

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

Extension
Butler County

April
2026



From the Director's Desk

There is no joking that April is here! We all know the old saying, "April showers bring May flowers," and with rain in the forecast this week, many of us are hopeful for some meaningful moisture to help settle the dust. Unfortunately, it looks like the Kansas wind is not going anywhere anytime soon!

April also marks the beginning of the Flint Hills Smoke Management season. There is often a misconception that no burning is allowed during April, but that is not the case. Restrictions apply to the burning of brush piles, yard waste, land clearing debris, agricultural crop residue, and construction or demolition waste. However, agricultural grasslands will continue to be burned as producers work to control weeds, invasive species, and unwanted trees. These prescribed burns are essential to maintaining the health and longevity of our grasslands. Butler County is one of 16 counties included in the Flint Hills Smoke Management Plan, and additional information can be found on the KsFire Website.

WalkKansas is also well underway, with Week 1 already complete. Butler County has an excellent group participating this year, with 19 teams and 70 individuals actively working toward healthier lifestyles. Even if you are not officially participating in WalkKansas, I encourage everyone to get outside and get moving. Walking and exercise are beneficial not only for our physical health but also for our mental well-being.

The Butler County Bloom and Grow Lawn and Garden Show is right around the corner. Hosted by the K-State Extension Butler County Master Gardeners this event will feature educational speakers and vendors for lawn and garden enthusiasts of all kinds. Be sure to mark your calendars for April 11 and 12. Additional information can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

And finally, a fun fact for the month of April: April 23 is National Picnic Day. A picnic is a great excuse to step outside, connect with nature, unplug from technology, and enjoy some good old-fashioned conversation. Plus, it is hard to beat a little sunshine and fresh air this time of year!

~Charlene

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Upcoming Events

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.

April 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 Lawn & Garden Show	11 Lawn & Garden Show Fairground Clean Up
12 Lawn & Garden Show	13	14 4-H Council	15	16	17	18
19	20 Small Animal Tagging	21	22	23 YQCA 6-8 p.m	24	25 Walnut River Showdown
26	27	28	29	30		

Upcoming Events



2026 K-State Junior Sheep Producer Day

Date
4.11.2026
Manhattan, KS

Registration
Due: 3.20.2026
Cost: \$20/person
<https://bit.ly/SheepJrProducer>
*All adults & youth must register to attend.
**Only those registered by 3/20/26 will receive a t-shirt.
***Late registration is \$30/person.

Questions
Lexie Hayes
785.532.1264
adhayes@ksu.edu

Program

Join us for the biennial K-State Junior Sheep Producer Day on Saturday, April 11, 2026. Presentations will be provided by featured guests, as well as K-State faculty, staff, and students. This event will be an educational day of activities in which youth, parents, extension agents, ag teachers, and sheep project leaders can increase their knowledge of youth sheep project selection and management. A variety of topics will be shared, including an optional YQCA certification at the end of the day. All ages and skill levels are invited! Lunch and a t-shirt are included. The registration fee is \$20/person for those who sign up by March 20 or \$30/person for those who register after that date. Only those who register by the deadline will receive a t-shirt. This is a family event! Anyone attending, including both youth and adults, must register. There will be an optional tour of the sheep and meat goat center offered on Friday evening and Saturday after jr. day.

Tentative Schedule

Friday, April 10
5:00-7:00PM Optional Tour of Sheep & Goat Center
Saturday, April 11
8:00AM Check-in
9:00AM Welcome
9:15AM Selection
10:00AM Nutrition
10:45AM Morning Breakout Sessions
-facilities & equipment, reproduction, project management purchase to show
Lunch
NOON
1:00PM Health
1:45PM Afternoon Breakout Sessions
-wool, showmanship, clipping & grooming
3:45PM Dismissal
4:00PM Optional YQCA Class
4:00-6:00PM Optional Sheep & Goat Center Tour

K-State, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating. All educational programs and materials available without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability.



WALK KANSAS

March 22 - May 16, 2026
Walk with us toward a healthier tomorrow.

Registration opens March 1!



Kansas State University
Extension

walkkansas.org

K-State Extension Butler County

206 N. Griffith St. El Dorado, KS 67042
316-321-9660
cmmiller1@ksu.edu

Kansas State University is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Upcoming Events

Are YOU interested in plants, livestock or wildlife?

KANSAS YOUTH RANGE CAMP

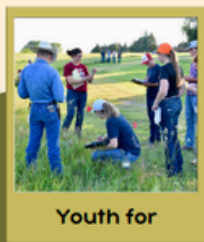
Upcoming High School Sophomores, Juniors, & Seniors

Learn about range plant identification, plant growth, stocking rates, livestock nutrition, and rangeland wildlife management

Enjoy field trips, hands on learning, a steak dinner, swimming, fishing, and hiking!

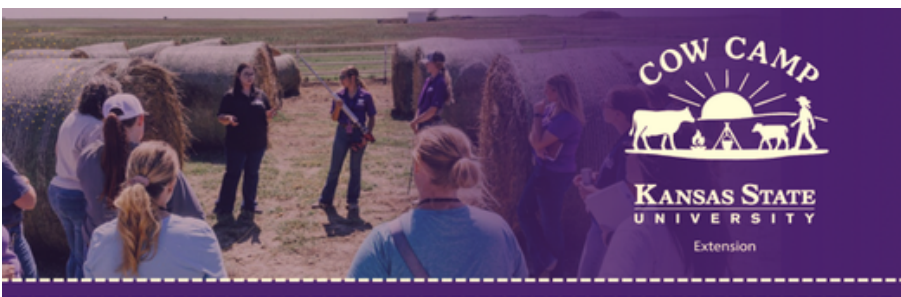
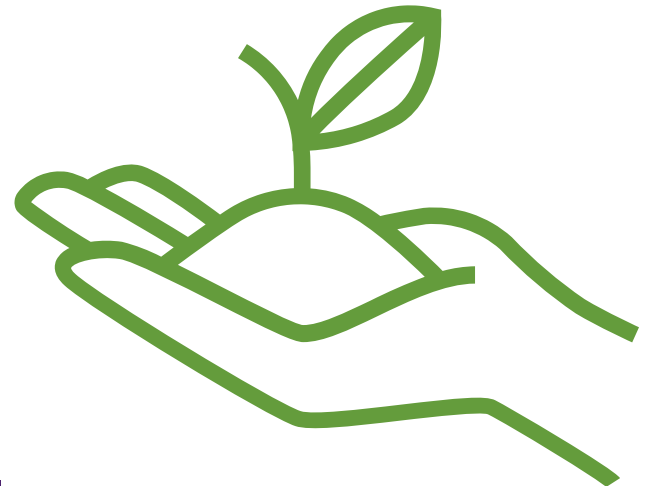
June 9-12, 2026 COST: \$300

Contact your local Conservation District for scholarship opportunities!



Contact:
Ethan Walker
KS Youth Range Camp Chair
620-451-1011
ethan.walker@usda.gov

Sponsored by:
Kansas Section, Society for Range Management



COW CAMP



KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension

TWO LOCATIONS. ONE PURPOSE. EMPOWERING WOMEN IN THE CATTLE INDUSTRY.

A no-pressure, practical skills camp for women ready to grow their knowledge—and their role—in beef cattle management.

WESTERN KANSAS, HAYS WKREC
SEPTEMBER 9-10, 2026
EASTERN KANSAS, PARSONS SEREC
MAY 5-6, 2026

Contact Us

Western: Dr. Emma Briggs
785-625-3425

Eastern: Dr. Jaymelynn Farney
620-820-6125

LEARN MORE AT:

https://www.wkrec.org/events/cow_camp/



Kansas State University is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision, or hearing disability, contact Logan Simon SWREC, Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Upcoming Events



TWO LOCATIONS. ONE PURPOSE. EMPOWERING WOMEN IN THE CATTLE INDUSTRY.

A no-pressure, practical skills camp for women ready to grow their knowledge and their role in beef cattle management.

- K-State-backed research and expertise
- Applied, real-world management practices
- Hands-on learning in a supportive environment

WESTERN KANSAS, HAYS WKREC
SEPTEMBER 9-10, 2026
EASTERN KANSAS, PARSONS SEREC
MAY 5-6, 2026

**Eastern
registration
now open**

Contact Us

Western: Dr. Emma Briggs
785-625-3425

Eastern: Dr. Jaymelynn Farney
620-820-6125

SCAN HERE TO LEARN MORE



www.wkrec.org/events/cow_camp/

Kansas State University is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision, or hearing disability, contact Logan Simon SWREC, Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

ANNUAL BUTLER COUNTY Lawn & Garden Show



**FREE
Admission**

- Children's activities
- Concessions
- Exhibits & vendors
- Plants for sale!
- Professional presentations
- Seed swap
- Soil test service available!
- & More!

**DOOR
PRIZES!**

Event Details



Saturday, April 11th, 9 AM - 5 PM

Sunday, April 12th, 11 AM - 4 PM

Butler County Community/4-H Building
200 N. Griffith, El Dorado

This institution 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 of communication (e.g., Braille, large print, and American Sign Language), may be requested by contacting the event contact, Butler County Ext. Office four weeks prior to the start of the event, March 13th, at 338-521-9660. 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
Master Gardener
Butler County



Available Services

Bad Odor?

We have a breath of fresh air for you! K-State Research and Extension - Butler County offers Nilodor cotton balls to help eliminate the odor in your most desperate areas. Just 1 drop can neutralize the air in a 10'x10' room. Costing only \$0.10 per cotton ball, this is an extremely cost effective solution to your most smelly situations.



Soil Testing

Whether you are preparing your garden for spring planting or wanting to make sure your fields are ready to produce a bumper crop, we can help. Bring your soil into the K-State Research and Extension - Butler County Office today and we will ship it to K-State Soil Labs for testing. Each test comes with personal recommendations put together by our Agriculture and Horticulture Professionals. Cost will vary depending on tests requested.

For more information on Horticulture Soil Testing, visit our website here: <https://www.butler.k-state.edu/horticulture/Soil%20Tests.html>

For more information on Agriculture Soil Testing, visit our website here: <https://www.butler.k-state.edu/agriculture/soiltest/untitled.html>



Outreach

All Things Kansas

Your guide to understanding all 105 counties of the Sunflower State.

k-state.edu/allthingskansas



Access free interactive tools with data-driven mapping, reports and insights through **30,000+ data layers** and **120+ national and state sources.**

Your one-stop shop for Kansas data about:

- Agriculture
- Broadband access
- Business
- Child care and youth
- Economy
- Education
- Environment
- Food and food systems
- Health and health care
- Housing
- Population trends and profiles
- Water
- Many more topics

How All Things Kansas can help:

- Save time by accessing multiple data sources in one place
- Visualize and map data
- Build geography-based reports
- Identify opportunities across Kansas
- Understand communities and market demands
- Analyze workforce strengths and industry gaps
- Research information to help with grant writing
- Make data-informed decisions

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

LEARN MORE
Scan the QR code or visit
k-state.edu/allthingskansas



Ag Talk

Charlene Miller

Director/Agriculture Agent

cmmiller1@ksu.edu

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

Be Prepared for Prescribed Burning Season

Prescribed burning is upon us. While we had an excellent, well-attended workshop the end of February, we know many were unable to attend due to work schedules. The Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition has an excellent set of videos for viewing if you missed the workshop. You can view the videos on their website: <https://www.kglc.org/prescribed-burning-video-series.cfm>. Be prepared this season and if you have questions, reach out.

Prescribed Burning – Know the Regulations!

It is the time of year when we start planning for native pasture prescribed burning. Here are a few things you can do to help prepare and reduce the risk of unintended outcomes. 1) Know the Butler County Burn Regulations! You can find those at:

<https://www.bucoks.com/203/Controlled-Burning>. You are required to make notifications and that contact information is found in this link. I also recommend notifying your neighbors.

2) The Kansas Smoke Management Plan goes into effect on April 1 – know the plan!
www.ksfire.org

3) Develop a burn plan; identify your goals, know the weather and wind forecast (www.weather.gov/ict/fire), review safety requirements, determine equipment and manpower needs and know your emergency contacts. Also be aware of roads and major highways and use caution not to lay smoke across them. Evaluate the ground to make sure it's solid enough to hold a pickup and sprayer. If the ground is not solid, think of what will happen when you put fire trucks on there if the fire should escape. Good planning is critical when planning and executing a controlled burn.

4) A great series of Burn Videos can be found at <https://www.kglc.org/prescribed-burning-video-series.cfm>

Ag Talk

Charlene Miller

Director/Agriculture Agent

cmmiller1@ksu.edu

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

Know the Facts

April has arrived and many are hearing of the “burn ban” in effect. Butler County has not issued a county wide burn ban, however, as part of the Kansas Smoke Management Plan, there are burning restrictions that are in place. The Kansas Flint Hills Smoke Management website (www.ksfire.org) has a list of FAQ’s that highlights the restrictions in place for the month of April. Please keep in mind that Butler County is included as one of the 13 counties in the Flint Hills that are required to follow this plan. Q: Is crop residue burning restricted in April? A: Yes, crop residue burning is restricted for the 16 counties specified in the April Burning Restrictions of K.A.R. 28-19-645a (13 in Flint Hills + Johnson, Sedgwick & Wyandotte). Burning of the tall grass prairie is not considered crop residue burning.

Q: Is burning yard waste allowed at an individual residence during April?

A: Yes, unless restricted by a local ordinance.

Q: Are residential trash burn barrels permitted?

A: Yes, unless restricted by a local ordinance.

Q: Can a local fire chief override the April Burning Restrictions of K.A.R. 28-19-645a if requested by a local resident or business?

A: Yes, if local ordinance is more stringent. No, when the purpose of the override is to allow something prohibited under state regulation.

Q: Are firefighter training burns permitted?

A: Yes, with approval from KDHE. However, it is appropriate to request fire training be scheduled outside of the month of April in the affected counties.

Q: Is open burning for land clearing and construction projects allowed in April?

A: Not in the 13 Flint Hills Counties unless approved by KDHE unless local ordinance is more stringent. It is our intent to discourage nonagricultural burning during the month of April.

Q: Are air curtain destructors/incinerators allowed to operate in April?

A: Yes. ACDs are permitted by KDHE as a special type of incinerator.

Ag Talk

Charlene Miller

Director/Agriculture Agent

cmmiller1@ksu.edu

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

Know the Facts Cont.

Q: What is an example of open burning that might be “deemed to be necessary and in the public interest”?

A: Fires set to remove dangerous or hazardous liquid materials, debris from an ice storm or a tornado (where landfilling is not feasible) or storage capacity after ice storms or tornados is not sufficient to wait until May or later.

Q: What agencies and offices are involved in regulating open burning?

A: a. Local fire, emergency response and law enforcement, depending on local ordinance. b. The six KDHE District Offices. c. The Compliance Section of the Bureau of Air at KDHE in Topeka.

Q: Where is the first place a person should call with questions concerning open burning?

A: The local fire department or law enforcement authority. Next, our KDHE District Office.

Q: Which agency has the final authority on regulating open burning?

A: In most cases, the local fire department if they are more stringent. If local requirements are less stringent than KDHE, the state agency has authority.

Q: Are camp fires and bonfires allowed in April?

A: Yes, open burning for cooking or ceremonial purposes, on public or private lands regularly used for recreational purposes.

Q: Is the local permitted open burn site allowed to burn in April?

A: No, unless KDHE issues a special circumstances or emergency approval specifically for April. Otherwise, all local permitted open burn sites are discouraged from open burning during the month of April, even if a permit had been previously issued.

The success of the Flint Hills Smoke Management Plan is contingent on all parties cooperating to reduce smoke impacts

Training Course

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension
Harvey County

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension
Manhattan

Livestock Emergency Response Plan Training Course

Course Description

This training is intended for first responders (including Fire Service, Law Enforcement and EMS), emergency management, public health, public safety communicators, governmental administrative, veterinarians and others who may provide support, assistance or aid to those dealing with bovine or large animal emergencies.

This training will equip agricultural and traditional responders with foundational knowledge and practical skills to address the unique challenges motor vehicle incidents with bovines can present for emergency personnel.

The knowledge and skills gained will assist in the effective preparation and response to this type of emergency and the unique situations that are

Course Highlights

- Introduction to livestock vehicle incident response
- Learn practical, hands-on response skills
- Understand unique challenges of livestock crashes
- Improve scene safety and coordination
- Strengthen preparedness and response effectiveness

Free Training – April 2026

Training Schedule

April 28, 2026 – Newton Training

Harvey County 4-H Building

April 29, 2026 – Manhattan Training

Stanley Stout Center

Both days will start with 8:30 am registration

9:00 am - 5 pm (tentative)

**Lunch provided on site

Event Locations

Newton Training: 800 W 1st St, Newton, KS

Manhattan Training: 2200 Denison Ave, Manhattan, KS

Contact Information

Course Inquiries:

Alex Acheson, aacheson@ksu.edu, 316-284-6930

Justin Waggoner, jwaggon@ksu.edu, 620-275-9164

Register Today

Registration Link:

https://ksstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3knftZn0WDSCcU6

*Space is limited to 50 registrants per location. Please select the correct day you plan on attending.

Preferably by April 20th for meal planning.



Continuing Education Units may be available.

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 Alex Acheson four weeks prior to the start of the event: 316-284-6930. 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.

Ag Talk

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Extension
Butler County

POND MANAGEMENT

FREE TO ATTEND



RSVP

316-321-9660

<https://forms.gle/uX4Putpp8ao5Gbyq6>



GUEST SPEAKER:

DR. JOE GERKEN

K-State Extension
Fisheries & Aquatic Specialist



TUESDAY,
MAY 19TH, 2026



6:30 P.M.



BUTLER COUNTY COMMUNITY/4-H BUILDING
200 N. Griffith
El Dorado, KS 67042

COVERED TOPICS



Managing Ponds



Aquatic Plant Control



Stocking Fish

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Family & Consumer Science

April is recognized as Financial Literacy Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of understanding money management and building strong financial habits. In today's fast-paced, increasingly complex financial world, financial literacy is more essential than ever. People of all ages are encouraged to evaluate their current financial habits. Whether it's creating a budget, starting an emergency fund, or learning about investments, even small steps can lead to significant improvements over time.

Financial literacy means having the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about budgeting, saving, investing, and managing debt.

The U.S. Government's Financial Education and Literacy Commission promotes five principles for Americans to keep in mind as they make day-to-day financial decisions and plan their financial goals. Those principles are: Earn, Save and Invest, Protect, Spend and Borrow. While everyone manages money differently, these are designed to help you guide you and not hard and fast rules.



Garden Gossip

Calla Edwards

Horticulture Agent

callae@ksu.edu

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

Gardening With Kids

Some of my earliest memories involve being around plants and helping with gardening. This tradition is one that I want to pass on to my son as he grows up. Gardens can be an excellent place for kids. They provide various opportunities to learn, play, and have fun. Studies have found that introducing youth to gardening encourages them to eat a wider variety of fruits and veggies they haven't tried before, and the garden is a wonderful place to mix education and fun. Teaching youth about gardening doesn't have to be limited to the outdoors and our normal growing season; teaching them to care for houseplants can also teach a variety of lessons. Here are some tips on involving your kids in the garden and with plants.

One of the first lessons I learned was to start small and set realistic goals with kids and gardening. Break tasks into smaller chunks, especially with young kids, to match their attention span and interests. That might mean you only plant one row of corn at a time instead of the whole section, or you only water a few plants indoors at a time. Setting realistic goals and activities will help you, as the adult, have fun, and the kids will have fun. When I first started gardening with my then-toddler, I skipped this step, and the first few times we were in the garden ended in frustration for me. Once I adjusted my expectations, our ventures into the garden became fun for everyone. Your role in the garden should be that of a facilitator, rather than a dictator telling them how to do everything. Show the kids what you want done, then walk them through and let them do it. There will be some messes, but both of you will learn more from the messes than anything else.



Garden Gossip

Give your child a job. Kids, especially young kids, love to help and to have a task that is theirs to do. Pick a task that fits your child's age and abilities; for example, planting small seeds is probably not a good choice for a young child, while planting potatoes or pumpkin seeds would work. Large seeds can be boring for an older child, but smaller seeds can add a challenge that keeps their attention. Pick something that won't impact the garden if they mess up by accident. Other tasks include pulling weeds, shredding paper for mulch, watering, or putting dirt in flower pots. At home, my little guy loves to water, so he has his own watering can and waters the bigger plants that can tolerate a bit too much water every once in a while.

As kids get older, give them ownership of their garden. An excellent option is to give kids a small portion of the garden that is theirs for the summer. They get to pick what they want to grow, then maintain that portion of the garden throughout the growing season. Once the produce is ready to pick, they get to choose where it goes after harvest or how they want to eat it. Another way to give ownership is to assign one kid to a task, such as running the wheelbarrow or watering. As kids get older, remember that gardening may become "uncool," and working with them one-on-one may work better than working with them in a group.

Gardening should be a fun and educational activity for kids. Be sure to reflect with the kids after completing an activity. Depending on the age group, this reflection period could be as simple as asking what was planted or what we did. As you work with your kids, try to foster a sense of discovery and hands-on activities. Gardening can become dull, especially toward the end of the growing season, but take the time to encourage their natural curiosity. If you don't know the answer to a question, take time to look it up and read gardening books. Remember that, in the garden, you are their role model, and what you do, they will follow. Remember to show them how to be safe in the garden and read the labels of any products you are using. Above all, make gardening fun. Look for the worms when you plant or throw the maple seeds and watch them fly to the ground. Go out and get dirty with your kids this summer because education shouldn't be limited to the classroom. Happy Growing!!!



Garden Gossip

Mowing Safety Only Takes A Moment

Over the last few weeks, I have heard the lawnmowers singing me the song of their people around our neighborhood. While lawnmowers are a common tool around the garden, they also need to be treated with respect. As spring arrives and it's time to mow the lawn for the first time, I think it's important to remind people that lawn mower accidents are all too common, with 85,000 people going to the ER every year for lawn mower-related accidents, approximately 800 children are run over by lawn mowers every year causing about 600 amputations, and 75 people are killed every year (one in five of those are kids). Here are a few tips that can help keep you and your family safe this lawn mowing season:

- Wear proper clothing: While it can be tempting to work on your tan while mowing, it's important to wear clothes that protect you from any debris that could come flying out. Wear sturdy shoes with good soles and long pants. Lawn mower blades spin at speeds of up to 200 miles per hour, and any debris thrown can fly quickly. Eye protection is also important. Your eyes are sensitive areas, and any debris can quickly cause damage. Be sure to wear ear protection; your hearing will thank you later.
- Keep safety guards in place: While it might be tempting to remove any weight restrictions, turn off the seat belt on riding lawnmowers, or remove guards, it is important to keep them in place for your safety. The guards keep debris from flying out and hitting you during mowing, the seat belt keeps you from falling off when you hit a bump, and the weight restriction turns the mower off if you do fall off. All of these safety features are vital to prevent you from being run over by the mower.



Garden Gossip

Mowing Safety Only Takes A Moment

- Beware of slopes: Rollovers on riding lawnmowers are the number one killer of people in accidents. Try to mow up and down the slope rather than across it.
- Clear yard of all debris: Clear the yard of all debris, such as sticks, toys, rocks, etc, before you start to mow. While I might have found it fun to send Osage orange fruit flying across the yard for the dog to chase when I was a kid, I now know it isn't very safe. It's easy for a rock or even a branch to be thrown through a window, damage siding, or even hurt a family member in the yard.
- Disconnect spark plug wire: Always disconnect the spark plug wire before changing the oil or doing any work on a lawn mower. This prevents accidents when the lawnmower starts unexpectedly.

Whether you have a weed-free green lawn, a bee lawn, or somewhere in between, mowing is a constant throughout the summer months. Just a few minutes of care can prevent numerous accidents this mowing season.



Garden Gossip

Calla Edwards

Horticulture Agent

callae@ksu.edu

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

**NEED A
SPEAKER?**



CALLA EDWARDS

K-State Extension is your number one source of reliable, research-based information in Butler County. If you are looking for a speaker for any of your programs or meetings, Horticulture Agent, Calla Edwards, has vast expertise in all areas of horticulture! Some of her programs include:



K-STATE
Research and Extension

Butler County

Butterfly Gardening
Feeding the Birds
Houseplants

Organic Gardening and Insect Management
Vegetable Gardening from Start to Finish

Contact Calla at callae@ksu.edu or 316-321-9660

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. www.ksre.ksu.edu

Garden Gossip

Pesticides

Pesticide Safety

Spring is a time when homeowners wage a war on insects and weeds around their homes, often using chemical products. Whether you are using organic or synthetic chemicals, using them correctly is vital to your health and how well the product works. Pesticides can be an important tool in your gardening toolbox, but only if they are used properly. Here are some tips to use pesticides safely around your home this year.

Correctly identify what you want to control: Before applying any chemical, the first step is to figure out what you are trying to control in the first place, whether it's a weed, an insect, or a disease. If you apply the wrong product, your issue could get worse. Contact me if you can't figure out what is happening, and I will help you. In some cases, pesticides might not be needed at all.

Choose the right pesticide: Once you know what you are trying to control, you can figure out what product to use. There are thousands of products on the market, so your first step when shopping for a product is to read the label to see if the pest, disease, or issue you need to control is listed. Some other factors to consider when picking a chemical include environmental safety, ease of use, cost, and the application equipment needed. Choose the pesticide with the lowest environmental impact or possible danger rating.

Read the Label!!! The label will give you all the information needed to safely apply that chemical, including the clothes to wear, the rate to apply, the weather to apply in, how long till it is rain fast, and how to clean up after the chemical is applied. Be sure to read the label before mixing or applying any chemical.

Clothing counts: Most of the time, exposure to chemicals can be prevented by wearing appropriate clothing, including closed-toe rubber shoes, long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and the correct gloves. It's important to wear the right clothing. After you finish your application, wash your clothes with laundry detergent powder on the washing machine's hottest, deepest water setting. Be sure to wash those clothes separately from all other clothing to prevent chemicals from getting on your family's clothes. To clean the washer, run it one cycle after you wash the spray clothes.

Don't forget the Shoes: Be sure to remove any shoes you used spraying outside the house and triple rinse them off to make sure the chemical has been removed. If possible, leave them in a garage and use them only outside.

Always use the original container: Keep it in the original container, no matter what chemical you use. If a neighbor asks to borrow some chemicals, always send the main bottle; never give them some in a pop or other bottle. There have been too many cases of people accidentally drinking chemicals because they weren't stored properly. If you must transfer it to another container, clearly label that product and include the label when possible.

Storage and Disposal: Make sure to store all chemicals away from children, preferably in a locked cabinet. Chemicals also should not be allowed to freeze in the winter as this impacts their effectiveness. If you have extra chemicals you won't use, dispose of them properly at a hazardous waste collection site. Never dump chemicals down the drain or pour them out onto the ground. Once a bottle is empty, be sure to triple-rinse it before disposing of it.

Pesticide safety is an important aspect of working in a lawn or garden. Even organic chemicals can be harmful if you are exposed to them. Chemicals themselves are not bad; they are simply tools in a gardener's toolbox when used correctly. The issues happen when you don't read the label and don't follow the instructions. Remember to be safe, read the label, and have a wonderful gardening season.

Garden Gossip

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April Gardening Calendar

Vegetables and Fruits

- Start fruit tree spray schedule when growth begins
- Plant carrots, onions, beets, and other salad crops in early April
- Thin radishes, beets, and carrots as needed
- Harvest asparagus until spear size decreases.
- Prune fruit trees. Plant new fruit trees.
- Plant asparagus and rhubarb
- Remove mulch from the strawberry bed
- Prune raspberry and blackberry plantings
- Do not spray insecticides while the fruit flowers to protect the honeybees
- Plant beans, corn, and vine crops in late April
- Cultivate to control seedling weed growth
- Turn the compost pile after a long winter rest
- Transplant broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage in the garden
- Fertilize the vegetable garden before planting and incorporate

Flowers

- Remove winter mulch from perennial garden
- Cut back last year's growth from perennials
- Remove seed heads from spring bulbs
- Do not remove foliage from spring-flowering bulbs
- Fertilize spring flowering bulbs
- Add organic matter, such as compost, before planting new flowers
- Divide perennials
- Plant new roses, prune rose bushes, and fertilize for spring growth
- Plant annuals from seed and transplants

Garden Gossip

April Gardening Calendar Cont.

Lawns

- Apply crabgrass control by mid-month
- Mow lawn as needed, bluegrass 2", tall fescue 3"
- Fertilize cool-season lawns with slow-release nitrogen fertilizer
- Do not fertilize zoysia this early in spring. Nutrients go to weeds, not dormant grass
- Spot treat broadleaf weeds such as dandelions, henbit, and chickweed
- Check the mower and make needed repairs before the season begins
- Sharpen mower blade
- No need to catch grass clippings if mowing frequently
- Do not water unless extremely dry; early irrigation sets turf up as a high water user in summer

Trees and Shrubs

- Prune spring-flowering shrubs, such as forsythia and lilac, after flowering
- Prune trees as needed and repair winter storm damage. Never top a tree
- Plant new trees and shrubs
- Remove grass from the base of young trees and shrubs to prevent lawn mower and line trimmer damage
- Apply a mulch layer around plants
- Keep new trees and shrubs watered
- Fertilize young trees to promote growth

House Plants

- Remove winter dust from leaves by gently rinsing with room-temperature water
- Repot as needed, increase the pot size by 1"
- Leach excess fertilizers from the soil with water
- Begin summer fertilization of plants
- Do not move plants outside until night temperatures remain over 60 degrees
- Propagate house plants by cuttings or divisions
- Fertilize amaryllis and keep in bright light to encourage new leaves



4-H

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A Minute with Madeline

Celebrating the Heart of 4-H: National Volunteer Week

Each April, we recognize the incredible individuals who make 4-H possible during National Volunteer Week! Behind every meeting, project, and event is a dedicated volunteer giving their time, talents, and passion to help young people grow. In 4-H, volunteers are mentors, role models, and champions for youth.

Our volunteers create meaningful experiences that shape life skills and build confidence in our members. They are the reason youth feel supported as they try new things, step outside their comfort zones, and discover their potential. The impact of a caring adult showing up consistently cannot be overstated, as it's often what makes the difference in a young person's journey.

National Volunteer Week is the perfect time to say "thank you" in both big and small ways. Clubs and members can write thank-you notes, recognize them during meetings, or do so in other ways. Even a simple expression of gratitude can go a long way in showing appreciation for the time and heart our volunteers invest.

Together, we can continue building a strong, supportive environment where all youth can thrive. To all of our 4-H volunteers, thank you for the difference you make every single day. Your dedication is truly the heart of our program.

