

GETTING HEALTHY WITH HERBS

Learn how to grow and use them!!!

On Tuesday, April 21st, at 6:30 PM at the Rose Hill Methodist Church 19551 SW Butler County Rd, Rose Hill, KS. Kay Neff, owner of Neff Family Farms, will share her vast knowledge of all things herbal. Kay will not only be giving tips on what herbs grow here and how to grow them, she will also be sharing recipes and have a good selection of herbs for sale for those in attendance. We will cover some of the nutritional aspects of including herbs in your diet. We will also be preparing different dishes that are relatively easy to make. So before and after the program people will be able to taste the different offerings to see what might interest them.

Please pre-register for this event, this will help insure that we have enough materials for all attending. The cost to attend is **\$5.00 per person**, and the **registration deadline is Friday, April 17th**. To register, come by or call the **Butler County Extension office at (316) 321-9660**. Or you can e-mail the Butler County Extension office using slewis2@ksu.edu. Put "Herbs" in the subject line and include your name and phone number in the body of the e-mail. So please come and join us for information on buying, growing, preserving, using and cooking with herbs!

Ants in the Home

April showers bring spring flowers and ants. Ant home invasions typically start after the weather warms. A few "scout" ants search for food and water. When they find what they are looking for, they will lay down a chemical trail to show others the way. If the homeowner can trace the ants back to a nest, control is simple. Spraying the nest with a labeled insecticide will take care of the problem. Unfortunately, nests are often outside the home and can be extremely difficult to find. Also, ants are so small that finding and caulking all potential entry points is usually not practical. Treating the trails is another tactic that may give temporary relief but normally does not work over the long term; the ants simply find another way.

In the end, homeowners are often left with two strategies: sanitation and baits. Eliminating crumbs, grease, scraps or other food materials will help discourage ant invasions. Ants use the most easily accessible food sources, which leads to use of baits. By using bait materials the ants like, you can trick them into taking the insecticide back to the nest where it is fed to the queen and other members of the colony. Over time the nest will be destroyed. There are a number of commercially available homeowner formulations that contain both the bait and insecticide and come pre-packaged in a child-resistant station. If ant activity increases around the newly set bait station, do not worry. The insecticides are meant to be slow acting so the product can be transported back to the colony before the worker dies. Unfortunately, not all ants are attracted to the same baits. Also, the food preference of ants may change over time. If one bait product isn't attractive, try another.

Butterfly Gardening

Butterfly gardening is becoming more popular with Kansans. Providing for the basic needs of butterflies, such as food, shelter and liquids, will encourage butterflies to visit this summer.

There are a number of plants that attract butterflies. However, different species of butterflies prefer different plants. Using a variety of plant material that vary in blooming times of day and year helps attract a diverse group of visitors. Plant groups of the same plant together; a single plant is difficult for a butterfly to detect. If trying to attract a certain species of butterfly, learn which plant(s) that butterfly prefers, and then emphasize that plant in your planting. Annuals that attract butterflies include ageratum, cosmos, French marigold, petunia, verbena and zinnia.

Perennials and shrubs can be split into those that bloom early, mid-season and late. Good choices for those that bloom early are allium, chives, forget-me-not and lilac. Bee balm, butterfly bush, black-eyed Susan, buttonbush, butterfly weed, daisy, daylily, gaillardia, lavender, lily, mint, phlox, privet, sunflower and veronica

are fitting picks for mid-season bloom. Late bloomers include aster, glossy abelia and sedum. There are other things you can do to encourage butterflies. Butterflies are cold-blooded and like open areas where they can sun themselves on cool days and shade to cool off when the sun is too intense. Butterflies also need water. A simple way to make a butterfly pool is to take a bucket, fill it with gravel, and bury it to the rim. Now add water, sugar water or sweet drinks so that the butterflies can land on the gravel but still reach the liquid.

Fertilizing the Home Orchard

Fruit trees benefit from fertilization around the bloom period, but the amount needed varies with the age of the tree. Normally, trees primarily need nitrogen, so the recommendations are for a high nitrogen fertilizer such as a 27-3-3, 29-5-4, 30-3-3 or something similar. Though recommended for lawns, these fertilizers will also work well as long as they do not contain weed killers or crabgrass preventers. Use the following rates:

Trees 1 to 2 years old, apply one-fourth cup of fertilizer per tree;

Trees 3 to 4 years old, apply one-half cup per tree;

Trees 5 to 10 years old, apply 1 to 2 cups per tree;

Trees more than 10 years old, apply 2 to 3 cups.

You may also use nitrate of soda (16-0-0) but double the rate recommended above. If a soil test calls for phosphorus and potassium, use a 10-10-10 but triple the rate. On apple trees, last year's growth should be 8 to 10 inches, cherries should have 10 to 12 inches, and peaches should equal 12 to 15 inches of terminal growth. If less than this, apply the higher rate of fertilizer, and if more, apply the lesser amount. Spread all fertilizer evenly on the ground away from the trunk of the tree and to the outer spread of the branches. Water in the fertilizer.