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UNL Termite Workshops Can Help You Make Better Decisions about Termites

Barb Ogg, Ph.D.
Extension Educator

When termites are discovered inside the home, many people panic and think they need to make a fast decision. They have a vision of termites eating wood like a buzz saw. The reality is, each termite takes a tiny bite of the wood and removes it, so termite damage actually occurs very slowly.

Because termite treatments are expensive — easily costing $1,500 or more — it pays to get the facts before you make an ill-advised decision.

The recent development of new termicidics and baits means that there are more treatment options than there were just ten years ago. Homeowners become confused when different companies recommend different treatment approaches.

One woman who recently called the extension office about termite treatments, asked, “How do ordinary people make decisions about termite treatments when the companies make such radically different recommendations? It is so confusing.”

In 1995, UNL extension educators, Barb Ogg, Lancaster County and Dennis Ferraro, Douglas/Sarpy Counties developed educational workshops, Everything Homeowners Need to Know about Termites and Termite Control. These three-hour workshops teach basic termite biology, behavior, foraging habits, prevention tips, the latest about termite treatments and why treatments cost so much. Workshop information is based on research results.

The goal of these workshops is to educate homeowners so that they can make better decisions and get effective treatments. In the last nine years, more than 1,450 people have attended 35 workshops. Results from a survey of persons attending these workshops indicate 98 percent of attendees had more confidence in their decision-making abilities after attending the workshop.

Many people are not sure how to proceed when faced with a termite infestation. But, there are logical, rational steps that can be taken:

1. If you see an insect you think could be a termite, have it identified by an expert. Your local county extension office should be able to identify termites for you.
2. Have your house inspected. It is important to know if there is a termite infestation inside your home.

Subterranean Termite Workers

Subterranean termites (the kind we have in Nebraska) build mud tubes to connect their colony in the soil with wood above ground. Presence of mud tubes is a sign of termites.

Inspectors may also look for signs of termite swarvers—small, black, winged insects that swarm in the spring.

3. If evidence of active termites are found, you should contact several pest control companies for bids. Some companies may suggest using a bait treatment, which is appealing because it is a non-invasive type of treatment. The other treatment option is the traditional “barrier” treatment. However, there are pros and cons of both treatment approaches that homeowners should understand.

To make an intelligent decision about treatments, homeowners need detailed bids from each company, so they can compare how companies will treat their homes.

4. Learn as much about termites as you can from an unbiased source such as Cooperative Extension. The best way would be to attend one of the upcoming termite workshops. Another resource that may be helpful is the Termites Handbook for Homeowners and can be found on the Web: pest.unl.edu/termite. This handbook is updated each spring with current information on termite treatments. Persons attending the termite workshop receive a copy of the handbook as part of their $25 registration fee.

5. Go through bids carefully. You should realize bids will reflect the following costs to the pest control company:

   • Cost of chemical or bait product.
   • Labor (the men/women actually doing the job).
   • Equipment costs (drills, drill bits, tanks, rodding equipment, truck, etc.).
   • Overhead (business rent, utilities).
   • Insurance (which protects the company in case of an application problem).
   • Profit.

What if bids are low? Beware. These companies may be skimping on chemical or on the labor necessary to do the job right.

• Schedule the treatment when you can be at home. Persons in Nebraska doing termite applications for hire must be certified by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) which means they are trained and have passed an examination. All certified individuals have received a green and red certification card and must carry it when doing applications — ask to see it.
• Watch the treatment and observe details. If you have attended a termite workshop, you should be able to tell if the pest control technician is treating appropriately.

Summary: To fully understand the intricacies of termite treatments, it is time well spent to read and gather information before you make a decision.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Everything Homeowners Need to Know About Termites and Termite Control

Date
Tuesday, May 11, 6:30–9:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 13, 6:30–9:30 p.m.

Location
Douglas/Sarpy County Extension Office
415 W. Center Road, Omaha, (402) 444-7804
Lancaster Extension Education Center
441 Cherry Creek Road, Lincoln, (402) 441-7180

For more information or to receive a brochure, contact one of the extension offices above or go to http://lancaster.unl.edu/enviro/pestworkshops/TermiteWorkshop.html

"Helping Nebraskans enhance their lives through research-based education."

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441-7180 • Web site: lancaster.unl.edu
Controlling Yellow Nutsedge

Controlling yellow nutsedge can be difficult. Pushing the weeds is usually not an effective control measure, because as the plants are removed, the small root tubers break off and remain in the garden. Each tuber sends up a new plant, initially making the problem seem worse. Determined homeowners willing to doggedly recheck infestations of yellow nutsedge weekly throughout the growing season and pull any new emerging plants as soon as they are seen, can eventually get this weed under control. However, if new plants are allowed to mature and develop tubers before being pulled, then hand pulling will not provide adequate control.

In areas of heavy yellow nutsedge infestation, chemical control may provide the only viable option. Common grasses and broadleaf herbicides will not control yellow nutsedge. Specialized herbicides for controlling sedges must be used. The most effective herbicides currently available for yellow nutsedge control are “Basagran” (benzonat) and “Manage” (thifensulfuron). Several applications of herbicide will normally be needed to provide control. Success in controlling yellow nutsedge with a herbicide depends entirely on carefully reading and following label directions. When applying control products, avoid moving three to five days before and after treatment. To ensure adequate herbicide absorption, do not water the lawn for at least 24 hours after application. Applications should ideally be initiated in the late spring/early summer when the nutsedge is young, actively growing and is most sensitive to herbicidal control. Once this weed matures, control is difficult regardless of the treatment schedule. (MIF)

Yellow Nutsedge has a triangular stem and “V” shaped leaf blades.

Blue Flowers for the Garden

Blue is a cool and calming color. Many gardeners look for plants that have blue flowers to plant with other complementary colors, such as white, violet, grey, pink and yellow. Here are a few plants that will grow in Southeast Nebraska that have blue flowers.

Blue lobelia (Lobelia siphilitica) This woodland flower blooms in the spring. It prefers moist to wet, well-drained soil. Lobelia can be affected by snow mold in spring. Some cultivars are available. There are many in USDA zones 4 to 10.

Blue corydalis (Corydalis flexuosa) This is a wonderful woodland plant that thrives in shade and moist soil, but also grows in full sun. The flowers bloom in neat clumps in mid to late spring. The plant has a lovely ferny foliage. Blue corydalis is a perennial and hardy in USDA zones 5 to 8. (MIF)

Heartleaf brunnera (Brunnera macrophylla) This plant prefers to be in full shade and can tolerate light to dappled shade. It is best in moist to well-drained soil. There are many cultivars available. It can be hardy in USDA zones 3 to 8.

Crested iris (Iris cristata) This little iris is native to North America. It prefers part shade and well-drained soil. Clumps of crested iris grow 3 to 6 inches tall. Crested iris is cold hardy in USDA zones 3 to 8.

Balloon flower (Platycodon grandiflorus) This reliable perennial emerges in late spring and blooms all summer. Bell shaped flowers open from balloon-shaped buds. It grows best in moist well drained soil. Plants reach a mature height of about 2 feet. Other blue flowering plants include monkshood (Aconitum napellus), bugloss (Anchusa azurea), blue false indigo (Baptisia australis), bellflower (Campanula spp.), delphinium (Delphinium chionum), gentian (Gentiana spp.), Stokes’ aster (Stokesia laevis) and veronica (Veronica spp.). (MIF)

Annual Flowers in the Landscape

Annual flowering vines are useful for many locations around the home landscape. They add new interest to the yard area when grown on a fence, lattice, arbor or trellis. Annual vines climb by twining around a support or by clinging with tendrils. They grow rapidly to form an attractive mass of foliage and flowers.

Morning glory is one of the most colorful vines you can plant. Brilliant flowers are available in white and shades of blue, pink, purple and red. The flowers are four inches across and are borne freely on vines which may grow to a height of 12 to 15 feet tall. Morning glories grow best on a well-drained soil in a warm, sunny location.

Scarlet runner bean is a readily determinate vine which grows four or five feet tall. They bloom profusely and produce fragrant flowers in shades of red and yellow. The plants perform best in well drained soil and full sun. Scarlet runner bean is an edible ornamental suitable for trellising. Rosy scarlet flowers top long twining vines. The pods are very ornamental.

The sweet pea has a delicate, cologne flower that has a honey-sweet blossom scent. These vines will grow to 6 to 8 feet tall in full sun. Cardinal climber is a lovely flowering vine. It has dark green, palm-like leaves and bright crimson red flowers.

Gourds have rather inconspicuous flowers, but produce colorful fruit which are ornamental on the vine during late summer. The fruit may be dried for fall and winter arrangements. (MIF)

Blue Flax (Linum perenne) An annual flower that is popular for its bright blue flowers. It is easily grown from seed and will self-sow. Blue flax is hardy in USDA zones 3 to 5.

Scabious (Cephalaria species) These plants are well suited for a sunny garden. They have daisy-like flowers and grow to about 2 feet tall. Scabious is hardy in USDA zones 4 to 7.

Black-eyed Susan (Rudbeckia fulgida) These flowers are a staple of gardens. They are easy to grow from seed and will self-sow. Black-eyed Susan is hardy in USDA zones 4 to 9.

Lobelia (Lobelia species) This is a very useful plant for the garden. It is easy to grow from seed and will self-sow. Lobelia is hardy in USDA zones 4 to 10.

Annuals

Annuals are plants that remain in the garden for one season only. They can be purchased as seedlings or seedlings and transplanted into the garden. Annuals can be used to fill in gaps in the garden, provide color when other perennials are not blooming, or to provide a contrast in texture or color. Annuals are also important for providing nectar and pollen for pollinators such as bees and butterflies.

Annuals can be divided into two groups: summer annuals and winter annuals. Summer annuals bloom from spring to fall and are planted in the spring. Winter annuals bloom from fall to early spring and are planted in the fall.

To grow annuals in containers on the patio, use a light weight soil mixture. Keep the plants well watered, because the soil dries out fast. Apply a water soluble fertilizer according to package directions every 2 weeks.

Watering roses with snorer hoses or drip irrigation will reduce the spread of black spot disease.

Plant cover crops on shade trees that do not allow enough sunlight to grow grass. Vinca minor or English ivy are good cover plants that grow well in shade.

Mulch around newly planted shrubs and trees. This practice reduces weeds, controls fluctuations in soil temperature, retains moisture, prevents damage from lawn mowers and looks attractive.

When you visit botanical gardens and arboreums, take your camera and road map with you. Plan now for changes you will make in your landscape.

For maximum landscape interest in a small, vertical space, try annual vines. They can disguise ugly walls and fences. When trained, they can create shade and privacy while hiding undesirable views. Try morning glory, nasturtium vine and scarlet runner bean.

Plan a landscaping project on paper first. Do not over plant. Be sure you know the mature size of each plant and allow for growth.

Lawns maintained at the correct height are less likely to have disease and weed infestation. Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue should be mowed at approximately three inches in height. Now frequently, removing no more than one third of the blade at each cutting.

Grass clipping can be used as a mulch in flower beds and vegetable gardens if allowed to dry well before use. Never use clippings from a lawn that has been treated with a herbicide.

Cabbage loopers and imported cabbage worms are green worms. They eat large holes in the leaves of plants in the cabbage family. For control, the caterpillars can be picked off by hand or sprayed with Bt (Bacillus thuringiensis), a natural, non-toxic preparation available by mail order.

Newly transplanted vegetable plants should be protected from clematinae with a collar. Cut strips of cardboard two inches wide by eight inches long, stick them in the soil and place around the plants. Press the collar about one inch into the soil. These collars will fence out the clematinae and protect the seedlings of the vegetable plants.

Stay out of the garden when the vegetable plant leaves are wet. Washing through a wet garden spreads disease from one plant to another.

Four or five layers of newspaper will serve as an effective mulch in the garden. Cover it with grass clippings or straw to prevent it from blowing away.

Put towels away at the end of the day. Clean them and hang them up so they are ready to use and easy to find when you need them.

To better evaluate your gardening successes, keep weather records along with garden records. The most important items to report are daily minimum and maximum temperatures, precipitation, cloud cover and frost occurrences. (MIF)

Growth Guide Things to do this month

Grow your own dried flowers. Raise statice, globe amaranth, straw flowers and other everlasting to provide flowers for this year’s arrangements.

Plant gladioli bulbs in late May.

Set out marigold, petunia, ageratum and fibrous begonia transplants. All are good border plants.

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Garter Snakes are Urban Snakes

Barb Ogg, Ph.D.
Extension Educator

A number of years ago, my husband and I were looking for a new house. Because we like old houses, we were excited about an old 2.5 story home with a wrap-around porch in an older section of town. It was what we were looking for, but — like many old houses — it did need some work. We noticed the basement foundation was typical of an older house — needing some modification filling between blocks, but basically sound. There was one cracked base- ment window and another one that had 1/2-inch gaps around it. We bought this house to fix it up, but was it worth it?

When we moved in, we noticed a mumified garter snake and a shed snake skin in the basement. I know garter snakes are good—they eat pests. But, I just didn’t want them in my basement. Out of the first things we did was replace the basement windows. We also filled holes/gaps with caulk and expanded foam. During the first summer, we saw garden snakes hanging themselves in the yard and realized there was a good-sized snake population in our yard. These snakes are the plains garter snakes, Thamnophis radix, the most common snake found throughout Nebraska. Plain garter snakes have three longitudinal stripes and a back- ground color usually light brown to black, but may be greenish or even red. We see snakes in the lawn on warm, sunny days from May through September. When approached with a lawn mower, they dart away swiftly, then stop. This behavior helps us detect the abundance because our eye tends to follow the pattern as we move. We have noticed it isn’t always a good survival strategy because the lawn mower keeps on moving. During summer, these snakes have been chopper up by the lawn mower each summer.

There are a couple other garter snakes found in southeastern Ne- braska. Garter snakes are variable in color, but most usually have prominent longitudinal stripes. The Boley and Amphibians of Nebraska Web site has great pictures of some of these snakes. You can find it at http://snr.unl.edu/herpnet/

Garter snakes are extremely common in urban and suburban areas. Highly adaptable, they survive well in open dry plains and grasslands. Garter snakes feed on frogs, earthworms, insects and rodents. They are attracted to shallow ponds and water gardens because they eat fish and frogs. A friend couldn’t understand why the gold fish in her new water garden were disappearing. She kept watching for predatory birds and then was surprised to see a garter snake in her water garden tossing goldfish into the grass. She solved her fish-disappearing problem by catching 17 garter snakes in her water garden in three days.

Garter snakes hibernate underground during the winter and emerge in the spring and immediately mate after emerging. Females deliver live young from July through October, giving birth to as many as 75 young. Males are ready to mate five to eight inches long.

So, where are our snakes living? Many Extension publications say snakes like to live around construction debris, rock piles, wood piles, termite and wood piles, water gardens and grass, but we don’t have any of those in our yard. There are several other possibilities:

• Snakes could be coming from our neighbors yard.
• Our porch has old concrete steps leading to the front walkway. Both the steps and walkway have seen better days and are cracked in places. Snakes like to hibernate underground concrete especially when the concrete is old and cracked so they can get underneath it. After we replace the steps and repair the walkway, we may be able to eliminate this snake habitat.

Many pest control compa- nies don’t provide snake control because they don’t care if there are no chemical sprays, poisons or fogging solutions registered for snake control. There are no effective snake repellant. Naphthalene (a component of mothballs) and sulfur have been tested, but garter snakes don’t change their movements when these substances are placed in their environment.

The real key to getting rid of garter snakes is to eliminate the hibernaculum — the den where the snakes overwinter in groups. In the fall, garter snakes instinctively migrate back to overwinter in the same place as previous years.

I am resigned to having garter snakes in our yard. I am sure that some snakes are living under the concrete steps and others are living in the decaying stump and tree roots, but it is not practical to dig the yard up for a few snakes.

How to attract Birds with Nest Material

Each year, I have a mourning dove who uses small orange peels as a nest site which she insists on creating in the gutter of my house no matter how many times I protest. My hackberry tree is home to an oriole who weaves a wonderful pouch-like nest. And, the feisty wren who tolerates my homemade birdhouse. How do these birds find the woodpile in the backyard. All of these birds use materials found in the neighborhood to help build their nests.

Take a look at your back- yard. Do you have potential nesting sites safe from predators and provide protection from the weather? If so, you can attract many nesting birds — even those that may not visit feeders. If you’d like to have some fun observing bird behavior or would like to offer nesting materials, here are some sugges- tions from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to get you started:

1. Go natural — leave a seedling tree or shrub spot in your yard where plants can grow naturally. Sticks can fall and be not raked up immediately. This gives birds a chance to pick through the material and choose what they need to build their nests.

2. A compost pile, you may see birds picking through it for materials. If you decide “natural” is for you, be a good neighbor and don’t create an eyesore. You can directly place your “natural area” out of view of neighbors.


• Plant flour or dried (i.e. cattail fluff, cottonwood down)
• Drying. Several
• Yarn or string-cut into four to eight-inch pieces

Visit lancaster.unl.edu for more resources to help you enjoy your backyard wildlife.

Keep Unwanted Bird Flocks from Dropping in

Watching birds might be a popular pastime in this country, but some birds in large flocks can cause problems for feedlot owners in winter and for anyone living close to large roosting flocks.

Now is spring, migratory flocks of European Starlings, blackbirds, and American Crows or House Sparrows can become a problem if large roosts in trees near people.

The best defense is a quick offense — if large flocks land in your back- yard, frighten them away before they move in, you’ve found a good spot. Clap- ping your hands together or hitting a pan with a stick usually works, if done right away.

A garter flock becomes used to roosting in a place, moving them takes more effort. Moving an established roost will take three or more nights of frightening in a row to disperse. Thinning the size and number of key roost trees may be needed. However, incor- rectly removing the roost is a tree unhealthy for the tree and simulating growth of more side branches makes the tree even more attractive as a bird roost.

A bird’s own distress call can be used in bird removal programs. Digi- zed versions of the calls can be used along with a wide variety of other audio and visual frightening methods to help deter unwanted flocks from their habitual night roosts.

Generally, dispersal pro- grams are more effective if a combination of methods are used. Last year, an elderly Lancaster County resident reported she had great success moving a flock of starlings from her trees with a distress call she purchased.

Where flocks are roosting in dense, mature tree groves, thinning about a third of the trees usually disperses the roost, and, if done properly, improves the grove of trees.

It’s still unknown as to how bird flocks select certain trees for roosting. Trees with many branches for perching, less exposure of the tree in relation to food resources (some birds fly several miles on migration flight patterns and over- crowded groves of young trees are key factors.

For more information about bird flocks, visit the Web at www.wildlifeimage.unl.edu.

SOURCE: R. Rojnson, Ph.D., wildlife specialist (NU)
May is Time to Control Leafy Spurge

In my travels around the county, I have seen many patches of leafy spurge. Leafy spurge is a noxious weed according to the Nebraska Seed Law and the Nebraska Noxious Weed Law. Leafy spurge is found primarily on unliened land such as pastures, range, roadside, woodlands and farmsteads. It is mildly poisonous to cattle and can effectively ruin the carrying capacity of patches where it is growing because cattle soon learn to avoid grazing near it.

Identification

Leafy spurge is a persistent, deep-rooted perennial which reproduces by seeds and roots. Leafy spurge has a somewhat woody crown below the soil surface. Each crowned area produces several upright stems giving the plant a clump-like appearance. In addition, new stems arise from buds on lateral, secondary roots. See Figure 1.

Stem growth starts in April, making leafy spurge an early, vigorous competitor with forbs and pasture plants. The plant bears numerous linear-shaped leaves with smooth margins. Leaves have a bluish-green color but turn yellowish or reddish-orange in late summer. Leafy spurge produces a flat-topped cluster of yellowish-flowers, petal-like structures called bracts, which bear the true spurge flowers. The showy, yellow bracts appear in May and give the plant a “blooming” appearance. See Figure 2. The true spurge flowers, however, develop about 10 days later and have small green bracts. See Figure 3. The distinction between yellow bract appearance and true flowering is important for timming herbicide applications. Spring applied herbicides are more effective when applied on plants with developing true flowers.

Seeds are borne in pods which contain three gray-brown, sometimes speckled, oblong, smooth seeds. At maturity, pods pop open, throwing seeds up to 15 feet from the parent plant

Sprinkling About 140 seeds are produced per stem and seeds may remain viable in the soil for up to eight years. Leafy spurge peak germination time is late April to early May. New seedlings develop throughout the summer but usually do not flower during the first year. Leafy spurge seedlings can vegetatively reproduce from root buds within 7-10 weeks after germination.

Control

Chemical control recommendations listed in the 2004 Guide for Weed Management—EC03-130 include: 2,4-D (4L) at two quarts per acre at flower bud stage (for suppression of seed production—annual treatments necessary). Grazon P+D at two quarts per acre at flower bud stage (for suppression of seed production and gradual stand reduction over several years). Tordon 22K at one to two quarts per acre (treatment necessary for several years). Plateau at 8-12 ounces per acre in the fall two weeks before frost. Note: Plateau is no longer being sold to private individuals or commercial applicators. However, existing stocks of Plateau can be used according to label directions. Spot treatment of seedlings and shoots emerging from deep root buds will be necessary for many years after a stand appears to be established. See the labels for follow label directions. (TD)

Fertilizing Grasses in Pastures

Spring is approaching and cool-season pastures soon will green-up. So we should begin thinking about fertilizing. Here’s how to decide if it’s worth it.

Grass growth is stimulated in pastures by fertilizer just like it is in your lawn. The key to profitable fertilizing of pastures, though, is to combine fertilizer with efficient harvest of the extra growth. Would you fertilizer your sweet corn patch and then drive through it just before its ready to harvest? Of course not — you’d knock down and lose much of the produce.

But that’s just about what you’re doing when you fertilize pastures in spring, and then let your animals graze continuously on one pasture throughout the growing season. They trample some of the grass, manure and foul some of the grass, bed down on some of the grass and simply refuse to eat some of the grass.

So when all is said and done, less than one-third of the grass your pasture produced will end up in the mouth and stomach of your livestock. It’s pretty hard to make fertilizer pay like that.

But fertilizer does pay if you manage grazing so more of what you grow actually gets eaten. This will happen if you divide pastures with some cross-fences and control when and where your animals graze.

Give animals access to no more than one-fourth of your pasture at a time, or even less and then graze off about one-half of the growth before moving to another subdivision. Since your pastures probably grow faster than you can use them anyhow in spring, why not wait until late-summer for some of them for extra summer growth.

More of your pasture growth will be eaten and more profits will come from fertilizer and pastures. (TD)

Wheat Plant Tour June 10

Extension will be hosting a wheat variety and disease management plot tour on June 10. Participants are asked to gather at the University of Nebraska field research site just west of 84 Street on Havelock Avenue. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. Coffee and donuts will be served. The plot tour will begin at 9. There is no registration fee.

Dr. Stephen Baenziger will present variety trials containing over 50 experimental lines and blends in the State Variety Trial. Participants will also see some of the university’s C Clearfield wheat experimental line evaluation trials plus winter barley and teff trials. Dr. John Winger will discuss ongoing wheat disease management trials. Participants will see 15 treatments in the wheat fungicide plot. Most will be registered products and include BASF’s Headline, Bayer’s Stagroto and Follicre and Syngenta’s Tilt, Quadris and Quilt. (TD)

Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben Pioneer Farm Family Award

If your family has owned your farm in Lancaster County for 100 years or more, consecutively, you are eligible to apply for the Nebraska Pioneer Farm Awards sponsored by the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben Foundation and the Nebraska Association of Fair Managers.

Honevise’s receive an engraved plaque and a gatepost marker as permanent recognition of this milestone. To date, nearly 6,000 families in 93 Nebraska counties have been honored.

If you qualify for this special award, please obtain an application from Deanna Karmazin at the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension office in Lancaster County or by calling 441-7180. Applications are due into the Extension office or the Lancaster Event Center by May 1. Winners will be notified no later than June 1 and the award will be presented during a special ceremony at the 2004 Lancaster County Fair.

If you have any further questions regarding this award, please call the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben office at 402-554-9600, extension 100. (DK)

Scrap Tire Collection May 15 & 16

Note: Last issue’s scrap tire printed incorrect dates — May 15 & 16 are the correct dates.

Individuals will have an opportunity to get rid of scrap tires that may have accumulated around your place. Tires (without the wheels) will be accepted May 15 and 16 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Shoermakers south parking lot 40th and West O Street, Lincoln. Three hundred and fifty tons of tires will be accepted in this recycling effort on a first-come, first-served basis. Please have a count of the number of tires you are dropping off.

This program is funded through a grant from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and<hl>hleed</hl>d by officials from Sanitary Improvement District Number 6.

Sorry, this opportunity is open to individuals only. the grant specially prohibits tire dealers.

For more information, call (402) 476-3590. (TD)
Consider the location of utility service lines when deciding where to plant trees. Proximity to electric, water, sewer and gas lines could affect plant growth, and any non-conformance could lead to the failure of underground utilities.

The mature height of the tree being planted should be within the available overhead growing space, and the soil area must be large enough to accommodate the particular root system habits and ultimate trunk diameter.

Trees growing near overhead lines can cause service interruptions when trees contact wires. Proper tree selection and tree placement around overhead utilities can eliminate potential safety hazards, reduce expenses for utilities and improve landscape appearance. When trees are planted too close to overhead lines, they must be pruned to maintain a safe clearance from wires. These pruned trees are under greater stress and are more susceptible to insects and disease.

Tree roots and underground lateral roots can conflict with utility lines. However, under-ground lines could damage tree roots if they aren’t needed to be dug for repair. Consult a tree care professional for assistance in choosing the right type of root system for a chosen location. Be sure to call the utility company before planting to find out where underground lines are located.

Trees can be dangerous if planted too close to houses. Plant large trees at least 35 feet from houses for proper root development. Large trees are recommended for streets, school and park reservations, parks, meadows and other open areas. Medium-sized trees are recommended for above and below ground growing space that will allow for root clearance from lines. Mature height of 30 to 40 feet. Small trees that grow no taller than 20 feet are recommended when growing space is limited.

There are many ways to manage tree hazards after planting. Move potential tree targets such as picnic tables, cars and buildings away from the path of falling branches. Be sure to prune trees to remove defective branches. A professional arborist should do this because inappropriate pruning also may weaken trees. Control and brace the tree to provide physical support for weak branches and stems to increase their strength and stability. Be sure to water trees and add fertilizer and mulch as dictated by the season and their structure. (DJ)

Pay Attention To Utility Lines When Planting Trees

Oriental bittersweet (Celastrus orbiculatus) is an invasive vine which needs lots of pruning to keep it from taking over garden areas. It is a deciduous woody vine that can reach 60 feet, depending on surrounding vegetation. The fruit is green changing to bright yellow/orange once mature and is used in floral decorations. The vines damage and kill native vegetation by smothering the trees or shrubs. Oriental bittersweet is found along field edges and thickets.

The tree is shade tolerant. Prune Oriental bittersweet vines remain viable for several years and spread extensively by birds and other scavenging animals. Control actions must continue until seed sources are eliminated. American bittersweet, a vine native to North America is less invasive. It is a list of best plants for fall colors is American bittersweet, a vine native to North America. Bittersweet is a must-have for those serious about providing the landscape with fall color. Ask at a nursery for a pair. Spring is the best time since you can discern from the flower pots. The berries, green in summer, bear a yellow hue in early fall. Even at this stage, they provide a truly striking display of fall color, and as autumn progresses, the husk peels back, revealing an orange berry within. As if that weren’t enough, the numerous leaves of the vine turn a vivid yellow.

Bittersweet will grow in part shade, but needs full sun for best flowering and subsequent fruit display. Prune in late winter to early spring. Mature vines require little pruning other than removal of dead or excess growth.

Bitter-sweet grows in woodland gardens and naturalized areas. The vine provides quick cover for fences, arbors, trellises, posts, walls or other structures in the landscape. Gardeners enjoy love or hate bittersweet vine. Bittersweet kills trees and is difficult to eradicate from your landscape. But during the fall season, bittersweet vine puts on a display few other plants can rival. (DJ)

“Vertebrate Pests” is May Rural Living Clinic

The University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension is presenting a series of free “Vertebrate Pests" entitled “Acreage Insights – Rural Living Clinics” to help area residents solve pest problems in their rural living environment. “Vertebrate Pests” is the fifth in the series, and will be presented from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrywood Road.

It will feature an in-depth look, as well as control methods, for some of the most common vertebrate pests often plaguing rural landowners. The discussion will include deer, moles, gophers, hogs, raccoons as well as any other vertebrate pests you would like to discuss.

The speaker for the program will be Dr. Dennis Ferraro of the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lincoln.

Growing Tomatoes

Once the tomato plants are established, apply a mulch to conserve moisture and suppress weed growth. If weeds do appear, they may be pulled by hand or removed by shallow cultivation. An even moisture supply is important, especially once the tomato fruits begin to develop. If the soil becomes too dry, the tomato fruit can be poor. If too much water is applied at one time, ripening may be delayed.

Staked plants are usually pruned to a single or double stem and periodically tied loosely to the stake with soft twine. Pruning is accomplished by removing the branches or “suckers” that grow from the leaf axils, leaving only the main stem or the main stem and one additional branch near the base. Unsupported and caged tomato plants may be left to branch normally. Staked and pruned tomatoes produce fewer but larger fruit than caged or unsupported plants.

A side-dressing of a nitrogen fertilizer may be desirable after the first cluster of flowers have set fruit.

There are numerous insect and disease problems of tomatoes that space prohibits describing in detail here. If problems arise, contact your cooperative extension office for identification and control recommendations. (DJ)
Making Your Own Baby Food

Making your own baby food is a great way to provide your child(ren) with tasty nutritious foods and is cheaper than buying baby food from the store. It is also very easy to do.

You Will Need
1. Something to mash or grind the food such as: a blender, food processor, potato masher or fork.
2. Good quality food without added salt, sugar, fat or spices. (Do not use leftovers that have been kept for more than one day.)
3. Containers for storage: clean dry jars (do not use glass jars or plastic storage containers or ice cube trays.

What To Do
1. Wash your hands with hot soapy water. Wash all equipment in hot soapy water and air dry.
2. Wash foods and vegetables thoroughly.
3. Cook your vegetables to a consistency that is easy for your baby to eat.
4. Puree prepared foods in a blender.
5. Do not add sugar, honey, coriander, salt or spices to your baby's food.

Storage Times
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Enjoy May — National Salad Month and National Egg Month

In addition to being National Salad and National Egg Month, May is National Strawberry Month. Did you know strawberries are full of nutrition with everything from “folate to fiber to phytochemicals.” Plus, they have only 50 calories per cup! To maintain their flavor, the California Strawberry Commission recommends “Store strawberries loosely covered and unwashed in the refrigerator. Just before eating, rinse with cool water.” Enjoy this strawberry pizza recipe from the California Strawberry Commission (www.calstrawberry.com/recipes).

Strawberry Breakfast Pizza

Yield: 5 servings

1 package (7-1/2 ounces) refrigerated biscuits (10 biscuits)
1 orange
2 pints (3 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
4 teaspoons honey, divided
1 pint basket fresh California strawberries, stemmed and halved
Mint sprigs, for garnish

Preheat oven to 400° F. Stack 2 biscuits, roll out to a circle about 6 inches in diameter. 1/8 inch thick. Place on ungreased baking sheet. Place stack over with fork. Repeat with remaining biscuits to make a total of 5 circles. Bake until lightly browned for 6 to 8 minutes. Loosen biscuits and cool slightly. Meanwhile, finely grate peel from orange. In bowl, beat cheese, peel and 2 teaspoons of the honey to blend thoroughly. Set aside. Juice orange into another bowl. Add strawberries and the remaining 2 teaspoons of honey. Toss. Increase oven temperature to 425° F. Spread cheeses with strawberry mixture to within 1/2 inch of edges, dividing equally. Bake just until edges of cheese brown lightly. Top with drained strawberries. Garnish with mint sprigs. Serve immediately.

Enjoy Nebraska Foods!

Alice Henneman, MS, RD
Extension Educator

Say “salad” and the first thing that pops into some people’s minds is a picture of iceberg lettuce with dressing on top, maybe a couple slices of carrot, a few cubes of celery and half a cherry tomato. YOU CAN change that picture.

Bowl family and friends over this season with nutritious and tasty salads or any other type of salad that will help you slim down as they fill you up. Here’s how.

Color It Healthy

Create your salads from a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables to gain the most advantage from the nutrients, fiber and phytochemicals in these foods. Phytochemicals are chemicals plants produce that are thought to have beneficial health effects.

Eating five or more vegetables and fruits a day has been associated with helping protect against certain types of cancer, heart disease and osteoporosis as well as with aiding in weight control. The current “Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2000” has added a nutrientdense diet solely for fruits and vegetables: “Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.” For starters, here’s a palette of possible salads:

• Red: Tomatoes, watermelon, strawberries, red grapes, raspberries, red peppers;
• Orange: Navel oranges, cantaloupe, carrots, papayas, peaches, oranges;
• Green: Broccoli, lettuce and other greens, spinach, avocados, peas, kiwi fruit, green peppers.

When considering green plant foods you might also think about adding herbs for flavor and color. Some possibilities include basil, dill, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage and thyme.

Eating right can be confusing. Every stage of life brings different concerns. Pregnant moms are anxious about their unborn babies. Parents worry about proper nutrition for their children. Many of us fret when swimsuit season looms just around the corner. And as we age, maintaining our vision becomes a concern. May, National Salad Month, is a good time to reevaluate eating habits and make some positive changes because eggs can provide some of the answers. Eggs are an excellent source of choline, a nutrient now considered essential for human health. Pregnant moms need to know that choline is vital for normal fetal/infant brain development as well as for memory — even later in life. In addition, six months of age is a good time to introduce egg yolks. They provide the hard-to-get-nutrient, heme iron, just as babies are weaning off breast milk and formula. Just hold the whites until the baby is at least a year old.

For your older child a picky eater or junk food junkie? Try eggs. Scrambled, fried, hard-cooked, soft-cooked — kids love eggs. Nutrient-dense breakfasts have been shown to help children focus and perform better in school. They also help to reduce snacking on less nutritious and more calorie-laden foods throughout the day. And as long as you’re feeding eggs for the kids, don’t neglect yourself. Research indicates that breakfast is just as important for adult cognition and memory.

For seniors, macular degeneration, a leading cause of irreversible blindness, is a concern. Lutein and zeaxanthin found in egg yolks and green vegetables may both reduce the risk for cataracts and help prevent macular degeneration. And there’s more good news. The American Heart Association, while limiting total daily cholesterol intake to less than 300mg, has lifted its three-yeer-weekly red meat recommendation on eggs. They now emphasize balanced eating, downplaying specific daily amounts.

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Baby Food Recipe — Combination Meat Dinner

1/2 cup cooked meat
1/4 cup cooked vegetable (or fruit) pieces
1/4 cup cooked rice or pasta
1/4 formula or breast milk

Combine all ingredients and blend or mash until few lumps remain. Some good combinations are beef, peas and potatoes, chicken, carrots and rice, pork, peaches and rice.
Composting Turns Yard “Waste” Into Useful Material

Compost is a mixture of partially decomposed material from organic wastes. It is used in the garden to amend soil and fertilize plants. The chief advantage 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 burdens 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 backyard 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 cut up prior to placement in the compost pile. Kitchen wastes such as vegetable scraps, coffee grounds and eggshells may also be added. Sawdust see COMPOSTING on next page.

Using Wood Chips for Mulch Has Multiple Benefits

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

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 the landscape, they also provide many landscape benefits.

• Helps retain soil moisture, Mulch helps soil retain moisture and reduces water evaporation caused by wind and hot sun. Under its insulating blanket, soil remains moist longer after bare areas become dry and require irrigation.

• Reduces soil temperature extremes. An application of mulch helps avoid extreme temperature fluctuations. It acts as an insulating blanket and keeps soil cooler during hot periods and warmer in 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, hedges, 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 gives your landscape the natural beauty of a forest floor.

• Prevents direct contact with soil. Mulch prevents vegetables (including squash, pumpkins, melons, cucumbers, and unstaked tomatoes) from making soil contact, thus helps to reduce 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 rain. During dry periods, mulch also reduces dust.

• Prevents heavy rain damage. Mulching prevents soil erosion. It permits water to seep slowly beneath the protective covering.

• Increases survival of new trees. Not only do mulches keep the soil cool and moist, they also keep the lawn mower and weed trimmer from damaging young bark and killing trees.

Free Woods Chips from City of Lincoln
The City of Lincoln has limited quantities of wood chip mulch on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact the Lincoln Recycling Office at 441-8215 for more information.

• Wood chip mulch is available at the N. 48th St. Transfer Station, located at 5101 N. 48th Street, (any vehicle) and the Bluff Road Landfill, located at Highway 77 and Bluff Road, (pickups and trailers only). There is a charge of $5 per cubic yard. City personnel will load woodchips into open pickups or trailers.

• Individuals may also self-load wood chips at no charge at the N. 48th Street Transfer Station recycling drop-off site.

• Delivery of wood chips within a 50-mile radius of the Bluff Road Landfill is available for a fee. Contact the Lincoln Recycling Office at 441-8215 for more information.

Ideas for Student Research Projects

Compost Ingredients
Garden supply stores and catalogs often sell compost “start- ers,” which supposedly speed up the composting process. Develop a recipe for a compost starter and design a research project to test its effect on the compost temperature profile.

How well do human nutrition concepts apply to compost microorganisms? For example, will the microbes get a “sugar high,” demonstrated by a quick, high temperature peak when fed sugary foods, compared with a longer, low peak for more complex carbohydrates?

Measure the pH of a number of different compost mixtures. How does the pH of initial ingredients affect the pH of finished compost? Some instructions call for adding lime to increase the pH when compost ingredients are mixed. Other instructions caution to avoid this because it causes a loss of nitrogen. How does adding various amounts of lime to the initial ingredients affect the pH of finished compost?

Microorganisms
Composting recipes sometimes call for inoculating the pile by mixing in a few handfuls of finished compost. Is there any observable difference in appearance of microorganisms between systems that have and have not been inoculated?

Does the pH of the initial compost ingredients affect the populations of microorganisms during composting?

Compost Physics
What type of insulation works best for soda bottle bioreactors? Does it help to have a reflective layer? Do different insulative materials or different thicknesses affect the temperature profile?

When constructing compost bins or piles, some people incorpo- rate perforated pipe, wire mesh or other systems to increase passive air flow. Is that effective? Do different methods of aeration on the temperature profile of any one compost system?

How do various means and schedules for turning a pile affect the temperature profile and the time needed for production of finished compost?

see STUDENT PROJECTS on next page.

Gardening
A Guide to Environmental Gardening
Special Insert to the UNL Cooperative Extension}

UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County
444 Cherryreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, Nebraska 68528
Phone: 441-7180 • Web site: lancaster.unl.edu

Spring 2004
Composting may be added in moderate amounts if additional nitrogen is added. Approxi-
mately one part of actual nitrogen (six cups 1 cup) is required for 100 pounds of dry sawdust. Certain organic materials should not be used to make compost because they may release a toxic or hazardous substance. Do not put pet feces since they may transmit disease. Meat, bones, grease, whole eggs 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 compost piles, it is impossible to mix efficiently enough to bring all waste to the center. Consequently, the products of weeds with seeds or diseased plants may create problems.

**Carbon-to-Nitrogen Ratios**

All living organisms are made of large amounts of carbohydrates (C) and smaller amounts of nitrogen (N). The balance of these elements in an organism is called the carbon-nitrogen ratio (C:N). This ratio is an important factor determining how easily bacteria can decompose organic waste. The microor-

The compost pile should be located close to where it will be used and not off neighbors. The pile will do best where it is protected from drying winds. **Building the Compost Pile**

A compost pile should be large enough to hold heat and small enough to admit air to its center. As a rule of thumb, the minimum diameter of the pile should be three feet by three feet by three feet (one cubic yard) to hold heat. Enough air must be allowed to air to the center of the pile five feet tall by five feet wide and as long as you wish.

Microorganisms can only use organic molecules dissolved in water. A moisture content of 40-60 percent provides adequate water without limiting aeration. The "squeeze" test is an easy way to gauge the moisture content of composting materials. The material should feel damp to the touch, with just a drop or two of liquid being released when the material is tightly squeezed in the hand. The compost pile can initially be prepared in layers. This will facilitate decomposition by insuring proper mixing.

To build a composting bin, the material should be four to six inch layer of chopped brush or other coarse material set on top of the soil. This will let air circulate under the base of the pile.

Next, add a three to four inch layer of low carbon organic material such as grass clippings. This material should be damp when added to the pile. On top of this, add a four to six inch layer of high carbon organic material (leaves or garden waste) which should also be damp. On top of this, add a one-inch layer of green soil or finished compost. This layer will introduce the microorganisms needed to break down the organic matter.

In addition to the other materials, low carbon organic matter, low carbon organic matter, and soil before adding another layer to the pile. This will encourage a speedy and even composting of the organic matter. Repeat the "layering" process until the composting is finished. **Using Compost**

**Compost Equipment**

- sifted-garden fork
- compost thermometer
- garden hose
- containment structure (optional)

**Birds that Compost**

In Australia, there is a bird called the Brush-turkey (Alectura lathami) that builds compost piles to incubate the eggs so they won’t have to sit on them! They build mounds of decomposing vegetation, and the heat produced by the microbial decay maintains the eggs at about 92° F. 59° F warmer than the ambient air temperature. Because each nest generates more than 20 times the heat production of a resting adult Brush-turkey, many more eggs can be incubated this way than if they relied on warmth from the parent birds. Initially, the adult birds tend the composting nest, occasionally mixing and either adding or removing vegetation as needed to regulate the temperature, which they sense through their bills. After this initial adjustment, the nest’s require attention and larger ones can stay warm for several weeks without tending.

The largest nests are on Kangaroo Island in South Australia, where the average nest size is approximately 13.9 cubic yards and weighs 14,991 pounds. Scientists have constructed a computer model using data on mound size, ambient temperature and the nest’s rate of heat loss in the event of heat stress, density and thermal conductivity. The model predicts as little as 0.39 inch of litter added to the mound will raise the core temperature about 1.8° F.
What is “Grasscycling”?

Grasscycling, or grass mulching, is the natural practice of leaving clippings on the lawn. Many homeowners and lawn care experts believe that this practice can provide benefits such as reducing the need for fertilizers and pesticides, improving soil structure, and conserving water and energy. However, it is important to consider the potential downsides of grasscycling, such as the need for proper mowing techniques and the potential for increased disease and pest problems in areas with high levels of moisture and suitable conditions for pathogen growth.

Grasscycling Saves Lawn Care Costs

- **Fertilizer** — Grass clippings can supply up to one-third of a lawn’s nitrogen fertilizer needs.
- **Time** — Recent trials confirmed leaving grass clippings on the lawn saves one-third of the mowing time.
- **Water use** — Clippings shade grass roots, cool the soil, return moisture, and reduce evaporative needs. Clippings hold 10% to 15% of their weight in water.
- **Soil health** — Clippings decompose readily, feeding soil organisms that keep soil healthy and help prevent turf diseases.
- **Thatch** — Studies prove grass clippings do not cause thatch build-up. (Dj)

Mulching Mowers

Everyone wants to do something good for the environment, and the new breed of yard equipment that allows you to recycle debris right in your own backyard makes it easy. If your refuse hauler doesn’t accept lawn clippings or leaves without an extra charge, there are new tools that will help. The idea behind recycling yard waste is that your lawn clippings and leaves are not debris at all, but a valuable organic resource that should be put back into the soil to help build a healthy lawn and garden.

The most popular piece of lawn-care equipment here is a mulching mow. More than 85 percent are now labeled as “mulching mowers” to respond to the public’s environmental concerns. Mulching mowers — like food processors for your lawn — use a special blade and enclosed deck to slice up your grass clippings and dried leaves; numerous times before depositing them back deep into the turf, where they decompose in a few days. The result, if conditions are right and the mower is designed well, is a clean, vacuumed appearance without any unsightly clumps or hedgerows of grass.

Don’t worry about creating thatch. Thatch is not built up out of whole grass blades left on the lawn, but excess surface roots caused by overwatering and overfertilization.

Using a mulching mower saves in several ways. It saves time, since you don’t have to repeatedly stop the mower to empty and reattach the bag. It saves money, since the nitrogen in the clippings fertilizes the lawn, reducing the amount of supplemental fertilizer you have to apply. And it leaves more room in the local landfill for real garbage.

Here’s one thing to look for in a quality mulching mower:

**Conversatility** — Can you easily convert the mulching mower to a bagging mower or a side-discharge mower? This is important, since it’s sometimes difficult for the mower to cope with thick, lush, rapidly growing grass. You may want to temporarily switch to a side-discharge mode to avoid clogs and prevent stalling out the mower. A mulching mower is useful in the fall, when you may want to collect your leaves for use as mulch for your vegetable garden or flower beds.

**Engine type and horsepower** — A mulching mower should have at least five horsepower, preferably six. Low-cost mowers with 3.5-horsepower engines may not have sufficient power to chop up clippings thoroughly. Automotive-design overhead-valve engines on premium mowers are powerful, efficient, and tend to have larger and quieter mufflers. For mowing over hilly terrain, you may want to consider a mower with a two-cycle engine, since they are constantly injected with lubricating oil and don’t have the problem of oil starvation that standard, splash-lubricated four-cycle engines do.

**Electric/cordless models** — In recent years, major manufacturers have introduced innovative electric corded and cordless mowers, some with mulching capability.

**Mulching technology** — If you take a look at some competitive mowers, you’ll see different solutions for how they solve the problem of chopping up grass finely enough to get it into the mower. Most manufacturers design the mower’s deck and blade so that the clippings will be stirred up and cut several times before being blown back into the grass. Some manufacturers add baffles or fans to the side of the deck to assist the process.

**Build quality** — As with other consumer products, “you get what you pay for.” When you buy a mulching mower, it’s important to consider the manufacturer and price. The value is not in the price; it’s in the features and the quality of the mower.

Mulching Tree Leaves into Lawns

The state regulation that prohibits sending yard wastes to landfills is causing a problem for grounds managers and homeowners who need to dispose of tree leaves. An alternative is to compost the leaves, either on the premises or at a local composting center. The latter requires the expense of collection, transportation to the composting center and the expense of composting. When there are many trees on the lands, the amount of tree leaves in the fall can be a time-consuming chore.

Another means of disposing of lawn clippings is to use a tree leaf blower to blow tree leaves into the turf. It is important to do so at the right time. It is important to use a rotary mower to blow the leaves away. If the mulching/mowing/sweeping is done at appropriate times. When oak leaves are predominant, it will be necessary to remove them from the turf later in the fall because they are held on the trees longer than most other leaves. 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 to blow the leaves away. Sharpening the lawn mower blades and a slow movement of the lawn mower will help to grind the leaves finer. It may be necessary to leave them as many as four passes over the area to grind the leaves fine enough. The finer the 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 tree leaves are “mowed regularly, not allowing them to lie on the turf more than three or four days.”

Fall is a very important time for the turf to photosynthesize and store carbohydrates, particular under trees where the turf receives limited sunlight during the summer. It is important to keep the nitrogen per 1,000 square feet in addition to the normal fall nitrogen fertility. The management of the decomposition of the tree leaves. Mulching leaves into the turf is a reasonable means of disposing of the leaves. (Dj)
Yard Smart Resources

Reduce Use of Herbicide on Lawns

The City of Lincoln maintains a 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 rows 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.

Since the program began in October 1992, the city has composted an estimated 156,000 tons of grass and leaves and wood chipped 197,450 tons of tree debris. For an average year the compost facility grinds about 5,000 tons of brush and tree debris.

The diversion of grass, leaves and brush by the city’s 11 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 2021 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.

Locations to Pick up or Purchase LinGro Compost

• The City of Lincoln has limited quantities of organic compost, called LinGro, available to the public each spring at the N. 48 Street Transfer Station located at 5101 N. 48 Street. This material must be self-loaded and is available at no cost, on a first-come, first-served basis. Information on loading pick-ups can be obtained by contacting the Lincoln Recycling Office at 441-8215.

• Delivery of compost within a 50-mile radius of the Bluff Road Landfill is available for a fee. Call the Lincoln Recycling Office at 441-8215 for more information.

The following area firms have LinGro compost available for a fee: Campbell’s Nurseries and Garden Centers, General Excavation, Nebraska Nursery and Color Gardens, Pine Valley Nursery and Landscaping, Pro Cast Productions, Inc, and Seeds of Life. Landscaping firms can obtain compost upon request.

Information on LinGro Compost is also available through the City’s Web site at www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/parks/lands/recycle/lingro.htm (D3)
Juggling is no longer an act.
It’s a way of life for you and your family as you try to juggle work, nights at school, church and community responsibilities. No matter how rushed you are, the need to prioritize what is most important in your life is critical. For most, your children are a priority.

Here are a few quick parenting tips you can use to show your children they are a priority in your life.

Stop in the middle of whatever you are doing and give your child a hug, share something positive or pat them on the shoulder.

Let your child hear you praise him or her to others. Kids love to hear good things about themselves, especially when they are accidentally overheard.

Use valuable time while in the car to discuss events of the day or help your child study for a test.
Make sure you pick up your baby or toddler even when they are not crying.
After disciplining your child, leave a loving message such as: “I don’t always like your behavior, but I will always love you.”
Write a special message on a piece of paper. Fold it into a paper airplane and sail it toward your child so they can read it or bring it to you to share the message.
When having a goodnight hug, kiss or pat on the back, tell your child how much you appreciate all the good things they did during the day. Be specific.

Vacation time is fast approaching. Vacations need to be a time for family fun and relaxation without making a big cut in the budget. In order to do this some careful planning must take place. Start by deciding how much your family has to spend on a vacation. Next, look into the many options available. Do some brainstorming with the family to come up with ideas and places to visit. As you are deciding where to go and what you want to do there are some things you can do to help keep the costs manageable.

• Place limits on the amount of money family members can spend on souvenirs.
• Carry food for snacks and mini meals instead of stopping at restaurants. Select foods that remain safe to eat under travel conditions.
• Take your vacations by staying home, but plan local or regional trips with the family. Enjoy local museums, zoos, historical attractions, parks and recreation sites.
• Camping vacations are fun and economical, especially for a family. Try low cost well-run campgrounds and parks.
• Plan to vacation in an area where you have family or friends who have invited you to stay.
• Attend community celebrations or festivities planned for the public at no or low cost.
• If you are traveling with children, look for motels/hotels that don’t charge for children sharing parents’ room.
• Stay in small or middle size towns or the countryside. Lodging and meals tend to be less expensive than in metropolitan areas.
• Explore taking a package tour.

Because tour companies purchase the parts of a tour in bulk, costs may be lower.
• You can lower the price of a round trip air fare by as much as two-thirds by making certain your trip includes a Saturday evening stay and by purchasing the ticket in advance.
• Since car rental rates vary greatly, shop around for the best basic rates and special offers.
• Ask about their telephones surcharges for making long distance calls from your room. Sometimes it is more economical to use the lobby pay phone than the phone in your room.
• Watch for special offers for places of interest for your family to visit.

Tips for Parents on Keeping Children Drug Free: Ideas for helping elementary, middle and high school students to remain drug-free.

Helping Your Child Become a Responsible Citizen: All children must be taught to read and write, solve math problems and understand science concepts and events in history, so must they be guided in developing the qualities of character that are valued by their families and by the communities in which they live. This booklet provides information about the values and skills that make up character and good citizenship and what you can do to help your child develop strong character. It suggests activities you and your school-aged children can do to put those values to work in your daily lives and tips for working with teachers and schools to ensure you act together to promote the basic values you want your child to learn and use. Available in English and Spanish.

Helping Your Child Through Early Adolescence: Learning as much as you can about the world of early adolescents is an important step towards helping your child through the fascinating, confusing and wonderful years from ages 10 through 14. Based on the latest research in adolescent development and learning, this booklet addresses questions, provides suggestions and tackles issues parents of young teens generally find most challenging. Available in English and Spanish.

Tips for Storing Winter Clothes
• Be sure all items are clean — either launder or dry-clean them.
• Store in a dry area.
• Boxes or plastic tubs work well for storage.

More Tips for Student Success
The U.S. Department of Education offers free research-based publications to help families and educators make good decisions about learning. They can be ordered by contacting ED Pubs, The Department of Education Publications Distribution Center at ED Pubs, PO Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794-1398; 1-877-4-ED-PUBS or online at www.gov pubs/edpubs.html

Three available publications are:

Helping Your Child Through Early Adolescence: Learning as much as you can about the world of early adolescents is an important step towards helping your child through the fascinating, confusing and wonderful years from ages 10 through 14. Based on the latest research in adolescent development and learning, this booklet addresses questions, provides suggestions and tackles issues parents of young teens generally find most challenging. Available in English and Spanish.

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Character Counts! Corner

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Character Counts! Corner

Responsibility
Life is full of choices...being responsible means being in charge of our choices, and thus, our lives. Responsibility requires us to recognize what we do — and what we don’t do — and matters and we are morally responsible for the consequences of our choices. (LB)

Character Counts! Corner

Character Counts! Corner

Character Counts! Corner
Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Lisa Burham as winner of May’s “Heart of 4-H” Award in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

Lisa has been a project leader for four years with the Star City Kids 4-H Club (the largest club in Lancaster County with 67 members). She teaches photography and wildlife conservation projects, and has helped junior leaders teach woodwork and small engines. Currently she is team teaching a geography class with five other volunteers in the club.

Marie Spomer nominated Lisa, saying “Mrs. Burham is a wonderful teacher. She is always finding some hands-on project to make the project fun.”

Lisa says, “I like being a 4-H volunteer because 4-H has been such a great learning experience for me and for my family. It has allowed us to make amazing new friendships. One of my favorite experiences was having the opportunity to help prepare a group of some of the best teens around for the music contest. They worked so hard, putting in long hours, and went on to win purple ribbons at the state contest. What a neat bunch of kids!”

Lisa is married with husband Mark and four sons (all four are members of Star City Kids). When she was younger, Lisa was a member of the Eager Hands 4-H club in Sidney. Congratulations to Lisa!

Photography Workshop April 29
This introductory workshop will concentrate on the basics of photography and exhibiting photographs at the fair. It will be held Thursday, April 29, 6:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Bring your camera and film. See you there!

“How to Exhibit at the County Fair” Leader Training May 11
New leaders, experienced leaders, 4-H members and parents are invited to this leader training on Tuesday, May 11, 9:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Come and receive information on how to fill out the new entry tags, the in’s and out’s of interview judging. Life Challenge information, the new Presentations Contest and other valuable county fair information.

Teens! Opportunities Wanted!
Join the new Nebraska 4-H E-team, a broad group of 4-H teens across the state who will communicate via e-mail to provide valuable input on various topics and issues related to the 4-H program. To join, call Tracy at 441-7180.

UNL Livestock Judging & Evaluation Camp June 9–11
Do you wish to enhance your livestock evaluation and selection skills? Do you wish to become better with oral presentations? Do you wish to become more competitive in your 4-H or FFA Livestock Judging Contest? If you answered yes to any of these questions, this camp is for you!

Become more confident with livestock judging by attending this three day, hands-on camp June 9-11. If you are interested, contact Deanna For a registration form. The camp will be held in the Animal Science building on UNL’s East Campus and the cost of the camp is $150. Registration is limited to the first 60, so call today! (DK)

TOUR 4-H NIGHT AT THE SALDGARDS
This year, 4-H Night at Lincoln Saldgards Baseball will be Friday, June 8 at Haymarket Park. 4-Hers should meet at 6 p.m. on the promenade north of the main field to march around the field prior to the game. Tickets are $5 per person for general admission fans being seated. Lancaster County 4-H will be selling Saldgards tickets for the game to 4-H’ers, families & friends May 3-15. To buy your tickets, stop by the extension office.

Life Challenge Event June 28–29
The 2004 Life Challenge event for the senior division, youth 12 and over, will be Monday, June 28 and Tuesday, June 29 in Lincoln on East Campus of UNL. Participants will compete as a team in one of the five possible challenge areas and individually in placing classes. A separate junior division contest for youth 11 and under will be held on Thursday, July 8, 1:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. If you are interested in participating in either contest, please contact Tracy at 441-7180 by May 14. (TK)

Pre-Districts May 22
The pre-district horse show will be held on Saturday, May 22 at the Capital City Arena. Rich and Katie Fortner have graciously agreed to judge and will also do a mini clinic on showmanship during the lunch break. There will be two age divisions, 11-14 and 15-18. Eleven year olds have been included this year so they will have a chance to see what it will be like for them next year! The show will start at 9 a.m. and should be over around 2 p.m. For the showbill and more information check the web at lancaster.unl.edu/4h/news.htm or call Marty at 441-7180. (MC)

New Series of Horse Shows
Salt Creek Wranglers will host a 4-H Silver Dollar Series this summer at the Wranglers Grounds, 4300 S Coddington Ave., Lincoln. This is a super exciting series of 5 shows. Show dates are May 16, June 12, July 25 and August 29. Each show will feature special events.

All judges are certified 4-H judges. This will give 4-H riders the opportunity to go to a warm-up show before the major shows, districts, state, county fair and AK-sar-ben. 4-H attire, armband and tack required. The registration fee is $3 per class or $20 for all day. No pre-entry required. All counties are welcome.

Showbills can be found at lancaster.unl.edu/4h/news.htm under Lancaster County 4-H Horse News or picked up at the extension office.

Questions, call Marty at 441-7180 or Colleen at 477-4697. (MC)

ORSE BITS

Lancaster 4-H’ers Place Well at Stampede State Horse Competes
The 2004 4-H Stampede was held in conjunction with the Nebraska Horse Expo at the Lancaster Event Center Saturday, March 13. The 4-H State Horse Competitions were public speaking, demonstrations (both individual and team), horse bowl and the new art contest. Lancaster results are as follows:

Speech — Jr. Division: Gabby Warner, red
Demonstrations — Individual Jr. Division: Gabby Warner, red
Art — Katy Cockrell, Grand Champion purple
Francis Anderson, purple
Horse Bowl — Lancaster Team I (Allison Weber, Robyn Shannon and Amy Gerdes) red; Lancaster Team II (Andrea McCain, Will Schedler, Gabby Warner, Elise Edgar), red; Lancaster Team III (Emily Thornton, Lindsay Kerns, Melissa Raisch, Katy Cockrell and Francis Anderson) purple; Katy Cockrell 5th high individual overall

Congratulations to all and thank you for doing such a superb job of representing Lancaster County!

Tack & Post
(for your refrigerator)

Following are upcoming 4-H horse deadlines, shows and events. More information, showbills and forms can be found online at lancaster.unl.edu/4h/news.htm under Lancaster County 4-H Horse News.

May 14 — Deadline for District/State horse show entries, IDs, level tests
May 16 — Wranglers 4-H Silver Dollar Series #2, 8 a.m. registration, 8:45 a.m. Cowboy Church, 9 a.m. show
May 22 — Pre-District Horse Show, Capitol City Arena — 9 a.m.
May 26 — Fitzer Ranch Horse Judging Clinic, registration 8:30 a.m., contact Steve Niemeyer at (308) 346-4200
May 28 — Deadline for State Horse Judging and Hippology entries and entry fees
May 29 — EquiRiders 4-H Club Horse Show, Capital City Arena, 8 a.m. registration
June 1 — Deadline for County Fair Horse IDs, forms must be picked up at extension office
June 6 — 4-H Horse Show, Indoor Arena, Wahoo, 9 a.m.
June 14-17 — District Horse Shows East (Fairbury, Elkhorn, Oakland, Albion)
June 21 — Capital City Horse Shows West (O’Neill, Hemingford, Grant, Broken Bow)
June 26 — Eastern NE Horse Judging Clinic, 8:30 a.m. registration contact: Monte Stauffer at (402) 344-7004
July 9 — Deadline for All County Fair Animal Entries
July 11-15 — State Horse Show, Fonner Park, Grand Island

Katy Cockrell’s “antiqued” collage done in pencil won the Grand Champion award in the first ever State 4-H Horse Art Contest held as part of the 4-H Stampede.
CLOVER COLLEGE REGISTRATION FORM

To register, complete the registration form (one person per form) and return with payment (check or money order made payable to Lancaster County Extension). Registrations must be received by June 14. They will be handled on a “first come” basis and will only be accepted upon receipt of fees. Early registration is encouraged. Telephone registrations are not accepted. Incomplete or incorrect forms are not responsible for fees to be canceled.

Name
Parent(s) Name(s)
Address
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Zip
Daytime Phone
Evening Phone
Special Needs (allergies, etc.):
Work
Sick
Total
Food
Total
Mailing or bring registration form and payment to: UNL Lancaster County Extension, 444 Cherry Creek Rd., Ne,a, Lincoln, NE 68528

CLOVER COLLEGE TUE., JUNE 22—FRI., JUNE 25
Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Rd. Open to 4-H & non-4H youth ages 6—19

CLOVER College is four days of “hands-on” workshops full of fun and learning. You may attend as many workshops as you wish. Youth attending workshops that overlap the lunch period should bring a sack lunch. Food will not be available (unless otherwise stated in the workshop description). If you have questions, contact Tracy Kulm at 441-7180.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

4-Day Workshops

Crooked Kids Day Camp Crooked Kids will participate in several workshops while learning about animals, food, dirt, and outdoor fun and games. Refresments provided for this workshop. TUE.-FRI., JUNE 22-25, 8-10 AM
AGES: 8-10; $9 INSTRUCTOR: Ron Van Arnum, 4-H volunteer

Birdhouse or Feeder Fly to Crooked Kids to build a birdhouse or feeder. Learn basic wood-working skills and build habitats for backyard animals. All materials supplied. Provided. TUE.-FRI., JUNE 22-25, 8-10 AM
AGES: 8-10; $9 INSTRUCTOR: Shirley Condon, 4-H volunteer

3-Day Workshops

Fun, Sun Pasta Make a delicious pasta meal filled with candy. You will also make sun catchers to take home. Provided when using your pasta. WED., JUNE 23, 2-5 PM
AGES: 8-10; $12.50 INSTRUCTOR: Cathy Hurdle, 4-H volunteer

2-Day Workshops

Paper Piecing—What Is It? Use paper to layer and sew fabric to make a finished design. Choose from a heart, boat or birdhouse to create a wall hanging, pillow, or a gift item for someone special. Bring your own scissors, pins, needle and your sewing machine. Provided. TUE.-WED., JUNE 22-23, 10:15-12:15 PM
AGES: 8-15; $6 INSTRUCTOR: Diane Spencer, 4-H volunteer

Design Your Own T-Shirt Create your own T-shirt design and apply using computer. T-Shirt designs, fabric to choose from, white or light-colored T-shirt and ideas. TUE.-WED., JUNE 22-23, 12:45-2:45 PM
AGES: 10 and up; $8 INSTRUCTOR: Vicki Jodidka, Ext. Publ. Communication

Antique Automobiles Build a model of this antique automobile and learn to drive it. THU.-FRI., JUNE 24-25, 12:45-2:45 PM
AGES: 8 and up; $7.50 INSTRUCTOR: Myron, Barb and Nathan, volunteer

Fun & Funky Purse Make a “fun & funky purse” using one of a kind fabric and purse. Need to have scissors, pin and thread. Bring sewing machine, scissors, white thread and thread. TUE.-WED., JUNE 22-23, 1-3 PM
AGES: 8 and up; $6 INSTRUCTOR: Geri Ripa, 4-H volunteer

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Henneman Receives Community Health Award

At its annual awards banquet, the Lincoln-Lancaster County Board of Health presented Alice Henneman with the Community Health Award for her outstanding public health work as an extension educator and registered dietitian with the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lincoln County. The Board of Health awards are given “for dedication to the promotion and pursuit of health of the highest quality for Lincoln and Lancaster Counties’ Citizens.” Alice regularly partners with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department and many other local organizations to promote food safety and nutrition.

Congratulations Alice!

Extension Welcomes Newest Staff Member

Yelena (Helen) Mitrofanova began her duties as an extension educator on April 1. Her focus will be on extension educational programs in urban community development. She will work with local/civic organizations, community leaders, businesses and local government officials. The main goal is to increase ability of local communities, organizations and citizens in identifying needs, building capacity of local communities and resolving critical issues. Yelena has worked for University of Wisconsin Extension in Dane County where she did community-based asset inventory work. In addition, she has worked on programs in affordable housing and youth-business mentoring.

Yelena has a Master’s Degree in Urban and Regional Planning with a concentration in economic development from the University of Wisconsin. She also has a Master’s Degree in Sociology from Moscow State University, Moscow, Russia. A United States citizen, Yelena is fluent in Russian and English and has traveled extensively in Eastern and Western Europe. She is a member of the New Neighborhood League which provides resources to new immigrants from other countries. She is married to Gennadiy Mitrofanov, who is a financial analyst at Tenaska, Inc (Omaha, NE). Yelena has a son, Mishal (6 years old), and a daughter, Nita (2-1/2 years old). The family hobbies are hockey, ice skating, outdoor activities and cultural & social events.

4-H Camps Are Bigger and Better Than Ever!

4-H summer camps have expanded in 2004 to create more camps and many new activities! Many camps have been expanded or doubled in length. 4-H camps are open to all youth ages 5-19. They are a great opportunity to meet new friends and experience a wide variety of exciting activities!

There are more than 40 day and overnight camping programs and trips scheduled in June, July, and August at the three 4-H camp locations in Nebraska.

“Nebraska 4-H camps provide youngsters the opportunity to continue learning in a fun environment throughout the summer months,” said Bob Scrivens, Nebraska 4-H camp interim director. “They will make new friends, learn new things and enjoy doing so in this exciting setting. And 4-H camps are different from other camps because there is a strong university expertise, which is presented at a level that kids can understand and enjoy.”

Brochures with camp descriptions, registration forms and more information are available online at http://unl.edu/camp4h or at the Lancaster County Extension office.

Camp Schedule for Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center near Greta

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>For</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Family Day &amp; Open House</td>
<td>for families</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Kids-N-Critters</td>
<td>for ages 5-8</td>
<td>$22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7-11</td>
<td>Boldly Bound</td>
<td>for ages 6-10</td>
<td>$254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 14-15</td>
<td>Take a Friend, Make a Friend</td>
<td>for ages 6-10</td>
<td>$83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 16-19</td>
<td>Discovery Camp - Elementary</td>
<td>for ages 6-10</td>
<td>$149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 21-28</td>
<td>Nebraska Canoe, Climbing, Casting Combo</td>
<td>for ages 14-16</td>
<td>$330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 28</td>
<td>Kids-N-Water</td>
<td>for ages 5-8</td>
<td>$22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 29-July 2</td>
<td>Biking Bound Trip</td>
<td>for ages 11-14</td>
<td>$284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 6-10</td>
<td>Discovery Camp - Middle School</td>
<td>for ages 11-14</td>
<td>$280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 12-16</td>
<td>Outdoor Skills</td>
<td>for ages 11-14</td>
<td>$280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 26-30</td>
<td>Splash Bash - Elementary</td>
<td>for ages 11-14</td>
<td>$132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Camp Schedule for Nebraska 4-H Camp near Halsey

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>For</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>Family Day &amp; Open House</td>
<td>for families</td>
<td>Free</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1-6</td>
<td>Sandhills Samples</td>
<td>for ages 11-14</td>
<td>$255</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 7-11</td>
<td>Sandhills Canoe &amp; Fish Combo</td>
<td>for ages 6-10</td>
<td>$233</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 7-11</td>
<td>Route 66</td>
<td>for ages 6-10</td>
<td>$233</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 20-22</td>
<td>Take a Friend, Make a Friend</td>
<td>for ages 6-10</td>
<td>$110</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 22-25</td>
<td>Outdoor Skills</td>
<td>for ages 11-14</td>
<td>$198</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 5-9</td>
<td>Niobrara Tribe - Session 1</td>
<td>for ages 11-14</td>
<td>$233</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 13-16</td>
<td>The State ESCAPE - Session 2</td>
<td>for ages 11-14</td>
<td>$233</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 16</td>
<td>Keeney Connections Day Camp</td>
<td>for ages 6-8</td>
<td>$22</td>
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<td>July 19</td>
<td>State Connections Day Camp</td>
<td>for ages 11-14</td>
<td>$233</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 20-24</td>
<td>Explorer Camp - Boys</td>
<td>for ages 11-14</td>
<td>$233</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 26-30</td>
<td>Explorer Camp for Girls</td>
<td>for ages 11-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 9-13</td>
<td>Outback Bash</td>
<td>for ages 11-14</td>
<td>$233</td>
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</table>

Lancaster County Fair Books Are Available

The Lancaster County Fair invites YOU to enter an exhibit or participate in a contest! The 2004 Fair Book includes all the information needed. Open Class exhibits and contests are open to all ages 6 and up (as of January 1 of current year) unless otherwise indicated.

For books are available at the Lancaster Event Center, the extension office, Lincoln libraries, village banks & post offices and other locations. It is also available online at www.lancastereventcenter.com/fair.html and at lancaster.unl.edu/fair.

Neighborhoods Spring Clean-Ups

Neighborhoods Working Together communities are encouraging their residents to become involved in keeping the neighborhood clean. Many spring clean-up schedules are planned. Join your neighbors and spruce up your neighborhood on the following dates. Check with your neighborhood president or cleanup coordinator for details in your area.

Hawley & Malone: April 24

Near South: April 24

East Campus: May 8, 1-2 p.m. Meet at the American Lutheran Church, 4200 Vine Street

Everett: May 1

Hartley: May 1

Witkewee: May 1, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Irvingdale: May 8

University Place: May 15, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Woods Park: May 15

Clinton: May 22, 7:30-11 a.m. Meet at Clinton Elementary School

The Nebraska LEAD Program

The Nebraska LEAD Program is a comprehensive, two-year, statewide, agricultural leadership development program designed to speed up the leadership development process to better prepare the problem solvers, decision-makers and spokespersons for both agriculture and the State of Nebraska. Through monthly, three-day, seminars the program promotes awareness, understanding and involvement in leadership positions at all levels. A national and international study/travel seminar is also a part of the program. Up to 30 individuals are annually selected from across Nebraska. The program is sponsored by the Nebraska Agricultural Leaders Development, Inc. in cooperation with the Institute of Agricultural and Natural Resources of University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Quotifications

- Be a resident of the state of Nebraska for the past three years.
- Be willing to commit the time necessary for full participation.
- Be actively involved in production agriculture or agribusiness.
- Be motivated and open to new ideas and differing points of view.

Application Deadline

Application deadline is June 15, 2004

Applications may be requested by calling (402) 472-6810 or by sending a written request to the Program Coordinator via email to nelead@unl.edu.

See our Web site at www.laaurc.unl.edu/nelead.

The Nebraska LEAD Program

The Nebraska LEAD Program, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 318 BioChem Hall, Lincoln, NE 68583-0763.
**EXTENSION CALENDAR**

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

**APRIL**
- 22 24 Composting Workshop, Calvert Recreation Ctr. 4500 Stockwell St. . . . 6:30 p.m.
- 23 24 4-H State Leader’s Forum, NE State 4-H Camp, Halsey
- 24 4-H Horse Tournament (in conjunction with the NSCA Class/Amateur (CLAM) Tournament, Southeast Community College . . . 8:30 a.m.
- 27 Composting Workshop, Easterday Recreation Ctr. 6130 Adams St. . . . 6:30 p.m.
- 27 28 4-H Photography Workshop
- 28 Composting Workshop, Irving Recreation Ctr. 2010 Van Dorn St. . . . 6:30 p.m.

**MAY**
- 3–7 Grandmarsh Training Program
- 4 4-H Council Meeting
- 9 Dine Out for 4-HCWF, Don & Millie’s, 5200 S. 56th Street . . . 11 a.m.–4 p.m.
- 11 4-H Leader Training
- 13 “Everything Homeowners Need to Know about Termites Control” Workshop
- 14 Extension Board Meeting
- 14 4-H/FFA Lamb Tagging & Weigh-in — must call for appt.
- 14 Lancaster Event Center
- 14 Deadline for District/State 4-H Horse Show Entries, I.D.s, Level Tests
- 15 Composting Demonstration, City Yard Waste Composting Demonstration Site, 50th & Colby
- 22 Acreage Insights: Rural Living Clinics — “Vertebrate Pests” . . . 9–11 a.m.

Big Red Summer Academic Camps
Youth in grades 8–12 won’t want to miss the Nebraska 4-H’s Big Red Summer Academic Camps to be held this summer at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. For more information, contact Peggy Jeffries at 472-2805.

**Speech & PSA Contest Winners**

The 2004 Lancaster County Speech & Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest was held March 14 at the State Capitol. There were more than 75 entries and all judges commented overall quality of the speeches.

More than 174 entries from 31 counties participated in the Southeast District Speech Contest held March 27 at the UNL East Campus Union. Medals were awarded to the top six winners in each division. Senior division winners advance to the State Contest held during the State Fair.

**Speech Winners**

**PSA Winners**

**NEBLINE FEEDBACK**

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Comments

Story Idea(s)

Return to:
University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County 444 Cherycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, Nebraska 68528-1507
Earth Wellness Festival Celebrates 10 Successful Years

The earth wellness festival marked its 10th anniversary this year with nearly 2,800 Lancaster County fifth graders from 44 schools attending on March 19 at Southeast Community College. Students rotated between sessions to discover and explore the relationships and interdependency of land, water and living resources.

Classrooms attending the festival received pre-festival learning kits in October. Hundreds of volunteers, area educators, environmentalists, government representatives, as well as donations from local businesses, make this educational experience possible. The earth wellness festival steering committee is comprised of ten local educational resource agencies, including University of Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County.

(Right) Youth learned about water quality through the study of bubbles in “Babbology.”

Featured presentations by the World Bird Sanctuary from St. Louis included owls, raptors, turkey, vultures, spiders and snakes.

4-H volunteer Sheri Ramirez quizzed students on beaver trivia in “Build a Beaver.”

In “Paper to Paper,” 4-H staff and volunteers (4-H’er Jordan Lantis is pictured above right) helped students transform used office paper into new pieces of paper.

4-H volunteer Shirley Condon tested student’s knowledge of what can and can’t be recycled in “Round & Round It Goes.”

Ag Awareness Festival Teaches Youth Importance of Agriculture

More than 400 fourth graders attended the Ag Awareness Festival April 6 and 7 at the Lancaster Event Center. Students rotated between stations to learn about agricultural products, how they are produced and how they are used. The Ag Awareness Coalition, led by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, organizes the festival with the help of agriculture businesses, commodity associations and food industry companies. This is the fourth year the festival has been held in Lincoln.

Did you guess it from the April Stacks? The answer was a compost for the garden.

Can You Guess It?

Douglas/Sarpy Extension Educator Monte Stauffer (right) places rumen fluid (obtained from a cow’s stomach) under a microscope to show the role of microorganisms in a cow’s digestive process.

Extension Educator Barb Ogg (right) demonstrates the value of farming technology by having students use a 1969 corn grinder.

Youth meet a pair of 5-week-old piglets.

Students learned about breeds and care of horses.

Latest U.S. Drought Monitor Map

As of April 6, Lancaster County was not in drought conditions.