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JOHNSON COUNTY KSRE



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K-STATE
Research and Extension



Johnson
County

CONTENTS

Information

- 2 | Table of Contents
- 3 | August Events
- 6 | Master Food Volunteers
- 12 | Master Gardeners
- 18 | Master Naturalists
- 24 | 4-H Youth Development

Health and Food Safety

- 4 | Farmers Market for Produce
Chelsea Reinberg

Horticulture

- 10 | Perennials that Put on a Show
Dennis Patton
- 10 | Tree Selection: Avoid these Pitfalls
Dennis Patton
- 14 | Summer Container Gardens
Dennis Patton
- 16 | What's Growing in the Garden?
Zac Hoppenstedt

Natural Resources

- 20 | Raccoons and Roundworms
Juju Wellemeyer

4-H Youth Development

- 22 | Johnson County Shooters Find Success at Nationals
Jessica Lawrenz

Our Mission

We are dedicated to a safe, sustainable, competitive food and fiber system and to strong healthy communities, families, and youth through integrated research, analysis, and education.

K-State Research and Extension — Cooperative Extension Service

All universities engage in research and teaching. But the 100 land-grant colleges and universities across the country have a third critical mission — extension.

The national Cooperative Extension Service was created with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914. The service was created to assure that research-based knowledge developed by the land-grant universities got delivered to the people at the county level.

Along with research and teaching, land-grant institutions “extend” their resources through non-formal, non-credit educational programs.

Johnson County, Kansas

As the local branch of Kansas State University Research and Extension (Kansas’ land-grant university), this Extension Office has served Johnson County citizens since 1917.

We have access to the latest science, research and technology on subjects in five program areas. Our agents are university faculty. Their role is to encourage the application of this research-based information to help improve the quality of life for our residents.

We make the university’s expertise available to you and help you apply it to your needs. You can trust that the information we provide is

1. Research-based
2. Expert
3. Presented without bias

Our Partners

Johnson County Extension is a unique partnership with Kansas State University, Johnson County government, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cooperative Extension Service.

What We Do

We provide answers! We offer you accurate information through [classes & events](#), K-State publications, [e-Newsletters](#) and more. Our office is committed to serving you, and our agents are always glad to answer your questions. So give us a call, send us an email, stop by and say hi!

If we don’t know the answer, we’ll track it down and present you with accurate, researched-based information you can trust and use to make informed decisions that are best for you and your family.

August 2022

Upcoming Events

2

4-H Food Auction

Come to the Johnson County Fair at 7:30pm at the Midway Stage to check out the 4-H Food Auction! You can purchase delicious foods prepared by Johnson County 4-H’ers.

5

4-H Round Robin Competition

Join us at the Johnson County Fair to celebrate the 4-H’ers competing for the top showmanship award in the Round Robin tournament at 6pm in the Livestock Arena!

5

Barnyard Olympics

Come support the 4-H Ambassadors in their yearly fundraiser by participating in the Barnyard Olympics at the fair for a boot stompin’ good time! Registration starts at 8:30pm and is on a first-come, first-serve basis, so sign up quickly!

5

4-H Project Auction

Attend and become a buyer at the 4-H Project which is sponsored by the JCEEF! You can purchase fresh baked goods, woodworking and more! It starts after the Round Robin.

11

WIC Farmers Market

The Pop-UP Market includes garden tours, and attendees can pick up produce to take home from the market stand (donations are accepted and appreciated).

19

4-H Ambassadors Game Night

Register for the 4-H Ambassadors Game Night, hosted by Johnson County 4-H Ambassadors, for a night full of games, movies and snacks!

23

WIC Garden Volunteer Work Day

Volunteers are welcome every Tuesday morning, 8-11 AM, through October. The WIC Garden supports the Johnson County Women, Infant and Children program.

27

Kids in the Kitchen - Wraps and Snacks

Fun, nutritious wraps and snacks... perfect for after school or anytime a snack attack happens! This class will cover food safety, basic cooking skills and nutrition.

Visit us at johnson.k-state.edu for registration details

FINDING A FARMERS MARKET FOR FRESH PRODUCE

By Chelsea Reinberg | Health, Food Safety & Nutrition Agent

August Classes and Events:

- Kids in the Kitchen – Wraps & Snacks
 - August 27th 10:00a-12:00p
- Come celebrate National Farmers Market Week (August 7-13th) with the Extension Master Food Volunteers (EMFVs)!
- Visit the Johnson County WIC Community Garden Farmers Market on August 11th between 10:00 am-1:00 pm to pick up some fresh organic produce, take a garden tour, and taste test some recipes prepared by the EMFVs highlighting seasonal produce from the garden. Donations for produce are suggested to support the WIC Community Garden.
- Stop by the Lenexa Farmers Market in Lenexa Civic Center on August 13th between 8:00 am-12:00 pm and visit with our Extension Master Food Volunteers at their booth located in the center of the market. The EMFVs can answer all your food and nutrition related questions. They will have informational handouts and recipes available to help you prepare tasty dishes with the produce you get from the market.

Farmers markets and fresh produce are some of the best things about summer! It's something about the buzz of the people strolling along the vendors of the neighborhood farmers market and all the beautiful produce and locally made goodies that make it an enjoyable time for all.

There are many benefits for individuals and communities when local foods are prioritized and sought out. Locally grown produce is more flavorful and more nutritious than what you may find in your local grocery store. The produce at farmers markets has been recently picked fresh compared to that in retail stores where the produce has been harvested, shipped far distances, and stored for an unknown amount of time. Did you know, the shorter the time between harvest and consumption, the less likely the nutrients (like antioxidants) have decreased and the better the food is for you?!

Purchasing local foods also supports the local economy and has less environmental impact. When you bring your own reusable bags to the farmers market you are helping to reduce the amount of waste from plastic packaging that is commonly found when purchasing produce in the retail stores. Lastly, when you buy local you make connections and build relationships with the people who grow and produce your food. Take some time to talk with the local vendors at your farmers market

and you can learn a lot about how your food is produced and develop a better understanding and appreciation for the food you eat.

There are several resources available to help you find nearby farmers markets and learn what produce is in season. Seasonal and Simple is one of those great tools that helps connect you with a local farmer market and guides you in selecting, storing, and preparing delicious recipes for fruits and vegetables. A description and the nutritional information for each fruit and vegetable is also available.

Seasonal and Simple can be accessed on your computer or downloaded to your smartphone or tablet. Having it on your smart devices comes in handy when you are at the farmers market and need a quick reference on how to pick the best produce, as well as find out what is in season!

Once you bring your produce home from the market, you want to ensure that you store it properly. Here are some tips and tricks for keeping your produce safe and at peak quality:

- Store fresh fruits like apples



(if more than 7 days), berries, cherries, grapes, and peaches and pears (after they ripen) in the refrigerator.

- Store herbs and fresh vegetables like mushrooms, green beans, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, leafy greens, cauliflower, beets, summer squash and sweet corn in the refrigerator.
- Remember, ALWAYS store cut or peeled produce in the refrigerator to prevent bacterial growth and keep it safe for consumption.
- Wash produce with cool running water before preparation or eating to remove dirt. It is important to wash produce even if peeling to prevent the transfer of dirt to the inside.
- Store garlic, onions, potatoes, and sweet potatoes in a well-ventilated area.



Extension Master Food Volunteers

An Extension Master Food Volunteer (EMFV) is a volunteer trained by university-based nutritionists, registered dietitians, food scientists and culinary experts and becomes certified in research-based food safety and healthy living concepts. They, in turn, give voluntary service for a variety of projects that utilize their training.



Our Mission:

Johnson County K-State Research and Extension Master Food Volunteers have a passion to improve the health, food safety awareness and quality of life of Johnson County residents by providing current, research-based information to the public. The organization embodies the education objectives of the Johnson County Extension Council cooperating with Kansas State University and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Who Can Apply?

Any resident of Johnson County, Kansas, age 18 or over with a high school diploma (or equivalent), who has an interest in health and food safety can apply.

Why Become an Extension Master Food Volunteer?

- Increase your knowledge about health, wellness, cooking techniques and food safety
- Make new and interesting friends
- Serve the community in new and exciting ways
- Share your passion for health and food with others
- Access to free or discounted EMFV cooking, nutrition and fitness classes

What Happens After Training is Completed?

Following basic training, EMFVs are required to volunteer 40 hours of service in the activity of their choosing for their first year as an EMFV. After that first year, all volunteers are required to volunteer 20 hours of service and continue their education with 8 hours of advanced training annually.

What Will You Learn?

Classes in the training include:

- Basic Nutrition
- Food Safety
- Cooking Techniques
- Meal Planning
- Food Labels
- Knife Skills
- Preparing Fruits & Vegetables
- Protein Basics
- Fish
- Soy & Legumes
- Grain Foods
- Preparing Desserts & Sweets
- Dairy & Eggs
- Food Preservation (home canning, dehydrating and freezing)

Applications will open soon for our next training class this fall! Contact the **Johnson County Extension Office** at (913) 715-7000 if you are interested in applying or have any questions.



Rudbeckia 'Henry Eilers'



Helenium



Solidago 'Fireworks'

It may be hot, and you prefer to hibernate indoors, but a pop of bright color in the garden can help us mentally beat the heat. Here are a few summer perennials that are easy to grow with vivid flowers that shine in the summer sun and have the added benefit of nurturing our pollinators.

PERENNIALS THAT PUT ON A SUMMER SHOW

By Dennis Patton | Horticulturalist

Gardeners are continually in search of the latest and greatest plant recommendations. I am fortunate to be surrounded by knowledgeable and experienced Extension Master Gardener volunteers (EMG) who share their tips with me. Our network of nine demonstration gardens allows me an opportunity to experiment with many plants.

As summer ends, let me share a few perennial plants to consider adding to your garden. These plants are beginning to put on their show as the garden tran-

sitions from summer to fall.

Rudbeckia 'Henry Eilers'

The flower of 'Henry Eilers' is unique as the sunshine yellow petals are not flat but have a rolled, tubular look. These cheery flowers with a brown center stand on upright stems reaching three to five feet. Reduce the height by cutting back the plant by one half in early spring. This not only reduces height but also results in stockier, sturdy stems.

'Henry Eilers' grows best

in full sun. Like most plants, it prefers evenly moist soils but will tolerate a mild drought. Divide this plant's slow-spreading clump every few years to keep its size in check. It makes an impressive focal point in the back of a bed for a pop of summer color.

Helenium

Helenium, also known as Sneezeweed, may have the worst common name ever. Breeders have refined this old-fashioned plant in recent years. A couple of beautiful

cultivars include 'Salud Embers' and 'Mardi Gras.' Prized for their brightly colored flowers, these varieties include a mix of yellow, orange, red and browns brightening the garden.

Helenium is also best grown in full sun with even moisture. Drought will decrease vigor and blooms. Like the Rudbeckia, the plant can be cut back by half in late May or June to reduce the height as the plant can reach three feet or higher. Fertilization is not recommended as it can lead to taller, leggy plants that tend to flop. Divide every few years

to keep the clump in check.

The vivid flowers attract pollinators like butterflies and bees. It is reported to be deer and rabbit resistant, even more of a reason to add Helenium to the garden.

Solidago 'Fireworks'

As the name implies, this perennial explodes with bright, yellow flowers heading into fall. Stiff plume branches loaded with the small, yellow flowers cover the plant like a firework bursting in air. 'Fireworks' is loved for its unique flowering habit.

Blooms provide a source of pollen for bees and butterflies.

Like the other perennials, the plant can reach three to four feet in height. Cutting back retains a three foot height and develops a woody like stem to keep the plant upright. Full sun to light shade is best as it tolerates dry to moist soils. The plant spreads by rhizomes so divide as needed.

These are just a few plants to consider adding to your garden this fall as they are sure to captivate your attention.

Tree Selection for Kansas City: Avoid these Pitfalls

By Dennis Patton | Horticulturalist



The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The next best time is now. This popular saying has been around for years. I have quoted it more times than I can count. Over the years I have written extensively on selecting and planting the perfect tree. Unfortunately not everyone has gotten the word on what is a recommended tree for the Kansas City area.

You might ask why I make this statement. Well, driving around the city I have seen some of the boneheaded choices that people have made. That made me think; maybe I should pen a column not about recommended trees but instead use the reverse approach. That would be a column on what not to plant. Call out the dogs of the tree world and help people make wiser choices.

Being so bold as to naming the poor tree choices for our area runs the risk of offending people. Who, might you ask, would be against cautioning people from making a mistake? I can quickly think of two groups I will offend. One is the people that have already made and planted the poor choice. The other group

I am sure to offend is the garden centers that will have these trees in stock and ready to sell. How dare I kill a sale? Personally I don't look at it as preventing a sale but instead as helping customers make informed decisions so that they get the best possible selection for their investment of time and money.

What Makes a Great Tree?

In order to determine what trees not to plant I think we need to look at what makes a great tree. A tree for the home landscape should have several desirable qualities. The most important quality for a tree that will grow large and planted for shade is it should have a strong growth habit. It should resist breaking up in an ice or wind storm. A great tree should not have any issues with insects or disease that would require treatments or harm growth.

Outside of those two factors all the other selection criteria is more about personal choice. I want fall color or flowers. I don't want any fruit or thorns. I want a fast growing tree with no surface roots. Granted these are all desirable characteristics but sometimes we focus too much on these cosmetic attributes and forget the fact that the tree needs to survive the ever-changing forces of Kansas City weather. What's more important, a tree that will not fall on your house in a storm or a tree that has pretty fall color for less than two weeks

out of the year? Unfortunately we often make the decision on the latter instead of thinking year-round and year after year.

The Lesson Learned From our Ash Trees

Many of us, while not happy about it, will be planting new trees as Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) continues its march across the metro. I am in this boat. I keep asking myself what tree I will select to replace my almost 25-year-old green ash. It is easier to list all the trees that I won't be planting. So here goes with the list of trees to avoid. Some of these are very obvious but people still plant them.

Avoid Planting These Trees for Kansas City:

Fast Growers

People seem to always want fast growing trees. We are a society of instant gratification. We want it now, so in this zest we put growth rate at the top of the wish list. In reality it should not be part of the discussion, as a slow growing tree with proper care can be sped up and still retain its benefits. As a rule, fast growing trees are weak wooded, tend to break under wind and ice, easily develop defects including rot and decay, and, in the scheme of life, tend to live for a shorter period of time.

Willows

Fast growing trees to avoid for the suburban home landscape include all species

of willows. Yes, I realize weeping willows are pretty but they just don't make it in a backyard. Another willow tree is a hybrid called the Aust tree. Aust trees are usually not found at our local garden centers, but instead in those too good to be true offers in the newspapers or magazines.

Cottonwood and Poplars

Avoid members of the poplar or cottonwood family. Even though cottonwood is the Kansas state tree it is probably best left to tower over the stream banks. In the landscape, fast growing poplar species break in storms, develop canker diseases which leads to limb die-back and are prone to borers. As the tree ages, they will fail and become landscape eyesores.

Maples: Silver, Red and Freeman's

The last group of trees I will put on my avoid list are ones that will get me in trouble. On my do not plant list are several species of maples. I will start with the least controversial, silver maple. This long available tree is a nice specimen, but due to the fact that it is soft-wooded it does not show its true colors until it is mature. At that point limbs will break in storms and then decay develops which leads to defects and a costly unwanted removal.

Those that have read my writing know what is coming next. I do not recommend red ma-

ples. Red maples have probably been the most commonly planted tree over the last 20 years. There is good enough reason not to plant red maple. Any species that is overplanted in an area is more prone to insect and disease outbreaks. Remember the destruction from Dutch elm disease and EAB? Both occurred from overplanted species. So what does the future hold for this maple?

Red maple as a young tree is highly susceptible to trunk injury. Look at it closely — it cracks, splits and dies resulting in rot and decay. I have lost track of the number of photos of sickly red maple trunks that have come into our office. "What can I do to save my tree?" I am asked. The honest answer is purchase some hotdogs and marshmallows and have a bonfire. There is no saving the tree.



cross the silver maple for its growth habit with the red maple for its fall color and produce a new tree!" Now we have a fast growing, soft wooded tree with fall color. Yeah, that will sell, and boy has it. But why did anyone ever think that two inferior parents would produce a better offspring? I do not recommend Freeman's maple.

As you can see some of our most popular and well-known trees are on my hit list. (And don't get me started on those blankety-blank ornamental pears!)

I think many people just fall prey to what they know or what is familiar. It is comfortable, easy, and doesn't require thought or an investment. But selecting a tree is an investment, not just today but for 20, 30, 40 years or more. Would you purchase your home because it is easy? No, you would research the area, schools, and crime rate. You wouldn't just walk in and say, "I'll take this one."

Don't become a tree settler just because you recognize the name or your neighbor planted one. There are lots of wonderful trees of all sizes and all aspects that do well here in Kansas City. Do your homework and make sure that the tree you planted today will be here tomorrow for future generations to enjoy.

Now to make matters worse the industry said, "Let's



Learn, Share, Grow

Extension Master Gardener (EMG) is an educational volunteer program sponsored by K-State Research and Extension. EMGs come from all walks of life, but their common bond is a love of gardening and sharing information throughout the community. EMGs receive a basic training in the disciplines of horticulture. They then volunteer in projects to help Extension promote its educational mission.



What We Do:

Johnson County K-State Research and Extension Master Gardeners volunteer to preserve and beautify the environment and improve the quality of life in the community by providing current research-based horticultural information to the public. EMGs promote horticulture practices, sustainability, and environmental initiatives supported by K-State Research and Extension. The organization embodies the horticultural education objectives of the Johnson County Extension Council cooperating with Kansas State University and the United States Department of Agriculture.

IT'S TIME TO REVIVE SUMMER CONTAINER GARDENS

By Dennis Patton | Horticulturalist

Container gardens add a pop of color. But without proper care they could be starting to fade. Learn these easy tips to help bring them back to life for extended beauty into the fall.

Colorful container gardens bring beauty to front porches and patios all summer long. Unfortunately, for some, the good intentions in the spring may have begun to fizzle during the heat of the summer.

Don't give up hope if your container garden is starting to look tired and ready for the compost pile. These tips, plus the arrival of cooler fall days, can breathe new life into the planting.

Feed to Promote Growth

Container gardens require constant watering to thrive as the summer heat and winds quickly dry out the soil. Unfortunately, nutrients in the soil are leached out from all this watering or are consumed by the growing plants. This lack of nutrients is like a car running out of gas.

There are several ways to fertilize containers. Water-soluble fertilizers are easy, just follow the directions on the package. Lawn and garden fertilizers without herbicides are an economical choice as well. A teaspoon spread around the surface works for smaller containers, while a tablespoon is necessary for larger plantings.

Before fertilizing, make sure the soil is moist and the plants are not under stress. Apply water-soluble fertilizers by labeled rates. If using a garden fertilizer, apply about once a month.

Avoid the use of slow-release fertilizers this late in the season. Time is running out, and they need the push now.

Prune to Promote Growth

Some container plants may be overgrown

or look straggly. Just like pruning a shrub or tree to stimulate new growth, apply the same principles to annuals in containers.

Is the sweet potato vine taking over the patio? Is the coleus tall and leggy, crowding out other plants? If so, get out the pruning shears and cut them back.

Removing the top growth will encourage new branches to develop below the cut. The new growth will be stronger, stimulate flowering, and breathe new life into the pot.

Pruning can and should be done all summer long to keep the planting fresh. Some plants outgrow and overtake less vigorous plants in the container. Nipping back the more robust growers maintains the balance of growth, keeping the planter looking terrific.



Replace the Dead and Dying

If fertilization and pruning will not work, it is time to get ruthless and remove the underperforming plant. Don't think of a dead plant or a hole in the planting as a failure. Instead, look at this spot as an opportunity to make a change.

Take a trip to the garden center to find inspiration and pop in a new plant.

An array of fall plants is coming onto the market. Use mums, flowering kale, colorful peppers, and pansies to transition between the seasons.

With the cooler days and nights, September and October can increase growth and flowering before the first frost. Don't give up on your containers. Impart new life by reviving your summer annuals. With a bit of care, they will continue to provide a splash of color and enjoyment.



What's Growing in the Garden?

By Zac Hoppenstedt | Horticulturalist



July was hot and dry (understatement of the year) and up until July 25th we actually hadn't accumulated more than 7/10 inch of rain—with several 4 day+ stretches without any precip. Great weather for curing onions and ripening blackberries, of which we had an abundance, but hard on tomatoes, leafy greens and unirrigated tree fruit. Nonetheless, at the time of writing we're enjoying some much needed rain and cooler temperature to close out the month.

Tomatoes in this Heat...

Everyone's asking when will we have our first big bumper crop of tomatoes. Because of space constraints (i.e. over planting the garden to spring crops) we didn't get our tomatoes planted until May 12th—which is actually pretty early based on the schedule of previous years. Through our participation with the statewide Master Gardener Variety Trial program we received over 60 transplants from the greenhouses in Manhattan and planted at least 3 samples each for 5 hybrid determinate and indeterminate varieties respectively. Varieties include Celebrity, Mt. Gem, Resolute, Red Snapper, Red Deuce, Jetstar, Tough Boy Gold, Better Boy Plus, Mt. Rouge and Big Beef—look for our variety evaluations this fall.

Unfortunately by the time the plants were established and really flowering temperature were 90°F and above on a fairly regular basis. Temps above 85°F interfere with tomato pollination and unfortunately we have not had great fruit set up to this point. We'll hopefully start some harvests of significance here in early August and if current cooler weather prevails we'll look forward to some late August and early September fruiting.

Planning for Fall

Following several bouts of heat exhaustion last month we were tempted to walk away from the demonstration garden forever—some of us looking for a new profession and/or hobby. But we had to keep in mind some of the best outdoor growing weather is still ahead of us. As we discussed in last month's article, there is still time for a second planting of Irish potatoes (if you saved any of your seed pieces from the spring) but more commonly squash,

beans and cucumber—this is especially good strategy if your first planting looks worn by now. We've already started seeding and will continue to sow indoors some of our cabbages, broccoli, scallions, spinach and lettuce for transplanting around mid-August. The rain at the end of July helped us get a head start on succession plantings of carrots, beets, and turnips which we will continue thru the end of the month for anything with less than 60 days to maturity. And even if you don't open up this newsletter until early September, remember you can still get in some radishes and baby salad greens.

Seeding Cover Crops

As we sit in front of our Farmers' Almanac to plan out dates for our fall vegetable plantings, we are also mindful to save some space and leave time to establish cover crops in the garden. These are plantings almost always started from bulk seed broadcasted over the beds in the garden that would otherwise be fallow. Fallow beds are especially common over the late fall and winter, so we try to "cover" them with cover crops. When we establish thick stands of cover crops like rye grass, winter peas, and oats late summer/early fall we smother weeds, protect the beds from erosion, nutrient loss, and build organic matter. The next spring we terminate these plantings by mowing them short and incorporating the residues back into the soil with our tiller, broadfork and/or silage tarps to speed up decomposition. It's like growing your own mulch and compost for the garden.

Upcoming Farmers Market

Just two more WIC Garden Farmers Markets left, the next being held August 11th 10am-1pm at the WIC Community Garden (11875 S. Sunset – East side of the Olathe Health Services Building) These are come-and-go events that are free and open to the public. The Market includes garden tours, recipe testing to highlight seasonal produce and of course attendees can pick up fresh organic vegetables to take home from the market stand (donation suggested to support the WIC Community Garden). This is a great opportunity to see in person the urban agriculture techniques we discuss in the newsletter, to get outside and take home some delicious food!



EXTENSION MASTER NATURALISTS

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Master Naturalist
Johnson County

Our Mission

In support of Kansas State Research and Extension we shall be an educational, non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to fulfilling the state program's mission to develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Kansas.

Who We Are

The Extension Master Naturalist (EMN) program is sponsored by K-State Research and Extension to provide the community with unbiased, research-based information and expertise on protecting and maintaining the natural resources of Kansas. We accomplish this through the efforts of volunteer Extension Master Naturalists (EMN's).

All EMN's share a passion and love of nature. They come from all walks of life and varying backgrounds, are trained and certified by the EMN organization in Kansas natural resource concepts and share their training and passion through a variety of EMN activities including restoration of natural areas, wildlife monitoring, citizen science and public awareness. In 2019, EMNs donated over 6850 hours of service worth more than \$144,500 and directly impacted over 8700 people.

Bluebird Stewardship

EMN Bluebird Stewards monitor Bluebird houses, located throughout many parks in Johnson County, during the nesting season to protect bluebirds from predators and other dangers. They also collect data on the number of nests, eggs and successful fledglings. This citizen science project shows us how well our parks are supporting bluebirds. In addition, Bluebird Stewards are rolling out educational resources for teachers, home schoolers, civic groups, and anyone interested in learning more about these beautiful birds.

Land Stewardship

In partnership with Johnson County Parks and Recreation District, the EMN program works to restore natural habitats at several sites including the Snake Mitigation Area at Shawnee Mission Park and the woodlands of Ernie Miller Nature Center. This involves both removing invasive plant species as well as restoring native plant species. The EMN program is also partnering with Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to restore the prairie at Olathe Prairie Center.

Mill Creek Stream Team

The Mill Creek Stream Team collects water chemistry and macroinvertebrate samples along Mill Creek to supplement other monitoring efforts in the area. Other activities include stream cleanups along waterways, education programs with Friends of the Kaw, and riparian restoration with Johnson County Parks and Recreation.

Pollinator Prairie Garden

The Pollinator Prairie Garden is an educational/demonstration garden for the public to visualize how native wildflowers and grasses might look in their home gardens. It strives to educate the public on pollinators like bees, birds, and butterflies, and how they can incorporate sources of food, shelter, and safe areas for breeding in their areas.

Our Partnerships

The EMN program partners with organizations that share common goals with the EMN and K-State Research and Extension. EMNs assist with their education/interpretation, ecological and citizen science activities. These partnerships include:

- Ernie Miller Nature Center
- Friends of the Kaw
- Johnson County Parks & Recreation District
- Kansas City Wildlands
- Kansas Dept of Wildlife Parks & Tourism Olathe Prairie Center
- City of Lenexa
- City of Shawnee

“EMN is my tribe... people who love nature the same as I do. I don't have to explain why I'm happy to get dirty and sweaty to see some birds or snakes!

- Mary Gillespie, EMN

RACCOONS AND ROUNDWORMS

By Juju Wellemeyer | Natural Resources Agent

Creative Commons Photo

Masked Bandits, trash pandas, Ring tails... their nicknames are almost as prolific as the creatures themselves.

Previous population estimates in Kansas have ranged from 20-40 raccoons per square mile, though some studies indicate higher densities exist in urban areas with more habitat and food resources. Some people find these iconic mammals to be a cute addition to the neighborhood, but many find raccoons to be poor neighbors who destruct property.

What is the actual risk of having raccoons share your living spaces? Distemper, rabies, and ringworm, to name a few of the most concerning.

Raccoons are social creatures when it comes to certain functions like eliminating waste. Often referred to as "latrines", raccoons will choose a spot to defecate and will continue to visit that area. If they weren't carriers of roundworm perhaps it wouldn't be a big deal to allow them to use your yard for their restroom facilities. But the roundworm they tend to harbor is also resistant to chemicals, so only extreme heat is effective at killing the eggs.

When they defecate, the roundworm eggs pass through their system and are deposited in the soil. In young children and pets this can then get picked up and ingested, continuing the lifecycle in a new host. The best practice is to wash your hands thoroughly after spending time outside, even if you were gardening with gloves on.

So what if they've locat-



ed their latrine in your vegetable garden? The good news is roundworm cannot infect vegetables except where the feces touch the plant material. The bad news is roundworm eggs can survive long periods of time, so you may need to bring in new dirt or move your garden if you have a thick population of raccoons visiting.

The other diseases they carry are not commonly passed to other animals or humans, which is good because getting raccoons to find a new residence is not easy.

Known for their intelligence, most deterrent methods don't work once they figure out the threat is not real. Repellents also have not been proven effective at discouraging raccoons. Trapping and exclusion fencing are the only two methods that provide consistent results.

The main tenants of Keeping Wildlife Wild apply to raccoons and help discourage them from inhabiting your area in the first place. Don't leave out food (dog/cat/bird) or water sources, keep trash secured, and make a lot of startling noise if you do see one to encourage it to be wary of humans.

If all else fails, you can hire a professional to come trap them for you, and Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks keeps a list of licensed operators located in the state. Check your local city ordinances to see if you can trap them legally yourself, as furbearers most trapping is regulated by a season unless they're damaging your property.

As always, contact your local friendly extension office if you need assistance dealing with nuisance wildlife.

Keeping Up With the Extension Master Naturalists

Extension Master Naturalists tour one of their project sites named Red-Bellied Snake Restoration Area at Shawnee Mission Park and stop to examine a green dragon (*Arisaeum dracontium*), a plant in the same family as Jack-in-the-Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*).



A Gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer*) sighting while some EMNs monitor Bluebird nest boxes. Gophersnakes (also known as Bull Snakes) are non-venomous and have a diet mainly of small rodents. They sometimes mimic the actions of rattlesnakes, instead of a rattle they use a hiss to announce their presence. Note the dark bands around the tail, a great indicator of this harmless species that provides beneficial pest control.

Gray-headed Coneflowers (*Ratibida pinnata*) bloomed at the [EMN-maintained] Pollinator Prairie in Olathe. These native flowers provide nectar for a variety of moths and butterflies, serve as a host plant for Silvery Checkerspot Butterfly and Wavy-lined Emerald Moth, and songbirds eat the seeds after the blooming season.



Eastern Bluebirds (*Sialia sialis*) prep to fledge from their monitored nestbox. Bluebirds typically nest in cavities from April – July, though sometimes they initiate breeding again in August, and typically raise several broods per year.

Johnson County Shooters Have a Successful Nationals Trip

by Jessica Lawrenz | 4-H Youth Development

Aim small, miss small!" is a phrase our Johnson County shooters have learned to embrace. The 4-H Shooting Sports program in Johnson County has undoubtedly become a popular and one of the largest 4-H projects in the last ten years!

Whether a 4-H'er has an interest in BB, rifle, shotgun, pistol or archery, the shooting sports project teaches youth shooting and range safety, hunting skills, environmental awareness, marksmanship, and a variety of life skills including respect, control, self-discipline, resiliency, determination, and sportsmanship, all while offering the opportunity to compete against other 4-H'ers from around the state and nation.

Shooting sports is a unique sport that is worldwide and so popular only two other sports attract more participating countries at the Olympics. The program promotes individual as well as team competition which can lead to scholarships in many colleges and a life-long sport or hobby.

This year, five JoCo shooters and two coaches qualified and had the opportunity to attend the 4-H Shooting Sports National

Championship that took place in Grand Island, Nebraska on June 26-July 1. The JoCo team included (l to r) Natalie Gulick, recurve archery, Evan Kozlowski, small bore pistol, Coach Sara Eccles, small bore pistol, Abby Lawrenz, muzzleloader, Coach Arn Eccles, recurve archery, Landon Pierce, small bore pistol, and Becca Adair, small bore pistol. Visit the 2022 Shooting Sports Nationals page, for images and results.

It requires many steps and a ton of hard work to end up at the National level in shooting sports! First a shooter must attend and compete in at least one county shooting match and earn a minimum score to qualify for the state match. At the state match, a shooter must place in the top four to earn a spot to attend Nationals. Only four shooters in each discipline from the ENTIRE state make up a Kansas team for every discipline, so it is quite an honor to earn your seat on the team.

The coach for the National team is then chosen by the #1 seed shooter in the state for every discipline. There are nine disciplines represented at Nationals

which include recurve archery, compound archery, shotgun, air pistol, air rifle, small bore pistol, small bore rifle, hunting skills, and muzzleloader. In total, a state can bring up to nine teams of three-to-four shooters per team.

At this year's Nationals, Team Kansas won a prestigious and special award! They won the Sweepstakes Award for the very first time in 42 years of the Nationals Championships! This award only applies to states with all nine disciplines represented. The teams' scores from each discipline is added together for an overall score. The highest scoring overall team earns the award, and this year it was Kansas!

The towering traveling trophy will be kept at the Kansas State University 4-H office until next year's championship match.

For more information about the Johnson County Shooting Sports program, contact the Extension Office or your JoCo Shooting Sports Coordinators Arn Eccles (arneccles@gmail.com), Lisa Castellon-Smith (lisa@custompublications.com), or Beth Alloway (boa@ksu.edu).





4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. 4-H helps young people acquire the skills and knowledge to become self-directing, productive, contributing members of our community through projects, events and activities. Rocketry, woodworking, foods, gardening, and clothing are just a few examples of the diverse offerings that help teach youth.

Why 4-H?

Raising great kids is a challenge, but it's easier when you have a team of people behind you. 4-H clubs are groups of families that do just that. By working together, families share knowledge and interests to help kids learn important skills and values.

What Do 4-H Clubs Do?

4-H Clubs meet once a month and members consist of boys and girls ages 7-18. 4-H'ers run the meetings using parliamentary procedure with some help from the adult club leaders. The youth president will lead the meeting but the whole club is involved in all the decisions made. During the meetings youth will discuss a number of items including community service projects, fundraising and club activities. 4-H'ers will have a chance to work on their public speaking skills by giving presentations to their club.

If you have questions about our program, please don't hesitate to contact us. No matter what you need, stop by, email or give us a call. We're here to help!

What is 4-H?

4-H Is a Network of Families That Grows Great Kids. 4-H clubs have a mix of teens and younger youth, as well as a variety of interest and activities. Most meet once a month with all members. At the meeting they make decisions about community service, hear presentations from guest speakers and other 4-H members, and learn about leadership, citizenship and public speaking. This is all done in an environment of a youth/adult partnership.

We encourage all parents to attend meetings with youth to support their activities. Youth who turn 7 before January 1 of the current 4-H year may enroll. Cloverbuds, an introductory program, is available for youth ages 5 and 6. The new 4-H year begins October 1st of each year but

we accept enrollment year round. Although to participate in the county fair, you must enroll by May 1.

How to Join:

Joining 4-H is as easy as 1-2-3!

1. Check out all the Clubs in Johnson County
2. Visit 2-3 clubs - every 4-H Club is unique and its important to find a good fit for your family.
3. Submit an online enrollment

SPecial INterest (SPIN) Clubs

SPIN Club stands for SPecial INterest Club. These are short-term and focus on one specific topic. The first two SPIN Clubs offered in Johnson County were Reading and BB Gun. Have a special skill or talent you would like to share with youth? Why

not volunteer to lead a short term program? Please check out our SPIN View our SPIN Club overview brochure on our Extension website.

Projects

4-H offers a wide variety of subject matter through its many projects. Youth enrolled in community clubs will have the opportunity to take part in many of the projects with the assistance of a project leader. Project clubs will focus on one or two specific project areas and will provide a very in-depth look at the project. Visit our Projects page on our Extension website.

Questions About Joining 4-H:

Call the Extension Office at 913-715-7000 or email joco4-h@jocogov.org.

In partnership together



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