



## Horticulture

### Side Dressing Vegetables and Flowers

Calla Edwards – Horticulture Agent

Nitrogen is an important plant nutrient in the metabolism of vegetable crops and annual flowers. Most annuals and vegetables are fast-growing plants with lush vegetation and high nitrogen needs. Home gardens can be a hodgepodge of soil fertility depending on previous fertilization, the type of the soil, and what was grown there in the past. A few gardeners will over-fertilize their gardens, a few get it about right, and most actually under-fertilize their gardens. They may put a good general fertilizer down at planting time and never fertilize the garden again which can compromise the growth and productivity of their plants. Coupled with the fast growth of the plants with the extreme mobility of nitrogen, it is necessary to split applications of the nutrients on most vegetable crops. This is known as side-dressing because we apply a nitrogen fertilizer alongside the row. In the absence of a recent soil test, we generally recommend a fertilizer application 3 to 4 weeks into the growing season. That is 3 to 4 weeks after seeded crops emerge for transplants or that can also be 3 to 4 weeks after transplanting. This is a general rule of thumb however, there are some vegetables that we need to be careful about when we apply the next round of nitrogen. Below are more specific recommendations.

- Bell peppers and eggplants – at first fruit set.
- Tomatoes (two side dressings) – at first fruit set and every three to four weeks after.
- Cucumbers, cantaloupes, watermelons, and squash – when vines begin to run then every three to four weeks after.
- Okra – at first fruit set and every four to six weeks after.
- Sweet corn – when corn is 1 foot tall and again when it is 3 feet tall.

Peas, green beans, and butter beans should not be side-dressed since these plants can produce their own nitrogen – they belong to the legume family. Additional nitrogen will stimulate the vegetative stage of the plant and reduce yields. Annual flowers should be fertilized approximately once a month to encourage blooming and growth throughout the season. Some good nitrogen-only fertilizers to use for side dressing include ammonium sulfate, nitrate of soda, blood meal, and calcium nitrate. The last one, calcium nitrate is my preference for tomato fertilization

## Agriculture

### Weather Forecast Vital to Farming

Charlene Miller – Agriculture Agent/Extension Director

Mother Nature hasn't slowed down on what trick she pulls out of her sleeve next. Nonetheless, farming and ranching must go on. Several websites and apps are available, free and paid, for producers to help navigate the ever-changing weather. One of the free weather sites I browse is the National Weather Service Office, Wichita. Recently, I held an online training session with meteorologist Chris Jakub, who taught attendees how to navigate the NWS, Wichita website. I encourage you to watch the recording at: [https://youtu.be/W3gHY1I\\_sZQ?si=K9Hh8RSDcvV4n863](https://youtu.be/W3gHY1I_sZQ?si=K9Hh8RSDcvV4n863) or find us on YouTube at Butler County Extension.

### Contact us:

Phone: (316) 321-9660

Web: Butler.K-State.Edu

Address: 206 N Griffith St, Ste. A, El Dorado, KS 67042

Facebook: @ksrebutlerco

Twitter: @ButlerExtension

See our full Newsletter at <https://www.butler.k-state.edu/newsletter.html>

For KSRE publications and information,

visit [www.ksre.ksu.edu](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu)

## Family Consumer Sciences

### Power Out? Here's How to Keep Foods Safe.

Bonnie Brewer – FCS Extension Agent

Electricity outages are a real concern as storm systems move through Kansas this season. Keeping food safe during a power outage begins well before storms hit. Remember the following tips:

- Keep an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer. According to guidelines from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the temperature inside the refrigerator should be 40 degrees Fahrenheit or lower, and the freezer at 0 F or below. Having a thermometer in place before the power goes out helps to assure the appliance temperature does not stray outside the recommended range.
- Stock up on canned and non-perishable goods. Dried foods, such as fruit, jerky and crackers, are great for snacks. Keep foods that family members enjoy, but also healthful foods to provide nutrient-dense nourishment. Other options include high energy foods such as nut butter, snack bars or trail mix, ready-to-eat canned foods such as fruit, vegetables or meat, and food for infants, elderly persons or those with special diets.
- When power is first lost, leave the door of the refrigerator and freezer closed to preserve cold temperatures as long as possible.
- If the power stays out for a longer period of time and the refrigerator is not staying cold, put food in a cooler full of ice. For food in the freezer, dry ice can be used if available – but thick gloves should always be worn when handling dry ice to prevent skin damage. Dry ice should then be kept in a ventilated area.
- If the power outage is lengthy, you may not be able to avoid spoiled food. Some signs that may indicate foodborne bacteria include: color changes, unusual odors, and texture changes. The most susceptible foods are meat, dairy, eggs and cut fruits and vegetables. Extra care should be taken when examining these food items.
- DO NOT taste any questionable food that has thawed out! When in doubt, throw it out. Also, don't feed pets or other animals spoiled food.
- If a power outage lasts more than four hours at temperatures greater than 40 F, refrigerated or frozen food kept without another cold source should be thrown out.

For other questions and to help determine what foods can be saved or what should be tossed, see Food Safety During Power Outage from FoodSafety.gov, or call our office.

## 4-H & Youth Development

Madeline Wallace – 4-H & Youth Development Agent

Experience the magic of 4-H Camp at **Rock Springs Ranch**, nestled in the heart of the Flint Hills near Junction City, Kansas. With a legacy dating back to 1946, this 700-acre camp offers youth and families unforgettable adventures like archery, swimming, hiking, campfires, and more—all in a supportive, screen-free environment that promotes confidence, connection, and lifelong memories. Whether you're new to 4-H or a returning camper, Rock Springs Ranch provides the perfect chance to unplug, explore nature, and bond with loved ones and friends alike. Learn more or register at [www.rockspringsranch.org](http://www.rockspringsranch.org).

# Coffee Mugs Now Available!

Get yours today at the K-State Research and  
Extension - Butler County Office  
206 North Griffith, Suite A  
El Dorado, KS 67042



**\$10.00 Each**

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

Butler County

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.