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# Missouri Vegetable Growers Association NEWSLETTER

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## Seed Germination Problems

By Norman Kilmer

The spring started out wet this year just like it did last year. First, the soil did not dry out enough for you to get your seeds planted. Several times it will come close to being able to till, however, if you till while it is too wet it will be harder than normal for the rest of the growing season. Also, when it is too wet you get more weeds and foxtail grass which loves to grow in compacted soil with low flowing calcium.

Make sure the soil is not too wet. Check the soil temperature, if it is too cold or too warm some seeds will not germinate.

When you plant your early crops (lettuce, radishes, beets, peas or carrots, sweet corn, beans) some of the seeds have come up and some did not. The first thing you need to do is dig after the seeds to see what they look like. Are they still there, Is the seed still whole, does it have holes in it or is just the shell of the seed there or is the seed completely gone?

**Seeds completely gone:** If this is the case, something ate it. Before replanting, figure out how to control it.

**Seed has holes in it:** This is caused by seed corn maggot or maybe wireworms, both will eat out the inside of the seed and leave only the shell. If it only has a hole through it, wireworms cause it.

**Seed is still there but rotted:** This happens when the seeds are too old or the soil was too cold and damp. Some of the very sweet corn varieties need 70°F soil temperature or the seed will rot. Most beans seeds need a soil temperature of over 65°F or they will also rot before germinating.

If the soil stays wet and cold after you plant, they most likely will just rot in the ground before germinating. Tender seeds like carrots do not like this. Planting radishes with them helps them push through the crusted soil. This is one reason growers are putting up high tunnels to help control the soil temperature and moisture.

When your seeds do not germinate, find out why. Dig after the seed. See what it looks like. Is there a problem with the seed or something else? Was the soil the right temperature? Was the soil too wet or too dry?

Having been in the seed business for over 30 years, I have seen a lot of different problems of why a seed does not germinate. It is not always the seeds fault.





## Free Water Testing and Cost Share Funding for GAPS Audits

Patrick Byers  
Horticulture Field Specialist  
Webster County MU Extension Office

Kansas State University and the University of Missouri continue to offer free microbial water testing to all fruit and vegetable growers in KS and MO, even in light of the Covid19 situation. We can provide this free testing until our generous grant funding from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (grant 2019-70020-30358) runs out. For **Missouri growers**, water sample kits can be obtained from most local public health departments in Missouri, as well as in some other locations throughout Missouri. Samples can be returned to most local public health departments in Missouri (on ice, within 24 hours of taking the sample). Due to the COVID-19 situation, please contact your local public health department before going to their office to pick up bottles or drop off samples to confirm their procedures and hours of operation. More information on collecting water samples and how to submit them in Missouri is available at

<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/produce/testing.html>.

For a limited time, MU Extension has USDA GAPs cost share funding available for Missouri produce growers, which will pay for up to half the cost of USDA GAP certification. The funding can be used for GAPs audits occurring between November 1, 2019 and October 31, 2021.

MU Extension can also provide technical assistance to farmers in preparing for the GAPs audit. More information on the GAPs cost share opportunity is at

<https://extension2.missouri.edu/programs/food-safety/produce-safety-for-growers>



## Don't Forget Your MVGA membership!

### 2020 Membership levels

- Student - \$5
- Basic - \$20
- Electronic - \$30
- Full - \$55
- Premier - \$60
- Corporate - \$110
- Lifetime - \$360

For membership application go to:

<http://www.moveg growers.org/>

or Contact Debbie Klindworth,  
Membership Manager  
573-378-5358



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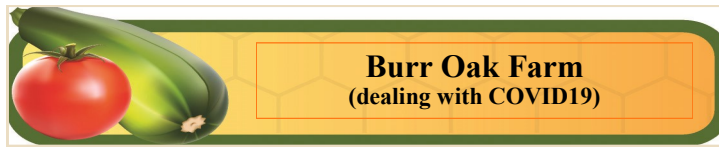


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MVGA is the sponsor of the Missouri FFA Vegetable Production Proficiency Award



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Burr Oak Farm is a very small market farm growing on less than an acre. We have 3 high tunnels (yes, all MCS Tough) The only thing we grow outside is peppers, pumpkins, watermelon and cantaloupe and part of our flowers. We only try to grow what we can sell at one of the markets we go to. For the first time last winter we attempted two private markets on a bi weekly basis at two different retirement villages, taking baked goods, our farm raised, certified processed meats, and fresh eggs and some crafts.

At our last market on the first Wednesday in March, we were a bit surprised that they allowed us to come and could see it was coming to a close. At that time, we told customers that if and when it shut down we would do a delivery route. What we did not anticipate was that the facility would not even let apartment residents walk out to the street and take a bag from us OR let us walk up to their door and leave them a bag. When that happened the next week, we immediately used social media and boosted a post to a large area from Independence to the Junction of Hwy 13 and I-70 and south to Warrensburg, telling about our delivery route. Within 2 weeks we were making about 20 deliveries a week, but all on one day. Folks would place their order the day before and pay ahead so we were not handling money both for sanitary and time reasons. Deliveries were to pre set public places, not homes.

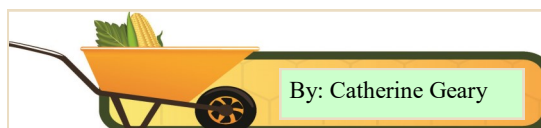
Lafayette County opened up their markets on schedule with few restrictions at the end of April and people traveled 30-40 miles to come until Jackson County opened up, which was just a couple of weeks ago.

We constantly have reminded folks that what they get in the store has been handled by dozens of hands. Our products have been handled by the person picking it and us.

Blue Springs, in Jackson County, opened up the last Saturday in May and at that time we stopped the delivery route, but we anticipate starting it up again this fall.

Our sales so far this year are up about 220%. The first Blue Springs Market was a drive through. Vendors and customers dislike them. They are very burdensome. Again, we went proactive. We made up very simple flyers with just our products and prices in black and white and I stood at the entrance and handed one out to each car. Our booth was on the back side of the loop. Out of about 130 cars, we had 92 sales and sold about 3X what any other vendor did. Anyone could have done what we did. No one else did. Might also mention we ran out of flyers toward the end so at least 10-15 cars never got one.

We have found that using social media but still developing a personal relationship with the customer and showing them we want to serve them with quality products has gained us a good reputation which equals a good business.



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### **In This Issue**

- **Seed Germination Problems**
  - **Check out our website**
- **Free water Testing and Cost Share Funding for GAPS Audit**
  - **Burr Oak Farm COVID19**