

# Berries and winter interest

December has ushered in some seasonal winter weather with a few inches of snow and brisk temperatures. These are festive conditions to do some outdoor winter work. Cold but not too cold, is the ideal weather in my mind and it can be invigorating for animals and people alike. The sheep and the big dogs seem to prefer the cold, in fact, their playful frolicking is proof to me! And a clear blue sky on a chilly winter day can be even more beautiful with a little winter plant interest.

We all say we want winter interest but sometimes we forget about it once spring rolls around and we get excited about a new season. Have you selected things that will capture your eye in January? Take a walk about the garden or look out the window and tell yourself what you see; then take some notes. What window do you gaze out of the most and where, in that view, would a colorful tree or shrub make the most difference? Now, consider planting something with the best winter interest there is: berries. Berries come in all sorts of colors; and they will bring in wildlife to enjoy, as well.

From where I sit, I can



JENEEN WICHE

look out the window and see a line of colorful crabapples decorated with burgundy, red, orange and yellow berries. A red papa Cardinal stands out against today's snow cover and grey sky and enjoys a meal. This view brightens any dull winter mood. I have a love-hate relationship with crabapples because they send up so many water sprouts (suckers from the roots and along branches) but when they bloom in the spring and provide berry color (and bird food) in the winter they are redeemed.

On the north side of the house the Nandinas steal the show. Nandinas are under appreciated, I think. The common name "heavenly bamboo" suggests the nature of the stems and foliage but reveals little about the brilliant red panicles that top the shrub this time of the year. Clusters of red berries against the bamboo-like (and evergreen) foliage provide great winter interest. Each year I appreciate the landscape value of this plant a little more.

The American hollies in the corner of the yard have a similar effect. Their pyramidal shape and imposing stature just puts you in the holiday

spirit. The deep green, glossy foliage is the perfect canvas for an array of colorful berries. American holly cultivars come in red, orange and gold so you can add a mix of colors to the landscape. Be mindful, however, that female hollies provide the berries and a male must be in the vicinity to pollinate the females so there will always be one in the mix that doesn't provide a winter show...but know the important role he plays for those who do!

The deciduous hollies are situated in a mass planting in front of an evergreen backdrop. These hollies are rather nondescript during the growing season; small green leaves flag the twiggy clump of stems. Once the leaves drop the show begins because we are left with a twiggy clump covered in berries,

literally, from top to bottom. The berries of the deciduous holly persist through the winter the longest. Birds do not start to enjoy a meal until late winter, so we get the show a bit longer. These, too, are male and female. Some bloom early, mid and late season so select varieties accordingly, so you have a male and female that complement each other.

The nice thing about all of these plants is that they can be pruned a bit this time of the year. I have made some festive planters by simply sticking cuttings of holly, Nandina and evergreen trimmings in the soil that once sustained summer annuals. You don't need to buy a plant just make your own decorative arrangement out of winter trimmings from the garden.

## Marion County Farm Bureau earns third place in KFB awards

LOUISVILLE — Marion County Farm Bureau, led by Information Chair Steve Downs, earned third place in Kentucky Farm Bureau's (KFB) 2025 County Information Awards. The County Information Awards recognize the top three county Farm Bureaus for outstanding achievement in public information and media relations programs.

Marion County received third place for its consistent

local media outreach, comprehensive coverage of county events and thoughtful storytelling about Farm Bureau members and programs. From the county fair to scholarship presentations and farm safety initiatives, the county's communication efforts showcased the organization's leadership in promoting agriculture and community engagement throughout the year.

## SPRING

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both receiving a "B"; and Taylor Regional Hospital in Campbellsville and Baptist Health Hardin in Elizabethtown, both earning a "C".

The top five states for percentage of "A" hospitals are Utah, Virginia, New Jersey, Con-

necticut, and North Carolina, and for the fifth consecutive Safety Grade round, Utah ranked No. 1. There were no "A" hospitals in Iowa, North Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming.

To view the whole report, visit <https://www.leapfrog-group.org/news-events/leapfrog-group-announces-its-fall-2025-hospital-safety-grades>

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CASE # 25-P-00029

Mary Kay Clements and Thomas R. Dant of the estate of M. Clarice Dant have filed a final settlement and a hearing for confirmation and approval will be held on 01/21/2026 in the Marion County District Court. Any exceptions of objections to such settlement must be filed prior to that date.

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