



NEWSLETTER



From the Director's Desk

'Tis the season to be thankful and preparing for a new year! 2025 will be gracing our presence in less than a month. As 2024 winds down, I encourage you to reflect on the year. What went well? What areas could you make changes? What do you have control of? What is out of your control? What areas do you need to give thanks? Who and what are you thankful for?

The Holiday seasons can be stressful. For farmers and ranchers, unpredictable weather, heavy workloads and financial worries can lead to stress. All of this can sometimes take their toll on individuals and families and lead to mental and emotional distress, substance abuse, anxiety, depression and suicide. Sometimes that stress can sneak up on you when you least expect. Mental health is real and among us, our family, our community...it's all around us and times when we least expect of those we love around us. There is no shame in acknowledging you have a problem and seeking help. If you or you know some one who needs help, several resources exist. They include:

- Crisis Text Line (24/7 support) - 988
- Suicide Prevention Line - 988
- Kansas Ag Stress Resource Regional Concern Hotline (24/7 support) 1-888-447-1985

There are several gifts you can give this Holiday season that can be a bit easier on your bottom dollar. Examples include:

- The gift of time - spend your time with your friends, family and loved ones, playing games/puzzles, visiting and cherishing one another. Perhaps it's the gift of helping a neighbor who could use a little extra help.
- The gift of gratitude - take time to share meaningful appreciation through a visit or phone call to those who may not always receive that from you
- Write letters of thanks/appreciation - take time to say thank you in writing.
- A day trip to visit local attractions/museums
- Community Service - volunteer your time and help out in your community. The gift of helping others is very rewarding.

Get creative or do an Internet search. Lots of options exist for individual and/or family fun that doesn't have to be a big financial burden. If you are interested in gifting and helping others less fortunate, our office is doing a Christmas Cuddle Bag drive for those children who are less fortunate and have to leave their home. We are excited to work with Tri-County CASA to help these youth out. Look for the flyer in this newsletter for the items we are collecting and the date/time we need them into our office.

I wish you all a wonderful Holiday season and hope it brings you many cherished memories.

Until 2025, have a Happy and Safe New Year.

~Charlene

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Upcoming Events

①	②	③ Extension Council Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.	④ Garden Hour 12 p.m.	⑤	⑥ Deer Processing Workshop - Eureka 6 p.m.	⑦ The Elite Livestock Judging Clinic and Contest
⑧	⑨	⑩	⑪ Living Well Wednesday 12 p.m.	⑫	⑬ Christmas Donation Drive Drop Off	⑭
⑮	⑯	⑰	⑱	⑲	⑳	㉑
㉒	㉓	㉔	㉕ <i>Merry Christmas</i>	㉖	㉗	㉘
Office Closed						
㉙	㉚	㉛ <i>New Year's Eve</i>				
Office Closed						

Butler County Extension Office
 206 North Griffith
 Suite A
 El Dorado, Kansas 67042
 (316)321-9660

Hours

Monday - Thursday
 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Friday
 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

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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			① CLOSED	②	③	④
⑤	⑥	⑦ Extension Council Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.	⑧ Garden Hour 12 p.m.	⑨	⑩ Mug Mingle 7:45-9 a.m.	⑪
⑫	⑬	⑭ 4-H Council	⑮	⑯	⑰	⑱
⑲	⑳ CLOSED	㉑ Women in Agriculture 5-8 p.m.	㉒	㉓	㉔	㉕
㉖	㉗ YQCA	㉘ Women in Agriculture 5-8 p.m.	㉙	㉚	㉛	

Upcoming Events

K-STATE
Research and Extension

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



K-STATE | Greenwood County
Research and Extension

Meal Provided

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

K-STATE | Butler County
Research and Extension

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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WINTER GREENS AND WINTER BLUES

Thursday, February 13, 2025
6:00 p.m.
Andover Public Library
1511 E Central Ave, Andover, KS 67002

K-STATE
Research and Extension
Butler County

ANDOVER PUBLIC LIBRARY
friends

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!

Email
friendsandoverlibrary@gmail.com
to register!

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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Garden Hour Webinars:

- **December 4th - Home Hydroponics**
- **January 8th- A Beginners Guide to Gardening in Kansas**

These class are offered online via Zoom at Noon. For more information on the Garden Hour series or to register visit here:
<https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/consumer-horticulture/garden-hour/>

Upcoming Events

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.



- ✓ 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



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Butler County

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

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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.



- ✓ 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



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Butler County

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

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. 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 CALLA EDWARDS TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO THE START OF THE EVENT AT 316-321-9660 OR CALLA@KSRE.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. K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

Butler County
H.E.A.L.
Health. Education. Action. Lifestyle.

EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO LIVE A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE THROUGH EDUCATION AND ACTION

PROMOTING HOLISTIC HEALTH BY INCORPORATING RESEARCH BASED EDUCATION INTO PRACTICAL DAILY LIVING.

K-STATE Research and Extension | Butler County

206 N Griffith, Suite A
El Dorado, KS 67042
(316) 321-9660

South central mental health
HELPING TO SHAPE PROMISING FUTURES

221 King St, Andover, KS 67002
524 N Main St, El Dorado, KS 67042
2821 N Brookside Dr, Augusta, KS 67010
(316) 733-5047 ext 515 OR 528

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for more happily, ever afters...

The Strong Couples Project

- ✓ Participate in a 6-session online program scientifically shown to strengthen relationships
- ✓ Video calls with trained coach to help maximize program impact
- ✓ No cost to enroll and chance to win \$25 Amazon gift card for completing program surveys

To learn more and enroll, please visit go.illinois.edu/StrongCouples

OUTREACH



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



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Ag Talk

Charlene Miller

Director/Agriculture Agent

cmmiller1@ksu.edu

<https://www.butler.k-state.edu/agriculture/>

Leaving a Lasting Legacy for Midwestern Farm Women: A Succession Planning Series

LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY FOR MIDWESTERN FARM WOMEN
A Succession Planning Series
In-Person Sites Across 3 States
5-8 p.m. CT
2025

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

Beaumont, KS
11724 SE Beaumont Rd.
Beaumont, KS 67012

agmanager.info/events

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USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NORTH CENTRAL EXTENSION RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

I am excited to offer this program and join Cowley County and Rolling Prairie District: Elk County in hosting this program in Beaumont. If you are not able to join in person, virtual attendance is also an option! Refer to the flyer for registration information!

Ag Talk



Body Condition Scoring for Cattle

Do you know the body condition score (BCS) of your cattle? Do you know how to tell? The BCS range for beef cattle is 1 to 9 with 5 and 6 being an optimal range. I recently attended an excellent hands-on workshop at Manhattan Livestock Commission that was tailored for BCS in cattle. Knowing your cattle BCS score can help make sure they are where they need to be for optimal breeding and health conditions. Determining an animal's nutritional well-being with a body condition score aids producers in appraising how an individual's body currently functions from a reproductive standpoint. An excellent guide on BCS can be found at:

https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/guide-to-body-condition-scoring-beef-cows-and-bulls_MF3274.pdf

If you would like the guide emailed to you or if you are interested in a body condition scoring workshop, let me know!

Table 1. Visual method for evaluating body condition in cattle

	BCS	Physical Attribute					
		Spine	Ribs	Hooks/Pins	Tailhead	Brisket	Muscling
Thin	1	Visible	Visible	Visible	No fat	No fat	None/atrophy
	2	Visible	Visible	Visible	No fat	No fat	None/atrophy
Borderline	3	Visible	Visible	Visible	No fat	No fat	None
	4	Slightly visible	Foreribs visible	Visible	No fat	No fat	Full
Optimum Condition	5	Not visible	Not visible	Visible	No fat	No fat	Full
	6	Not visible	Not visible	Visible	Some fat	Some fat	Full
Over-Conditioned	7	Not visible	Not visible	Slightly visible	Some fat	Fat	Full
	8	Not visible	Not visible	Not visible	Abundant fat	Abundant fat	Full
	9	Not visible	Not visible	Not visible	Extremely fat	Extremely fat	Full

Adapted from Herd and Sprott, 1986; BCS = body condition score

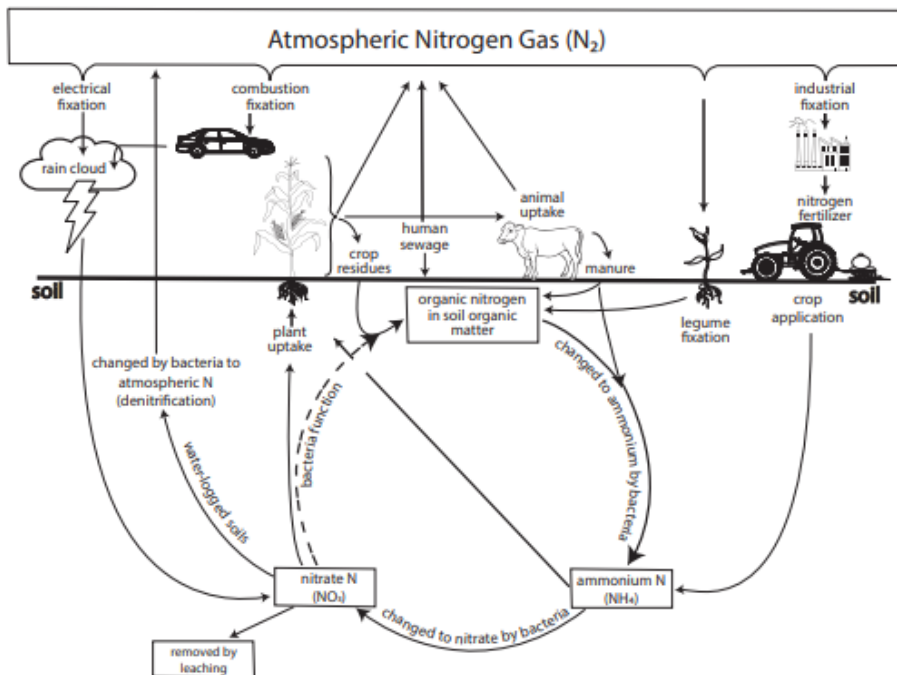
Ag Talk

Corn Stunt and Corn Leaf Hopper

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.



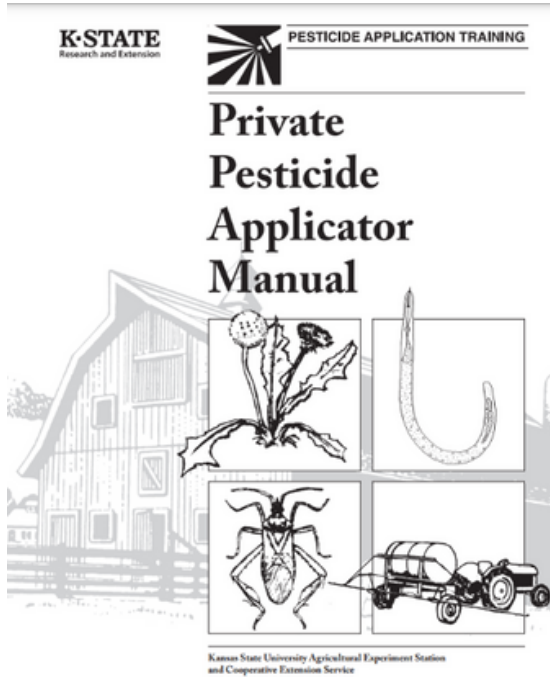
Nitrate and Groundwater



Nitrate is a common contaminant in groundwater. Groundwater with excessive nitrate contamination can have immediate and long-term health effects. Groundwater supplies about 50% of the drinking water in the United States. Almost all private water supplies are from wells or springs. For the most up to date information addressing this topic visit - https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/nitrate-and-groundwater_MF857

Ag Talk

Private Pesticide Applicator Testing New Rules Effective January 1, 2025



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 an electronic copy online at:
https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/private-pesticide-applicator-manual_MF531.pdf
- 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

Ag Talk

Charlene Miller

Director/Agriculture Agent

cmmiller1@ksu.edu

<https://www.butler.k-state.edu/agriculture/>

K-State Agricultural Economics presents

Finances and the Farm: An online class to enhance your farm management skills

An applied approach to developing and using farm financial statements for management decision-making for farmers and ranchers of all types

This is a self-paced course you can take when it is convenient for you!

This course can be taken for education only or to fulfill FSA borrower's requirements.

Seven Lessons: Recordkeeping, Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Enterprise Budgets, Cash Flow, Goal Setting and Managing Family Living Expenses

Participants will:

- Understand the structure of a balance sheet, income statement, enterprise budgets, and cash flow
- Choose either Cattle & Crops or CSA & Farmers Market case farm to complete quizzes to check understanding and practice using these financial statements in a real-world setting
- Be prepared to use financial management techniques for their own operation
- Set goals for their operation

- Learn how to make changes to avoid financial difficulties

Registration Fee:

- \$300 for FSA credit class
- \$100 for education only



Approved for FSA Borrower's Training Financial & Production Credits

Taught by Robin Reid, K-State Extension Farm Economist, and LaVell Winsor, K-State Farm Analyst

Register online for FSA Credit or Education Only:
www.AgManager.info/Events

KANSAS STATE
Agricultural Economics

K-STATE
Research and Extension

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K-State Agricultural Economics Presents: Risk Management on the Farm

Online, on-demand course to take when it is convenient for you.
Taught by Robin Reid, Extension Farm Economist, and LaVell Winsor, K-State Farm Analyst

Five Lessons: Determining Cost of Production, Crop Insurance, Crop Marketing, Farm Programs (ARC/PLC), and Beef Cow/Calf Risk Management

Register online by using the link below:

www.AgManager.info/Events

Course Description:

- Learn principles of determining cost of production, developing a marketing plan, evaluating crop insurance options, and participating in farm programs (ARC/PLC)
- Participants will work with a case farm to apply these topics to a real-world farming operation through hands-on activities.
- The goal of this class is to acquire risk management skills that can be applied directly to a farming operation.
- The bulk of the course focuses on risk management for row-crop farming operations but also includes principles for beef cow/calf operations.

Special Topics:

- Managing stress and being resilient in tough times
- Communicating effectively with family members

Registration Fees:

- \$100 education only

Other information:

- Have 6 months from registration to complete
- This course is a replica of the 5-part Risk Management Series delivered by KSRE in 28 locations across the state from January-February 2022 in which 340 producers participated in-person

KANSAS STATE
Agricultural Economics

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Research and Extension

Just the FACS

Bonnie Brewer

Family & Consumer Sciences Agent

bjbrewer@ksu.edu

<https://www.butler.k-state.edu/fcs/>



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-in-law 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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Just the FACS

Living Well Wednesday Webinar Series

Living Well Wednesday is a virtual learning series hosted by K-State Research and Extension, Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) professionals from across the state of Kansas. The Fall 2024 series kicks off in October and we invite you to join us!

Webinars will be offered the second Wednesday of each month, from 12:10-1 pm. There is no charge to participate, however, registration is required. All webinars will be recorded and posted below along with supporting resources.

Register for all webinars in this series here: bit.ly/3zvWWGQ.

2024 Fall Series

December 11, 2024

Simplify Your Space: A Guide to Downsizing and Decluttering

Speaker: Carol Ann Crouch, KSRE Extension Agent/Director, West Plains Extension District
Learn practical strategies for sorting through your belongings, making informed decisions about what to keep, and creating a more organized and peaceful living environment.



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

K-STATE
Research and Extension

LIVING WELL WEDNESDAY
K-State Research and Extension Webinar Series

Just the FACS

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Hypertension Awareness
and Prevention Program

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



K-STATE
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Butler County

QUESTIONS?

Bonnie Brewer
Family & Consumer Sciences Agent
bjbrewer@ksu.edu
Phone: (316) 321-9660

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Garden Gossip

Calla Edwards

Horticulture Agent

callae@ksu.edu

<https://www.butler.k-state.edu/horticulture/>



Caring for Holiday Plants

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,

Garden Gossip

Caring for Holiday Plants Cont.



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.

Garden Gossip

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December Gardening Calendar

Vegetables and Fruits

- Store leftover seeds and a cool, dry location, for example, in a sealed jar placed in the refrigerator.
- Check vegetables in storage for spoilage.
- Mulch strawberries for winter protection.
- Clean and oil garden hand tools for winter.



Flowers

- Mulch roses by mounding soil 6 to 8 inches deep over the plants to protect the graft.
- Mulch perennial beds with 2 to 4 inches of straw, shredded leaves, or other lightweight material.
- Cut tall hybrid tea roses back to 18 to 24 inches to reduce wind whipping and plant damage.
- Continue to plant spring flowering bulbs until the ground is frozen. Water and mulch.
- Give plants or gift certificates as holiday gifts for gardening friends.
- Empty decorative pots and containers. Store inside or decorate for winter.



Garden Gossip

December Gardening Calendar Cont.

Lawns

- Pick up fallen leaves, limbs, and other debris from lawn to prevent suffocation of the turf during winter.
- Store any leftover lawn fertilizers in dry location and out of reach of children and pets.
- Store pesticides in a cool (not freezing) dry location for winter, out of reach of children and pets.



Trees and Shrubs

- Keep heavy snowfall from limbs of trees and shrubs by lightly shaking to avoid damage.
- To prevent breakage, avoid shoveling snow onto trees and shrubs.
- Check and protect the trunks of young trees and branches of shrubs for rabbit damage.
- Living Christmas trees are special. Leave in your home no longer than one week, then acclimate to outdoors and plant in a desirable location.
- Prune damaged branches throughout the winter months.
- Water newly planted trees and shrubs in winter to prevent dry soil conditions.
- Mulch roots of tender shrubs such as azaleas and rhododendrons to keep vigorous during winter.
- Prune branches of junipers, pines, hollies, and other plants to use as holiday decorations.



Miscellaneous

- Start planning for next year by making notes and preparing orders.
- Turn compost pile to encourage winter breakdown.



4-H

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Using Your 4-H Skills to Create Handmade Holiday Gifts

The holiday season is a perfect time to put your 4-H skills to use and create thoughtful, handmade gifts for family and friends. Whether you're working on a craft project, gardening, or cooking, there are endless ways to use what you've learned in 4-H to make something special and unique. Here are a few ideas for using your 4-H projects to create meaningful gifts this holiday season:

1. Sewing and Textile Design

- **Handmade Bags or Pouches:** Create a stylish tote or small zipper pouch using fabric you've picked out or dyed yourself. Add a fun embroidery design for a personal touch.
- **Quilted Pillows or Blankets:** A small quilted pillow or lap blanket can be a warm and thoughtful gift for loved ones. Whether it's patchwork or a more intricate design, these cozy creations will surely be appreciated.
- **Embroidered Towels or Aprons:** Add a personal touch to plain kitchen towels or aprons with embroidery. These make great gifts for the home cook or baker in your life!



2. Photography

- **Personalized Photo Calendars:** Use your favorite photos from past 4-H events or family memories to create a custom photo calendar. It's a practical and sentimental gift that loved ones will cherish all year long.
- **Framed Prints:** Pick a few of your best photos and frame them as a gift. Consider printing them on canvas or as prints to make a beautiful and timeless holiday present.



4-H

Using Your 4-H Skills to Create Handmade Holiday Gifts Cont.



3. Cooking and Food Preservation

- **Canned Goods:** If you've been preserving fruits, jams, or pickles, package them in decorative jars and add a personalized label. Your friends and family will appreciate the time and care you put into making these homemade treats.
- **Baked Goods:** Use your baking skills to create holiday treats like cookies, brownies, or loaves of homemade bread. You can even wrap them in festive packaging or gift baskets for a special touch.
- **Spiced Mixes or Homemade Candies:** If you've learned how to make candy or spice mixes, these are perfect for holiday gift-giving. Think homemade hot cocoa mixes, spiced cookie mixes, or even caramel popcorn!



4. Visual Arts

- **Hand-Painted Ornaments:** Use your painting skills to create personalized holiday ornaments. Whether you paint on wood, glass, or ceramic, these unique gifts will be cherished year after year.
- **Handmade Jewelry:** If you've worked with beads or metalworking, try making earrings, bracelets, or necklaces as gifts for friends or family. Customize the design to suit the recipient's style for an extra personal touch.
- **Holiday Cards:** Use your skills in drawing, painting, or stamping to create beautiful, handmade holiday cards. Include a handwritten message inside to make it extra special.



4-H

Using Your 4-H Skills to Create Handmade Holiday Gifts Cont.



5. Horticulture and Landscape Design

- Potted Plants or Succulent Arrangements: If you've been working with plants, you can create small potted arrangements or succulents. Decorate the pots with ribbons or paint for a festive touch.
- Herb Bundles or Plant Kits: Consider gifting herb bundles, small homemade terrariums, or DIY plant kits for friends and family who enjoy gardening.

6. Woodworking and Construction

- Handcrafted Wooden Gifts: Whether it's a cutting board, picture frame, or small shelf, your woodworking skills can create beautiful and functional gifts that will be treasured.
- Birdhouses or Feeders: Make a simple birdhouse or bird feeder as a gift for nature-loving friends or family. These projects can be decorated or painted to make them unique.



Gift Wrapping Ideas

Don't forget to wrap your handmade gifts in a creative way! You can use fabric scraps, newspaper, or recycled materials to wrap your presents in an eco-friendly and personal style. Try using some of your sewing or craft supplies to make your own gift tags, bows, or ribbons to add a personal touch.

On behalf of the entire Butler County Extension team, we wish each of you a warm and joyful holiday season. May this time of year bring you peace, happiness, and an opportunity to reflect on the year's accomplishments. As we look ahead to the New Year, we're excited to continue working alongside you to make the Butler County 4-H program even better.

4-H


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The new 4-H year began on October 1st, 2024! From hands-on exploration to project-based skill building, young people thrive through participation in 4-H and find their way to success in life and future careers. We are excited to offer over 35 projects, ranging from Foods and Nutrition, to Robotics and Geology, to Livestock. There truly is something for everyone! We focus on exploration, learning, and experiencing the world around us through hands-on activities lead by our qualified volunteers and mentors. Any Butler County youth ages 7 to 18 is eligible to join 4-H! Our learning pathways support 21st century learning skills to help our youth grow and develop into productive citizens within their community! I encourage you to visit our website: <https://www.butler.k-state.edu/4-h/> to learn how to enroll in 4-H!

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4-H Online Enrollment Opens October 1st!

4-H's Long-reaching Effects
Compared to other youth, 4-Her's are:

- 4x** more likely to contribute to their communities
- 2x** more likely to be civically active
- 2x** more likely to make healthier lifestyle choices

The Top 5 Project Areas in Butler County:

1. Photography
2. Visual Arts
3. Foods & Nutrition
4. Clothing & Textiles
5. Floriculture & Horticulture

Find more information here:



What does Butler County 4-H have to offer?

- 9 Community 4-H Clubs across the County
- Butler County 4-H Shooting Sports
- Over 70 Projects
- Cloverbud Program for ages 5-6 yrs.

Visit Our Website
<https://www.butler.k-state.edu/4-h/>

Call Us
316-321-9660

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Butler
County

SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

LESSON TOPICS!

- Farm to Plate
- STEM
- Financial Literacy
- Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness
- Team Building and Bonding
- Robotics

K-12

**Don't see what
you're looking
for? Contact us to
see if we offer it!**

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