9-1-2002

The NEBLINE, September 2002

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Food Safety at the Workplace

September is National Food Safety Education Month

Alice Henneman, MS, RD, Extension Educator & Joyce Jensen, REHS, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

Have you ever heard comments around your workplace such as these?

**Situation #1**
"Too often I've seen the catered lunch delivered around 11 a.m., served at noon, left sitting in the conference room until 1:30 p.m., and then leftovers offered to staff in the break room throughout the afternoon."

**FOOD SAFETY TIP:** Never leave perishable food—such as milk, cheese and other dairy products; eggs; meat; poultry and seafood—at room temperature for more than two hours. At room temperature, just ONE bacterium in these foods could grow to 2,097,152 in seven hours!

Rather than leave perishable foods on the break room table or counter, a method used by one office is to refrigerate the food and leave a note instead. Example: Help yourself to the turkey and roast beef sandwiches in the refrigerator.

**Situation #2**
"I don't think we ever remove anything from the refrigerator at work. If we tossed everything that was past the 'use by' date on the label, the refrigerator would be almost empty by the time we got done."

**FOOD SAFETY TIP:** Some companies have a policy of once-a-week tossing all lunch foods left in the refrigerator. Label any item meant to be shared with staff as "For Staff" with the date it was refrigerated and person responsible for the item. Toss any item not eaten by the third day.

**Situation #3**
"I'm surprised by the number of people who don't wash their hands after going to the restroom. And then they put their hands in the popcorn bowl in the break room."

**FOOD SAFETY TIP:** When in doubt, toss it out! You can't always see, smell or taste bacteria that cause food-borne illness.

Consider placing posters at eye level inside bathroom stalls and in front of urinals.

**Hand-washing is considered...**
Hand-washing is considered the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Truly, your health may be in your hands!

**Resources**
Consider setting up an office food safety policy. Check lancaster.unl.edu/food/chill.htm for information and suggestions.

Promote food safety at the office using these reproduction-ready materials online at lancaster.unl.edu/food/ftsep02.htm:

1. Refrigerator poster
2. Table tents
3. General food safety quiz
4. Handwashing poster

Test Your Refrigerator Food Safety Savvy Quiz

**NOTE:** You can also take this quiz online at: lancaster.unl.edu/food/fridge.htm

**Questions**
1. Is it safe to leave perishable foods at room temperature for longer than TWO hours?
2. Is it OK to refrigerate foods while they're still warm?
3. Should you eat refrigerated leftovers within a day or two for safety and quality?
4. Should you keep your refrigerator at 40°F or lower?
5. Can you always see, smell or taste bacteria that cause food-borne illness?

**Answers**
1. NO. Refrigerate perishable foods so the TOTAL time they’re at room temperature is less than two hours. At room temperatures, just ONE bacterium in these foods could grow to 2,097,152 in seven hours!
2. YES. Just leave the container cover slightly cracked until the food has cooled. Refrigerate foods in shallow containers to speed cooling.
3. YES. Eat refrigerated leftovers promptly.
4. YES. Keeping your refrigerator at 40°F or lower slows bacterial growth. Keep your freezer at 0°F or lower, which stops most bacterial growth. Freezing DOES NOT kill bacteria. Keep an appliance thermometer in your refrigerator and in your freezer to assure they stay at these recommended temperatures.
5. NO. When in doubt, toss it out! You can’t always see, smell or taste bacteria that cause food-borne illness. It takes from 1/2 hour to 6 weeks before you get sick from contaminated food.
Storing Sweet Potatoes

Harvest sweet potatoes after a light frost kills the vines. Do not delay harvest after the vines die back, the tubers will not increase in size and may begin to rot. Do not wash the sweet potatoes after you dig them. Place them in a basket or slated crate where there is good movement.

Store sweet potatoes in a warm, dark place to cure them. Ideally the temperature should be 85 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit with 85 to 90 percent humidity. The curing process helps to heal cuts and bruises. It also helps to increase the sweetness of the potato. Sweet potatoes in a cool place, preferably where the temperature will be maintained at 60 degrees Fahrenheit, can be stored for several months. (MIF)

After they have cured, store the sweet potatoes in a cool place, preferably where the temperature will be maintained at 60 degrees Fahrenheit. If possible, choose a place with high humidity. The temperature should not be allowed to drop below 50 degrees because if the potatoes suffer cold damage, they will rot. Never store sweet potatoes in the refrigerator. If sweet potatoes are stored properly, they will keep for several months. (MIF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Annual/ Perennial</th>
<th>Flower Color</th>
<th>Bloom Time</th>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aster</td>
<td>Aster fendleri</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Light purple</td>
<td>July–September</td>
<td>12-18&quot;</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beebalm</td>
<td>Monarda fistulosa</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Lavender</td>
<td>June–August</td>
<td>24&quot;</td>
<td>Sun to part-shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-Eyed Susan</td>
<td>Rudbeckia fulgida</td>
<td>Biennial or short-lived perennial</td>
<td>Yellow, brown center</td>
<td>July–August</td>
<td>24&quot;</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blanket Flower</td>
<td>Gaillardia aristata</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Red with yellow</td>
<td>June–August</td>
<td>18&quot;</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bollonia</td>
<td>Bollonia asteroides</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>August–October</td>
<td>48&quot;</td>
<td>Sun to part-shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterfly Milkweed</td>
<td>Asclepias tuberosa</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>July</td>
<td>24&quot;</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coreflower Purple</td>
<td>Echinacea purpurea</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>July–August</td>
<td>36&quot;</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coreopsis</td>
<td>Coreopsis lanceolata</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Yellow June–August</td>
<td>24&quot;</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gayfeather</td>
<td>Liatris spicata</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>August–September</td>
<td>18-24&quot;</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri Primrose</td>
<td>Oenothera macrocarpa</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>May–July</td>
<td>12&quot;</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasque Flower</td>
<td>Anemone patens</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Lavender</td>
<td>April–May</td>
<td>12-18&quot;</td>
<td>Sun to part-shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penstemon</td>
<td>Penstemon species</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Red, pink, white</td>
<td>May–September</td>
<td>8-36&quot;</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phlox, Prairie</td>
<td>Phlox pilosa</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>12-18&quot;</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedum, Tall</td>
<td>Sedum telephium</td>
<td>Perennial</td>
<td>Rose to salmon</td>
<td>August–October</td>
<td>18&quot;</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Nebraska landscapes, conserving and maintaining water quality is essential. Planting water wise flowers will help accomplish this, while providing season long color. During establishment, water wise perennials require regular irrigation. After establishment, however, supplementary water will be needed only during periods of extended drought. The depth, width and overall health of a plant’s root system determines how efficiently it uses water. To encourage maximum root growth, wet the soil to the depth and width of the eventual root span.

Here is a list of low water use plants for you to try in your landscape. (MIF)

Many of us need reminders. That is the purpose of this calendar. Check the calendar each month and follow the recommendations if they are necessary in your landscape situation. (MIF)
Protect Yourself from West Nile Virus by Controlling Mosquitoes

The recent rains are a relief, but because standing water breeds mosquitoes, people should take precautions now to protect themselves against the West Nile Virus disease. West Nile Virus affects birds, horses and people but is only transmitted by mosquitoes. It is not spread by person-to-person contact.

A bite from an infected mosquito will not always make you sick; most people infected with West Nile Virus either have no symptoms or experience mild illness. Exposure to a mosquito carrying the West Nile Virus makes anyone susceptible, but people at greatest risk are those more than 50 years old and people who are immuno-compromised.

There currently is no vaccine for West Nile Virus for humans, although one exists for horses. Because West Nile Virus is transmitted by mosquitoes, the key to protecting yourself from West Nile Virus is to control mosquitoes and to avoid being bitten by them. The best way to control mosquitoes is to eliminate sites where mosquitoes breed. Tips include:

- Eliminate standing water on your property because mosquitoes will breed in any puddle existing for more than four days.
- Properly discard used tires and children's toys that catch water and serve as a breeding ground. Turn over plastic watering pots and wheelbarrows when not in use.
- Empty bird baths and koi ponds at least weekly to interrupt the mosquito breeding cycle.
- Dispose of empty tin cans, paint containers, flower pots and other similar containers that harbor mosquitoes on your property.
- Clogged roof gutters can be a breeding site for mosquitoes; they should be checked periodically for proper drainage.
- Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish.
- Control mosquito larvae in standing ponds with mosquito "dunks" containing Bt, which specifically kills mosquito larvae but is safe for birds and wildlife. These products can be purchased at local home and garden stores.
- Trim shrubs and mow tall grass close to your home because they provide excellent resting sites for adult mosquitoes.

The second way to protect yourself is to try to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. Avoid mosquito-infested areas or stay indoors when mosquitoes are active. Most mosquitoes are active two to three hours before and after dark, though one mosquito, the Asian tiger mosquito, is active during the day. Other tips include:

- Wear light-colored clothing, leather and synthetic fabrics.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors.
- Avoid or use cologne and perfumes sparingly. These, together with other gases such as carbon dioxide emitted during physical exertion, attract mosquitoes.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors.

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension has recently released an educational resource, West Nile Virus — Getting Prepared. This publication is available at the Lancaster County Extension office, 444 Cherrycreek Road, online at lancaster.unl.edu. (BPO)

Fall Cleaning?
Take advantage of these household hazardous waste collection days

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE &amp; TIME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Sept. 21</td>
<td>9 a.m.–3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Oct. 19</td>
<td>9 a.m.–3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat., Nov. 16</td>
<td>9 a.m.–3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ITEMS THAT YOU CAN BRING FOR DISPOSAL

- Heavy metals: items containing mercury such as thermometers and thermostat units
- Solvents: mineral spirits, turpentine, paint strippers and thinners, oil-based paints, varnishes, stains, polishes, waxes, perfumes
- Pesticides: weed killers, garden sprays, weed preservatives, roach powder, rat poisons. You may also bring EPA banned products, like DDT, chlordane, 2,4,5-T, pentachlorophenol, sulfur, PGP and Dursban.
- PCB’s: Ballasts from old fluorescent fixtures and capacitors from old appliances including radios, motors and televisions.

Leave products in their original container and keep the label intact. Empty or leaking or rusted containers should be placed in a clear plastic bag during transport. Do not mix chemicals.

DO NOT BRING: latex paint, medicines, explosives or ammunition, fertilizers, used oil, general household trash, antifreeze or batteries.

These collections are for households only; not businesses. Only residents of Lincoln and Lancaster County can bring items to collections. For more specific information, call the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department at 441-8040.

Recycle Used Oil!

The Nebraska Used Oil Collection and Reuse Program promotes the recycling of oil. Used oil collected through the program will be reused, recovered for energy, used in asphalt applications or re-refined.

Why Collect Used Oil?

- State law (LB1257) banned disposal of waste oil in landfills back in 1994. There is a need to prevent soil, surface water and groundwater in Nebraska from possible contamination from used oil.

- According to the Environmental Protection Agency, used oil is responsible for approximately 40 percent of the pollution in rivers and streams. A gallon of used oil can ruin one million gallons of fresh water for a year's supply for 50 people.

- Used oil that is improperly disposed of on roads, along fences or released into the air through burning, is a pollutant because toxic metals such as lead, cadmium, and arsenic are released into the environment. The oil can contaminate surface and groundwater.

What Happens to Collected Oil?

- Used oil can be used as a fuel resource. One gallon of used oil can be used to generate 98 kilowatt-hours of electricity.

- Used oil has nearly twice the energy-producing value of coal. It's also a valuable resource when cleaned of its impurities and re-refined. Several national brands have been successfully marketed as premium recycled motor oils. Recycling used oil back into clean lubricating oil takes only one-half to one-fourth as much energy as refining from crude oil.

What Will Be Accepted?

- Spent oil from gasoline and diesel engines.
- Spent refrigerant lubricating oil.
- Spent lubricating oil from aircraft reciprocating and jet engines.
- Spent hydraulic fluid.
- Spent heat transfer fluids.
- Spent transmission fluid.
- Cooking oil.

See USED OIL, page 11.
President Bush signed into law the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 on May 13, 2002. The new farm bill carries over some familiar features from previous farm bills and has added new twists as well. One thing is certain, this farm bill provides a multitude of choices for the producer. It is important for the producer to understand the many options and choices so they can take the best advantage of the bill. This article will address the major points to consider.

Some of the features in the new bill include: Producers have an opportunity to update bases and yields — but only if they desire to do so. There are no set-aside requirements (no idle acres) built into the new bill as was the case of farm bills of the '70s and early '80s. A carryover feature of the '96 farm bill is farmers still have planting flexibility. They can plant any crop, with a few exceptions, without affecting the crop base for the farm within the current farm bill.

There are three parts to the support system in the 2002 legislation: marketing loan/counter-cyclical direct payments and counter-cyclical payments. The marketing loan/counter-cyclical program, provides protection in the same manner as the 1996 farm bill. If you take a non-recourse loan on the crop, you must retain beneficial interest in the crop throughout the life of the loan. It may be paid back with interest at any time at the lower of the loan rate or the posted county price on the day the loan is paid back. Alternatively, you may take an LDP payment on any portion of the crop in which you still have beneficial interest, on any day they choose. LDP payments are calculated based on the difference in county loan rate and posted county price on the day the transaction is conducted. One new feature under the 2002 Farm Bill is the counter-cyclical payments. These payments are paid each year throughout the life of the farm bill (2002-2007), regardless of actual crop history or market price. Direct payments are based upon the 2002 PFC payment yield (or oilseed payment yield as established) multiplied by the payment rate per bushel multiplied by 85% of the crop base acres for each program crop. The direct payment rates per bushel for the program crops are: Corn: $0.24, Soybeans: $0.44, Wheat: $0.52 and Grain Sorghum: $0.35. Producers who received advance payments for 2002 should expect to receive the difference between the advance payment and the direct payment after they sign the new contract with the FSA office.

The third support mechanism under the new farm bill is called counter-cyclical (CC) payments. The CC payment rate is based on target price minus effective price. Where: effective price is equal to the higher of the national average loan rate or the 12-month national average market price plus the direct payment rate. CC payments are paid on 85% of the base acres times the established yield (2002 PFC yield or updated yield).

Updated payment yields apply only to counter-cyclical payments (not direct payments). The farm owner must update payments if they choose to update yields. You may choose one of five basic participation options under the new farm bill. Option 1 leaves the bases and payment yields as they were under the '96 farm bill (2002 PFC bases and yields). Options 2, 3 and 5 allow the producer to use his/her '98-’01 average oilseed acres to adjust base. Under option 2, oilseed base can be assigned to any non-base (five) acres. Under option 3, all of the oilseed acres must be first established base on non-base acres and then offset wheat or feed grain base.

Option 5 appears to be the most advantageous option when adjusting bases. Under option 5, oilseed base can be used to establish base on non-base acres and then at the producer’s discretion, any portion of the oilseed base can be used to offset wheat and feed grain base. Support for feed grain base is removed when the new farm bill. You typically would first establish base on non-base acres and then establish oilseed base (if any) with oilseed base. The decision to offset the feed grain base should be considered based on an economic analysis using payment yields for the respective croplands versus oilseeds.

Option 4 allows the producer to update both bases and payment yields. You must update bases if you desire to update yields. The new bases are simply the carryover base from the '96 oilseeds grown during ’98-’01. The producer has three choices of how to update the new bases under option 4. You may keep the 2002 PFC yields. You may apply the change for ’98–’02 to 2002 PCF yields and then add 70% of the difference to the 2002 PFC yield to derive an updated yield. Or, you may multiply the proven ’98–’01 yields by 93.5% to derive the new payment yield.

No matter which farm program option is chosen, the same option must be used to establish bases and payment yields on the whole farm. If you farm several tracts of land with different farm numbers, you must choose the same option for each farm number. In each case, you would choose which of the five basic participation options (option 4, the best of the three payment yield methods) that provide the largest payment for the farm as a whole. (Note: within a farm number, you must use the same option for all cropland under option 4 for all crops).

As stated above, this farm bill provides an opportunity for a choice of the producer. This flexibility allows each owner to select the option that will maximize returns for each farm number. Choosing the best option is going to require some number crunching. (TD)
Organic Production

Jane Sooby, Sustainable Agricultural Technician & David Baltespenger, Crop Breeding Specialist

Organic crop production is often associated with the growth of fruit and vegetable crops. All kinds of crops, including grains, can be grown organically and marketed for a premium if the right buyer is located. In Nebraska, wheat, proso millet, oats, barley, corn, soybeans, edibles, and grains including alfalfa, are grown and marketed organically. Other crops grown organically include amaranth, popcorn, blue corn and spelt. Poultry and beef are produced in accordance with organic guidelines as are specialty products like sprouts, herbs and a variety of vegetables.

What Is “Organic” Production?

According to one organic organization, “Organic production focuses on natural processes and their management: materials and products are an adjunct to, and not replacement for, effective management.”

Organic means the crop was grown without the use of synthetic fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides or fungicides. Instead, intensive management is used to improve soil health and reduce the need for synthetic inputs. The production of crops by simply eliminating synthetic fertilizers and pesticides is known as “organic by neglect” and doesn’t give the high yields and quality that purposeful organic production does.

In organic crop production, emphasis is placed on building the soil with organic amendments and using crop rotations to enhance the crop system’s natural defenses against disease, insects and weeds. The rewards for such management can be seen in reduced input costs, building soil quality; increasing safety by reducing pest, weed and disease pressures; and improving the soil's ability to store and release nutrients to plants. Other important benefits include increasing access to local food, reducing reliance on imported foods, improving soil, water and energy conservation, and finding new markets for farmers. A study done by Organic Consumers Association’s Food and Agriculture Project found organic farmers are good managers who follow sound soil, water and energy conservation practices and value environmental quality.

Organic Fertility Management

Methods for building fertility in the soil without using chemical fertilizers are well-established. Managing cropping systems to naturally build soil nutrient levels is the preferred approach; simply replacing chemical fertilizers with organic fertilizers is inadequate and often prohibitively expensive.

Applying animal manure is one of the oldest agricultural practices known. Composting the manure before it is applied kills bacteria, reduces odor and minimizes nutrient release. Other sources of organic nutrients are legume amendments, natural phosphates, bone meal, composted meal and seaweed.

In rotating crops with other crops, a very important fertility-building practice. Legumes host rhizobia bacteria that form nodules on the plant roots. These nodules convert atmospheric nitrogen into a form plants can use (nitrogen fixation). Clovers, vetch, lupine and alfalfa are some common legumes grown for their nitrogen (N) contribution. Usually, large-seeded legumes grown for the seed (like beans), use as much N in seed production as they fix and aren’t generally used to build soil nitrogen levels.

Incorporating the legume—or a non-legume such as oats, rye or buckwheat—returns the plant tissue itself to the soil as a nitrogen source. A crop grown for the purpose of being plowed back in is called a green manure. Austrian winter pea is one legume being studied for use as a green manure in the Great Plains.

Beginning Oct. 21, 2002, the USDA Organic seal may be displayed on organically produced products produced and handled by operations certified by a USDA-accredited certifying agent. The USDA Organic seal tells consumers that a product is at least 95 percent organic.

Benefits of Organic Certification

The main benefit of receiving organic certification is having access to the organic market, which usually pays a premium for organic products. Other important benefits include reducing input costs; building soil quality; increasing safety by reducing pest, weed and disease pressures that accompany monocropping. A USDA study found organic farmers are good managers who follow sound soil, water and energy conservation practices and value environmental quality.

Drying Gourds

Harvest gourds when the stem dries and begins to turn brown. Be sure to completely dry your harvest before the first hard frost. Imma-

Raising Ducks

About 22 million ducks are raised annually in the United States. Duck production is under confinement on specialized duck farms in a few commercial and important duck production areas. However, many farms still raise a few ducks primarily for family use or local sale. Ducks are raised primarily for meat. All domestic breeds used are relatively poor layers, the flock should be managed to save the eggs produced for food purposes or hatching. The commercial duck industry is built around the Pekin breed. Pekins reach market weight early and are fairly good egg producers, but they are poor setters and seldom raise a brood. The Rouen is a popular farm flock breed. It is slower growing than the Pekin, but it reaches the same weight over the five to six months period of feeding and foraging under farm flock conditions. Its slower growth and colored plumage make it undesirable for commercial production. The Muscovy, a breed unrelated to other domestic ducks, is also used to some extent in farm flocks. They are good foragers and make good stock setters. Mus-

Urban Agriculture

Let Popcorn Mature on the Stalk

There are no shortcuts to popcorn harvest. Pop-
corn must mature on the stalk. In a normal growing year, it takes about 120 days from seed to harvest. The kernels are usually hard and ready to harvest by the time the stalks turn brown and dry. The husks will be dry, too. Harvest before cool, damp weather takes effect to prevent the possibility of mold growth.

After picking the ears, remove the husks and cure the ears for two to three weeks. To cure, place them in a nylon stocking or mesh bag and hang in a warm, dry, well-ventilated place. After curing, remove the kernels by rubbing them off against another, starting at the tip and working toward the base.

Store the kernels in sealed one quart glass jars, filled three-fourths full and store in the refrigerator, if possible. Properly stored popcorn should keep three to five years before becoming stale.

How popcorn pops depends on its moisture content. If many kernels remain un popped or pop only partially, they are too dry. Try adding one tablespoon of water per quart jar and shaking the jar twice a day for a couple of days. If a test popping shows kernels are still too dry, repeat the process once again.

If kernels are too moist, they will pop very slowly with a loud explosion, and steam may rise from the popper. To encour-

age moisture loss, leave the popcorn storage container unresolved until a test popping shows the kernels are properly cured. (DJ)
Focus on Food

Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

Q: How interchangeable are butter, margarine and oil?

A: Here are some general amounts that can be substituted for each other. For illustration purposes, amounts are given in 1 cup portions or multiply accordingly for your recipe.

- 1 cup “regular” margarine
- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup vegetable shortening
- 1 cup oil (can be substituted if the recipe specifies MELTED butter/margarine/shortening)

TIP 1: According to the National Association of Margarine Manufacturers, you can tell “if the product is regular margarine by checking the Nutrition Facts: a one tablespoon serving will have 100 calories.”

If the margarine is labeled “light,” “lower fat,” “reduced fat,” “reduced calorie/diet” or “fat-free” or is called a “vegetable oil spread,” you may be less successful substituting it for butter OR for regular margarine in baking and in some cooking procedures. These products are higher in water and lower in fat content and won’t perform in the same way as regular butter or margarine.

For additional information about using the various forms of margarine in recipes, check the Web site of the National Association of Margarine Manufacturers: www.margarine.org, hou tousemargarine.html

TIP 2: There is no standard procedure to substitute liquid oil for solid shortening in cooking. Oil is 100 percent fat, while butter, margarine and other solid shortenings are lower in fat in on a volume-for-volume basis.

Also, for some recipes, solid shortening helps incorporate air into the batter when it is whipped with other ingredients such as sugar and eggs. If you try to whip these ingredients with oil, your baked product is likely to be more compact and oily in texture. Your most successful substitution occurs if your recipe calls for MELTED butter/margarine/shortening, in which case you can usually substitute an equal amount of oil.

Sports Nutrition

Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

Fall is the time when kids start turning out for sports and young athletes need extra energy from healthy snacks. Here’s a sports mix you and your child may enjoy.

Sports Mix

1/4 cup raisins
1/4 cup dried cranberries
1/4 cup dried tart cherries
1/4 cup chopped apricots
3/4 cup whole grain crunchy cereal
1/4 cup chopped almonds

Combine the raisins, cranberries, cherries, apricots, cereal and nuts. Place in four small zip-top bags for easy snacking.

COOK'S TIP: You can substitute different types of dried fruits for the ones mentioned.

Serves: 4
Provides 1 fruit serving per person
Nutritional Analysis per Serving: 225 calories; 5 g fat; 19% protein; 46 g carbohydrates; 134 mg sodium; 4 g dietary fiber.

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Also, for some recipes, solid shortening helps incorporate air into the batter when it is whipped with other ingredients such as sugar and eggs. If you try to whip these ingredients with oil, your baked product is likely to be more compact and oily in texture. Your most successful substitution occurs if your recipe calls for MELTED butter/margarine/shortening, in which case you can usually substitute an equal amount of oil.

Sports Nutrition

Focus on Food

Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

Q: How interchangeable are butter, margarine and oil?

A: Here are some general amounts that can be substituted for each other. For illustration purposes, amounts are given in 1 cup portions or multiply accordingly for your recipe.

- 1 cup “regular” margarine
- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup vegetable shortening
- 1 cup oil (can be substituted if the recipe specifies MELTED butter/margarine/shortening)

TIP 1: According to the National Association of Margarine Manufacturers, you can tell “if the product is regular margarine by checking the Nutrition Facts: a one tablespoon serving will have 100 calories.”

If the margarine is labeled “light,” “lower fat,” “reduced fat,” “reduced calorie/diet” or “fat-free” or is called a “vegetable oil spread,” you may be less successful substituting it for butter OR for regular margarine in baking and in some cooking procedures. These products are higher in water and lower in fat content and won’t perform in the same way as regular butter or margarine.

For additional information about using the various forms of margarine in recipes, check the Web site of the National Association of Margarine Manufacturers: www.margarine.org, hou tousemargarine.html

TIP 2: There is no standard procedure to substitute liquid oil for solid shortening in cooking. Oil is 100 percent fat, while butter, margarine and other solid shortenings are lower in fat in on a volume-for-volume basis.

Also, for some recipes, solid shortening helps incorporate air into the batter when it is whipped with other ingredients such as sugar and eggs. If you try to whip these ingredients with oil, your baked product is likely to be more compact and oily in texture. Your most successful substitution occurs if your recipe calls for MELTED butter/margarine/shortening, in which case you can usually substitute an equal amount of oil.
The primary turfgrasses grown in the Midwest are cool season grasses. The most common species of cool season grasses used in residential lawns include Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, fine fescue and tall fescue. Cool season grasses perform best when daytime temperatures are in the range of 60-78°F along with 1-1.5 inches of water per week. These lawns possess the best color and quality attributes during the spring and fall seasons. Being cool season grasses, good to excellent winter hardiness allows established lawns to survive even the harshest winters. The most stressful time of the year for cool season grass is typically in the summer (i.e., June through August). This period is often characterized by hot, sunny days with daytime temperatures routinely in the mid 80’s to low 90’s (°F). In addition to high temperatures, moderate to severe moisture stress is often imposed on the turfgrasses. The combination of high temperatures and dry soils will lead to significant declines in turf quality unless proper management practices are implemented. Turfgrass plants need soil moisture to sustain normal growth and development. The water use rates of cool season turfgrasses during the summer period will often exceed the rate which natural rainfall returns water back into the soil. Once the soil moisture reserves are nearly depleted, the turfgrass will begin to wilt and turn from green to either yellow-green or gray-green. Wilt is a sign of water stress and is usually most evident during mid to late afternoon. The continual water stress that limits or prevents the growth of plants is termed drought. Once drought conditions develop, the lawn will stop all growth and development and proceed into dormancy. Dormancy is characterized by the development of brown turf. The turfgrass is not dead but in a condition which preserves the vital parts of the plant. Turfgrass dormancy reduces water usage and can concentrate the limited amount of available moisture into the crown, rhizomes and roots. This dormant condition will allow the turfgrass plant to survive adverse conditions for extended periods until soil moisture is replenished.

The length of time lawn grasses can survive in a dormant condition is dependent on a number of factors including soil moisture levels, daytime temperatures, condition of the turfgrass at the onset of dormancy, etc. In general, turfgrasses can be expected to survive in a dormant condition for up to 4 to 5 weeks with limited damage if temperatures are at or below normal. If daytime temperatures are high (mid-80's or higher) consistently through the stress period, only three to four weeks of survival can be expected. Dormant grass is lost once the crowns, rhizomes and roots begin to dehydrate. The areas of the lawn along sidewalks, curbs, driveways, south facing slopes, etc., will encounter the most stress and will be the first areas to die during extended periods of drought. Homeowners have little control over the daytime temperatures in the lawn. However, they can improve the survivability of the turfgrass in their lawn through proper management. This management includes proper cultural practices and/or irrigation.

Proper Summer Cultural Practices
The ability of lawn turfgrasses to survive drought conditions is improved if proper cultural practices are followed. The practices should start in early June and continued until late August. The most important cultural recommendations include:

- **Proper Mowing**: The height of mowing should be maintained at 2.5-3.0 inches. When mowing the lawn remove no more than one-third of the total leaf area at any one time. A lawn mowed at a height of 3 inches should be cut when it reaches a height of 4.5 inches. Removing more than one-third of the leaf area weakens the turfgrass and reduces its capacity to withstand additional environmental stresses. Weakened turf is also more likely to be invaded by weeds. If possible mow in the cool of the morning or evening. Mowing during high temperatures of midafternoon is stressful for the turf. Also, make sure the mower blade is sharp. Dull blades tear and bruise the leaf tips.

- **Lawn Irrigation**: Homeowners following the recommended summer management practices need to irrigate to prevent drought conditions. Water use rates of cool season grasses are higher than that of warm season turfgrasses. **Learn how to turn yard waste into a reusable organic matter which can be used to improve soil structure. Attend any of the composting workshops sponsored by the Lincoln Recycling Office and Lancaster County Extension and receive a FREE COMPOST BIN. For more information call 441-7180.**

**Garden Compost**
Compost is a mixture of partially decomposed plant material and other organic wastes. It is used in the garden to amend soil and fertilize plants. The most important function of compost is its ability to improve soil structure. Good garden soil is loose and has a high water-holding capacity with adequate drainage. Adding compost to heavy clay soil improves drainage by improving soil structure. Compost also absorbs water and improves the water-holding capacity of sandy soils. To conserve moisture it is essential to have soil with good water retention.

In addition to improving soil structure, decomposing compost will slowly release plant nutrients. Compost will not provide all the nitrogen that highly productive crops require. Organic gardeners can supplement compost applications with manure to produce good yields without the addition of other fertilizers. And last but not least, making and using compost allows the gardener to recycle garden wastes and reduce the amount of organic trash on our landfills.

**Composting Materials**
Almost all organic materials will decompose, but not all organic materials belong in the compost pile. Yard wastes, such as leaves, grass clippings, straw and non-woody plant trimmings can be composted. The predominant organic waste in most back yard compost piles is leaves. Grass clippings can be composted; however, with proper lawn management, clippings do not need to be removed from the lawn. If clippings are used for compost, it is advisable to mix them with other yard wastes. Branches, logs and twigs greater than 1/4 inch in diameter should be put through a shredder/chipper or wood chipper.

**Research Technologist Darren Binder leads many of Extension's Composting Workshops.**

**Composting Workshops and Demonstrations**
Learn how to turn yard waste into a reusable organic matter which can be used to improve soil structure. Attend any of the composting workshops sponsored by the Lincoln Recycling Office and Lancaster County Extension and receive a FREE COMPOST BIN. For more information call 441-7180.

**Workshops (7–8 p.m.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sept.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Park Recreation Ctr, 3720 NW 46</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastridge Recreation Ctr, 6130 Adams</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beltmore Recreation Ctr, 1234 Judson</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calvert Recreation Ctr, 4500 Stockwell</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving Recreation Ctr, 2010 Van Dorn</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Workshops with Hands-On Demonstrations**
(back at 8:30 a.m.)

Backyard Composting Demonstration site at University Place Park, 50th & Colby — Third Saturday of each month through October.
Mulching Tree Leaves into Lawns

The state regulation that prohibits sending yard waste to landfills has created a problem for grounds managers and homeowners who need to dispose of tree leaves each fall. One alternative is to compost the leaves, either on the premises or at a local composting center. The latter is a reasonable means of collection, bagging and a means of transport to a compost center. The former requires part of the landscape to be devoted to the composting. When there are mulched leaves on the ground, leaf clean-up and composting can be a time-consuming chore.

Another means of disposal is simply mowing the turf/leaf mixture with a rotary mower often enough to pulverize the leaves so they fall into the turf. It appears returning the leaves to the turf is not harmful to the grass if the mulching/mowing is done at appropriate times. When oak leaves are predominant, it will be necessary to mulch them into the turf later in the fall because they are held on the trees longer than most other trees.

For best results, leave the mower set at the same height as you have been mowing the turf. It is important to use a rotary mower that pulverizes the leaves well and that the leaves are dry when mowed. Sharpening the mower blades and a slow movement with the mower will help to grind the leaves finely. It may be necessary to make as many as three or four passes over the area to grind the leaves nice enough. The finer and more leaf particles the more easily they fall into the turf, leaving grass leaves exposed to the sunlight. The pulverized leaves will settle into the turf within a day or two, particularly if followed by rain. Take care that the pulverized leaves do not cover the grass blades entirely. It is best if the leaves are moved “nodulated” regularly, not allowing them to lie on the turf more than three to four days.

Fall is a very important time for the turf to photosynthesize and store carbohydrates, particularly under trees where the turf receives limited sunlight throughout the summer. It is suggested to add 1/2 pound nitrogen per 1000 square feet in addition to the normal fall nitrogen fertilization to enhance decomposition of the tree leaves.

Mulching leaves into the turf is a reasonable means of disposing of the leaves. (DJ)

What is “Grasscycling”?

Grasscycling, or grass mulching, is the natural practice of leaving clippings on the lawn when mowing. It is obvious how this practice can save resources like landfill space, but there are additional benefits as well. The clippings quickly decompose, returning nutrients to the soil. Grasscycling, in conjunction with the practice of reducing water and fertilizer inputs, can reduce mowing time in addition to reducing costs.

Grasscycling can be practiced on any healthy lawn as long as responsible turf management guidelines are followed. Proper mowing, watering, and fertilizing practices result in more moderate turf growth yet still produce a healthy, green lawn.

The nitrogen contained in grass clippings removed from a lawn almost equals the recommended application rate for healthy turf (about five pounds of nitrogen per year per 1000 square feet). While some of this nitrogen is lost through the decomposition of the clippings, leaving the clippings on the lawn by grasscycling can have the overall impact of reducing fertilization requirements by 15-25 percent or more. Similar savings on water use are possible.

Returning clippings to the lawn usually means mowing more than once a week during the few weeks of rapid growth in spring and early summer. Grass clippings should be less than one inch, or no more than one-third of the total plant height, to ensure rapid decomposition. Mowing more frequently is not as much extra work as you might think because lawns mowed at the proper height cut more easily and quickly. Mowing infrequently damages the lawn by removing too much of the plant at one time. When mowed regularly, clippings filter down through the grass, decompose rapidly, and recycle nutrients back into the soil.

Fertilize your lawn to provide uniform, moderate growth throughout the growing season. A properly fertilized lawn will have a healthy, dense stand of turf that reduces weeds and recovers quickly from insect or disease injury. The number of fertilizer applications you make will depend on how you want your lawn to look, the type of grass, and soil type.

Good lawn care practices can save water and prepare turf for dry summer months. Taller mowing and proper fertilization result in a deep and efficient root system that reduces the need for additional water. The best time to water is early morning. Less water is lost by evaporation, and disease incidence is reduced. (DJ)

The Truth About Thatch

Thatch consists of a tightly intermingled layer of dead and decaying turfgrass tissues derived from stems, roots, and leaves. Thatch has a high lignin content and resists decomposition. Located between the green vegetation and soil surface, thatch accumulates when production of turfgrass organic matter exceeds decomposition. Refrequent mowing of tall grass can contribute to thatch accumulation. The rule for mowing is to move at a height and frequency so no more than one-third of the grass height is removed at any single mowing. For example, a lawn that grows to a 3-inch height can be cut back to a 2-inch height, leaving the 1-inch clippings to easily filter into the grass canopy. A small thatch layer (less than 1/2 inch) can be beneficial because it increases the turf’s resiliency, improves its wear tolerance, and insulates it against soil temperature changes. When thatch layers exceed 1/2 inch, however, the disadvantages generally outweigh the advantages. The turf’s susceptibility to heat, cold, and drought increase with excess thatch accumulation, and localized dry spots, scalping, disease, and insect damage can occur.

Turfgrass during drought

Drought is a period of time when the water supply for lawn irrigation is limited or when watering restrictions are in place, the homeowner should designate priority areas of the lawn and water those areas first. These areas usually include the front lawn, areas around the patio or deck, and children’s play areas. If the homeowner cannot water, or elects not to water a dormant lawn, a light watering or rainfall of 0.5 inch every two weeks will help minimize damage to the lawn during the dormancy period. This watering practice will supply enough moisture to keep crowns cool, prevent thatch growth, and is practical only for small areas. Power rakes can be rented, or the service can be hired from a professional lawn care company. Power rakes use rigid wire teeth or steel blades to lift thatch debris and a small amount of soil to the lawn surface. The soil should have some moisture for best results. (Dj)

Grasscycling Saves Lawn Care Costs

• Fertilizer — Grass clippings can supply up to one-third of a lawn’s nitrogen fertilizer needs.
• Time — Recent studies confirmed that grass clippings on the lawn save one-third of the mowing time.
• Water use — Clippings shade grass roots, cool the soil, return moisture to the ground, and thereby reduce lawn watering needs.
• Soil health — Clippings decompose rapidly, feeding soil organisms that help maintain soil health and help prevent turf diseases.
• Thatcher — Studies prove that grass clippings do not cause thatch build-up. (DJ)

As thatch accumulates, turfgrass roots grow in the thatch rather than in the soil, resulting in a weakened turf prone to stress injury.
COMPOSTING
continued from page i
be added. Sawdust may be added in moderate amounts if additional nitrogen is added. Approximately one pound of actual nitrogen (six cups of ammonium nitrate) is required for 100 pounds of dry sawdust. Certain organic materials should not be used to make compost because they may pose a health hazard or create a nuisance. Do not add pet feces since they may transmit disease. Meat, bones, grease, whole egg and dairy products should not be added because they can attract rodents. Most plant disease organisms and weed seeds are destroyed during the composting process when temperatures in the center of the pile reach 140° to 150°F. However, in most compost piles, it is impossible to mix efficiently enough to bring all materials to this temperature. Consequently, large amounts of weeds with seeds or diseased plants may create problems.

Carbon-to-Nitrogen Ratios
All living organisms are made of large amounts of carbon (C) combined with smaller amounts of nitrogen (N). To maintain the balance of these elements in an organism is called the carbon-to-nitrogen ratio (C:N). This ratio is an important factor determining how easily bacteria can decompose organic waste. The microorganisms in compost use carbon and nitrogen for protein synthesis. The proportion of these two elements used by the bacteria averages about 30 parts carbon to one part nitrogen. A steady diet at this 30:1 ratio, averages about 30 parts carbon for energy and 30 parts nitrogen (N) for protein synthesis. So, to speed up composting don't have the ideal 30:1 ratio. This will work best on a weight rather than volume basis. Mixing materials of different sizes and textures also helps to provide a well-drained and well-aerated compost pile.

A pile that is too high in nitrogen will decompose to fast and smell like ammonia gas. In both instances, the decomposing process is not working. If you have the time to wait and the space to keep these materials, they’ll eventually be rewarded with compost.

Making a Compost Bin
To save space, hasten decomposition and keep the yard looking neat, contain the compost pile in some sort of structure. Composting structures can be made from a variety of materials. They can be as simple or as complex as desired. Yard wastes can be composted either in simple piles or bins, where they will sit undisturbed for slow decomposition, or in turning bins, which produce finished compost in six to eight weeks. Holding units are simple containers used to store garden waste in an organized way until these materials break down. A holding unit is the easiest way to compost. It only requires placing wastes into a pile or bin as they are generated. This material may include such things as grass clippings, crop wastes, garden weeds and leaves work best in these systems. Decomposition can take from six months to two years. The process can be hastened by chopping or shredding wastes, mixing dry and wet materials and maintaining proper moisture. Since yard and garden wastes will be added continuously, the depth of decomposition will vary from the top to the bottom of each compost pile. Generally, the composted materials found near the bottom of a pile and partially decomposed materials near the top. Once the compost at the bottom of a pile is finished, it can be removed and used.

Building the Compost Pile
Turning units are typically a series of bins used for building and turning active compost piles. A turned unit provides superior aeration for to be conveniently mixed for aeration on a regular basis. This speeds composting by providing bacteria with the oxygen they need to break down materials. Turning systems require frequent maintenance and preparation of the wastes to be composted. Composting in these units is more efficiently done in batches. Materials should be stockpiled until there is enough to fill the bin. These bins should be monitored and turned after temperatures have peaked (90° to 100°F) and begun to fall. This occurs four to seven days after pile construction. Turn a second time when the temperature peaks again, four to seven days later. Compost processed this way will be ready in six to eight weeks.

Location
The compost pile should be located close to where it will be used. Too large a distance to neighbors. The pile will do best where it is protected from drying winds.

Using Compost
Finish compost is dark brown, crumbly, and is earthy-smelling. Small pieces of leaves or other ingredients may not be visible. If the compost contains many materials which are not broken down, it is only partly decomposed. Allow partially decomposed compost particles to break down further or separate them out before using compost around growing plants.

Compost can be blended into soil mixts and is suitable for most outdoor planting projects. It is typically mixed with other ingredients such as peat moss, shredded bark, sand, or loam. Top soil when used as an outdoor planting mix. Mixes ratios vary; but 10 percent compost is considered to be a minimum, 30 percent optimum and 50 percent maximum in planting shrubs and trees.

Compost has its greatest value when rottted directly into the soil. One cubic yard of compost covers 108 square feet at three inches, 216 at two inches, and 324 at one inch. The rule of thumb is to spread compost no more than one-third the depth of the rottter. A one-inch layer of compost should be turned in. A three-inch layer tilled in six inches, and a three-inch layer tilled in nine inches. Making two or more passes with the tiller helps blend the compost with the soil and break up any clumps of material.

Compost Equipment
• Compost bin
• Compost thermometer
• Garden hoe
• Containment structure (optional)

Troubleshooting Your Compost Pile
Composting is a science based on guess work. Ideally a compost pile’s outside will be warm, moist and earthy-smelling. When it isn’t, it means that one or more of the six components listed at the beginning of this article are out of balance. The chart will help you correct the problem. If there is a problem with your compost pile, don’t worry; compost will still result, but you’ll have to wait longer.

Symptoms
The pile is wet and smells like rotten eggs. The center is dry and contains tough, woody wastes. The pile is damp and warm right in the middle, but nowhere else. The pile is damp and warm throughout, but will not heat up. The pile has an ammonia odor. Pets, raccoons, rats and insects are attracted to the pile.
Problems
Not enough air; pile too wet. Not enough water in pile. Too much woody material. Pile is too small, or too dry. Lack of nitrogen. The compost may be done, check and see! Too much green material. Lack of nitrogen. Meat scraps and fatty foods are present. Mix in fresh grass clippings or nitrogen fertilizer. Add high carbon material, such as straw, wood chips or sawdust. Remove meat and fatty foods from pile. Cover pile with a layer of soil. Turn the pile to increase temperature.
Solutions
Turn it; add coarse, dry wastes such as straw or corn stalks. Turn and moisten; add fresh green waste; chop or shred the pile. Collect more material and mix in into a new pile; moisten. Mix in fresh grass clippings or nitrogen fertilizer. Add high carbon material, such as straw, wood chips or sawdust. Remove meat and fatty foods from pile. Cover pile with a layer of soil. Turn the pile to increase temperature.

LinGro Compost Is Available From City
LinGro is a name developed by Public Works and Utilities for the organic compost produced from grass clippings, leaves and wood chips at the City of Lincoln’s compost facility (see article on next page). It is recommended for every inch of LinGro compost applied to soil that be incorporated into the soil three inches. For example, a homeowner or newly constructed home might incorporate three inches of compost into nine inches of soil. This disperses organic matter throughout the root zone of the turf.

Each spring, LinGro compost is available to the public at the North 48th Street Transfer Station, 5101 N. 48th St. This material is available at no cost on a first-come, first-served basis. Larger users interested in 10 cubic yards or more of compost can obtain compost directly from the city’s compost facility. Call the city of Lincoln’s Recycling Office at 441-7043 to make arrangements for delivery of the compost. There is a charge of $6 per cubic yard plus delivery costs. A delivery fee of $50 per truck is assessed. Delivery will be made within a 50 mile radius of the compost facility. The public can obtain see LINGRO on page iv.
Checklist for Subscribing to Special Yard Waste Collection

1. **Leaf Collection**
   - Refer to the schedule provided by local authorities.
   - Ensure your yard waste is not contaminated by other materials.

2. **Mulch/Wood Collection**
   - Bundle brush in four to five foot lengths.
   - Bundle wood chips in a single layer.

3. **Composting Program**
   - Contact your local waste management office for details.
   - Ensure your yard waste is not contaminated.

4. **Insect/ Pest Control**
   - Use insecticides to reduce pest populations.
   - Keep your yard clean and tidy to discourage pests.

5. **General Tips**
   - Keep your yard free of clutter.
   - Use proper disposal methods for yard waste.

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**City's Composting Operation Saves Landfill Space**

Grass clippings and leaves account for about one third of the residential waste stream during the growing season. When the State of Nebraska was developing strategies to promote waste reduction and recycling, this waste stream was targeted. It is a waste stream that can be separated from other wastes relatively easily and the composting process is relatively inexpensive when compared to other recycling options.

When the Nebraska State Legislature passed the Integrated Solid Waste Management Act in 1992 one of the key components was to prohibit the disposal of grass clippings and leaves in sanitary landfills during the growing season, from April 1 to Nov. 30 of each year. During this time, the state can fine any city or county up to $5,000 per day for dumping grass clippings and leaves in landfills.

Based on this legislation, the City of Lincoln developed the 16-acre yard waste compost facility next to the Bluff Road Sanitary landfill (at Highway 77 and Bluff Road). This site receives about 20,000 tons of grass, leaves and brush each year. This is equivalent to about 2,000 garbage trucks during an eight month period.

Grass is mixed with leaves and wood chips to form windrows roughly six feet high and 12 feet wide. It takes about 9-12 months to complete the composting process. The material is screened to remove any debris and wood chips and placed in a curing pile for another three months. This finished material is then available to the public as LinGro compost (see accompanying article).

Since the program began in October 1992, the city has composted an estimated 140,000 tons of grass and leaves and woodchipped 192,800 tons of tree debris. The amount of tree debris includes tree debris that was woodchipped from the 1993 and 1997 storms as well as the material diverted from the landfill and the Parks and Recreation Department. For an average year the compost facility grinds about 6,000 tons of brush and tree debris.

The diversion of grass, leaves and brush from the composting program for ten years, has added over three years to the life of the sanitary landfill. If the program was discontinued and the yard waste was buried in the landfill, it would close in 2030 instead of the current projection date of 2024.

Partial funding for the city’s composting program was provided by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Waste Reduction and Recycling Program. Gene Hanlon, Recycling Coordinator, believes that the compost program is successful because it saves valuable landfill space and produces a beneficial product that improves soils in the county.

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**Is Your Yard Producing Unwanted Critters?**

Sometimes it is easier to prevent or eliminate conducive conditions than control pests that are invading your yard.

There are a number of conditions around the yard that may be contributing to increased populations of some pest invaders. Mulching helps benefit the ornamental plants and trees in your yard by decreasing weed growth and preventing moisture loss, but it may also serve as habitat for several types of insects that may move inside your home later. The more mulch/wood chips you have and the longer it sits, the more likely there will be pillbugs, sowbugs, millipedes, and crickets living in it. Predators, like spiders and centipedes, will also increase in these areas.

Most of the time, these critters find their way into the house in the fall of the year.

One way to use mulch and still reduce the critters is to use it farther away from the house. Another is to seal cracks and crevices in your house exterior to prevent entry.

Another strategy might be to anticipate these pests and use an insecticide barrier around the house in the fall to help prevent entry.

Compost is great stuff. But it has its own complement of insects that like to live in it, including many of the insects pests that are also found in mulch. A poorly managed compost pile may produce stable flies. These flies look a lot like house flies, but can give a painful bite to people and pets. Another source of stable flies is animal excrement. Removing this waste promptly will prevent the development of stable flies and later discomfort to people and outdoor pets.

Other conditions in the yard environment can be attractive to pests. Dense vegetation is attractive to many pests because of increased humidity; most insects survive better in higher humidity. You have probably noticed mosquitoes seem to be especially attracted to dense vegetation. Rabbits are also fond of dense vegetation or piles of brush that they can hide in. Snakes like to live under concrete porches or under sidewalks. If foundations have cracks, snakes may enter basements. Mice can easily enter through small openings in basement foundations. Pine needles serve as a food source to insect species. A couple good examples are elm leaf beetles and boxelder bugs. Some insects may be attracted to your yard waste from plastic bags. A: Use paper lawn bags. Many local stores will stock biodegradable, paper lawn bags. Or you could try a 32-gallon refuse container with a tight fitting lid. If you have your waste bagged, up your yard waste, they may provide a 90-gallon, two wheel cart for you. (GH)

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**LinGro continued from page iii**

LinGro compost in bulk quantities from select retail outlets in Lincoln. A $15 fee is charged for the material by these retailers. The 10 retailers that will make compost available to the public are:

- All Care Grounds Maintenance
- 300 South Coddington Avenue; 438-5115
- Campbell’s Nurseries and Garden Centers
- 7000 S. 56th St.; 423-1133
- General Excavating
- 6701 Cornhusker Highway; 467-1627
- Nebraska Nursery and Color Gardens
- 7801 Pioneers Blvd.; 489-6543
- Nemaha Nursery
- 430 W. Pioneers Blvd.; (call for appointment) 434-5488
- Naturescapes Inc.
- 466-7771
- Pine Lake Nursery
- 7250 Pine Lake Rd.; (call for appointment) 421-3584
- Pine Valley Nursery and Landscaping
- 6901 W. O St.; (call for appointment) 435-8733
- Precast Products and Landscaping Village
- 1010 S. Coddington Avenue; 477-2255
- Seeds of Life
- 2460 Holdege St.; 730-8733

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**CRITTERS on page v**
Learn About Ground Water – The Fun Way!

Ground water, the water we use today may have traveled through the hydrologic cycle hundreds or thousands of times since the earth was formed. The ground water flow model is used to demonstrate ground water movement principles. It demonstrates two types of aquifers: an unconfined aquifer of sand located just below the surface and a confined aquifer of gravel located near the bottom. The aquifers are separated by a clay/sand layer.

Ground water moves slowly down gradient between grains of soil or in cracks in rocks until it reaches a point where it can discharge at the surface of the ground, some of it travels on the land into lakes and streams (runoff), and some soaks into the ground (infiltration) and reaches the saturated zone or aquifer, a holding place for ground water. The top of the saturated zone is the water table.

Ground water, the water we pump from the earth through wells or which flows naturally from springs, is one of Nebraska’s most valuable resources. It is not new water, but “recycled” water that is related to all the other water on earth by a process called the hydrologic cycle. The source of ground water is precipitation. When rain, snow, sleet, fog, or any moisture falls on the surface of the ground, some of it evaporates to become water vapor and thus, the cycle begins again. The ground water we use today may have traveled through the hydrologic cycle hundreds or thousands of times since the earth was formed.

The ground water we precipitate, and thus, the cycle begins again. It then evaporates to become water vapor and in cracks in rocks until it reaches a point where it can discharge at the surface of the ground, some of it travels on the land into lakes and streams (runoff), and some soaks into the ground (infiltration) and reaches the saturated zone or aquifer, a holding place for ground water. The top of the saturated zone is the water table.

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Ground water, the water we use today may have traveled through the hydrologic cycle hundreds or thousands of times since the earth was formed. The ground water flow model is used to demonstrate ground water movement principles. It demonstrates two types of aquifers: an unconfined aquifer of sand located just below the surface and a confined aquifer of gravel located near the bottom. The aquifers are separated by a clay/sand layer.

Water is introduced into the model through jars located at each end. A vacuum pump is used to draw water from the wells and dyes serve as visual tracers to show how contaminated water migrates. A surprising number of concepts can be demonstrated with the model. Twenty-eight, in fact. Here are just a few:

• Ground water is part of the hydrologic cycle.
• Ground water is contained in pore spaces and cracks.
• Ground water can be withdrawn from wells.
• Ground water is recharged by precipitation.
• Human activities can contaminate ground water.
• Contaminated surface water can pollute ground water.
• Contaminated ground water can pollute surface water.
• Pollutants travel with the ground water. Through the 4-H School Enrichment program Water Riches, fifth-grade students in Lancaster County are learning about ground water by using this model. Resource personnel at University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County can present basic ground water information to you too. Just ask and learn the fun way!

Educating Future Stewards of the Earth

Fifth graders learn about runoff at the earth wellness festival

When “red wiggler” worms eat your garbage, it’s called vermicomposting and this process takes place in a bin. They can be wood boxes or any containers with lids that provide good ventilation in a dark and moist environment in which to live and eat vegetable food wastes. Worms are bedded within these boxes in shredded and moistened newspaper, corrugated cardboard or other high-cellulose materials. Selected kitchen garbage is buried in this bedding and burial spots are rotated in an orga-
Basic Tree Pruning for the Home Owner

Trees are the most valuable of all landscape plants. Care for them properly, and your trees will live a long and healthy life. Start tree maintenance the day you plant the tree and continue throughout its life.

Proper pruning is essential and helps your trees live longer. Good pruning keeps your trees attractive, healthy and less susceptible to injury from natural forces, such as strong winds. On the other hand, poor pruning forces, such as strong winds.

On the other hand, poor pruning keeps your trees attractive, healthy and less susceptible to injury from natural forces, such as strong winds. If you want to prune smaller trees, here are a few helpful tips. Use the right tools. You can prune most shrubs with all pruning shears, a lopping shears, and a hand pruning saw. Pruning tools are available at garden and hardware stores, and through garden supply catalogs. Although you should do most pruning from late winter through spring, other times of the year are also acceptable times to prune. Some trees will bleed when you prune them in early spring. Examples include maples and birch. This heavy sap does not hurt the tree, but you can prevent it by pruning the growing season. Pruning wounds are best left unpainted. Pruning paint does not stop bleeding or prevent decay, and in some cases may even increase decay. Tree wound dressings are not recommended for most pruning cuts, including those made on maples, birch, and other bleeders to stop sap flow. When pruning trees, there are several types of branches to remove. Prune out dead branches, whenever you see them. Remove broken or diseased branches. And, remove branches that are rubbing together or growing back toward the tree’s crown. These last branches will eventually rub against other branches. Finally, prune out water sprouts and suckers.

You’ll see water sprouts and suckers on flowering crabs, maples, and certain other trees. Suckers are long straight shoots that grow out of the ground around the trunk. Water sprouts are long straight shoots that grow off of the trunk and main branches.

Certain trees have multiple leaders, including maples, ash, and others. If you want to develop a better branch structure when you train them to a single leader. It’s important to remove all but the strongest leader early in the life of trees prone to developing multiple leaders.

Occasionally, you may need to remove lower branches on mature trees. You can usually do this anytime of the year. Because these branches are usually large, it’s best to use the three-cut pruning method for removal. To do this, make an undercut halfway through the branch, a foot out from the trunk. Make a second cut a few inches beyond the undercut. You will remove the branch with this second cut. Remove the stub with your third and final cut. The three-cut method prevents the falling branch from tearing a large section of bark from the trunk.

No matter what kind of branch you’re pruning, the rule is never to leave a stub. Stubs are unattractive, and result in larger decay columns than flush cuts. Make pruning cuts so they are flush to the branch collar when the collar is evident. Branch collars are the natural swellings that occur where a branch joins a larger branch or the trunk.

Low Maintenance Trees & Shrubs For Your Landscape

After a major snow or wind storm, many of us are forced to remove damaged trees. The next task is to select trees to replace the one’s you lost. After these trees become established, they will beautify your landscape for years to come. (MIF)

Trees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mature Height (Ft)</th>
<th>Crown Spread (Ft)</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
<th>Mature Form</th>
<th>Fall Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Hophornbeam</td>
<td>25-40</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amur Maackia</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>round</td>
<td>green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amur Cork Tree</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>15-25</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>round</td>
<td>yellow-brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogwood, Pagoda</td>
<td>15-25</td>
<td>15-25</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>round</td>
<td>red-purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas fir</td>
<td>40-80</td>
<td>12-20</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>round</td>
<td>green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gongko</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Ram Tree</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>round</td>
<td>brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hackberry</td>
<td>50-70</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>round</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardy Rubber Tree</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>round</td>
<td>yellow-green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hornbeam, European</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Tree Lilac</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>15-25</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval</td>
<td>green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linden, Little-Leaf</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval</td>
<td>yellow-brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnolia, Saucer</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>30-30</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval</td>
<td>yellow-brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnolia, Star</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>15-15</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow-brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple, Norway</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow-orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple, Sugar</td>
<td>30-70</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow-red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple, Amur</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>15-15</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple, Tatarian</td>
<td>20-20</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow-red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple, Black</td>
<td>50-70</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow-orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Ash, Korean</td>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow-orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak, Swamp White</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>20-40</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow-brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak, Shingle</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>slow-round</td>
<td>yellow-red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak, Chinkapin</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>40-60</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow-brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak, Bur</td>
<td>50-70</td>
<td>50-70</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow-brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak, White</td>
<td>50-70</td>
<td>30-50</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow-brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redbud, Eastern</td>
<td>20-20</td>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>purple-yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoketree, Common</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>red-purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spruce, Colorado</td>
<td>30-60</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow-orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spruce, White</td>
<td>30-60</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>red-purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Fringe Tree</td>
<td>15-25</td>
<td>15-25</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witch Hazel, Common</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shrubs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mature Height (Ft)</th>
<th>Spread (Ft)</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
<th>Mature Form</th>
<th>Fall Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barberry, Japanese</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>scarlet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cinquefoil, bush</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotoneaster, spreading</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>8-8</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euonymus, winged</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninebark, dwarf</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>slow</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siberian Pea Shrub</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>12-15</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viburnum, Arrowwood</td>
<td>4-10</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viburnum, Wayfaring</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>oval-round</td>
<td>red</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pruning Tools – The Basics

The keys to pruning trees and shrubs are a basic understanding of pruning techniques and knowing when to prune plants. It’s also important to have the right tools. There are various types of pruning tools. The best tool for the job is determined by the size of the plant material and the situation. Hand pruners or pruning shears are generally used for cutting branches up to 3/4 inch in diameter. There are two basic types of hand pruners. Scissor-types have curved blades that overlap (scissor action) when making the cut. Anvil-type pruners have a sharpened upper blade which cuts against a flat surface (anvil). Each type is valuable in different situations. Generally, scissor-type hand pruners are preferred over the anvil-types. Sharp, properly used scissor-type pruners make clean, close cuts. Anvil-cuts can’t cut as close as scissors and are...
Recognizing Living, Hazardous Trees

Wood chip mulch is made from the chipping of tree and landscape prunings. Rather than taking up landfill space, these once discarded products (including Christmas trees) are now providing a better growing environment for many trees and plants in landscapes and gardens.

Benefits of Mulch

Mulch is material placed on the soil surface for the purpose of protecting the soil and plant roots. Not only do organic mulches add a decorative natural appearance to your landscape, they also provide many landscape benefits.

• Retains soil moisture. Mulch helps retain soil moisture and reduces water evaporation caused by wind and hot sun. Under its insulating blanket, soil remains moist long after bare areas become dry and require irrigation.
• Reduces soil temperature fluctuations. An application of mulch reduces temperature fluctuations. It acts as an insulating blanket and keeps soil cooler during hot periods and warmer in the winter months.
• Reduces weed growth. When the site has been properly prepared, mulching reduces weed growth (the headache of many gardeners). Occasional persistent weeds will need to be removed.
• Saves time in landscape maintenance. Place mulch under and between plants in tree and shrub beds, border plantings, beds of edging, rose beds, and fruit orchards. By replacing grass with mulch, mowing and watering time is cut dramatically.
• Gives a natural look. A few fallen leaves in a planting bed with a wood chip mulch garden your landscape the natural beauty of a forest floor. When you choose to remove the leaves, they too can be re-cycled by composting and then returning to the garden.
• Prevents direct contact with soil. Mulch prevents vegetables (including squash, pumpkins, melons, cucumbers, and even some sand lamb’s quarters and tomatoes) from making soil contact, thus helps to reduce root rot caused by soil microorganisms.
• Creates paths. A thick layer of mulch can be used to create walkways throughout the yard. Mulch paths permit easy access to any part of the landscape, even after heavy rains. No longer is a wet plot of land an obstacle that keeps people and pets from making their way. (MJF)

The 48th Street Trans-
PRUNING TOOLS
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more likely to crush stems when pruning.

Attempts to prune branches larger than 3/4 inch in diameter with hand pruners often results in torn, jagged pruning cuts and may damage the pruning shears. Branches from 3/4 to 1-1/2 inches in diameter can be effectively cut with lopping shears. Lopping shears consist of blades attached to long handles. The long handles give the gardener greater leverage so cuts can be made through larger branches. Lopping shears are also excellent for pruning difficult-to-reach places.

Use a pruning saw on branches larger than 1-3/4 inches in diameter. Various types of pruning saws are available.

Small tree branches that are hard to reach from the ground can be pruned with a pole saw or pole pruner. A pole saw is essentially a saw blade attached to a long pole. Pole pruners consist of a stationary hook and hinged blade operated by a rope and mounted on a long wooden or fiberglass pole. Pole saws and pole pruners are generally used to cut branches up to 2 inches in diameter.

Chain saws are often used by professional arborists when cutting large tree branches. Chain saws, however, can be cutting large tree branches.

Every time you turn on a faucet, an important natural resource, water, goes down the drain. Unfortunately, more water than necessary. This check list will help you conserve water for lawns and garden use. Try to add these water conservation tips into your landscape and vegetable gardens.

• Mulch Turf, perennials, annual flowers, and vegetable plants to retain moisture in the soil longer. Use shredded leaves, grass clippings, or chopped bark around the base of trees.

CRITTERS
continued from page iv

CRITTERS

drive you crazy, consider planting another type of tree. If you have the opportunity to plant one. Box elder bugs feed on members of the Acer genus, including box elder trees and maple trees. Nearly every tree species has something not-so-good about it. Hackberry trees, in addition to dropping branches easily, produces lace bugs that have a nasty bite in the late summer and early fall. Oaks are messy and attractive to squirrels. It can be a real challenge to find the “perfect” tree. Fruit-bearing trees are highly attractive to bees in the springtime, a fact that someone highly allergic to bee stings might want to consider before planting fruit trees. Yellow jackets are attracted to dropped, fermenting fruit in the fall of the year. Pick up dropped fruit is one way to reduce wasps in the yard. Or, plant crab apples that don’t produce much of a fruit.

Lighting around the home can attract nocturnal insects, like moths, midges, wood roaches, and spiders that prey on these insects. Using yellow light bulbs can attract nocturnal insects that are not as attractive to nocturnal insects may reduce these pests.

Aquatic environments, like wetlands, lakes, streams and ponds near your home can breed aquatic insects like mosquitoes, midges, horseflies, deer flies, and black flies.

Mans made from wood shingles or cedar siding attract a number of insects that prefer living in wood. These include carpenter ants, carpenter bees, paper wasps, yellow jackets, and honey bees. Log homes are very attractive to beetles that naturally invade felled trees.

It is impossible to completely prevent pests in your yard, unless you decide to completely pave your yard with concrete and we don’t recommend that. But, by recognizing conducive conditions and remedying problems in your yard, you might be able to decrease the numbers of pests.

For more information about most of the pests mentioned in this article, contact UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County at 441-7180 or visit online at lancaster.unl.edu. (BPO)

Conservation Checklist

Things you can do to help save natural resources.

In your yard...

• Start a compost pile.
• Put up birdfeeders, birdhouses, and birdbaths.
• Put weeds instead of using herbicides.
• Use organic fertilizers.
• Compost your leaves and grass clippings.
• Use mulch to conserve water in your garden.
• Reuse plastic pots and containers.

On vacation...

• Carry reusable cups, dishes, and flatware.
• Do not pick flowers or keep wild creatures for pets — leave plants and animals where you find them.
• Watch out for wildlife, give consideration to all living things you see crossing the road.
• When hiking, stay on the trail, do not trample fragile undergrowth.

Water Use in the Landscape

Hand pruning equipment

reduce the risk of injury, home gardeners should use pruning saws rather than chain saws when pruning trees. In potentially hazardous situations, such as the prunings of large branches high in the trees or limbs near power lines, individuals should always contact a trained arborist.

Another tool sometimes used by the home gardener is the hedge shears. Hedge shears (manual or electric) are used to shear formal hedges to a definite size and shape. They should not be used to prune trees and shrubs.

When buying pruning equipment, select high quality tools. Good, high quality tools are not inexpensive. However, if they are used and cared for properly, they will perform better and far outlast the poor quality, less expensive choices. (DJ)

Badminton, perennials, annual flowers, and vegetable plants to retain moisture in the soil longer. Use shredded leaves, grass clippings, or chopped bark around the base of trees. Mulching also controls weeds that compete with garden plants for water. Vegetables that require more water should be grouped together in the garden to make maximum use of water applications. Collect rain water in a barrel or large bucket from down spouts. Use it to water container plants.

Use a drip irrigation system in your gardens. This method uses 25 to 50 percent less water than a hose or sprinkler system.

CRITTERS

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Mans made from wood shingles or cedar siding attract a number of insects that prefer living in wood. These include carpenter ants, carpenter bees, paper wasps, yellow jackets, and honey bees. Log homes are very attractive to beetles that naturally invade felled trees.

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September has arrived. We got our son off to college, the weather has cooled down and we've had just enough rain to make our grass turn green once again and actually dry enough for us to mow. We sure haven't over-used the mower this summer. The only thing that seemed to grow when it was so hot and dry was the clover. Once again the ladies who attended state convention had a good time. The new lessons for next year will be:

1) Woman to Woman — Searching for Chocolate
2) Someone in the USA— Good time. The new lessons for next year will be:
3) Someone's in the Living Room...With an Eye for Redecorating

More information on the conventions will be given at the September Council Meeting.

Next year’s convention will be held in Syracuse.

It’s time to re-organize your clubs. Don’t forget to pick up the re-organizational packets from the Extension Office soon. There are some Oct. 1 deadlines.

A reminder to the members who do not belong to a club, you need to fill out the membership form in the last FCE SPEAKS or call Pam at the Extension Office for the form. This form needs to be mailed to Joy Kruse by Oct. 1.

If you or someone you know would like to be a Family and Community Education (FCE) member but can’t or doesn’t want to belong to a specific club, you can pay your dues and receive all FCE information through the mail.

Mark your calendar for Sept. 23. That’s the next FCE Council meeting. It will be held at 7 p.m. at the Bess W. Dietrich Library, 6701 S. 14th St. Please call Pam at the Extension Office, 441-7180, so we know how many are coming. The clubs responsible for this meeting are Emerald, Live and Learn and Salt Creek Circle.

Another important date to mark on your calendar is Oct. 21. That’s Achievement Day. Clubs responsible are Busy Bees, Helpful Homemakers and Home Service.

The evening will start at 6:30 p.m. with a light dessert. We will have a speaker from Cedar’s Home who will talk about the homeless. This subject is a real eye-opener. Most of us don’t even know we have a problem in Lincoln.

Please bring SMALL bars of soap and SMALL bottles of shampoo (the kind you get in hotels). These will be donated to Cedar’s Home to be used in packets given to homeless and Heritage Hope to see all of you at the September meeting. Enjoy the nice weather.

Young children naturally show and tell you they love you. They hug, kiss or say I love you. That feels good. But, they just as naturally say or show they are upset with you, or another member of the family. Sometimes those negative feelings are not easy to accept. Parents tend to respond to “I hate you!” or other negative feelings with, “No, you don’t, that’s not a nice thing to say.”

Most of us have learned to hide our feelings. Boys shouldn’t cry and girls shouldn’t get mad. Negative feelings are just as much a part of growing up as positive ones. They don’t mean you’re a bad parent, or your child really doesn’t like you. A young child’s anger is short-lived and normal. Try to handle these times with understanding instead of argument or punishment.

When feelings aren’t let out and are bottled up, they don’t go away. They grow stronger and will come out later as temper tantrums, hitting or bad dreams. When someone takes the time to understand our feelings, it may allow us to feel loved and safe. A child who feels understood by us is more likely to trust us and feel close to us.

Children need to accept all their feelings, positive and negative, rather than becoming angry, lecturing or trying to change them. Feeling understood helps a child understand his own feelings, respect them and deal with them. It may actually help the child find solutions to the problems.

Active listening is a way of showing understanding.

When you and your child are disagreeing, STOP and listen carefully and see if you can identify what the child is feeling.

Repeat back to him what you hear. “You are sounding very angry.”

Check to see if you heard right. “Is that what you’re feeling?”

Active listening lets the child know you care about what she feels. Taking time to understand what children feel sends a powerful message to them. It says to them, “You’re important to me, I care about your feelings. I want to understand how you see things.”

FCE Members Attend Convention

Joy Kruse, Ann Meier and Donna DeShon, members of the 49th FCE club, attending the annual conference of the Nebraska Association for Family and Community Education held Aug. 18-20 in Sidney, Neb., W.O.W. Women Out West, was the theme of the meeting.

Attendees spent two days renewing their vision in the organization’s mission to strengthen individuals, families and communities through education, leadership and action. Attendees also visited the Chappell’s Memorial Library, Art Gallery and the Sudman-Niemann Heritage House with lunch at Connie’s Home Cooking. The tour also visited the Museum and the Moose and Grape Frame Shop. Joy toured the Atlas Missile Home and the Aftonhamen was in Potter, then on to the Reading Garden and a windsheild tour of the historic Sioux Army Depot.

Hands-on craft workshops added fun and learning. The Keynote Speaker, Dr. Jean Beyer showed the strength of Nebraska pioneer women. She is still prevalent throughout the lives of women today using quilts to show their contribution to society and how the family life was strengthened past and present.

The business meeting was followed by a luncheon where the Evening Star Festival of the FCE Award was presented to Helen Woten of Potter for her contributions to home, church and community. The state winners of the Environmental Poster Contest, the Creative Writing Contest and the Character Counts! Contest were announced.

Leadership workshops on Respect for the Flag, Woman to Woman—Searching for CHOCOLATE!, Someone’s in the Living Room...With an Eye for Redecorating will be held.

FCE Leader Training

The FCE leader training lesson, “Energy Isn’t the Only Thing You Will Save” is scheduled for next year’s convention held in Syracuse.

FCE Re-Organizational Packets

President of Family and Community Education (FCE) clubs: If you have not picked up your re-organizational packets please contact Lorene Bartos at the Extension Office, 441-7180, so we know how many are coming. The re-organizational packets include the leaders manual, treasurer’s manual which has a due date of Oct. 1. There are other October deadlines within the packet. It is time to look forward and plan an exciting and educational year for FCE. If you have questions, call Lorene or Pam at 441-7180. (LB)

Feelings

Active listening is a way of showing understanding.

When you and your child are disagreeing, STOP and listen carefully and see if you can identify what the child is feeling.

Repeat back to him what you hear. “You are sounding very angry.”

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Active listening lets the child know you care about what she feels. Taking time to understand what children feel sends a powerful message to them. It says to them, “You’re important to me, I care about your feelings. I want to understand how you see things.”

Youth Labor Rules Online

Many teens have part-time jobs. The new Labor Department Web site at www.youthrules.dot.gov is designed to educate the public on federal and state rules regarding young workers, from the hours youth can work to the jobs youth can do to ensure safe work experiences.

FCE News

Family Community Education (FCE) Council Meeting

The September Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 23, 7 p.m., at the Bess W. Dietrich Library, 6701 S. 14th St. The business meeting will follow the program being planned by Emerald, Live & Learn and Salt Creek Circle FCE Clubs. All FCE members are invited to attend. (LB)

FCE Re-Organizational Packets

President of Family and Community Education (FCE) clubs: If you have not picked up your re-organizational packets please contact Lorene Bartos at the Extension Office, 441-7180, so we know how many are coming. The re-organizational packets include the leaders manual, treasurer’s manual which has a due date of Oct. 1. There are other October deadlines within the packet. It is time to look forward and plan an exciting and educational year for FCE. If you have questions, call Lorene or Pam at 441-7180. (LB)

CHARACTER COUNTS! Corner

Youth Labor Rules Online

Many teens have part-time jobs. The new Labor Department Web site at www.youthrules.dot.gov is designed to educate the public on federal and state rules regarding young workers, from the hours youth can work to the jobs youth can do to ensure safe work experiences.
2002 Lancaster County Fair
4-H & FFA Photos and Ribbon Placings Online at:
lancaster.unl.edu/4h

Take a moment to enjoy highlights from the livestock, horse and small animal shows at the Lancaster County Fair. See photos of youth proudly displaying their projects. Chuckle at the photos from the Dunk Tank and the “Prettiest Cow” contest. Lancaster County Fair 4-H & FFA Exhibit Ribbon Placings, Awards and Nebraska State Fair selections are also available.

2002 Lancaster County Fair
4-H & Youth

Fair’s Over, Now What? Parent and Leader Meeting
Leaders, parents and interested volunteers are invited to attend this 4-H training. Topics include:
• The 2002 Lancaster County Fair. Take this opportunity to share your ideas concerning static exhibits, non-animal contests and the general dynamics of the fair.
• Discover how to finish the current 4-H year and how to prepare for the next 4-H year. Awards, project completion/selection and club reorganization will be covered.
See you Tuesday, Sept. 24, 9:30 a.m. or 7 p.m. (TK)

Thanks County Fair Award Donors!
The Lancaster County 4-H and FFA members would like to thank all the county fair award donors. Your donation and support towards youth programs in this county is greatly appreciated. (DK)

4-H Bulletin Board
Postcards will be sent to 4-H Teen Council members announcing the October meeting date. To join Teen Council, call Tracy at 441-7180. (TK)

Award Nominations
Nominations are needed for the following awards by Oct. 31. Application forms are available at the extension office.

4-H Meritorious Service — presented to individuals or organizations which have exhibited consistent and strong support of the 4-H program. 4-H members are not eligible.

Outstanding 4-H Member — presented to an individual who has excelled in his involvement with the 4-H program and is 14 years of age or older. The basis for selection appraises the variety and depth of 4-H activities.

1 Dare You Youth Leadership Award — presented to junior or senior high school 4-H members who have demonstrated personal integrity, lead well-rounded lives and possess a willingness to assume responsibility. They do not need to currently hold a leadership position, but should be recognized by their peers and adults who work with them as emerging leaders. Two 4-H members will be selected from Lancaster County. (TK)

Dates Set for 2003 State Leaders Forum
The 2003 State Leaders Forum will be held on March 21–23, at State 4-H Camp at Halsey. 4-H volunteers who are interested in serving on the planning committee can call Katherine Potthoff at 472-9021.

4-H Scholarships Available
The Lancaster County 4-H program offers a variety of scholarships to active senior 4-H members in Lancaster County. The following is a list of scholarships available for the 2003 school year. To obtain an application for any of these scholarships, please contact the Lancaster County Extension office or call Deanna Karmazin at 441-7180.

4-H Council — awards eight $300 scholarships to any active Lancaster County 4-H'er.

Amy Countryman Memorial — $1,000 to a senior at Waverly High School currently enrolled in 4-H. Amy Countryman was active in the 4-H horse program and this scholarship is given in her memory.

Lincoln Center Kiwanis — awards two $500 scholarships to a current high school senior who is active in 4-H.

Teen Council — awards two scholarships to a current 4-H'er who is active in Teen Council and helps with at least one major fund raising during their senior year.

Lone Scholarship — one $200 scholarship is awarded to a current 4-H'er who attends Raymond Central High School.

4-H Bulletin Board
Postcards will be sent to 4-H Teen Council members announcing the October meeting date. To join Teen Council, call Tracy at 441-7180. (TK)

The Wittstruck Award winner was Mindy Leach. Mindy is the 14-year-old daughter of Lynn and Natalie Leach of Malcolm and is a member of the Ropes and Riggins 4-H Horse club.

Herdsmanship award winners were the Western Pride 4-H Horse Club. Coming in a close second were the Flying Hoofs.

Senior Horse Judging winners were 1) Melissa Raithe, 2) Dana Hahn, 3) Esther Anderson, 4) Danielle Fenster, 5) Teresa Ferrin, 6) Laura Olson, 7) Lindsay Kerns, 8) Sara Zimbelman, 9) Melissa Ebeling, 10) Michela Winters.

Junior Horse Judging winners were 1) Morgan Marshall, 2) Joanna Duhauchek, 3) Cissie Kuebner, 4) Lauren Benda, 5) Sam Culp, 6) Mindy Leach, 7) Emily Morton, 8) Elizabeth Harris, 9) Jessica Havria, 10) Eru Kinberg.

Lancaster Family & Consumer Science Contest Participants Win Top Awards at State Fair

Congratulations to the following individuals who were chosen to represent Lancaster County at the 2002 State Family and Consumer Sciences Contest. They exhibited knowledge and decision-making abilities in being chosen for this event.

Mary Obrist and Nina Contreras were in the Top 10 Individual in the Intermediate Division, receiving third place and fifth place respectively. There were 75 contestants participating in this division.

Lancaster County had two Intermediate Division Team. The team participants were Mary Obrist, Nina Contreras, Alyssa Fiola and Abigail Gabel. They were awarded 2nd place out of 34 teams.

Mary Conroy was a Top 10 Individual in the Senior Division, receiving third place. In this division 154 contestants participated.

This year Lancaster County had two Senior Division Teams. Team One participants were Mary Conroy, Laura Conroy, Nicole Pedersen and Emily Veburg. They placed 3rd out of 52 teams. Team Two participants were Kristin Malone, Karen Clinch and Monica Fujan. (TK)

2002 Ak-Sar-Ben Livestock Exposition

The 75th Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Youth Livestock Exposition will be held at Ak-Sar-Ben from Sept. 25-29. More than 2,000 4-H families from an eight-state area participate in the annual event. For more information, visit online at www.aksarben.org. A partial schedule follows:

Friday, Sept. 27
7:30 a.m. Judging of Breeding Beef followed by Breeding Showmanship
9 a.m. Judging of Feeder Calves followed by Feeder Calf Showmanship

Saturday, Sept. 28
7 a.m. Judge Three Divisions of Market Steers
8 a.m. Judging of Market Lambs followed by Showmanship
Judging of Dairy Cattle followed by Showmanship
7 p.m. Market Swine Showmanship

Sunday, Sept. 29
7 a.m. Judging of Market Steers
Judging of Market Steers Heifers
Judging of Catch-A-Calf
Judging of Market Swine
Judging of Market Beef Showmanship
Judging of Market Broilers

Community Service Corner

Volunteer Work Day Sept. 25 at Eastern NE 4-H Center

The Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center in Gretna is asking for your help this fall! Volunteers are needed to help with fall projects on Sept. 25, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Some of the projects lined up include:
- Staining the elements on the TRUST Course
- Picking up litter around the camp site
- Staining picnic tables
- Staining newly rebuilt decks
- Tearing down a cabin deck
- Tree trimming
- Mulching
- Arboratum Activities

Lunch and snacks will be provided and volunteers receive a free XL Blue “Camp” T-Shirt.

Please R.S.V.P. to Kelly Krambeck at (402) 332-4496 with your name and your first two choices of activities. You are welcome to bring your own work gear or use the camp’s equipment. If you are unable to volunteer on Sep. 25, but would like to volunteer another day, call Kelly to arrange a time and project.

Youth In Action/Community Service Grants Available

Community service project grants of $500 to $1,500 are being offered to youth who take leadership roles and work with adult 4-H volunteer leaders and/or Cooperative Extension staff. Grants require youth teams to identify critical issues in their communities, develop activities to address these issues, and educate other young people and children about ways to model community service. Youth must be actively involved in writing the proposal and in program implementation. Collaborative efforts reflecting the diversity of the community are encouraged. 2003 Grant applications are now available at www.grants.nsah.org under “community service.” Applications are due Sept. 23.

Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards is searching to find their top youth volunteer. This search is for youth in grades 5–12 who has engaged in a volunteer activity that occurred at least in part after Sept. 1, 2001. If selected, youth can receive $1,000, an impressive silver medallion and a trip to Washington, D.C. next May. If you feel you’ve made a positive difference through a volunteer activity during the past year, please call Tracy at 441-7180 for an application or log on at http://esa.prudential.com/awards for application. Applications must be received in the office by Oct. 31.

Target All-Around Scholarships for Students Committed to Community Service

Administered by the Citizens’ Scholarship Foundation of America, Inc., Target All-Around Scholarships for Students will award four $10,000 and more than 2,100 $1,000 scholarships for higher education (two per Target store) to high school seniors and college students who are committed to community service and education. The deadline for the scholarship application is Nov. 1.

For more information, call (800) 316-6142. For rules and application forms, visit: http://www.target.com/target_group/community/community_scholarships.html.

Congressional Award Gold Medal

The Congressional Award is a public-private partnership created by Congress in 1979 to provide a unique opportunity for young people ages 14–23 to set and achieve personally challenging goals that build character and foster community service, personal development and citizenship. In order to earn The Congressional Award Gold Medal, each individual must complete a minimum of 400 hours of voluntary public service, 200 hours of personal development activities, 200 hours of physical fitness, and four consecutive days and nights of an exploration or expedition. Any young person ages 14–23 may register for the program by calling (202) 226-0130 or logging onto www.congressionalaward.org.
Porches — Building a Sense of Community

LaDeane Jha
Extension Educator

Imagine a tree-lined street in your neighborhood with a front porch on every home. Each porch is outfitted with a swing, a comfortable rocker and maybe some attractive plants. "Out on the porch..." The very words bring to mind a smile, a feeling of a place to relax and enjoy a cool breeze on a warm afternoon or evening — a place to read, rock, share stories and just visit with family members, neighbors and friends.

The front porch originated from a desire to enjoy warm weather while still being protected from the hot sun or a sudden rainstorm. By today’s television, computer, air conditioners, privacy fences and endless activities seem to keep people off their porches even if they have them. Some in the community are also creating a return to the front porch.

Important to Families and Neighborhoods
Porches tend to promote social interaction and relationships in a variety of ways. For example, the relaxing atmosphere encourages family members to share stories and traditions. Intergenerational bonds are often strengthened and parents have an opportunity to pass on values and principles through the conversations and stories shared.

Neighbors are more likely to know one another better when there are opportunities for spontaneous interaction. Relationships can have their start on the porch as neighbors talk and get to know each other. As neighbors form friendships they begin to appreciate and care about each other. These bonds then help strengthen the porch and build communities.

Back to the Porch
With many things pulling us away, it may take some special effort to get back to the porch. How about inviting a few neighbors over for some lemonade and cookies? You can create some rich, wonderful memories by sipping, sharing and supporting! see PORCHES on page 12

Helping Your Child Prepare for College
Lila Tooker
UNL Admissions Office

With today’s choices in post-secondary education, many students will want to pursue an education at a college or university. Help them prepare for their future careers. A college education is an important part of their child’s future and preparing early is one way to guide him or her to success.

Throughout their education, students should strive for excellence. Parents can help by encouraging their child to develop good study habits and to challenge himself or herself when choosing college or career class projects. In addition, students should get involved in school and community activities particularly those that encourage hands-on learning and career exploration. They should try to record these activities in a scrapbook or notebook, as well as activities that are important so your student can complete applications for scholarships and other honors and awards in the future. As students enter middle school/junior high school and high school, it is time to begin seriously focusing on what a student can do each year to make sure he or she is on a path to college success.

Middle/Junior High School: Help your child prepare on a college-preparatory track so he or she has the necessary prerequisites for high school college-prep classes. This includes taking algebra in the eighth grade and getting a good study habit in English, history, science, foreign language, computer skills and other academic areas. Junior high school is also not too soon to talk with your child about college and what he or she envisions for the future. You can encourage them by telling them what their strengths are and by planning with them for their future beyond high school.

9th Grade: According to Kelley Winter, UNL Admissions Counselor and former guidance counselor, "Even though the decision not to take the ACT or SAT, and it is perfectly acceptable to take these exams using any of the books and computer software packages available. Your guidance counselor should be able to recommend these, and there may be copies available at the library. Encourage your child to visit with the college representa- tives visiting their school. Attend local college fairs to ask questions. By now you will be receiving a lot of information from your child and colleges around the country. You see COLLEGES on page 11

Furniture and Home Living

October is Indoor Air Quality Action and Awareness Month

Is the air in your home making you ill? Carbon monoxide, radon, secondhand smoke, mold, mildew and other biologicals, formaldehyde, dust and asbestos are just a few of the unhealthy substances in indoor air. Research has found in homes across the nation, the quality of indoor air can be worse than outdoor air.

Today, many homes are being built and remodeled more tightly without regard to the factors that influence indoor and outdoor air. Homes today contain furnishings, combustion appliances and hobby and household products that can compromise the quality of the home’s air.

October is Indoor Air Quality Action and Awareness Month. Being aware of the signs of possible indoor air quality problems and taking action to improve any problems that exist will help reduce the number of health problems in families.

Signs of Possible Home Indoor Air Quality Problems Include:

• Unusual and noticeable odors, stale or stuffy air.
• Noticeable lack of air movement.
• Dusty or smelly central heating or air conditioning equipment.
• Damage flue pipes in chim- neys.

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Cultural Insights: Nurooz the Persian New Year Festival

Nurooz which means a new day in Persian, celebrates the awakening of the natural life and symbolizes two concepts — the End and the Rebirth. Nurooz is the point when the cold winter begins to retrieve the beginning of the lively and helpful spring.

A few weeks before the New Year, Iranians clean, rearrange and often paint their homes. Another tradition associated with Nurooz is that every person buys at least one set of new clothes. On the night before Nurooz, the entire family gathers around a table and arrange several items, each of which symbolizes a wish or theme. Of all the items in this arrangement, seven of them starting with the Farsi letter “sern” (the English is “S”), must always be included. The seven items stand for the seven angelic herald of life — rebirth, health, happiness, prosperity, joy, patience and beauty. These seven dishes are: green vegetables, garlic, Samano (a Persian snack made of flour and sugar), hyacinth flower, coin, vinegar and Senjed (a dried fruit). Other items often included on the table are sugar, cookies, a mirror, candles, eggs and a bowl with goldfish.

Looking at the goldfish at the turn of the year is believed to bring good luck and fortune. On the eve of the last Wednesday of the year, bonfires are lit in public places and people leap over the flames.

On the 13th day of the new year, families leave their houses and celebrate the last day of the festival outdoors in a picnic style. The concept of avoiding the number thirteen is mainly to symbolize the will and power to deal with evil in the new year.
Extension Calendar

All programs and events will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center unless otherwise noted.

SEPTEMBER

13 Extension Board Meeting .................................................. 8 a.m.
14 NU Landscape Connections, UNL East Campus .................... 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
17 Composting Workshop, Air Park Recreation Center, 3720 W F 46 ........ 7-8 p.m.
17 Composting Workshop, Backyard Composting Demonstration site at Lancaster Park, 6th St & Colby ........ 7-8 p.m.
17 Composting Workshop, Belmont Recreation Center, 1234 Judson ........ 7-8 p.m.
17 Fair Board Meeting, Extension Education Center .................. 7-8 p.m.
21 Composting Workshop with Hands-On Demonstration, Backyard Composting Demonstration site at University Place Park, 5th & Colby .... 8:30 a.m.
23 Family Community Education (FCE) Council Meeting, Wall Branch Library .................................................. 7 p.m
24 Fair’s Over-Now What? Leader Training ................................ 9:30 a.m. or 7 p.m.
24 Family and Community Education (FCE) Leader Training .................... 1 p.m.
24 Composting Workshop, Calvert Recreation Center, 4500 Stockwell ........ 7-8 p.m.
25 Composting Workshop, Irving Recreation Center, 2010 Van Dorn ........ 7-8 p.m.
25-29 Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Livestock Exposition, Omaha .................... 8:30 a.m.

OCTOBER

1 4-H Council Meeting ................................................................ 7 p.m.
6-12 NATIONAL 4-H WEEK .......................................................... 7 p.m.
8 CIF Meeting ............................................................................ 7 p.m.
9 Horse VIPS Meeting ................................................................ 7 p.m.
10 Rabbit VIPS Meeting ................................................................. 7 p.m.
11 Extension Board Meeting ........................................................ 8 a.m.
17-19 North Central Regional 4-H Forum, St. Louis, MO ............... 7-8 p.m.
19 Composting Workshop with Hands-On Demonstration, Backyard Composting Demonstration site at University Place Park, 5th & Colby .... 8:30 a.m.

Composting Workshops and Demonstrations

Learn how to turn yard waste into a reusable organic matter which can be used to improve soil structure. Attend any of the composting workshops sponsored by the Lincoln Recycling Office and Lancaster County Extension and receive a FREE COMPOST BIN. For more information call 441-7180.

Workshops

(7-8 p.m.)

Location Sept.
Air Park Recreation Ctr, 3720 NW 46 17
Easterday Recreation Ctr, 6130 Adams 18
Belmont Recreation Ctr, 1234 Judson 19
Calvert Recreation Ctr, 4500 Stockwell 24
Irving Recreation Ctr, 2010 Van Dorn 25

Workshops with Hands-On Demonstrations

(begin at 8:30 a.m.)

Backyard Composting Demonstration site at University Place Park, 50th & Colby — Third Saturday of each month through October.

Composting Workshops

continued from page 10

If you don’t have a porch, sit under an old shady tree. The important thing is to get together and share. No matter how big or small your porch — even if it is front stairs or a stoop, it can send a message of welcome to guests with a little creativity and planning.

The COPC Porch Project

Partnerships to Revitalize Heart of Lincoln Neighborhoods, (PRHONL) a project of the Community Outreach Partnerships Center (COPC) is committed to neighborhood beautification and education. Steve Larrick, project director, in cooperation with management students from UNL, is leading an effort to rehabilitate and replace porches in targeted neighborhoods as one way to accomplish the goals of beautification and community awareness.

Larrick indicates, “Porches enhance the architectural aesthetics of older homes, enhance neighborhood and prevent crime.”

The first porch rehabilitation took place this spring and more are to follow. For more information about this project contact Steve Larrick at 472-9217 or Jan Harris, Staff Assistant for COPC at 472-0597.