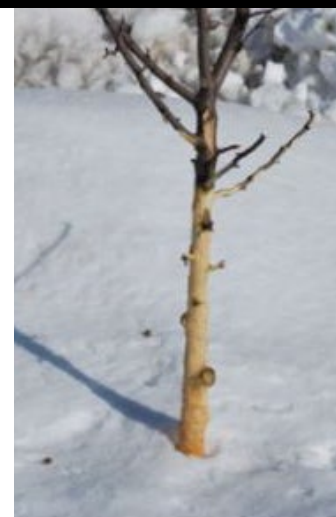


## Fall/Winter Fruit Pests

There are a few tasks we can do now to help our fruit perform well next season. Sanitation, removing dropped leaves and fruit from the ground around our fruit plantings helps reduce the overwintering of some diseases. For the same reason, make sure to remove mummy fruit still attached to branches or vines.

A couple of animals that can become serious fruit pests in winter are voles and rabbits. Both can damage, or even kill, fruit trees and blueberries by chewing bark from the lower portions of the trunk and portions of the roots. If the grass has grown tall in the orchard, cut it. Shorter grass offers less cover to the voles and rabbits and makes the orchard less inviting. If you've mulched your trees, then make sure to pull the mulch back and leave a bare soil ring about six inches in diameter to prevent voles from tunneling up to the trunk.



Rabbit feeding damage on a crabapple. Image from Iowa State.

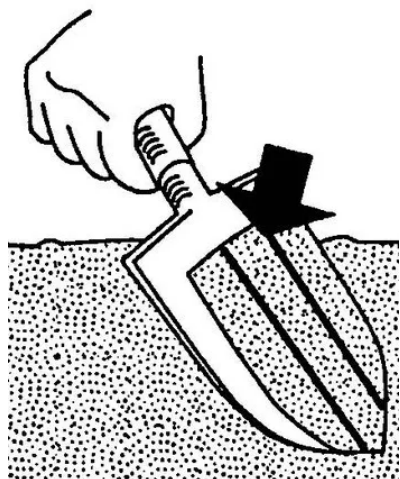


You can use rodent guards to protect your trees. Commercial plastic guards are available or you can make your own from quarter inch hardware cloth. Guards must encircle the trunk completely and should be 18 inches tall. If using a guard that wraps directly in contact with the trunk, take care to remove these in spring. Free standing wire guards such as depicted in the picture to the left can remain in place for a period of time so long as they are removed before the trunk grows large enough to be restricted by the wire.

More information can be found in [Managing Voles in New Hampshire Orchards and Highbush Blueberries](#); [Video: Blueberry Vole Control](#)

**Thinking about feeding the birds this winter? Check out [Winter Bird Feeding: The Basics](#) for in depth information.**

## Soil Testing for Next Year's Garden

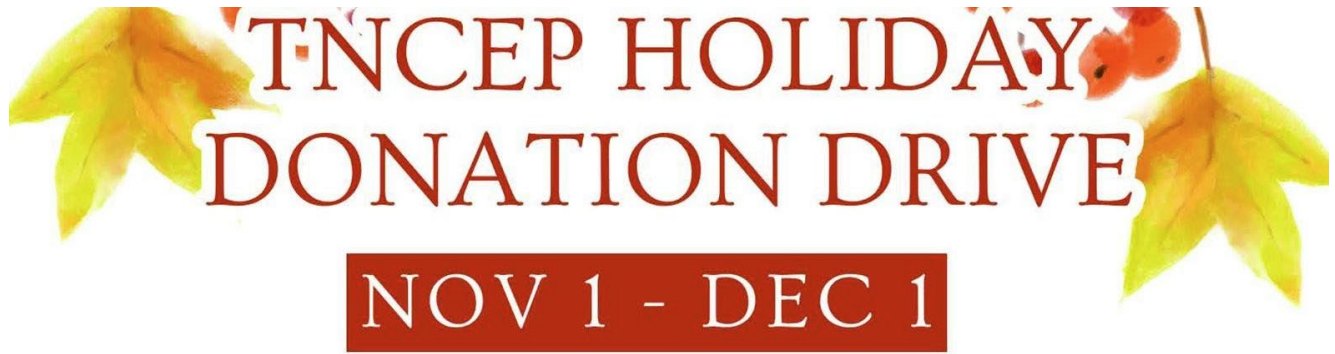


Fall is a great time to take a soil test to get next year's garden off to its best start. Knowing what nutrients are in your soil and the soil pH can allow you to use the proper amendments in the correct amounts. The cost for sample through our office is \$20.

### **Collecting the Sample (The results are only as good as the sample!)**

We are interested in the top 6" of soil. Don't include plants, surface debris or rocks. If your garden is fairly uniform in how it lays, and how it's managed, then one composite sample can be made. Samples can be taken using a trowel, spade or shovel. Collect 10 or more subsamples in a bucket. Mix these samples well in the bucket then pull your final sample from this mix. We need two cups or one pint of soil to submit. A quart sized baggie ¾ full is plenty. Bring the sample to our office and we can ship it off. In about two weeks, you'll have results back on what your garden needs to perform at its best.

The Trusty Trowel-November 2023



# TNCEP HOLIDAY DONATION DRIVE

NOV 1 - DEC 1

TNCEP of Washington County (UT Extension) is collecting needed items this holiday season for Frontier Health: Willow Ridge Women's Group and Magnolia Ridge Men's Group



Needed items: t-shirts, hoodies, leggings, socks, gloves, sweatpants, sweatshirts, men's and women's hygiene items, new packs of underwear.

Drop off at UT Extension of Washington County:  
206 W Main Street, Jonesborough, TN 37659

For questions, call (423)753-1680 for Sarah Ballance or Emma Beddingfield. Office hours 8am-5pm.

**UT EXTENSION**  
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

**tsu** COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

For questions about your home and garden please feel free to contact me, Adam Watson, Agriculture Extension Agent [watson@utk.edu](mailto:watson@utk.edu).

**Washington County Extension-206 West Main Street Jonesborough, TN 37659-1230**  
Office Phone: **(423) 753-1680**

References made to commercial products or brand names is with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied. Be sure to read and follow all pesticide label instructions.

Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.