



4-H & Youth Development 2023 Christmas Toy Drive

The Butler County Extension Office is now collecting new and unwrapped gifts for the 2023 Christmas Toy Drive until Friday, December 8th at 11:30 a.m. All donations will be given to the Augusta Community Caring Center where they will be distributed to Butler County families in need. See flyer for more details!

Horticulture

The USDA released a new Plant Hardiness Zone Map for the United States, the first update to this map since 2012. The 2023 map is based on 30-year averages of the lowest annual winter temperatures at specific locations. Plant hardiness zone designations represent what's known as the "average annual extreme minimum temperature" at a given location during a particular period (30 years, in this instance). Put another way, the designations do not reflect the coldest it has ever been or ever will be at a specific location, but simply the average lowest winter temperature over a specified time. Low temperature during the winter is a crucial factor in the survival of plants at specific locations. What does that mean for gardeners in Butler County? In the 2012 version Plant Hardiness Zone Map, our county was divided into zones 6a and 6b. With the update to the map, the county is now in zones 6b and 7a. Most of the county is now a half-zone warmer than in the past. In general, this update means that we should be able to grow zone 7 plants that require a slightly warmer winter temperature, but I would consider them marginally hardy in our area. You may get away with those plants for a few years, but we may still get the odd winter with unusually cold temperatures. I do want to note that the map does not show microclimates. A microclimate is a local set of atmospheric conditions that differ from those in the surrounding areas, often slightly but sometimes substantially. The term may refer to areas as small as a few square yards or smaller to as large as many square miles. The interactive map may be found here:

<https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>

Agriculture How Dry Are We?

I don't have to be the one to tell you that we are in a drought and continue to be in a drought. But how dry are we? I attended an Agronomy update the week of Thanksgiving where one of our K-State Climatologists provided us with in-depth information. Between April 1, 2023 to October 31, 2023, on average – our southeast area of the State is 10.13 inches BELOW normal precipitation. Between November 1 and March 31 our southeast area of the State on average receives 10.33 inches of precipitation. What does that mean? In order for us to not be in drought come April 1st, we must receive 20.46 inches of precipitation by the end of March! This amount has never been received during that time frame! One should never say never, however, the closest to that occurring occurred 1972-1973. To go along with that, we are close being in a Super El Nino and predict that we will end up in a Super El Nino. We have had 5 Super El Nino years previously and in 100% of those, we have ended up with above normal precipitation during our winter months. So, while we remain hopeful that we will receive much needed moisture, it is quite possible we will enter spring 2024 still in drought conditions.

Family Consumer Sciences

How often do you clean your kitchen sink?

With the holiday season upon us, the kitchen is a place to not only prepare food, but gather for conversation and connection. To prevent it also becoming the breeding ground for illness-causing bacteria use the following tips:

Practice good personal hygiene. One of the top causes of foodborne illness is the failure of the preparer washing their hands. Wash your hands, tie back your hair and make sure you are practicing good hygiene habits.

Know your times and temperatures. Cook your foods to their proper internal temperature. Cooking a turkey? Remember the internal temperature should reach a minimum of 165 F, cooking at no lower than 325 F.

Remember the 2-hour rule. Discard any perishable items left out at room temperature for more than two-hours unless you're keeping it hot or cold at the proper holding temperature.

Prevent cross-contamination by cleaning as you go. Using contaminated equipment causes cross-contamination and the spread of bacteria.

Don't forget the sink! The sink often goes unnoticed during kitchen clean up, leading to food contamination. After using your sink to wash or prepare food, clean and sanitize it:

- 1) Use warm, soapy water to wash the sink. Wipe it clean with paper towels.
- 2) Use a sanitizer and let air dry. Sanitizers can be homemade (1 tablespoon of liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water) or use a commercial sanitizer or sanitizing wipe.

For other questions when it comes to food safety, contact your local K-State Research and Extension Office. May your holiday season be one filled with joy, health and good cheer.

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

For KSRE publications and information,
visit www.ksre.ksu.edu

K-STATE RESEARCH AND
EXTENSION BUTLER COUNTY

Christmas Toy Drive

All donations will be collected at the Butler County Extension Office at 206 N Griffith, Suite A in El Dorado Until 11:30 a.m. Friday, December 8th



New and Unwrapped Items
Needed for Children 11 years
of Age and Younger:

- Sports Equipment
- Art Supplies
- Toys
- Books
- Journals
- Puzzles
- Board Games

All collected items will be given to
the Augusta Community Caring
Center where they will be
distributed to Butler County
Families in need.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment
Station and Cooperative Extension Service K-State
Research and Extension is an equal opportunity
provider and employer.

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



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

