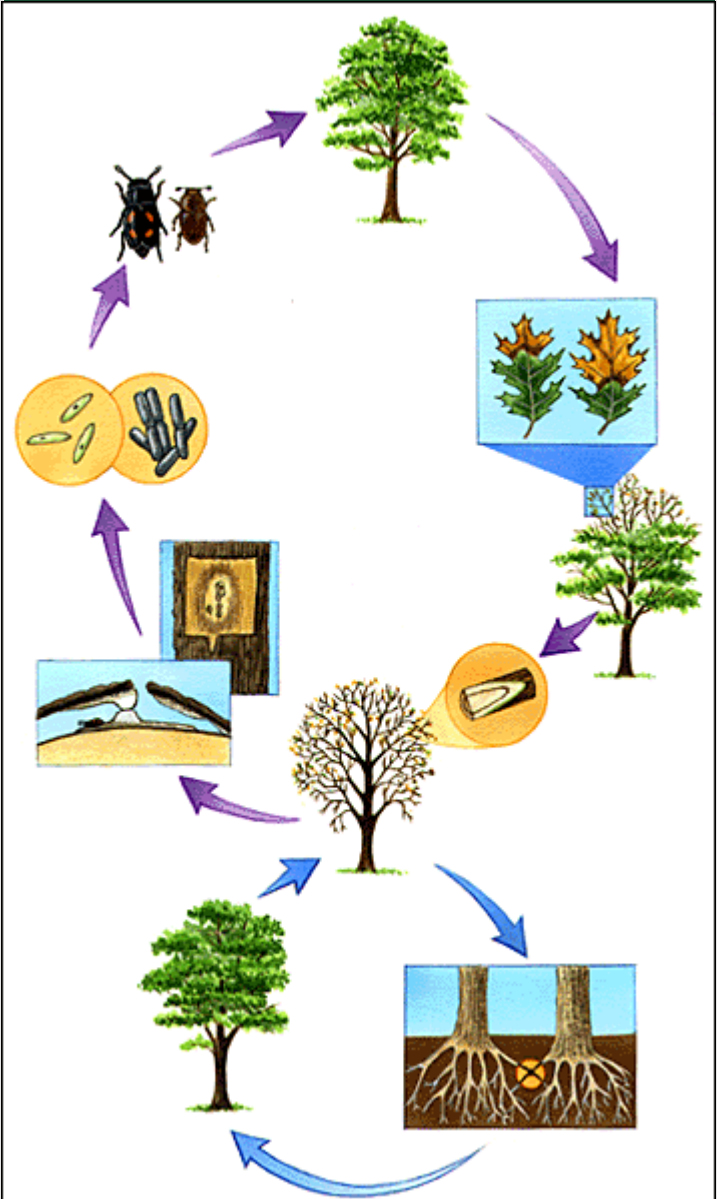


In the spring, fungal mats (small masses of the fungus *Ceratocystis fagacearum*) develop under the bark of some trees that have died from oak wilt the year before. These mats force the bark to crack open. The fungus produces a sweet odor that attracts sap-feeding beetles to the mats. The beetles then fly to healthier oaks to feed on sap flowing from fresh wounds, carrying the fungus on them and thus infecting healthy trees.

Oak wilt also spreads when firewood or logs from infected trees with fungal mats are moved. Fungal mats hide easily in firewood and often go unnoticed.

## Additional Resources:

1. How Infection Occurs: The Disease Cycle of Oak Wilt [tiny.cc/x80zbx](http://tiny.cc/x80zbx)
2. Are you thinking of building on a wooded lot? Protect your trees from oak wilt. [tiny.cc/690zbx](http://tiny.cc/690zbx)
3. Oak Wilt Management—What Are the Options? [tiny.cc/xa1zbx](http://tiny.cc/xa1zbx)



**Upper pathway.** Long distance spread of oak wilt occurs when nitidulid beetles carry spores of the fungus from spore mats on infected trees to wounds on healthy trees, causing infection and death of the tree. Time from infection to mortality may be very short for red oaks and Texas live oak, or many years for members of the white oak group.

**Lower pathway.** Local spread of oak wilt occurs when the fungus travels through the interconnected roots of infected and healthy trees.

Pictures from : *How Infection Occurs: The Disease Cycle of Oak Wilt* [tiny.cc/x80zbx](http://tiny.cc/x80zbx)



# Getting Started with Herb Gardening

"How do I start a herb garden?"

"Just like you would start a vegetable or flower garden."

I'd say the difference is herbs can be incorporated into existing flower and vegetable gardens as well as many garden designs to make strictly an herb garden. Some herbs have interesting leaves that increase the visual interest of gardens. Examples include:

- dill (*Anethum graveolens*)
- chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*)
- lemon grass (*Cymbopogon citratus*)

Some herbs are good planted on the borders of gardens because they grow a few inches high and spread out along the ground filling in spaces particularly types of thyme (*Thymus spp.*) and oregano (*Origanum spp.*).

Along walk ways and other paths it's nice to plant fragrant herbs at the border so when you brush past them their fragrance fills the air. Fragrant herbs include:

- Anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)
- Lavender (*Lavandula spp.*)
- lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*)
- rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

Herbs can add color to a vegetable garden. The follow are considered herbs because the flowers are edible.

- Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*)
- Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*)
- Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*)
- Borage (*Borago officinalis*)
- Oxeye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*)
- Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)
- Scented geranium (*Pelargonium spp.*)

Herbs can be enjoyed for visual interest, flavor, scents, or all of the above!



Foto: Teruna Hovland Ljone



## Gardening Tips

Sharon Morrissey, Consumer Horticulture Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension in Milwaukee Co.

### First Week

Take bulbs out of cold storage for forcing as soon as they have had a long enough cold period. The smaller bulbs like hyacinth and crocus only need 8 weeks of cold while tulips and daffodils need 12 - 14. Paper white narcissus do not require this chilling so can still be purchased and potted up to grow and bloom yet this spring.



Tender bulbs of tuberous begonias, caladiums, dahlias, and canna lilies can be potted up in well-drained soil rich in organic matter. Discard any that have rotted in storage.

If you have been storing geraniums in cool, dark conditions, its time to pot them up, cut them back and start watering again.



Cut back geraniums and coleus that you have kept growing indoors through the winter to only a few buds. This will stimulate new growth and a fuller plant by the time summer arrives.

The longer days and shorter nights now will stimulate houseplants to grow more rapidly again so you may resume fertilizing. Use fertilizers at only half-strength and only every other watering. If March is cloudy plants will still use less water and therefore less fertilizer.

Continue feeding your holiday plants like Christmas and Thanksgiving cacti, poinsettias, cyclamen, azalea and amaryllis. After flowering they start actively growing again and therefore need more nutrients.

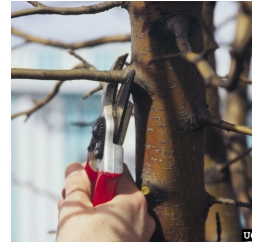


### Second Week

The end of the dormant season is the best time to prune almost all trees and shrubs. Pines are about the only

exception. Let their new growth expand until young needles are half of full size before pruning.

Spring flowering shrubs can be pruned now, too, unless you can't stand losing the flower buds on the stems you are removing.



Branches cut from spring flowering shrubs and fruit trees can be brought in and put in warm water to force them into bloom.

Do not use tree wound dressing or paint on pruning cuts. These can actually slow the healing process.

Elm, maple, birch, and black walnut ooze sap when pruned in the spring due to water pressure from the moist soil. It will not harm the plant but you can prune these in early summer or late fall instead if you are bothered by it.



Some insect pests of trees and shrubs are best controlled by spraying with dormant oil. This includes scale insects of pine, lilac, and euonymus and many of the gall-forming insects. These insects reside on stems or needles and are smothered by the oil. Galls are mostly a cosmetic problem but scales can weaken plants. Check weather forecasts to be sure temperatures will stay above freezing for 8 - 12 hours after spraying to avoid damaging stems and needles.

Prune out and burn or bury the brown, shriveled "witches-brooms" on honeysuckle. The leaf-folding aphid that causes these overwinters in these growths. They feed on new growth as soon as the buds break in the spring. This one is hard to control since untreated honeysuckles are everywhere. This may be a good time to consider replacing honeysuckles with less invasive plants with



*(Continued on page 5)*





## Gardening Tips

Sharon Morrissey, Consumer Horticulture Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension in Milwaukee Co.

fewer pest problems.

### Third Week

Make St. Patrick's Day a floral holiday with shamrocks and other assorted foliage plants. Kids get a kick out of making their own "Irish" carnations by using white carnations and a vase of green food coloring and water. At the same time they learn that plants suck water up and move it through the whole plant.



Start planning the vegetable garden. Be sure to include your children or grandchildren in the process this year.

Seeds of the following annual flowers can be started indoors: ageratum, wax begonia, browallia, dianthus and carnation, dusty miller, impatiens, larkspur, lobelia, dwarf marigold, nierenbergia, pansy, petunia, moss rose, snapdragons, and stocks. Be sure to use a sterile seed starting medium, supplemental lighting, and bottom heat for best results. Different species also have different requirements for light or darkness during germination. Look up the varieties you have on the seed packet, in a seed catalog or a good reference book.



Tops of onions seeded last month should be clipped to keep them at about 4 inches. This diverts energy to bulb growth.

### Fourth Week

Sow seeds indoors for the following vegetables: broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, eggplant, and head lettuce. Sow seeds indoors for the following flowers: alyssum, verbena, calendula, celosia, coleus, dahlia, phlox, and salvia.



Be mindful of warm days when the sun can cause heat to build-up under rose cones, cold frames, and in other plant protection systems. However, avoid removing mulches prematurely from plants with tender new tissue forming. Examine lawn areas where water may have pooled or snow cover lingered. Snow mold fungus may develop in these areas. Also look for meadow mouse tunnels in the browned grass. Both can be improved by roughing up the affected area with a rake to encourage the adjacent healthy grass plants to fill in.



Take your lawnmower in for servicing to avoid the rush at the repair shop on that first nice weekend of April. Get it tuned up, the oil changed, and tighten all bolts. At the very least, get the blade sharpened.



On nice days, go outside and turn the compost pile. This will get it "cooking" again. Hopefully, it will also help you resist the urge to start working the soil too soon.

During inclement weather, clean-up and sharpen garden tools and prepare other gardening equipment for the busy months ahead. Inventory pesticides, fertilizers, bags of potting soil and amendments.

# THINK SPRING!

## Upcoming Events - Cont.



**Beauty of Spring Basket --  
Early Session & Late Session**  
March 10 | 1 until 5 pm  
(Early Sessions) &  
5:30 until 9:30 pm (Late  
Session) | Wise Nature  
Center

\$35 for Friends, \$40 for Nonmembers

**20 spots available for each session**

This unique basket is named the beauty of spring because it is perfect to hold a bouquet of tulips. This basket starts on an oblong, wooden base with several rows of chase weaving. The sides are woven in a continuous twill weave. You can choose to weave your basket with straight sides or give it a little shape which the instructor will show you how to do.

**Please bring the following supplies to class : bucket, pencil, sharp pointed scissors, ruler, towel and spray water bottle.**

**\*Registration and full payment required by**



**Feb. 21, 2014 Bluebird  
Program**

March 22 | 9:30 until 11:30  
am | Wise Nature Center  
\$5 Adult / \$3 Child for  
Friends, \$8 Adult / \$4 Child  
for Nonmembers

**20 spots available.**

Join a staff naturalist to learn how to attract bluebirds to your yard. The slide program and discussion will provide information on the natural history, behavior and habitat requirements of bluebirds, as well as tips on building, placing and monitoring bluebird houses. (Additional \$5 charge per bluebird house kit.)

**Please request number of houses needed when you register for class.**

**Registration and full payment required by March 19.**

**Beaver Creek Reserve**

S1 County Road K | Fall Creek, WI 54742  
715.877.2212 | [bcr@beavercreekreserve.org](mailto:bcr@beavercreekreserve.org)

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FREE online at: [eauclaire.uwex.edu/horticulture-2](http://eauclaire.uwex.edu/horticulture-2)

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