



December 2024

4-H & Youth Development

2024 Christmas Donation Drive

Madeline Wallace – 4-H Agent

The Butler County Extension Office is now collecting new and unwrapped gifts for the 2024 Christmas Donation Drive until Friday, December 13th at 11:30 a.m. All donations will be given to the Tri-County CASA to provide the abused and neglected children of Butler, Elk, and Greenwood Counties with a little joy this Christmas. See flyer for more details!

Agriculture

Corn Stunt and Corn Leaf Hopper

Charlene Miller – Agriculture Agent / Extension Director

Corn stunt spiroplasma (CSS, *Spiroplasma kunkelii*) and its associated vector (corn leafhopper, *Dalbulus maidis*) have been recently confirmed in Kansas. Corn stunt spiroplasma has been confirmed in 26 counties (Figure 1). Recent scouting efforts across Kansas confirm active leaf hoppers in many additional counties. Although the majority of the positive reports are from field corn, we also confirmed corn stunt spiroplasma in sweet corn as well. High levels of disease were found in late-planted and double-cropped corn, leading to potential yield reduction. The yellow counties are confirmed locations this year in Kansas. A statewide testing is will be starting soon. We will share more information as it becomes available.



Contact us:

Phone: (316) 321-9660

Facebook: @ksrebutlerco

Web: Butler.K-State.Edu

Twitter: @ButlerExtension

Address: 206 N Griffith St, Ste. El Dorado, KS 67042

Horticulture

Caring for Holiday Plants

Calla Edwards – Horticulture Agent

Thanksgiving was last week and Christmas is right around the corner. With the change in the season Christmas plants are becoming common at stores everywhere you look. This weekend when I was out shopping I saw some beautiful Lavender and Rosemary bushes trimmed up in a Christmas Tree shape. For those of you who love herbs and the smell of those plants, these would make a beautiful alternative to smaller trees. Around the area cut Christmas trees are for sale and while they smell wonderful and look even better, there are some dangers with using cut trees in your house. I have a few tips and ideas that can keep your Christmas plants beautiful throughout this holiday season and ways to keep your Christmas tree looking great all through the month of December.

Nothing says Christmas like a fresh-cut Christmas tree, and picking the right one is a major key to success. As you look for your tree, not only should you be looking at the shape but you should also be checking to see how freshly cut the tree is. If the tree isn't frozen, run your finger up and down the branches, or in the cases of a small tree pick it up and shake it. The needles on a fresh tree shouldn't fall off, and if a large number of needles fall off that is a sign the tree is starting to dry out. Store your tree outside or in a cool spot till you are ready to bring it inside. Before you bring the tree in, cut the bottom of the tree off at a diagonal about 1" above the original cut. This allows the tree to draw water up and keep it hydrated throughout the season. Keep your tree away from drafts or hot areas as they dry trees out faster and always keep water in the reservoir. Dry Christmas trees are a fire hazard so keep your tree hydrated and always check your lights before putting them on.

A recent trend is to use a Christmas tree in a pot. This is an excellent way to have a live tree that you can enjoy for years to come. Caring for these trees when they are inside is easy, simply keep the plant watered and keep it in a cooler location. It's best to bring these trees inside only a week before Christmas to reduce the chances that they break dormancy and start growing. You will have to transition the tree to the outdoors once you are done with it for the holidays. Place the tree in a cooler location such as an unheated garage so it can become used to cooler temperatures and be sure when you move it outside you water it well and surround the truck with mulch or plant material to insulate it. An alternative to a spruce or pine tree, if you want a living tree, is a Norfolk Island Pine. These plants make wonderful houseplants and can be decorated for a variety of holidays. Treat them like other houseplants through the year but be aware they can get big with time.

Poinsettias are another popular Christmas plant, and despite what is commonly thought, they are not poisonous but I wouldn't recommend eating them since they do cause upset stomach and in pets can cause vomiting, drooling and diarrhea. Poinsettias are fairly easy to take care of, they prefer bright direct light so a sunny window is ideal but be sure to keep them away from drafts and temperature fluctuations. Remember that the temperature close to a window will be cooler than in other parts of the room. Be sure to water thoroughly and don't let the poinsettias dry completely out as that will shorten their flowering time. If you would like you can keep your poinsettias and try to get them to bloom next year. Once they have stopped flowering cut the plant back to 4-6 inches tall and water sparingly. Treat your poinsettia like a houseplant till late September.

One final thought when bringing Christmas Trees and other blooming plants into a house is that often these plants bring in tiny visitors, which can spread to your houseplants. Try to keep your new plants and tree separated from your current houseplants to prevent bugs from spreading. With a few simple tips your Christmas plants can bring you cheer throughout the Christmas season and all year long.



SKIP THE "HUMBUG!" 10 TIPS TO RELIEVE HOLIDAY STRESS

Few families will match the idyllic images captured in holiday advertisements, but most can find joy during the holiday season. Everyone is encouraged to extend the thankfulness typically associated with Thanksgiving celebrations throughout the holiday season—and into the new year. Feeling grateful for home, family, friends and life in general spills over into other activities and to others who sense your gratitude. Gratitude itself can have a calming influence. A little planning also can go a long way in relieving family stress—and holiday stresses. The following time- and stress-management tips are offered:

- Start early to plan family and other gatherings.
- Involve others, so everyone will be informed. Surprises can add stress unnecessarily.
- Be responsible. If the family is planning a potluck and you promised to bring the main dish, be on time, with enough food to serve everyone expected.
- Ask adult children what they would like to bring, rather than making arbitrary assignments. Let's face it—a daughter-inlaw may enjoy making fruit salad, but not pie crust.
- Explain house rules to children.
- Leave disciplining others' children to the childrens' parents.
- Plan age-appropriate activities, such as soccer or touch football, table or board games.
- Keep the peace—try not to bring up touchy topics.
- Don't overstay—everyone needs his or her own space and time for self.
- No family nearby? Call a local chamber of commerce or community service organization and volunteer to help serve a community dinner or give time to a food or toy drive.

Focus on others, rather than yourself by inviting others to join in a potluck, watch a movie or sports event to share the day. Calling family and friends also can help those who are alone stay connected. And, if you like—and can—treat yourself to an afternoon off, new book, video or craft project. The dog might like an extra walk, too.

Bonnie Brewer
Family & Consumer Sciences Agent
bjbrewer@ksu.edu

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Private Pesticide Applicator Testing New Rules Effective January 1, 2025

Charlene Miller – Agriculture Agent / Extension Director

If you have considered getting your private pesticide applicator certification for application of agriculture chemicals, now just may be the time to certify!

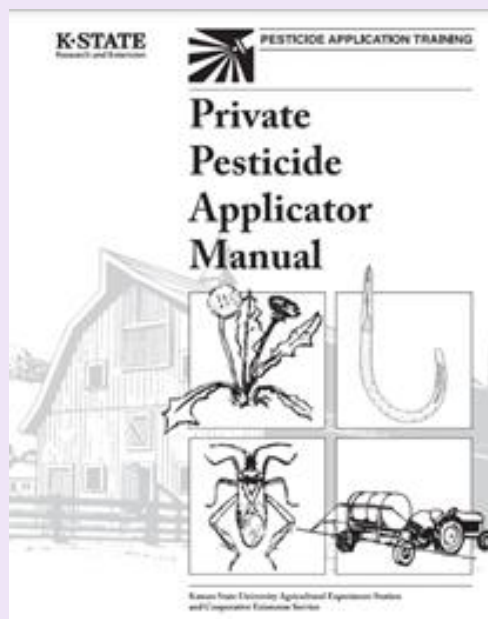
While we don't have all the new rules that take effect Jan. 1, we do know the following:

- 1) Tests will no longer be open book. You will still be able to come to the Extension Office to take the test, but you will no longer be able to use your book.
- 2) In-person trainings will be a possibility. We don't have any details on them or what that looks like yet.
- 3) Complete online training hosted in CanvasPro (6 modules each with review and activities to complete)

If you would like to get certified this year here is what you need to know:

- ✓ If you don't already have the book, you can purchase one at our office for \$8.50 if you would like a hard copy of it.
 - You can download it online at https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/private-pesticide-applicator-manual_MF531.pdf if you would like an electronic copy
- ✓ The following dates/times are available for testing in our office:
 - No testing will be started after 1:00 p.m. or will be taken on Friday's. Tests have taken anywhere from 1.5 hours to 3 hours to complete.
 - All dates will be Monday – Thursday 7:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
 - Dec. 2nd – 5th
 - Dec. 9th – 12th
 - Dec. 16th – 19th
- ✓ A check for \$25 made payable to the Kansas Department of Agriculture must be brought with you to testing. This does not cover the cost of the book and the book has to be paid separate.
- ✓ You can learn more on the testing at: <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/pesticides-ipm/private-applicator.html>

If you have any questions, please contact Charlene at the Butler County Extension Office. (316) 321-9660 or cmmiller1@ksu.edu





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2024 CHRISTMAS DONATION DRIVE

Drop off by December 13th

K-State Research and Extension Butler County is partnering with Tri-County CASA to provide the abused and neglected children of Butler, Elk, and Greenwood Counties with a little joy this Christmas.

We will be collecting New & Unwrapped Items:

- **Cuddle Kits**
 - One pillow case that can be used as a bag to gather their items
 - One soft and warm blanket to wrap up in
 - One stuffed animal to hold on to
 - One flashlight with batteries
- **Small Suitcases or Duffle Bags**
- **Nightlights**
- **Small Document Lockboxes**

All donations will be received
until 11:30 a.m.

Friday, December 13th at the
Butler County Extension Office
206 N Griffith in El Dorado



Nourish Your Heart

JOIN US TO LEARN TIPS AND TRICKS FOR MAKING HEALTHY EATING SIMPLE AND DELICIOUS!

FEEDING YOUR HEART: HEALTHY FATS

Healthy fats add flavor, texture, and help with nutrient absorption. Come learn which fats are heart-healthy and which to avoid.

SHAKE OFF THE EXCESS SODIUM

Decreasing your sodium intake is one of the best things you can do for your heart! Come learn which foods are high in sodium and which are heart-healthy.

COOKING WITH HERBS & SPICES

Healthy cooking can be quick, easy, and fun. Come learn healthy cooking skills to enhance flavor without added salt.

HEART-SMART EATING WHEN YOU ARE OUT & ABOUT

Making heart-healthy choices when you can't cook at home can be a challenge. Come learn how to make healthier choices when eating out.

MONTHLY NUTRITION EDUCATION WORKSHOPS NEAR YOU!

WORKSHOPS ARE FREE:

Douglass Senior Center
124 W 4th St, Douglass, KS

All classes begin at 11 AM

- Tuesday, October 29th
- Tuesday, November 12th
- Tuesday, November 19th
- Tuesday, November 26th
- Tuesday, December 17th
- Tuesday, January 14th



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QUESTIONS?

Bonnie Brewer

Family & Consumer Sciences Agent

bjbrewer@ksu.edu

Phone: (316) 321-9660



Carol Ann Crouch
KSRE Extension Agent
& Director, West Plains
Extension District



SIMPLIFY YOUR SPACE: A GUIDE TO DOWNSIZING + DECLUTTERING

Learn practical strategies for sorting through your belongings, making informed decisions about what to keep, and creating a more organized and peaceful living environment.

Wed. December 11th, 12:10 - 1PM CST



Scan the QR code or use
the link below to register:
bit.ly/3zvWWGQ

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**LIVING WELL
WEDNESDAY**

K-State Research and Extension Webinar Series

K-STATE
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Deer Processing Workshop

December 6, 2024

6:00 PM

1030 River Rd.

Eureka, KS 67045

Topics:

- Field Dressing
- Basic Processing

Presented by:

- *Dr. Drew Ricketts* – K-State Wildlife Extension Specialists



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Greenwood County

Meal Provided

For more information and to register please call the Greenwood County Extension Office at 620-583-7455 or email benjam63@ksu.edu or cmmiller1@ksu.edu

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K-State Research and Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested by contacting the event contact (**Ben Sims**) two weeks prior to the start of the event (**11/22/24**) at (**620-583-7455** or benjam63@ksu.edu). Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service
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Join Us For Our 2025 Quarterly Extension Connection

Mug Mingle



**Grab a mug and mingle with your local
Butler County Extension Staff**

Friday, January 10th from 7:45-9:00 a.m.

Save the dates: April 11th, July 11th, and October 19th

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LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY FOR MIDWESTERN FARM WOMEN

A Succession Planning Series
In-Person Sites Across 3 States

5-8 p.m. CT
2025

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-
-

1.21.25

**MOTIVATION FOR
SUCCESSION
PLANNING**

1.28.25

**COMMUNICATING ABOUT
ESTATE & TRANSITION
PLANNING**

2.4.25

**FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF
ESTATE & TRANSFER
PLANS**

2.11.25

**LEGAL: PUTTING
YOUR PLAN IN
PLACE**

agmanager.info/events



This material is based upon work supported by
USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2023-70027-40444.



WINTER GREENS AND WINTER BLUES

Thursday, February 13, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Andover Public Library

1511 E Central Ave, Andover, KS 67002



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The long winter months are upon us. Longer hours of darkness coupled with the colder temperatures can bring feelings of “winter blues.”

Join in an interactive program with Bonnie Brewer and Calla Edwards as they share tips to prevent those winter blues from sneaking up on us to maintain positive mental health.

Together we will explore house plants, breathing techniques and so much more!



K-State Research and Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Language access requests and reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means for communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, and American Sign Language), may be requested by contacting the event contact Bonnie Brewer four weeks prior to the start of the event at 316-321-9660 or bjbrewer@ksu.edu. Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

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RAIN BARREL CLINIC

Andover Public Library
1511 E Central Ave, Andover, KS
Clinic is free!
Make your own rain barrel for \$50!



**SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY
8TH AT
9:30 A.M.**



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- ✓ How to make a rain barrel
- ✓ How to care for a rain barrel
- ✓ Plants for a Resilient Landscape
- ✓ How to reduce water use in the garden and landscape

**RSVP FOR A RAIN BARREL BY
JAN. 30TH
CALL (316) 321-9660**

RAIN BARREL CLINIC

Butler County Community/4-H Building
200 N Griffith, El Dorado
Clinic is free!
Make your own rain barrel for \$50!

**SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY
22ND AT
9:00 A.M.**



K-STATE
Research and Extension

Butler County

- ✓ How to make a rain barrel
- ✓ How to care for a rain barrel
- ✓ Plants for a Resilient Landscape
- ✓ How to reduce water use in the garden and landscape

**RSVP FOR A RAIN BARREL BY
FEB. 7TH
CALL (316) 321-9660**