

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

Extension
Butler County

May
2026



From the Director's Desk

April showers have, hopefully, brought May flowers. While some areas of the county received more precipitation than others, we remain in varying levels of drought. Even so, the recent rainfall has encouraged burned grasses to green up, bringing a renewed sense of vitality and freshness to the landscape.

In that same spirit, I had the opportunity this past week to participate in a train-the-trainer course on Livestock Emergency Response Planning. The course featured instructors from North Dakota, Ohio State, Iowa State, and West Virginia, as well as veterinarians and emergency responders from across the state. Several key principles from this training extend beyond emergency response and are highly applicable to everyday life and work: build a team and have a plan.

Building a team is essential in any endeavor. This team may include family members, friends, medical professionals, legal advisors, veterinarians, financial partners, and other specialists as needed. Identifying and relying on a strong support network prepares you to address challenges effectively.

Equally important is having a well-developed plan. Much like a sports team relies on strategy and practice, success requires thoughtful preparation and training. Approaching tasks without a plan can lead to inefficiencies and setbacks. Taking the time to develop, implement, and practice a plan increases the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes.

As we progress further into spring, the contrast between much-needed rainfall and ongoing drought conditions serves as a reminder that circumstances can change quickly. Whether managing land, caring for livestock, or addressing daily responsibilities, success is often rooted in preparation and collaboration. By building a reliable team and committing to a strong plan, we position ourselves to respond effectively to both expected and unforeseen challenges.

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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.



Upcoming Events



WALK KANSAS

March 22 - May 16, 2026

Walk with us toward a *healthier* tomorrow.

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

SCAN HERE TO LEARN MORE



www.wkrec.org/events/cow_camp/

Contact Us

Western: Dr. Emma Briggs
785-625-3425

Eastern: Dr. Jaymelynn Farney
620-820-6125



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

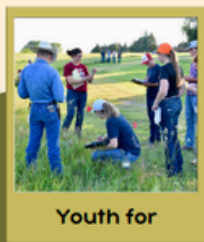
Upcoming High School Sophomores, Juniors, & Seniors

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!

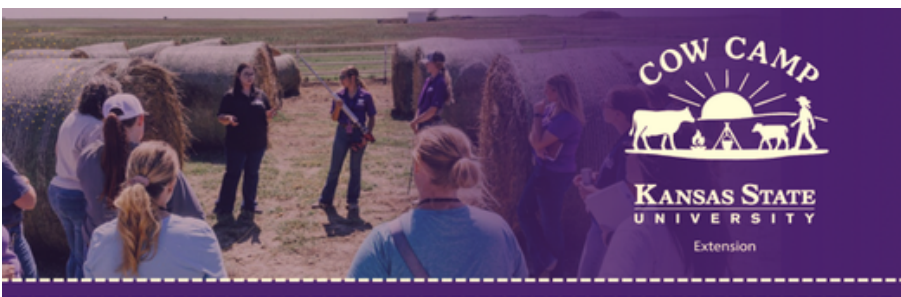
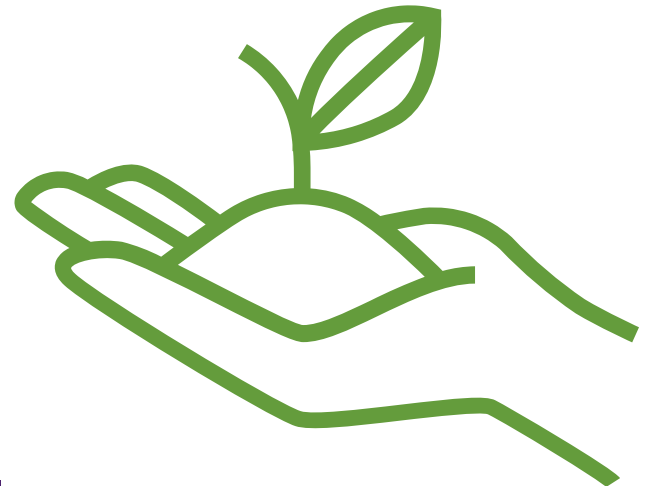
June 9-12, 2026 COST: \$300

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

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Master Gardener
Butler County

PLANT & SEED SWAP EVENT

ANDOVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

1511 E Central Ave, Andover, KS 67002

May 14th
5:30 PM

Have your houseplants turned your home into a jungle, or are your perennials taking over and needing trimming? Join the Butler County Master Gardeners for a Plant Swap!!!

Rules:

- Plants must be labeled
- Plants must be disease and insect-free
- Bring a plant or plant related item to swap



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, Calla Edwards, four weeks prior to the start of the event at 316-321-9660 or callae@ksu.edu. 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. Kansas State University is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

K-STATE
Research and Extension

Master Gardener
Butler County

PLANT & SEED SWAP EVENT

BUTLER COUNTY COMMUNITY/4-H BUILDING

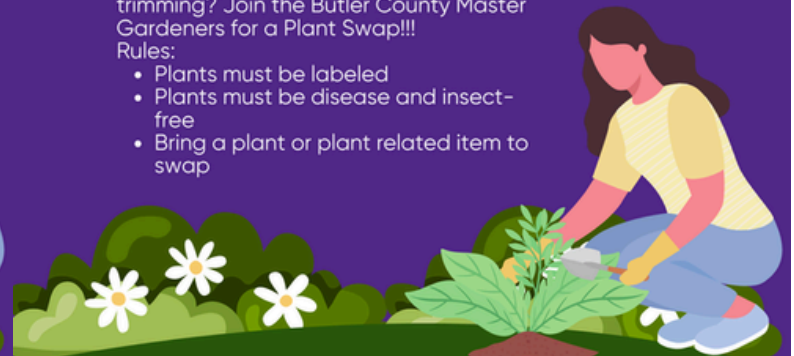
206 N Griffith St. El Dorado, KS

May 23rd
1-3 PM

Have your houseplants turned your home into a jungle, or are your perennials taking over and needing trimming? Join the Butler County Master Gardeners for a Plant Swap!!!

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Upcoming Events

K-STATE
Research and Extension



YOU ARE INVITED TO
**STARS,
STRIPES, AND
4-H PRIDE**

JUNE 16 | 1-5 P.M.
WITH THE BUTLER COUNTY 4-H
AMBASSADORS

Free Day Camp for ages 5-9 years old
Limited to the first 20 registrations
Fun day of games and crafts
A light snack will be provided

Butler County Community/4-H
Building
200 N Griffith St
El Dorado, KS 67042



Register here:
<https://forms.gle/XGgzVWciJgKS4CJ8A>

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Kansas State University is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension
Butler County

POND MANAGEMENT

FREE TO ATTEND

RSVP
316-321-9660
<https://forms.gle/uX4Puto8ao5Gbya2>



GUEST SPEAKER:
DR. JOE GERKEN

K-State Extension
Fisheries & Aquatic Specialist

TUESDAY,
MAY 19TH, 2026

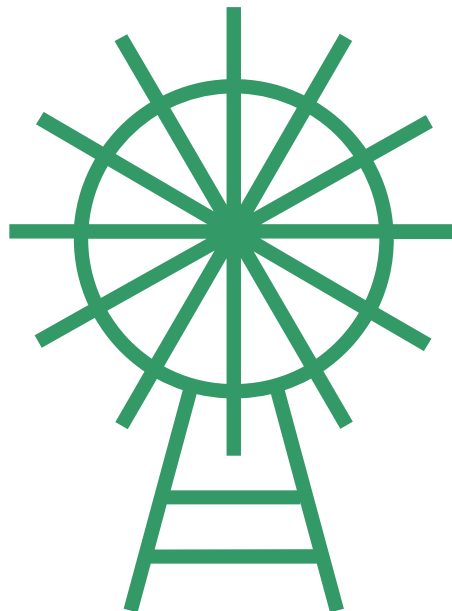
6:30 P.M.

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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Kansas State University is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



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/>

Crop Pests

This is a KSRE publication

Wheat Insect Pest Management 2026

For the full publication please visit [here](#)

“ Armyworms feed on a variety of plants, preferring grasses, and females lay eggs in large clusters on lush vegetation. Larvae are green to black with stripes of various colors. The head capsule is medium brown with dark markings. Most damage to wheat in Kansas occurs in southern and eastern areas of the state during warm, moist periods from late April to early June. Each larva, feeding mostly at night, can consume 43 linear inches of wheat leaf, or the equivalent of three whole plants, in the course of its development. However, 80% of this damage occurs during the last three to five days of larval feeding. When leaf feeding is observed, look for larvae curled up on the ground under litter, especially in patches of lodged plants. Treatment is usually not necessary below levels of four or five larvae per foot, but is probably justified at infestations of five to eight per foot provided most larvae are still small. Wheat is likely to suffer yield loss if the flag leaf is destroyed before the soft dough stage is completed.

Plant developmental stage is a factor to consider when making treatment decisions. As wheat plants mature and leaves dry out, armyworms may feed on beards and clip heads to complete their development. Head clipping in barley is serious and should be prevented. While it is less likely in wheat, worms should be watched closely if present after heading and forced to feed on the upper parts of plants to complete development. Migration out of maturing grain fields and into adjacent fields of corn and sorghum is also possible become large enough to destroy entire leaves. Fields with 25% to 30% of plants with windowpane injury should be re-examined daily and treated immediately if stand establishment appears threatened. Larvae increase in size at an exponential rate, and so do their food requirements. Later instars do the most damage, sometimes destroying entire stands, and are the least susceptible to insecticides. Without treatment, problems can continue until larvae reach maturity or until a killing freeze.”

Ag Talk

Charlene Miller

Director/Agriculture Agent

cmmiller1@ksu.edu

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

Crop Pests

This is a KSRE publication

Wheat Insect Pest Management 2026

For the full publication please visit [here](#)

“There are many species of grasshoppers in Kansas, and not all are crop pests, although most have the potential to inflict damage if present in large numbers.

Damage can occur in fall or spring. Typically, grasshoppers invade from field margins as fall-planted wheat emerges. Occasionally, heads may be damaged before harvest. Vegetation bordering wheat fields should be inspected 10 days before planting. Counts of seven to 12 grasshoppers per square yard signal potential problems. Once wheat has been planted, three or more hoppers per square yard within the field can destroy seedling wheat.”



Wheat Stem Maggot

This is a KSRE publication 2026

For full publication please visit [here](#)

“The wheat stem maggot is found in wheat growing regions from Mexico to Canada. Damage is evident from May through June in the form of conspicuous white heads on stems where the flag leaf is still green. Although this insect is widespread and produces a very distinctive type of damage, it is usually considered to be a minor pest problem.”:

Family & Consumer Science

Canning and Preserving Season

As we come into canning and preserving season we must follow guideline that way it is still tasty but safe to make and eat. Click each link to read the full document.

Food Safety Recommendations for Food Preservation Exhibits

Karen Blakeslee. Newly updated guide for food preservation exhibits, emphasizing food safety.

Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe: Strawberries.

Karen Blakeslee. When preserving fresh foods at home, follow proper techniques to prevent foodborne illness. These tested methods can be used to process strawberries.

Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe: Beans.

Karen Blakeslee. When preserving fresh foods at home, follow proper procedures to prevent foodborne illness. The following safety-tested methods can be used for preserving snap and Italian beans, and dry beans.

Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe: Cherries.

Karen Blakeslee. When preserving fresh foods at home, follow proper techniques to prevent foodborne illness. These tested methods can be used to process sweet or sour cherries.

Family & Consumer Science

Children's Screen Time

The amount of time a child spends on a screen is important. For more information click on the document.

Thinking through children's screen time



"How much screen time is okay for kids?". It's a question many of us are asking. Here are two answers to it.

The Brief Answer

At the time of this being published, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- No screen time at all for children from newborn until 18 to 24 months (except for video chatting),
- One hour or less of screen time per day for children 2 to 5 years of age, and
- Developing a Family Media Plan for children 6 and older.

This Family Media Plan is designed to help put limits on screen usage, have media use discussions as a family, and consider media use and broader aspects of a balanced life, including sleep and physical activity.

The Long Answer

The question of how much screen time is okay for kids is about more than just numbers. For that, let's consider a second, longer way to answer this question. In doing so, here are five observations.

- 1 There's still a lot we don't know**
Even within the research community, there remain differences of opinion about the benefits and harms of screen time for children. But one point of agreement from individuals on both sides is how much still isn't known. The technological changes that have occurred in the last two decades are unprecedented in human history. Corresponding longitudinal research investigating these changes and their effect on the development of children and families, however, is still in the very early stages.
- 2 Not all screen time is the same**
This may seem obvious, but this fact - that not all screen time is the same - has some important implications. As a parent (or other caring adult), do you know how "screen time" is being spent - what videos your child is watching, what sites your child is visiting, and what online conversations your child is having (and with whom)...both within the home and outside of it? And are there open lines of communication such that your child will share this information with you? This does not imply being a police officer to your child, but children need a parent's nurturing and guidance. Children will have to manage their own digital life one day. We want to set them up with the ability to do this effectively.

Screens are not going away, and all of us (children and parents) can work to ensure we are intentional about our use, and our non-use, of screens for the good of our children and our families.

Thinking through children's screen time



- 3 Not all kids are the same**
Technology affects children in different ways. Here's a clear example - prolonged time on social media, specifically Instagram, appears to be particularly harmful for teenage girls and their mental health. Think about your child. In what ways is your child susceptible to negative influences of technology, and what can be done in response?

Your child is unique in many wonderful ways, including unique tendencies that can be negatively influenced depending how screen time is spent. How is screen time shaping your child's proclivities, whether it's inclinations to be aggressive, sedentary, withdrawn, or easily distracted?

- 4 Time spent watching screens replaces time spent in other ways**
Researchers who study development and learning commonly discuss the importance of active (versus passive) learning. Suffice to say, a lot of screen time involves passive learning or passive entertainment.

In the process of incorporating more and more screen time into daily life (and thereby more passive learning), what opportunities and experiences have been replaced or lost? Are there times and spaces to actively learn - to create, play, think, explore, build, pretend, and engage in a host of other activities that have characterized childhood throughout history? Have any experiences you want for your child been unintentionally lost or replaced that you would like to bring back?

- 5 Supportive parenting matters, a lot**
This point, although not directly about screen time, is worth emphasizing. There is a lot we don't know about child development, but one finding is clear across cultures, time, education, and pretty much every other factor - having a supportive parent or caregiver is powerful! And for youth encountering adversity or hardship, supportive parenting helps to make children more resilient.

So, regardless of how much (or how little) screen time your child has, make sure you are spending quality and quantity time with your child, demonstrating through words and actions your unwavering love and support for them, their ideas, their activities and hobbies, and who they are becoming.

Author

Dr. Allen Barton, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Department of Human Development & Family Studies, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

united.illinois.edu

Additional Resources

[Family Media Plan \(American Academy of Pediatrics\)](#) | bit.ly/3F11bM0
[Common Sense Media](#) | commonsensemedia.org

[Click here for more information](#)



Family & Consumer Science

Social Media For Teens

Take a look at the impact of social media on teens. For more information click on the link for whole document.

Help Your Teen Take Control of Social Media Use



For parents of teenagers, it comes as no surprise how many teenagers use social media as a way to communicate with their friends and learn what their peers are doing. Social media can keep young people connected to friends at a stage in life when relationships with peers are critical. Additionally, social media can serve as an outlet for fun and a source of support and helps teens feel less alone.

At the same time, social media can present teens with a host of challenges, such as navigating pressure to be their “best selves”, facing harmful and hateful content, and balancing social media use with healthy behaviors such as getting enough sleep and spending time offline with friends.

Social media can negatively impact young people’s emotional well-being by increasing stress and anxiety, as well as negatively affecting body image. Negative emotions related to social media use are more pronounced for Black and Latino youth, and especially for LGBTQ+ young people.

Half of social media users aged 14-22 somewhat agree or strongly agree that they cannot control their use or that they end up using social media for a longer period of time than they originally wanted to.

Turn the page to see five strategies for helping your teen set healthy social media boundaries.

Five Strategies for Helping Your Teen Set Healthy Social Media Boundaries



1. Start by Setting Goals

Help your teen set reasonable, attainable goals for taking control of their social media use. For some, it may be staying off their phone between dinner and bedtime. For others, it might limit screen time on a specific app or remove app notifications.

- Write out the goal: Consider starting with keeping phones out of the bedroom and avoiding overnight use.
- Keep the goal someplace prominent such as on the desk or on the fridge.

2. Experiment with Strategies for Healthier Tech Use:

Here’s where the action happens.

- Silence notifications: The sound or vibration of a notification releases dopamine, a hormone the brain craves. This can lead to the urge to react right away by checking the notification.
- Hide distraction apps by modifying notification settings.
- Switch device to grayscale: Decreases visual stimuli on your phone that keep you attached to the screen.
- Schedule focus modes: Set presets to block out time for school and work.
- Disable badges: Badges drag you in to check notifications in an app.
- Leave the phone in another room: This is especially important while sleeping.
- Intentionally unplug: Consider designating one day a week or a specific time of day when you avoid your phone.
- Make a game out of it: When hanging out or studying with friends, consider placing all phones in a pile and not touching them. See who can go the longest without checking their phone (emergencies aside).

3. Track it: Keep a Journal

Encourage your teen to track their social media usage daily. Remind them that setbacks are natural and that you are there for them if they are struggling with meeting their goal. Encourage them to ask a friend to be an accountability buddy.

4. Take Time to Reflect

Making notes of lessons learned is an important part of the process. Sharing those lessons with peers serves the greater good and is a move toward technology that respects one’s attention and intentions.

5. Progress, Not Perfect

Remember, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to taking control of social media use. Encourage your teen to experiment with different tools and strategies. You might even consider role modeling some of the techniques yourself.

Additional Resources

- <https://www.common sense media.org/>
- <https://www.logoffmovement.org/>

[Click here for more informatin](#)



Garden Gossip

Calla Edwards

Horticulture Agent

callae@ksu.edu

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

The flash of a colorful butterfly and the buzz of a bumble bee traveling between flowers bring extra beauty and enjoyment to our gardens. Pollinators serve an important role in our ecosystem, but they also bring beauty to our lives, and a pollinator garden can easily become a focal point of any landscape. Planning your garden or landscape to include plants that attract and sustain butterflies, bees, and other beneficial insects can increase the populations of these desired insects and increase the diversity you can observe and enjoy. Let's walk through planning a pollinator garden that can attract a variety of beneficial insects to your yard this year.

Location, location, location. One of the first steps to planning your pollinator garden is to pick the location. The best location is one that receives as much light as possible. Butterflies and other pollinators are cold-blooded and need sunshine to warm up their bodies. Butterflies, in fact, cannot fly until their body temperatures are 86 degrees or warmer, so they are most active when the sun shines. Most of the plants that pollinators love also need at least six hours of sunlight to thrive, so location is vital. Try to pick a location that is out of the harsh winds as much as possible. This helps both the plants and the butterflies survive and prevents damage to both.



Garden Gossip

Pick your plants. When we think of plants for pollinators, we typically think of the flowers the plants provide, but it is important to provide food sources for all stages of a pollinator's life cycle. Simply providing nectar sources for the adults is not enough to attract and keep pollinators in your backyard; you must also provide host plants for larvae. Many plants can pull double duty and serve both purposes, but not all. If you want specific butterflies to come to your backyard, be sure to pick host plants that those butterflies specifically like. We all know that monarch caterpillars need milkweed, but did you know that black swallowtails are the only ones that feed on dill, while Zebra swallowtail caterpillars only feed on pawpaw trees? As you choose plants, be sure to use a mix of plants so you have blooms throughout the growing season. Herbs are also attractive to many pollinators, and mixing them with other plants can provide a pleasing aesthetic. When you are making your design, place the plants in blocks rather than individually, as the blocks of color are easier for the pollinators to see. There is a big push for using native plants in pollinator gardens, and while that is a great idea, pollinators will also use non-native plants in addition to natives.

Provide the extras. While food sources are important for pollinators, they aren't the only items we should incorporate into our pollinator garden. As was mentioned before, insects are cold-blooded and need the sunlight to warm up so they can fly. Be sure to add areas, such as stones or bricks, that will be in the sun early in the day, so insects can bask and warm up. Don't forget to provide a water source for the insects. Mud puddles are a wonderful and inexpensive option, but you can also use shallow dishes or birdbaths with rocks to give insects a place to perch while they drink.

Planning a garden for pollinators doesn't have to be rocket science, but it can provide years of enjoyment for you and your family watching the butterflies, bees, and other pollinators fly around your backyard. There are many resources available to help you plan your garden. Check out some of those resources, or, if you live in Butler County, visit the pollinator garden at the Ranger Station at El Dorado State Park for ideas on things you can do in your backyard. Be sure to check out the additional resources included with this publication.

may be able to provide recommendations.



Garden Gossip

Hardening Off Transplants

I don't know about you, but April is passing in a blink of an eye around our office. As quickly as the month is flying by, it seems like my vegetable transplants are growing even faster. It's almost time to start transitioning any vegetable starts or even plants purchased at the greenhouse outside. We still have a couple of weeks before it's safe to consider planting warm-season plants outside, but that doesn't mean we get to sit back and twiddle our thumbs till then. Let's talk about how to "harden off" your plants and troubleshoot common issues.

One of the biggest mistakes I see people make when starting their own vegetables or purchasing plants from a greenhouse is not hardening the plants off before planting them outside. "Hardening off" is the process of transitioning plants grown in a greenhouse or a protected indoor location to the harsher outdoor conditions with fluctuating temperatures, wind, and sunlight. This should be a gradual process that slows the growth of the plant's top, encourages more root development, reduces water content in the plant, and actually thickens the cell wall. The process really does "toughen up" the plant, as it changes from soft and supple to leaves and stems that are harder and firmer to the touch. You should start this process several weeks before you actually want to plant outdoors. Rushing this step can lead to sunburn, stunted plants, wilting, and possibly even the plant dying from shock.

The first step in hardening a plant off should actually happen inside. The first step is to gradually reduce the amount of water you give the plants. You never allow them to wilt, but you do allow the soil to partially dry out so the plants slow their growth. At this point, I would also add a fan blowing on the seedlings at a low speed to start acclimating them to the ever-present wind in Kansas. On days when it's above 55 degrees outside, move the plants outside and place them in a shady, protected location for a couple of hours. Over the next couple of weeks, gradually increase the time spent outside and the amount of sun and wind the plants receive. Be sure to take them inside at night, especially if temperatures are projected to reach



Garden Gossip

Hardening Off Transplants

· the 40s. After two weeks, the plants should be able to handle full sun and most of our winds. Remember, it's not just our seedlings grown indoors that need this process; any plant grown in a garden center will also need to be transitioned outside, especially early in the season.

A couple of troubleshooting steps: if your plants have gotten leggy, you may need to transplant them into larger containers before attempting to transition them outside. Leggy plants tend to struggle in the wind, and we have at least a couple of weeks before they can be safely planted outside. There is absolutely nothing wrong with bumping your plants to a larger container. Remember that leggy tomatoes can be planted deeper than the current soil line, as they will root up the stem. Another common issue is yellowing leaves if you haven't been fertilizing your transplants. Unfortunately, we shouldn't fertilize as much during the hardening-off process because we want to slow the plant's growth, not increase it. I would continue adding fertilizer, but nutrient deficiencies will have to wait until the plants are planted in the ground to be corrected.

The overall goal of hardening our plants off is to slow their growth and allow them to adjust to the fluctuations of the outside world. After a hardening-off period, our vegetables, even the ones that love heat, can tolerate a dip in night temperatures (not to freezing, but to a cooler night) without being harmed. The hardening off process described above can also be used to move your houseplants outside. Not all plants can handle full sun outdoors; gradually acclimate them to avoid leaf burn. Happy growing!!



Garden Gossip

Calla Edwards

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**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

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Garden Gossip

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May Gardening Calendar

May Gardening Calendar

Vegetables and Fruits

- Plant tomato, pepper, and eggplant transplants in early May
- Seed sweet corn, cucumbers, squash, beans, and other warm-season vegetables
- Mound soil around potato plants to encourage tuber formation
- Harvest fresh asparagus until the spear size decreases
- Remove rhubarb seed stalks to encourage leaf growth
- Plant kitchen herbs for summer use in dishes or food preservation
- Treat fruit trees with needed chemicals to control insects and disease
- Thin heavy fruit set on apples to increase fruit size and next year's crop

Flowers

- Plant annual flowers for summer color
- Continue to plant and divide perennials
- Mulch perennial and annual gardens for weed control and moisture retention
- Begin pinching chrysanthemums for bushier plants
- Do not remove foliage from spring bulbs till it dies naturally, as this develops stronger blooms for next year
- Plant container gardens and hanging baskets

Lawns

- Reduce thatch layer from zoysia by verticutting or core aerating
- Sod or spring zoysia lawns to fill in bare areas
- Fertilize zoysia lawns with a high nitrogen fertilizer to promote green-up and summer growth
- Apply a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer to tall fescue to promote summer growth if desired. Lower-maintenance lawns should skip this application
- Mow tall fescue at 3 inches tall
- Spot treat broadleaf weeds
- Withhold early summer watering until needed to promote a drought-tolerant lawn
- Sharpen mower blades as needed

Garden Gossip

May Gardening Calendar Cont.

Trees and Shrubs

- Plant new trees and shrubs
- Prune spring flowering shrubs after bloom to shape plants and encourage flowers next year
- Mulch around young trees and shrubs to conserve moisture and control weed growth
- Water young ornamentals as needed
- Remove tree wraps for summer growth
- Fertilize trees to help increase growth rates
- Be cautious using line trimmers and mowers around trees and shrubs to avoid damaging the bark aka “mower blight”

Houseplants

- Move plants outdoors for summer by gradually increasing their exposure to light
- Fertilize plants to promote summer development
- Rotate plants to develop a well-rounded plant
- Wash dusty leaves in the shower or using a hose
- Repot plants into a one-inch larger pot
- Check for insects



4-H

Madeline Wallace

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A Minute with Madeline

Celebrating Milestones in 4-H

Spring is a season full of milestones, and across our 4-H program, it's exciting to see members grow, achieve, and take on new challenges. From project work gaining momentum to youth stepping into leadership roles, this time of year is a great reminder of how much progress can happen in just a few short months.

For many members, May brings the satisfaction of seeing their hard work start to come together. Whether it's refining a project, preparing for upcoming events, or trying something new, each step forward is worth celebrating. For others, this season may mark important transitions such as graduations, new opportunities, or setting goals for the future. No matter the milestone, 4-H helps young people build confidence, develop skills, and discover what they're capable of.

As we move through this busy time of year, I encourage members and families to stay connected with your clubs, leaders, and the Extension Office. Strong communication and planning ahead will help ensure a smooth, successful finish to the spring season and set everyone up well as we head into summer activities!

Office Update – May Availability I will be out of the office for much of May with limited availability. If you need assistance during this time, please contact Charlene Miller at cmmiller1@ksu.edu or the Extension Office at 316-321-9660. They will be happy to help with any questions or needs that come up. Thank you for your understanding and for all you do to support our 4-H program. I look forward to reconnecting soon and continuing to celebrate the many milestones ahead!