Going online - it might be the fastest easiest way to look for an answer. But is it the right answer? One of the roles of a trained and certified Extension Master Gardener is to help disseminate researched based information to the community, to help neighbors find the best solution to their problem, and teach. There is a lot of information on the worldwide web and often many of the gardening “tips” are not rooted in fact or research.

Carol Reese, UT Extension Area Specialist in Horticulture has a great article that appeared in a January issue of the Jackson (TN) Sun newspaper you can find the article at http://www.jacksonsun.com/story/news/local/2018/01/18/show-me-facts-dont-gullible-gardener/1043574001/


Carol also mentions a pod-cast with Dr. Linda Chalker-Scott, Extension Horticulturist and Associate Professor, Washington State University. You can find more articles by Dr. Chalker-Scott, at her website https://puyallup.wsu.edu/lcs/.

So what is the best way to find reliable science/research based information?

1) Know your source – where is the information coming from? Cooperative Extension sites, and .gov (government sites) are reliable sites. There are others good sources available but you need to know the source.

2) Get a second option, and maybe a third. In other words double check the information.

3) If it sounds too good to be true…. Common sense can go a long way.

A great place to start your search is https://extension.tennessee.edu/Pages/ANR-CED-Residential-and-Consumer-Horticulture.aspx or you can search the https://eXtension.org site which links all the Cooperative Extension sites into one searchable location. When using the eXtension site look for articles from neighboring states, which have a similar climate and growing season.

Oh, by the way the link to Dr. Chalker-Scott’s web site will lead to links for a series of pod-casts “The Informed Gardener” they can count as CEUs.
Dates for 2018

- **March Spring Workshop** March 22 Details coming – Tree Fruits as topic March 2018
- **2018 Tennessee Extension Master Gardener State Conference** April 5-6-7, 2018 Montgomery Bell State Park. More information to come as sessions and events are scheduled
- **2018 Spring Flower and Garden Show Cumberland County Master Gardeners** April 27-28, 2018 Crossville, TN "Creative Containers ... Thinking Outside of the Box" [http://www.ccmga.org/FGS_2018.html](http://www.ccmga.org/FGS_2018.html)
- **SVMG Quarterly Meeting** April 28, 2018, 9:00 AM, Pikeville tentative location UT – TSU Extension Bledsoe County Office moved to avoid Valley Fest
- **Valley Fest** May 5-6, 2018, Dunlap TN
- **Steak and Potatoes Field Day** – August 7, 2018, 8:00AM Crossville
- **SVMG Quarterly Meeting and Tomato Tasting** August 11, 2018, 9:00 AM – meeting 10:00 AM, Tasting Pikeville (moved to avoid Yard Sale)
- **10th Annual Fall Gardeners' Festival** August 28th, 2018 UT Gardens Crossville, Plateau Research & Education Center
- **SVMG Quarterly Meeting** November 3, 2018, 9:00 AM Dunlap

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2018 All Bugs Good and Bad Webinar Series

- **March 2, 2018** Title **Misidentified Pests in the Landscape**
  Presented by Dr. Erfan Vafaie, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
- **April 6, 2018** Title **Argentine Ants and Others**
  Presented by Dr. Eric Benson, Clemson University
- **May 4, 2018** Title **Everything You Must Know About Fleas**
  Presented by TBA
- **June 1, 2018** Title **Attracting Pollinators to Our Yards**
  Presented by Elizabeth "Wizzie" Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
- **August 3, 2018** Title **Bees, Wasps, and Hornets, Oh My!**
  Presented by TBA
- **September 7, 2018** Title **Winterizing Your Home to Keep Out Pests**
  Presented by Janet Hurley, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
- **October 5, 2018** Title **Structural Misidentified Pests**
  Presented by Molly Keck, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
- **November 2, 2018** Title **Lice, Scabies, and Mites**
  Presented by Dr. Nancy Hinkle, University of Georgia
- **December 1, 2018** Title **Pantry Pests**
  Presented by Dr. Dan Suiter, Extension Entomologist, UGA Extension
March Garden Tips

Climbing roses should not be pruned until after their first flush of growth. Now is a good time to tie the canes to a support before they flush out with spring growth.

Evaluate your vegetable garden plans. Often a smaller garden with fewer weeds and insects will give you more produce.

When night temperatures get above 40 degrees feed your pansies with a water-soluble fertilizer such as 20-20-20.

Apply a pre-emergence herbicide to your lawn if you have had crabgrass and other summer weeds in the past. Timing is important and a good indicator when to apply is it just as forsythia begins to show some color. Sow nasturtiums this month. Soak seed overnight in water. Cover with ¾ inch soil.

March is a good time to shop for and add lungwort (Pulmonaria) and Lenten rose (Helleborus) to your garden. Lungworts are early flowering shade perennials that often struggle in the heat and humidity of our Tennessee climate, so be aware that Pulmonaria longifolia and its cultivars and hybrids are much more durable. Good selections are 'Roy Davidson,' 'E. B. Anderson,' 'Trevi Fountain' and my favorite for its vigor and heat tolerance, 'Diana Claire.'

March is an ideal time to cut back the following garden plants:

- **Miscanthus** (maiden grass), **Pennisetum** (fountain grass), **Muhlenbergia** (muhly grass) and
- **Nassella** (Mexican feather grass) to 3 inches to 6 inches above the ground.
- **Hydrangea arborescens** 'Annabelle' flowers on new wood. To encourage stronger stem and tidy appearance, cut stem anywhere from 3 to 12 inches from the ground. If you have several plants, try them at different heights to determine what works best for you.
- **Liriope** (Monkey grass) before new growth appears. Use a string trimmer for larger areas.
- **Hardy fern** (particularly evergreen forms) before new growth appears.
- **Epimedium** (barrenwort) flowers early so don't delay.
- **Acorus** (sweet flag) and **Carex** only if the winter has browned the foliage.
- Prune out older branches on **Cornus sericea** and **Cornus sanguinea** (red twig dogwood) to encourage new growth with bright colored bark.
- Knock Out roses or other shrub roses that have gotten bigger than you desire. In mid-to-late March cut well established plants back 2 to 3 feet shorter than the height you desire them to reach. In cooler parts of the state, wait until early April.
- Summer-flowering **Spirea japonica** are best cut back before the new growth appears and you won't even know it come spring. A few common cultivars are 'Gold Mound,' 'Magic Carpet' and 'Gold Flame.'
- Older branches on **Callicarpa** (beautyberry) to encourage new growth that produces more berries.
- Rejuvenate overgrown Nandina by cutting back to a few inches on the outside, leaving taller canes in the center, staggering the heights.
- Limb-up and remove cross branches on trees and tree-type crapemyrtles as needed.
- Never top trees or crapemyrtles. For more information on tree topping click here or proper pruning tips on crapemyrtles click here.
- Look closely at grafted plants and remove all growth below the graft, paying close attention to commonly grafted plants like witchhazels, contorted filberts, weeping cherries, weeping mulberries, dogwoods, fruit trees, crabapples, grafted rose, and Japanese maples.

"Gardening requires lots of water - most of it in the form of perspiration." - Lou Erickson
February: Alleghany Viburnum

A Beautiful Shrub with Four-Season Interest

Submitted by Joellen Dimond, UT Extension Tipton County

The Alleghany viburnum, known scientifically as Viburnum xrhitydophylloides ‘Alleghany’, is a large, robust semi-evergreen shrub that is worthy of adding to any landscape. It has dark, leathery, green leaves that are resistant to bacterial leaf spot. The stiff branching habit is softened by the tomentose, or woolly gray-brown stems and under sides of leaves. This woolly plant can be irritating to skin, so wear gloves when pruning. It is best left to develop its 10 to 15 foot vigorous, dense habit naturally. The foliage makes an excellent coarse-textured plant for screens or large areas. Mixing with other plants of different textures creates an impressive-looking landscape.

Alleghany viburnum leaves turn purple in the winter and may persist even when temperatures reach into the single digits with ice and snow. White flowers three to four inches in diameter appear in spring. Their display on branch tips looks gorgeous against the dark green foliage.

Alleghany viburnum is one of several cultivars originally produced by crossing Viburnum rhytidophyllum and Viburnum lantana in 1925 in the Netherlands. Alleghany was developed in the U.S. and released in 1966. It is adaptable to most soils; however, it does not like wet soil. Sun to part shade sites are preferred. Flowers are more plentiful when the shrub has sufficient sunlight. Red, ripening to black, fruit will appear in August through September. Birds are attracted to these drupes, but fruit production requires cross-pollination. Use another cultivar resulting from the cross, or use one of the parent species, Viburnum rhytidophyllum or Viburnum lantana.

You can see a specimen of Alleghany viburnum at the UT Gardens, Knoxville.

Once established, Alleghany viburnum is drought tolerant and does not have insect or disease problems. It transplants easily and is trouble free to maintain. Its four-seasons of interest include beautiful foliage, flowers and fruit, which add up to one nice shrub for the landscape.
Get Your Financial House in Order

Best Practices for Personal Financial Record Keeping

By: Ann A. Berry, Professor and Consumer Economics Specialist, UT Extension,

The beginning of the year is a great time for many people to take stock of their financial situations. Many people set resolutions to save more, give more, or use credit cards less but for 2018, University of Tennessee Extension consumer economist Ann A. Berry suggests making a resolution to organize financial records and “get your financial house in order.”

According to Berry, “Debit card receipts, ATM receipts, credit card bills, bank statements and canceled checks all document where your money goes. But they take up precious space in homes, and keeping all of these records indefinitely can be unnecessary.”

Berry continues, “Developing a plan for managing financial paperwork is vital. This plan should prioritize keeping only those paper documents that are necessary, and keeping them only for the required length of time as well.” Records that would be difficult to replace should be kept in a fireproof home safe or safe deposit box. Being able to access records quickly should also be a priority, so be sure to keep files organized, either physically or electronically.

One of the most important reasons for keeping financial records organized is that federal tax rules require citizens to have receipts and other tax return support documentation for as long as the IRS can assess additional tax. According to FDIC tax policy managers, this is up to three years from the date you file your return, but it can be six years if the IRS suspects you underreported your income by more than 25 percent.

Berry outlines a reasonable financial record retention schedule below:

- Canceled checks that have no tax or other long-term purposes can be destroyed after a year. File those that support tax returns, such as charitable contributions or tax payments, keeping them for at least seven years. File and keep indefinitely any canceled checks and related receipts or documents for a home purchase or sale, renovations or other improvements to property you own. Also keep documentation for any non-deductible contributions to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) indefinitely.
- ATM, deposit, credit card and debit card receipts should be saved until the transaction appears on your statement and you have verified the accuracy of the information. Businesses sometimes ask if you want a paper or electronic receipt, as electronic receipts (including a cell phone picture of the receipt) are sufficient for this purpose.
- Credit card and bank account statements should be saved for one year if they have no tax or other long-term significance, but file and keep the rest for up to seven years.
- Credit card contracts and other loan agreements should be kept as long as the account is active, in case you have a dispute with your lender over the terms of your contract.
- Documentation of your purchase or sale of stocks, bonds and other investments should be retained while you own the investment and then seven years after that. Berry recommends these records be kept in a safe deposit box.

Berry also suggests investing in a quality crosscut shredder, and says bargains on these machines can be found at many types of stores this time of year. “A crosscut shredder slices the paper both horizontally and vertically, turning the documents into small pieces that are harder to put back together. This can protect you from identity theft, which costs victims an average of $1,343, much more than the cost of a shredder,” she said.

Records that should be shredded, not just discarded include:

- Any documents with your social security number, bank account number or credit card number
- Any documents with your signature as identity thieves could use it to falsify other documents
- Employer pay stubs
- Monthly bills
- Expired credit cards, driver’s licenses or other identification cards
- Prescreened credit card offers
- Explanations of benefits from medical, dental or vision insurers
- Tax forms that are more than seven years old
- Any documents with a password or PIN
- Any other documents with personal information you would not want a stranger to see to avoid the possibility of someone stealing your identity or accessing your accounts.

Purchasing a fireproof safe to prevent document loss in the case of a disaster is also an important step for Tennesseans, cautions Berry. These can be purchased fairly inexpensively and are well-worth the initial investment to protect both your important documents and your peace of mind. Fireproof safes will protect documents for most fires, floods and tornadoes.

See UT Extension Publication W223 for more information.
The Extension Master Gardener Program is a program of the University of Tennessee Extension. For more information contact:

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Useful links
Tennessee Extension Master Gardening Program
https://extension.tennessee.edu/MasterGardener

Reporting hours On-line
mastergardener.tennessee.edu/tmg_resources

TMG Volunteer Handbook
https://extension.tennessee.edu/MasterGardener/Documents/W099-%20Volunteer.%20November.pdf

Short Rows: How to Read a Seed Catalog

Basic terms found in a seed catalog:
Open Pollinated (OP): This is a variety that will come true from seed. You can save seed from your plants from year to year.
Hybrid, F1 Hybrid, or X in the name: This is a cross between two pure-bred parents. They will not reproduce true from seed.
Height: How tall the plant will be. Very important when deciding where to plant.
Days to bloom or bloom season: How long it will take a plant to flower. This is based on the company’s trials and your results may vary depending on climate, soil etc.
Days to harvest: when will you get a harvest again this may vary.
Disease Resistance: The term "disease resistant" is relatively meaningless if they don’t know what disease are meant. Look for specifics, like VFN for tomatoes, which means resistant to verticillium and fusarium wilts and nematodes.
Start Indoors: These are seeds that need to be started under lights, or in a greenhouse before the last frost date. Think about how much seed starting space you have before buying lots of these.
Direct Sow: These are seeds that can go straight into the ground. Check for the recommended planting date.
Determinate/Indeterminate: Describe tomato plants. Determinate plants grow to a certain size, fruit all at once, and stop growing. Indeterminate plants are more vining and continue to grow and fruit until frost.
Number of Seeds: How many seeds are you getting? Some catalogs will even tell you how much area or how many feet of row a packet will plant.
Light Requirements: Does the plant need sun? Or is it shade-tolerant?
Special Cultural Requirements: Some varieties need high or low soil pH. Some prefer dry soils, some like it damp. Some tall plants are fine on their own, others need staking.
Scientific Name: This is really important for flowers and herbs. With all those common names out there, it’s often hard to tell what the plant actually is.
Good catalogs give the scientific name.

Adapted from
Things they need
Food – right type varies with species so do your homework
Water – about an inch in a pan works great – keep it clean
Shelter – from houses to natural hiding places
Space – the right thing in the right place

Native Plants
Need a list of native plants for landscaping [http://www.tneppc.org/pages/landscaping#native_plants](http://www.tneppc.org/pages/landscaping#native_plants)

Gardening for the birds

Deciduous Trees
- Mulberries (Morus species)
- Dogwoods (Cornus florida and other species)
- Crab Apples (Malus species)
- Serviceberries (Amelanchier species)

Coniferous Trees
- Red Cedar (Juniperus virginiana)
- Spruces (Picea species)

Shrubs and Vines
- Staghorn Sumac (Rhus typhina)

- Northern Bayberry (Myrica pensylvanica)
- Viburnums (Viburnum species)
- Virginia Creeper (Parthenocissus quinquefolia)
- Wild Grapes (Vitis species)

Herbaceous Plants
- sunflowers
- salvia
- foxglove morning glory
- bee balm
Food preferences of birds common to backyard feeders in Tennessee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Preferred Food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mourning doves</td>
<td>black oil-type sunflower seeds, white proso millet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woodpeckers, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches</td>
<td>black oil-type sunflower seeds, cracked nuts, shelled and broken peanuts, bread crumbs, suet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue jay</td>
<td>sunflower seeds (all types), peanuts, cracked nuts and corn, suet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mockingbirds, brown thrashers, robins, thrushes, catbirds</td>
<td>cut apples, oranges, raisins and bread crumbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cardinals</td>
<td>sunflower seeds (all types), cracked corn, shelled and broken peanuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern towhees</td>
<td>white proso millet, sunflower seeds (all types), cracked corn, and shelled and broken peanuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evening grosbeak</td>
<td>sunflower seeds (all types), cracked corn, and shelled and broken peanuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goldfinches</td>
<td>niger thistle, hulled sunflower seeds, black oil-type sunflower seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>house finch</td>
<td>black oil-type sunflower seeds, niger thistle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purple finch</td>
<td>sunflower seeds (all types)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sparrows, juncos</td>
<td>white proso millet, black oil-type sunflower seeds, wheat, bread crumbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grackles</td>
<td>hulled sunflower seeds (all types)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Table 3. “Food preferences of birds common to backyard feeders in Tennessee.” Improving Your Backyard Wildlife Habitat [https://utextension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/PB1633.pdf](https://utextension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/PB1633.pdf)

List of web resources

Improving Your Backyard Wildlife Habitat [https://utextension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/PB1633.pdf](https://utextension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/PB1633.pdf)

Web sources used in presentation

Improving Your Backyard Wildlife Habitat [https://utextension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/PB1633.pdf](https://utextension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/PB1633.pdf)

www.birds.cornell.edu/citsci/take-action/2014/08/attract-birds-with-these-berry-bearing-plants-for-your-container-garden/

www.birds.cornell.edu/citsci/illustrated-answer/2014/08/does-it-matter-to-birds-which-berries-i-plant/

http://celebrateurbanbirds.org/learn/gardening/

http://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/?__hstc=161696355.12ee49dbd75ce8aff67761011c59eaea.1407932431705.1407932431705.1407932431705.1&__hssc=161696355.4.1407932431706&__hsfp=101138381


Types of Bird Seed a Quick Guide


http://feederwatch.org/learn/feeding-birds/