Have you seen this? *

**Tomato catfacing**

It’s tempting to rush tomatoes transplants into the ground as soon as the weather breaks, but catfacing can result. This physiological condition deforms the blossom end of the tomato, causing deep crevices or holes. It occurs when temperatures fall below 52 degrees F, for even a few hours, disrupting fruit development. Flower buds that are not even open can be affected. Large-fruited tomato varieties are more susceptible. Pull catfaced fruit immediately. They will not outgrow the damage, and they divert plant resources from other developing tomatoes. To be safe, set out transplants about 1-2 weeks after the last expected spring frost. At HGIC, 2016 is the Year of the Tomato. For an extravaganza of things tomato, go to the UMD HGIC website below.

**Stinkhorn fungus egg**
A hidden Easter egg never found? An old avocado? This peculiar formation (shown cut in two) may be discovered in mulch or soil. It is the beginning life form of a fungus which generates alarm, curiosity and revulsion: the stinkhorn fungus. Dog stinkhorn or devil's dipstick is in the Phalaceae family of fungi. The fruiting body of fungi is a mushroom, but stinkhorn is not your typical mushroom. The "egg" contains the fungi's fruiting structure just before it emerges. It shoots out of the ground in a matter of hours as a crazy-looking reddish-orange thick stalk with a tip covered in brown, fetid goo. The goo attracts flies, which feed on it then fly off dispersing the spores that were in the goo. This harmless fungus survives only a day or so before shriveling up, so no control is necessary. Perhaps the only control of one's emotional response is required.

April Tips

- This is a good time to plant tree fruits and small fruits. Fruits that require little or no spraying include fig, Asian persimmon, Asian pear, blueberry, blackberry, raspberry, strawberry and currant. (HG 68, HG 69)
- Consider planting groundcovers where grass won't grow, where you have heavy shade or tree root problems, and on steep slopes where it's not safe to mow grass.
- Avoid the temptation to set out warm season crops until after all danger of late frosts.

More seasonal tips

Featured Video

Houseplants - Choosing and Caring for Foliage Plants
Dave Clement, UMD Plant Pathologist and Carrie Engel of Valley View Farms Garden and Nursery in Cockeysville, MD review many different foliage houseplant options good for low, mid, and high-sunlight areas and general care instructions for those plants.

--- Watch on Youtube

### Q&A

**Q** I need help identifying a perennial weed that shows up in my yard this time every year. First I see shiny, green kidney shaped leaves which are then soon followed by glossy bright yellow flowers. The groundcover dies off around June and leaves a mat of decaying matter. I try to pull it out but there are bunches of little tubers connected to the roots and it is hard to get it all. What is it and how can I get rid of it?

**A** From your description the weed sounds like lesser celandine or fig buttercup (Ficaria verna, previously Ranunculus ficaria). This vigorous groundcover was originally planted as an ornamental but now is reported to be invasive in many states including Maryland. It spreads by bulbets and tubers. Small infestations can be removed by hand digging making sure you remove as much of the root system as possible. A non-selective herbicide that contains glyphosate can be applied to the foliage. With using these two tactics it can still take many years to rid you yard of this nuisance plant. You need to be persistent.

--- Read more on Lesser celandine

**Have a plant or pest question? University of Maryland Extension’s experts have answers!**

Send in your questions and photos here.