



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/gardening-harvesting-onions>

Note to online editors: A video to accompany this story is at https://youtu.be/g4f5irHCaUE?si=tku_UE9lfQ6gNooM

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In the Garden: When tops fall over, it's time to harvest onions

K-State horticulture expert says onions should be stored in a dry spot

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini says gardeners have no need to cry when looking for signs to harvest onions.

She said onions reach maturity when the tops begin to fall over; when at least one-half of the tops have fallen, it's time to harvest.

“Onions can be pulled or dug up, leaving the tops intact,” Domenghini said. “Hang the bunches, or spread them out, but ensure that they have good airflow and are out of direct sun in a warm location.”

Domenghini noted that it can take 2-4 weeks for the tops and necks of onions to dry completely. Then, cut the tops and roots to one-half inch from the bulb, and store bulbs in a container that allows air to circulate, such as a loose basket, crate or mesh bag, at 32-40 degrees F with low humidity.

“If the temperature is too warm, the onions will sprout,” Domenghini said. “If the room is too moist, roots will develop.”

More information on growing and harvesting onions is available in [a publication from the K-State Research and Extension bookstore](#).

Harvesting popular fruit

Blackberries and strawberries make the list of favorite fruits for many Kansas gardeners.

Blackberries should be harvested at peak maturity for best flavor. “They will not continue to ripen after harvest,” Domenghini said, “so wait until the blue-black fruit has lost its shine, leaving a duller surface.”

Blackberries should be harvested on a dry day during the cool hours. When the fruit is removed, the receptacle remains attached to the berry. Store freshly harvested blackberries in the refrigerator, unwashed. Blackberries should be harvested every 3-5 days depending on weather and the cultivar.

For more information, see the K-State Research and Extension publication titled, [Raspberries and Blackberries](#).

After harvesting strawberries, the beds should be prepped for the next season. Strawberry plants will develop fruit buds in the fall, so renovating the beds now is important to avoid disturbing the plants later, according to Domenghini.

Prepping strawberry beds includes removing weeds, mowing the plants to 2 inches tall, cultivating the soil and applying fertilizer.

More information on growing strawberries is available in [a publication also available from the K-State Research and Extension bookstore](#).

Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State’s Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a [weekly Horticulture Newsletter](#) with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens.

Interested persons can subscribe to the newsletter, as well as send their garden and yard-related questions to Domenghini at cdom@ksu.edu, or contact your [local K-State Research and Extension office](#).

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Sidebar: Question of the Week

Tomatoes: What can be done to stop Septoria leaf spot?

Septoria leaf spot is a common problem for tomato growers in Kansas. The best control is prevention, including crop rotation, mulching around tomato plants, and staking/caging plants.

Allowing good airflow is also important and can be encouraged by spacing plants, as recommended.

Gardeners who choose to use a fungicide need to start applying it before the problem takes over. Plants usually become susceptible when the fruit is about the size of a walnut. Fungicides need to be applied thoroughly on the top and bottom surface of the leaf; if it rains, the fungicide needs to be re-applied.

If you aren’t sure if you have a problem with Septoria leaf spot, your local extension agent can help you diagnose it.

-- Cynthia Domenghini, K-State horticulture expert, Cdom@ksu.edu

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story

Onions, https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/onions_MF761

Raspberries and Blackberries, https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/raspberries-and-blackberries_MF720

Strawberries, https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/strawberries_MF598.pdf

K-State Horticulture Newsletter, <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/horticulture-resource-center/horticulture-newsletter>

K-State Research and Extension statewide offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations>

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