April 2005

The NEBLINE, April 2005
Hallam Tornado Cleanup Included Proper Disposal of Hazardous Waste

Barb Ogg
Extension Educator

On May 22, 2004, an F4 tornado traveled 52 miles across five counties and reached an unprecedented width of 2-1/2 miles. Several communities, including Hallam, saw homes destroyed, field flooded, downed powerlines and other property damage.

After the tornado, emergency personnel representing federal, state and local agencies were mobilized to assess the damage and take action. Immediate concerns included ensuring the safety of residents, re-establishing communication, securing personal property and managing and eliminating the huge amount of debris. Other agencies, charitable organizations and businesses helped families find temporary housing and meet their immediate needs.

Beth Mann, Household Hazardous Waste Coordinator and other Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) environmental health specialists, spent two weeks after the tornado collecting hazardous materials from damaged homes in Hallam and surrounding areas.

In Hallam, residents and cleanup volunteers were instructed to put hazardous waste on the curb. Environmental health personnel collected waste and brought it to temporary sites set up by LLCHD for sorting and packing hazardous wastes. Because training is required to identify, assess, sort and pack toxic wastes, untrained volunteers could not be used to help.

Due to the fact many containers were damaged or leaking, items normally recycled by citizens such as batteries, used oil, antifreeze and propane tanks were collected for proper disposal. Some waste collected had no label, was in unmarked containers or had damaged labels. LLCHD environmental health specialists performed field tests to determine type of substance so materials could be safely packed.

Hazardous waste collected after the tornado included banned products containing DDT (left) and a turf fumigant containing mercury (right).

Types of hazardous waste collected in Hallam included PCB’s, oxidizing and flammable materials, asbestos, pesticides and five-gallons of mercury. Old pesticides now banned by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), such as DDT and chlordane were also collected. One potentially hazardous item collected was “Cyanogas for Ants.” When the calcium cyanide powder in Cyanogas is exposed to moist air or water, hydrogen cyanide, a deadly poisonous gas is produced.

The use registration of this dangerous fungicidal is cancelled by the EPA in 1989.

At the end of two weeks, the amount of hazardous waste collected filled a flat-bed semitrailer and was transported to a storage facility in Lincoln.

Throughout the summer, LLCHD environmental health specialists spent time assessing and collecting additional damaged hazardous materials found in the county as cleanup efforts progressed. By the end of the summer, nearly 30,000 pounds of waste had been collected. This waste was transported to Arkansas by a hazardous waste contractor for disposal for recycling, fuel recovery, incineration or disposal.

Hazardous Waste Collections

Each year, the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) offer several Household Hazardous Waste Collections. Don’t wait until a disaster to get rid of your household hazardous waste. LLCHD encourages all Lancaster County residents to take a few minutes to inventory what is stored in their basements and garages and bring hazardous items to one of the upcoming collections. This is a good step to eliminate potential risk to their families and the environment.

See page 3 for details.

Hazardous waste collected after the tornado included banned products containing DDT (left) and a turf fumigant containing mercury (right).

15 Tons of Hazardous Waste Collected After 2004 Tornado

Partial list of the hazardous materials collected by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department during cleanup after the 2004 tornado.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WASTE MATERIAL</th>
<th>AMOUNT COLLECTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pesticides</td>
<td>12,175 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(other than those exempted)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flammable solids and liquids</td>
<td>2,173 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(explosive hazards)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxidizing materials</td>
<td>705 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(fire and explosive hazards)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil-based paint</td>
<td>254 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium hydroxide (lye)</td>
<td>173 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(extremely corrosive)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asbestos</td>
<td>17 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(increased lung disease etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCB’s</td>
<td>15 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(causes neurologic damage, causes human health problems)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium cyanide</td>
<td>4 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(toxic fumigant, when exposed to moist air/damp air)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonium sulfide</td>
<td>3 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(burns and corrosive)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>5 gallons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(toxic, damages central nervous system, causes birth defects)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After sorting, hazardous waste was packed in large, extra strong boxes with double-wall construction for safe transport.

2005 Hazardous Waste Collections

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See page 3 for details.

Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department environmental health specialists spent two weeks after the tornado collecting hazardous materials in Hallam and surrounding areas.
Liming Acid Soils

Why is liming an acid soil important?
Nutrient availability and biologic activity in the soil can both be affected by pH, especially at levels too far removed from neutral. Nutrient avail- ability is affected by the pH of the soil in two ways. Clay and organic matter carry negative charges. Positively charged particles, called cations (kat-I- ons) are attracted to and held by, the negatively charged sites on the clay and organic matter particles. These nutrients are taken up by plants when the plant roots encounter the nutrient and ex- change one or more hydrogen ions (H+) for.

There are a finite number of cation exchange sites in a given soil. This can be measured in the laboratory and is reported as the cation exchange capacity (CEC) of the soil. As cation exchange sites get filled up with hydrogen ions, fewer sites can be occupied by the cations needed for the metabolic processes in the plant. The essential plant nutrients held as cations in the soil include: Nitrogen in the ammonium form (NH4+), Potassium (K+), Magnesium (Mg2+), Calcium (Ca2+), Copper (Cu+ and Cu2+), Zinc (Zn2+), Manganese (Mn2+) and Iron (Fe2+). Soil chemistry is a dynamic pro- cess. Various compounds constantly form and decay. A combination of the total quantity of a nutrient present in the soil will exist in a plant available form at any one time. One of the factors affecting the availability of many nutrients, is pH. A pH of 6.0 to 7.0 is ideal in that range the major plant nutrients are available for use by plants. Phosphorus, Potassium, Calcium, Sulfur, Molybdenum and Boron are all more available to plants in this range than at lower pH values.

When pH drops below 6.0, the availability of many of the major plant nutrients are decreased and the lower the pH value below 6.0, the less available they become. Conversely, at very low pH values (below 5.2), aluminum enters the exchangeable ion complex. Aluminum is toxic to plants and further depresses yields if pH is allowed to get this low.

Besides the effect that pH has on the purely chemical processes in the soil, pH also affects the microbiological processes. Bacteria in the soil are more active between pH 6.0 and 7.0, thus the mineralization of organic matter is better (increasing the availability of nitrogen and other nutrients such as phosphorus, sulfur and other nutrients). Also, the bacteria associated with nodule formation and nitrogen fixation by legumes function better in the 6.0-7.0 pH range. As a rule, it is best to maintain the soil pH at values above 6.0. A pH of 6.5 is considered ideal for agricultural crops. It usually takes several years for the soil to fully react in the soil and for that reason, liming should be considered an eight-year investment. Remember also, the same things that made the soil acidic in the first place, are going to continue to occur, requiring periodic applications of lime in the future.

Do you have to apply the recom- mended amount of lime?
University of Nebraska lime recom- mendations are for the amount of lime required to bring up seven inches of soil up to a pH of 6.5. Less lime will not bring the level up as much nor maintain it at the higher level as long. An analogy would be the decision to fill the gas tank on the pickup which might take $35 or only to put $10 worth of gas in the tank. Both will help you get down the road, but you won’t go as far on $10. Basically, there is no way around the laws of chemistry. It takes a given amount of calcium carbonate equivalent to neutralize the active and reserve acidity in the soil and bring the mea- sured pH up to an acceptable level.

Are there differences in lime quality or effectiveness?
There can be differences in lime quality depending on the source. High quality lime contains more calcium carbonate than low quality lime. Lime that is good enough for agricultural purposes is considered to be 60 percent effective. Lime that is 50 percent effective or less is considered to be of little value. Lime that is less effective in agricultural operations is still of value and could be used as a co-amendment in a trial. Lime in the 40 percent effective range is still of value for raising the fall pH to a value where crop production is possible.

For more information:
“Estimating Ag Lime Quality” (Nebraska, GN94-714)
“Soils House Study Course” (University of Nebraska, EC8-152)
“Lime Acid Soils” (Kansas State University, MF-1065)
Illegal Dumping in Lancaster County Declines

Harry Heafer Environmental Health Educator, Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

Illegal dumping in Lancaster County has decreased 36 percent when comparing statistics from fiscal year 2002-03 to 2003-04. From a high of 397 reported in fiscal year 2002-03, the number of illegal dumping reports to the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) dropped to 254 in 2003-04. This is despite the May 22, 2004 tornado that left a path of destruction across the southern portion of Lancaster County. Residents took responsibility for themselves for any debris that they cleaned up. This decrease could be attributed to two things. One is the educational effort being done to combat illegal dumping. The education campaign is funded by the Lancaster County Environmental Fund and coordinated by the Keep Lincoln and Lancaster County Beautiful program at the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department. Educational messages at four different billboards are posted regularly. Signs have also been placed around the county near areas that have been used for illegal dumping. Educational efforts by the health department, city recycling office and county extension have made citizens more aware of how and where to properly dispose of items commonly dumped.

Secondly, illegal dumpsites are being cleaned up as soon as possible. This removes the items that might otherwise give the impression that it’s OK to dump. A contract is signed with a local refuse hauler to clean up sites that have been reported. The hauler also monitors three areas around Lincoln often finding illegally dumped items before they are even reported. Items most commonly dumped include tires, furniture and appliances. Despite the drop in illegal dumping, all citizens pay for the cleaning up of illegally dumped items. The annual cost for cleaning up illegal dumpsites for the 2003-04 fiscal year was $15,835. In 2002-03 the bill was $14,083. LLCHD encourages citizens to dispose of items properly. Appliance pickup freon may be recycled at no cost by taking them to Alter Scrap Processing at 5 and N Street. A small fee is charged for appliances with freon. Most refuse haulers will take furniture, usually at no extra cost. Car tires can be recycled for a small fee at any of the Graham Tire Stores. Citizens are strongly encouraged to pay the fee when getting new tires and to keep the tires. Although many might think they would use them later, few do. Storing them outside often provides a place for mosquitoes to grow in the warm-weather months. 

Fines for illegal dumping can be as high as $1,000. With this in mind, it’s much cheaper to properly dispose of items than risking getting caught. The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department serves as the central clearing house for reporting illegal dumping in the county. The Health Department receives calls from the Sheriff, county roads staff and citizens reporting illegal dump sites. To report a location where material has been dumped, call 441-8022. To report a suspicious vehicle or an illegal dumping in progress, call the Sheriff’s office at 441-8022. Citizens are encouraged to make more reports and refuse information, refer to pages 42-44 in the blue pages in the Alltel Phone book. (BPO)

They are available at the extension office and/or on the Web site at http:// lancaster.unl.edu.

• Butterfly Gardening” (NebGuide, G93-1183)
• “Wildflowers for the Home Landscape” (NebGuide, G92-1074)
• “Rearing Butterflies and Moths” (Educational Resource, #290)
• “Butterfly Gardening Resource”

You can attract many different butterflies, by choosing the right plants, adding a provable mural of color to your landscape. If possible, include both larval host plants (for the caterpillars) and plants that provide nectar for the adult butterflies.

Here are some resources you may want to check out.

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Here are some resources you may want to check out.
Yogurt Salad Dressing

(Makes 8 servings. Serving size: 2 tablespoons.)

Try it, you’ll like it! This mayonnaise gives a nice creamy texture to the yogurt. The herbs and lemon juice add a delicious burst of flavor.

8 ounces plain yogurt, fat-free
1/4 cup mayonnaise, fat-free
2 tablespoons chives, dried
2 tablespoons dill, dried
2 tablespoons lemon juice

Mix all ingredients in bowl and refrigerate, covered.

Nutrition analysis per serving: Calories: 22; Total fat: 1.5 g; Carbohydrates: 5 g; Fiber: 0 g; Magnesium: 44 mg; Calcium: 169 mg.


 Fruit Muesli

Cool and creamy—stir up a bowl of muesli the night before and enjoy as a quick, nourishing breakfast in the morning! A Swiss doctor, Maximilian Bircher-Benner, invented muesli in the late 19th Century for patients in his hospital. The original muesli was made with uncooked rolled oats, grated apple, milk, lemon juice and nuts. It was served at breakfast as a protection against a variety of illnesses. Today, muesli is still associated with healthy eating with many different recipes and variations available.

INGREDIENTS PER SERVING:
1/2 cup oatmeal, quick or old-fashioned, uncooked (also called “rolled oats”)
1/2 cup orange juice or apple juice
1/2 cup yogurt, vanilla or plain

* You may wish to add 1 to 2 teaspoons sugar or equivalent amount of no calorie sweetener if using plain yogurt.

1/2 cup fresh, frozen or canned fruit (blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, sliced oranges, cranberry sauce, coated chop-peaches, etc.)
1/4 teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon chopped almonds

Mix all ingredients, except almonds. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Serve topped with almonds.

ALICE’S TIPS
1. The following raw fruits may turn brown overnight and are best added just before serving: apples, pears, bananas and peaches.
2. Create your own version of muesli by adding different nuts, fruits, spices, dried fruits, flavors of yogurt, etc.

Yogurt Salad Dressing

(Serving Size: 2 tablespoons)

2 tablespoons dill, dried
2 tablespoons chives, dried
8 ounces plain yogurt, fat-free

1/2 cup chopped raw vegetables

Select From All Five Vegetable Subgroups Several Times a Week

Examples of vegetables from these subgroups include:

- Dark green vegetables: Broccoli, kale, mustard greens, leaf lettuce, spinach
- Orange vegetables: Carrots, sweet potatoes, winter squash, pumpkin
- Legumes (dry beans): Chickpeas, pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, soybeans, split peas, lentils
- Starchy vegetables: Corn, white potatoes, green peas
- Other vegetables: Tomatoes, cabbage, celery, cucumber, lettuce, onions, peppers, green beans, cauliflower, mushrooms, summer squash

Consume 3 or More 1-oz Equivalents of Whole-Grain Products Per Day, with the Rest of the Recom-mended Grains Coming From Enriched or Whole-Grain Products

Examples of one-ounce equivalent are:
- 1 slice bread
- 1 ounce ready-to-eat dry cereal
- 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta or cereal

Spending Your Calorie Salary: Tips for Using the 2005 Dietary Guidelines

In general, at least half the grains should come from whole grains. Examples of whole-grains commonly eaten in the United States include: whole wheat, whole oats, brown rice, wild rice, barley, wild rice, buckwheat, triticale, bulgur (cracked wheat), millet, quinoa, sorghum

For now, replacing satu-rated fats with mono-unsaturated fats like olive oil is a good recommendation. Just remem-ber to still check your calories and total fat intake and should be regarded by the research and review the dietary guidelines. For more information about the guidelines, go to: www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines

Consume 3 Cups Per Day of Fat-Free or Low-Fat Milk or Equivalent Milk Products

If you don’t or can’t consume milk, choose lactose-free milk products and/or fortified foods and beverages. Children 2 to 8 years of age should consume 2 cups per day and children 9 years of age and older should consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk prod-ucts. A serving size is:
- 1 cup low-fat-free milk, yogurt
- 1 1/2 ounces of low-fat or fat-free cheese

See recipes at left for some delicious ideas for fortifying the Dietary Guidelines. For more information about the guidelines, go to: www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines

Olive Oil and Heart Disease

We’re tired, there’s no one else to fix dinner for today and all we feel we’re doing is pouring out a bowl of cereal. But, wait! Take an extra 5 minutes and fix this luscious parfait, full of foods from 3 of the 5 food groups. And there’s no “sink full of dishwashers” (It’s OK to eat this for other meals besides dinner, including break-fast!)

No need to get out your recipe book. Forget about the measuring cups and spoons.

Just layer yogurt, low-fat granola and fruit in whatever proportions you like. Add some nuts and you’ve included a 4th food group. A sprig of mint is optional!

Olive Oil and Heart Disease

For Limited Resource Families

Wanda M. Kozlowski UNL Nutrition Specialist

In November, 2004, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the mono-unsaturated fat, olive oil, might help reduce the risk of coro-nary heart disease. The FDA found replacing saturated fats with olive oil in one’s diet might reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. However, calories and total fat intake should not be increased.

What does this mean? It means that when we look at a bottle of olive oil we may see a health claim on the bottle that has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration. This is the third time the FDA has approved a health claim. The proposed health claim is “limited and not conclusive scientific evidence suggests eating about two teaspoons of olive oil daily may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease due to the mono-unsaturated fat in olive oil.”

All groups are not supporting this health claim, as the American Heart Association (AHA) has not yet issued a statement. They want to look at the research and review the health claim in more detail. The AHA says lowering cholesterol, quitting smoking and exercising can help boost heart health. For now, replacing satu-rated fats with mono-unsaturated fats like olive oil is a good recommendation. Just remem-ber to still check your calories and total fat intake and should be regarded by the research and review the dietary guidelines. For more information about the guidelines, go to: www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines
FAMILY & COMMUNITY EDUCATION (FCE) CLUBS

President’s Notes — Janet’s Jargon

Janet Broer
FCE Council Chair

Spring bulbs are peaking through the dirt and I’m feeling revisioned about the winter past. New flowers in bloom are great surprises with their beautiful colors and fragrances. I have not lived at this home an entire year so I still don’t know what remains hidden in my landscape. Each day I do a quick tour around the house looking for new plants coming to life. March 28 at 1 p.m. we will have our Council meeting hosted by Emerald and Live N Learn clubs. A speaker from the Lancaster County Sheriff’s office will talk on Women’s Safety. Presidents should particularly try to attend but the meeting is open to all members. Please remember to turn in your signed Tune Out Violence sheets and scholarship applications need to be submitted by April 1. If you know someone studying in the health or home economics fields encourage them to apply for the FCE scholarship. The Steezing Summer Sampeler will be July 12. Independent members and Council officers will be responsible for planning this event. We will have a planning meeting around the first part of April and it would be so helpful if you passed on some ideas to us. Talk about your club meetings and let us know what you are thinking might be possibilities. Hope to see many of you at our meeting March 28.

FCE News & Events

Leader Training “Healthy Cooking for 1 or 2” March 22

The April FCE and community leader training lesson “Healthy Cooking for 1 or 2” will be presented by Extension Educator Alice Hefner on Tuesday, March 22, 1 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road, Lincoln. This lesson will show you how to prepare quick, delicious and nutritious meals for one or two people.

Poison Prevention Now!

Good Poison Prevention Practices Help Save Lives

Despite our best efforts, sometimes unintentional poisonings happen. In fact, every year in the U.S. nearly 2.5 million poison exposures are reported. Children and youth under age 19 suffer 66 percent of these exposures. To help prevent unintentional poisonings, follow these important steps in your household to keep products safely.

Use Safely

• Scheduled routine cleaning with kids in mind. Choose times when small children aren’t around or when they’re napping.
• Read and follow product label directions. Don’t mix products—harmful gases can be released.
• Never remove product labels. The precautions, first-aid instructions, and ingredients will be important if there’s an emergency.
• Take out only the amount of cleaning product needed. Put the rest away, so nothing’s left out to tempt curious toddlers or pets.

Store Safely

• Lock products up. This location should be away from children, pets or food.
• Store products in their original containers. If you put products in food or beverage containers, someone might eat or drink them by mistake.
• Close container caps securely. Products with more potential hazard, such as some oven or drain cleaners, come in child-resistant packaging. However, unintentional poisonings can still occur if the package isn’t closed properly.

Dispose Safely

• Carefully dispose of empty cleaning containers. To protect children, pets and garbage handlers, replace caps first, then discard in a sealed recycling bin or garbage corner.

For more about poison prevention or if you think someone has been poisoned from medicine or a household chemical, call the Poison Control Center’s nation-wide toll-free hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

Spring Cleaning Cleaning Spotlight: Put the Sparkle Back in Windows and Walls

Clean windows and walls are the icing on the spring-cleaning cake. They make everything else you’ve done look even better. The Soap and Detergent Association offers up some new ways to clean windows and walls.

Window Dressing

Curtain call The deteriorating effect of dust and sunlight can make curtains fragile. If the care label says they’re washable, launder on the delicate cycle. Otherwise, have them professionally dry-cleaned. But, with elaborate treatments that are difficult to dismantle on a regular basis, a good vacuuming may make more sense. Follow up with a fabric refresher spray to remove lingering odors.

Blinds dilemma Blinds are great dust traps. An easy cleaning tool is an electrostatic duster with a soft, disposable head—the modern version of the feather duster! The multitude of soft, fluffy fibers pass easily between the slats, grabbing dust and dirt.

Windows of Opportunity

Remove dirt and debris Vacuum window frames and sills to get rid of dust, soot, cobwebs and dead insects.

Removing Mineral Build-up in a Steam Iron

To remove a mineral build-up in a steam iron, fill the iron with tap water and rest the sole plate on a cake cooling rack. Turn the dial to steam and to the high setting. Shake periodically until all water is dissipated. You may have to repeat the process two or three times, if the condition is not cleared up after the first attempt.

Another method to remove mineral deposits from the inside of a steam iron, is to fill it with equal parts of water and white vinegar. Let it steam for several minutes, then disconnect and let set for one hour. Empty and rinse out with clear water.

Remove brown or burned on spots on the sole plate of the iron by cleaning with a heated solution of vinegar and salt.

Wall Story

Read the product label It will tell you how to properly use the product and what type of wall surfaces the product can and cannot be used on. Spray it on Use a multipurpose spray cleaner. For streak-free results, spray onto a cleaning cloth rather than directly on the wall.

Rubbish

Crayon marks on the wall, scuff marks on your baseboards, sticky finger marks on the window sill—lift them off the surface with a new, soft cleaning pad that acts just like an eraser. (LB)

CHARACTER COUNTS! CORNER

Responsibility

Responsibility requires us to recognize what we do—and what we don’t do—matters, and we are morally responsible for the consequences of our choices. • Responsibility means being accountable for what we do and who we are. • Everyone is responsible for the development of his or her personal character. (LB)
Nebraska’s GreatPlants 2005 Selections

The GreatPlants program is a joint effort of the Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. They select and promote exceptional plants that are reliably hardy, easy to care for and ornamentally worthwhile. Look for them at your local nursery.

Previous year’s selections can be found online at arboretum.unl.edu.

Tree: Ginkgo

Ginkgo biloba. Undoubtedly one of the most distinct and beautiful of all deciduous trees. The leaves can turn a prudery golden yellow in the fall. One of the oldest trees growing on earth. Usually pyramidial in youth, in old age, a well developed Ginkgo is an impressive sight, forming large picturesque branches and handsome bark. Female trees produce an undesirable fruit after 20 years, so for this reason, usually only male trees have been selected. A durable tree for difficult landscape situations. Recommended male selections are ‘Autumn Gold’ and ‘Princeton Sentry’. Ginkgo’s reach a height of 50 to 60 feet and a width of 30 to 40 feet. Hardy to Zone 4.

Perennial: Dwarf Blue Indigo

Baptisia minor. An exciting plant for the landscape. It looks like a miniature version of Blue False Indigo, Baptisia australis. Nebraska Statewide Arboretum introduction from seed collected in north central Kansas. The pea-shaped indigo blue flower spikes appear in spring, displaying nicely above the blue-green foliage. The showy flowers are reminiscent of lupines and are a favorite of bumble bees. In late summer and fall interesting seed pods develop from the flowering stages. Changing from a soft green to a rich black in autumn and persisting into winter. Native Americans called this plant “Rattle Pod” because the hard seeds rattle around inside the pods. A tough, durable plant for the hot, sunny border that looks good all season long. It is only 15 to 24 inches tall and hardy to Zone 4. This is a great plains native.

Grass: Side oats Grama

Bouteloua curtipendula. This durable native grass has delicate, oat-like spikes that hang to one side of the inflorescence in summer, arching to 3 feet above the basal mound of gray-green foliage. Numerous seed heads are purplish when they first appear in June and July, then bleach to straw color as they age. Autumn foliage is generally bronze-purple to orange and red, to straw-colored in winter. Particularly handsome when backlit by the sun or combined with little bluestem and prairie wildflowers. It spreads slowly to form a dense mat of foliage that is ideal for erosion control, choking out weeds or mass plantings. Hardy to Zone 4. (MJF)

Arbor Day Celebrates Future

Arbor Day, the Tree Planter’s Holiday, started more than a century ago in Nebraska, to be observed on April 10, 1872. In January 1872, J. Sterling Morton proposed to the State Board of Agriculture a tree planting holiday be observed in Nebraska on April 10, 1872. He proposed the holiday be named Arbor Day and its purpose, “to urge upon the people of the State the vital importance of tree planting.” His efforts were successful and more than a million trees were planted in Nebraska on the first Arbor Day.

In 1885, Arbor Day became a legal holiday in Nebraska, to be observed on Morton’s birthday, April 22. Since 1889, Nebraska has celebrated Arbor Day on the last Friday in April. Tree planting is as important now as it was to our grandparents. In fact, it is even more important now since many trees must be planted to keep up with the loss of trees and forests to land clearing and urban development. By replacing these trees we can be sure we will always have forests and trees for our future.

Perhaps the most important aspect of Arbor Day is its emphasis on the future. In the words of J. Sterling Morton, “Other holidays repose on the past. Arbor Day proposes for the future.” We learn to plant trees to show our hope for the future and our concern for those who will come after us.

Why is Arbor Day so important to Nebraskans?

Certainly the holiday’s origin in our state contributes to our enthusiasm. But even more important is the scarcity of trees and forests in Nebraska. We appreciate trees because we can easily see what life would be like without them.

Nebraskans should be proud of their tree planting heritage. We can feel satisfied in knowing this state is a more beautiful place to live and a better place for the future. To celebrate Arbor Day this year consider planting a tree in your yard, neighborhood, school yard, local park or city square. To find out more about Arbor Day, go to www.arborday.org (MJF)

Benefits of Trees

Trees provide more benefits than just shade and aesthetic beauty. Trees also:

• help cleanse and purify the air by absorbing carbon dioxide, catching dust particles and other pollutants, and giving off oxygen
• moderate building temperatures and conserve energy by insulating homes and buildings and providing windbreaks
• reduce run-off and erosion
• screen out “eyesores” in the landscape and frame good views in addition to creating privacy, if desired
• help increase the resale value of a home

Arbor Day Poster Contest Nebraska winner was Carmen Clouseon (who is a Lancaster County 4-H member).

Grass: Side oats Grama

Bouteloua curtipendula. This durable native grass has delicate, oat-like spikes that hang to one side of the inflorescence in summer, arching to 3 feet above the basal mound of gray-green foliage. Numerous seed heads are purplish when they first appear in June and July, then bleach to straw color as they age. Autumn foliage is generally bronze-purple to orange and red, to straw-colored in winter. Particularly handsome when backlit by the sun or combined with little bluestem and prairie wildflowers. It spreads slowly to form a dense mat of foliage that is ideal for erosion control, choking out weeds or mass plantings. Hardy to Zone 4. (MJF)
Ten Rules for Planting Trees

Tree planting is an ancient art, but the methods have changed over time to affect the later growth of urban, agricultural, and forestry research. It is vitally important to remember which trees live in nature. In the natural forest there are no sidewalks, automatic sprinklers, streets, parking lots, tall buildings or other man made objects.

These guidelines are the most current practices recommended for proper tree planting.

1. Establishment of a tree stock in shaded location and well watered. Do not get rough with the planting ball or container. If you have to hold a plant over, make sure it is moist and shaded. When shipping trees is important to have them covered to avoid heavy loss of water through transpiration. Keep it in the mind when trees are transplanted from the nursery 90 to 95 percent of the root system is left behind.

2. On site and prior to planting remove all wires, labels, curly grass and anything else attached to the plant.

3. Hole size and shape have become a very important factor. Do not skim on the depth and size of the planting hole. Plant slightly above nursery level. Place the soil on plant solid ground—not fill dirt. Be careful of drainage. One sure way to check is to fill the hole with water and let it drain in 20 hours. If the water has not drained out, make alternate plans.

4. Remove ALL containers from the root ball prior to planting—even peat pots should not be left intact. Wire baskets and burlap should be rolled back into the hole at least 12 inches below planting depth after the tree has been set into the hole. It is best if wire baskets can be removed completely.

5. Backfill with loosed soil. Research shows amendments are not necessary. When dealing with difficult sites some judgments may have to be made.

6. Place a line of stakes around the tree when planting. Remove only if necessary. If the tree is staked, allow for some movement but take care not to injure the bark. Staking is useful for protection against people. Remove stakes after one year.

7. Take care not to injure the trunk. Large wounds take many years to close over and can heal back into the tree.

8. Water the plant thoroughly at planting time. Remove only damaged or rubbing branches. Food production by the leaves is vitally important. Cutting back results in the loss of area and therefore food production.

9. Mulch around the tree.

This is important!! Natural composted mulch is best. Do not use plaster sheeting. Two to four inches of mulch is ideal. Critters will infest mulch levels any deeper. Mulch should cover the ground to the drip line if possible and should not be placed against the trunk.

10. Stake only when necessary. If the tree is staked, allow for some movement but take care not to injure the bark. Staking is useful for protection against people. Remove stakes after one year.

Note: This part is of a series of articles related to rural water issues.

The purchase of water treatment equipment is a decision that must be carefully considered. There are several key steps to follow when purchasing equipment. These include:

- Identify options for correcting the problem.
- Decide whether whole house or single-tap treatment is needed.
- Select a reputable dealer.
- Obtain second opinions.
- Check to see if the equipment has been tested by an independent organization.

Water Treatment Equipment: A Buyer’s Guide

The purchase of water treatment equipment is a decision that must be carefully considered. There are several key steps to follow when purchasing equipment. These include:

- Identify options for correcting the problem.
- Decide whether whole house or single-tap treatment is needed.
- Select a reputable dealer.
- Obtain second opinions.
- Check to see if the equipment has been tested by an independent organization such as the National Sanitation Foundation.
- Talk with others who have the same equipment you may purchase.
- Understand all the costs of the equipment including purchase price, installation, operating and routine required maintenance.
- Understand what maintenance will be required.
- Understand how to determine if the equipment is operating satisfactorily.
- Determine if the system has adequate capacity for your needs.
- Determine the expected life of the equipment.
- Understand any warranty provided with the equipment.

Beware of Misleading Tree Advertisements

Homeowners need to be on their guard for advertisements with lofty promises. Seasonal magazines and newspapers are filled with advertisements for shade and ornamental trees. Beware of advertisements that proclam “super trees,” which usually have faults that need to be invesitigated and corrected.

According to Dennis Adams, Nebraska Forest Service, “Unsuspecting buyers often are lured by vivid descriptons of amazing growth and beauty. Generally, these advertisements refer to the tree by scientific name only or an unfamiliar species.”

Almost every year brings a new version of the “super tree.” The advertisements often feature exaggerated claims such as, “the tree soars to a magnificent height just one single year.” Prices often are exorbitant for the size and species of tree being sold.

Two examples of such “super trees” advertised in the past are the Ulmus pumila and Royal Paulonia. It is true that both trees grow rapidly; however, Ulmus pumila is the scientific name for the common Siberian elm, which is non-native, short-lived, suscible to heavy elm leaf beetle infestations and has brittle branches that break easily in storms. Royal Paulonia, or Empress Tree, is not adapted to Nebraska’s climate. It grows rapidly, but usually dies to the ground during each Nebraska winter.

To avoid falling into the “super tree” trap, learn the characteristics of trees before purchasing them to ensure they match the intended objectives. Contact a reputable nursery or local cooperative extension office before making a purchase.

Give Trees a Chance Against Weeds

Competition for moisture, light and nutrients by aggressive weeds and grasses may severely stunt or kill newly planted trees and shrubs.

Methods of controlling weed competition include cultivation, mowing, herbicides and natural or fabric mulch.

- Cultivation aids growth, vegetation should be removed in a 4-foot diameter circle around each seedling or two feet on each side of a tree row. Mulches effectively control weeds and conserve moisture, but initial cost often is higher than cultivation or herbicide treatment.

- Emergent herbicides (e.g. simazine) applied to mineral soil just after planting usually will control most weeds for the bulk of the growing season when applied in the proper amount and at the right time. Always follow label directions when applying any pesticide.

- The best time to control weed and grass competition is before the weed seeds germinate or when the weeds are in their seedling stage. Cultivation is the surest method to control weeds and retain moisture for the tree, but it should not be too deep and should never ridge soil against the trees.

- Where moisture is sufficient and a cover between rows is desirable to prevent soil erosion, mowing vegetation between tree rows often is recommended.

- People often want to plant aggressive grasses such as bromegrass or fescue between rows of trees. This generally is harmful. If perennial grasses must be planted, grow should consider less competitive cool-season grasses, like blue grass and rye grass, or short warm-season grasses, like bermuda and side-oats grass.

New tree and shrub plantings should receive adequate weed control for at least three years until the roots have become established.

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension is presenting “Acreage Insights - Rural Living Clinics” to help acreage owners manage their rural living environment. On Thursday, April 14 from 7-9 p.m., “Acreage Landscape Management” will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. The workshop will also be offered in Omaha and Fremont.

Acreage landscapes don’t always look like they do in the magazines. In this program, learn the “how to’s” on the care of herbaceous perennials and woody plants (watering, prining, best management practices, etc.) so they will thrive and look their best on your acreage. Workshop presenter is horticulturist Kelly Feehan, extension educator in Platte County.

Pre-registration is $10 per person and must be received three working days before the program. Late registration is $15 per person. Note: If a minimum number of registrations are not received, clinics will be cancelled and pre-registered participants will receive a full refund.

Upcoming workshops are:

- August — Construction and Management of Large Farm Ponds
- September — Septic Systems: Answers to Common Questions
- October — Grape Growing for Wine Production in Nebraska
- November — Growing Woody Shrubs for Profit

For more information or for a registration form, call the extension office at 441-7180 for a brochure or go online at lancaster.unl.edu/hort/Programs/AcreageInsightsClinics.htm

WATERWHEEL

"Acreage Landscape Management" Rural Living Clinic, April 14
Fair Books Have Been Mailed Out, Available Online

Fair Books have been mailed to all 4-H families and previous Open Class exhibitors. Extension office staff will be on hand to help. The 4-H/FFA portions of the Fair Book and many 4-H county fair forms are also online at lancaster.unl.edu/4h.

Premium Payouts MUST be Picked Up Sunday, Aug. 7, Noon–4 p.m.

All static exhibits for the 2005 Lancaster County Fair will be released from 12 noon–2 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 7. This includes both 4-H and Open Class static exhibits. Please note time change from previous years.

Animal Bedding for Sale at Fair

Absolutely no outside bedding or straw is allowed. All exhibitors must use bedding provided by Event Center ($5 per bag). All other livestock and horse exhibitors must purchase bedding from the farrier office (located in Pavilion 2, enter from courtyard) during office hours, which will be:

- Thursday, Aug. 3 — 7-9 a.m. & 4-6 p.m.
- Friday, Aug. 4 — 7-9 a.m. & 5-7 p.m.
- Saturday, Aug. 5 — 7-9 a.m.

What Qualifies as a Home Environment Exhibit?

Class static exhibits. Please note time change from previous years.

Animal Exhibitors encouraged to Bring Own Fans

Animal exhibitors are highly encouraged to bring their own fans and extension cords. Fans must have finger guards. Electrical equipment must be UL listed and in good working condition — all equipment subject to safety inspection. Equipment found in poor condition must be immediately removed from the grounds.

Horse Show Rule Clarification

A horse identified jointly by 4-H members MAY NOT BE SHOWN BY MORE THAN ONE EXHIBITOR IN THE SAME EVENT OR CLASS. “Event” shall mean a category of classes: i.e., all Beef classes or event. Walk-trot, exhibition and introduc-
tory driving classes are exempt from this rule. Each member of a joint project must submit an identification form for the joint project animal.

Last Call for Speech & PSA Contest Registrations!

The 4-H Speech and Public Service Annunciation (PSA) contests are open to all 4-H’ers — need not be enrolled in a specific project. Registration, call Deanna Karmazin at 441-7180 by Friday, March 28 at 3:30 p.m.

PSA Contest, April 5

Due to the growing number of participants in this contest and the tapering of the district winners, the PSA contest will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center on Tuesday, April 5 at 6:30 p.m. Contestants must be 60 seconds, topic is 4-H. Emphasis is on the presentation of a PSA for radio. Contestants must give their PSA in person, no prerec-orded tapes allowed.

Speech Contest, April 10

This year’s Speech Contest will be held at the State Capitol (date is CONFIRMED) on Sunday, April 10 at 1 p.m. Topics can be anything, but a 4-H theme should be main-
tained. Length depends on division:

- Novice (ages 8–9): 2 min. or less
- Junior (ages 10–11): 2–3 min.
- Senior (ages 14–19): 5–8 min.

New 4-H Static Exhibits

There are several new static exhibit categories and classes. See Fair Book for detailed information about each of the following:

Quilt Quest—Quilt Quest is a new Nebraska 4-H project which will be a State Fair exhibit in 2006. This year it is in a county fair-only exhibit. Classes include: Educational Exhibits, Imaginative Quilt Designs, Photography, Computer Exploration, Wearable Art, Quilted Accessories, Quilts, Ad-
dequated quilts, Premier Quilt, Community Service Quilt, and Intergenerational Quilt or Project Quilt.

Eco-Wonders, Eco-Adventures, Eco-Actions— These county fair-only exhibits are based on project manuals published last year.

Leather: Level 3—Additional skills utilized in this level may include the use of decorative stamps, dyeing and lacing/sewing techniques. Additional classes in upcoming years will be added and include such skills as pictorial carving and color, leather garments and accessories, home furnish-
ings and saddles.

Becoming Money Wise—“Becoming Money Wise” level 1 and 2 exhibits are county-only exhibits in the “Consumer Management” category.

Photography: Internet Wallpaper/Screen Saver—This county-only class will showcase the photography talents of Lancaster County 4-H’ers by making select photos available on the Lancaster County 4-H Web site as Wallpaper or Screensaver. Additional 4-H members may submit photos of GIS/GPS technology—here is your chance to share what you have learned at the county fair! Exhibits can be a poster, notebook, display, journal, etc.

4-H Horse Show Schedule

All 4-H horse events held in the Multipurpose Arena unless otherwise listed

SUNDAY, JULY 31

Pre-Fair Briefing: 2 p.m. (Pavilion 3 - 4H Extension Office)

MONDAY, AUGUST 1

Set-up for Dressage: 7 p.m.

TUESDAY, AUG. 2

Check-in for Dressage and English Horse (Western also if desired): 8 a.m.–12 p.m. (Pavilion 2)

Warm-up Opportunity for Dressage*: 8:30 a.m.–12 Noon

Dressage Show: 1 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 3

Warm-up Opportunity for English Horse**: 7:30–8:30 a.m.

English Horse Jumping Show—Hunter/Back Hunter/Hunter: 9 a.m.

English Horse Show—Hunt Seat/Saddle Seat Showman-
ship/English Pleasure/English Equitation: 1 hour after

Jumping Show

Dressage and English Horse May be Released after Show.

Check-in for Western Horse: begins at Noon (Pavilion 2)

Horsemanship Pairs/Freestyle Dressage/Dressage/Drill Teams: 6 a.m.

THURSDAY, AUG. 4

English Horse Show—Western Showmanship/English Pleasure/English Equitation: 1 hour after

Western Horse Show—Rodeo/Reining: 9 a.m.

Warm-up Opportunity for Western Horse: following

Western Show until 3:45 p.m.

Set-up for Trail Show: 4 p.m.

Trail Show: 5 p.m.

FRIDAY, AUG. 5

Check-in for Roping/Working Ranch Horse***: by 7 a.m.

Amy Countryman Arena

Roping/Working Ranch: 8 a.m. (Amy Countryman Arena)

Western Horse Show—Rodeo/Reining: 9 a.m.

Western Horse Show—Rodeo/Reining: 9 a.m.

SATURDAY, AUG. 6

Miniature Horse Show: 8 a.m.

Western Horse Show—Western Pleasure/Working Pleasure/Riding:

Reining: 1/2 hour after Miniature Horse Show

Horse Games Show: 9 a.m.

Western Horse Release Time Begins: 10 p.m.
Llama 4-H Club Welcomes New Members to April 11 Meeting

Have you ever wanted to learn about llamas or show one at the county fair? If so, you should attend the Star City Llama Club’s first meeting of the year. The meeting will be Monday, April 11, 7 p.m. Please call Deanna at 441-7180, for the location. This club is devoted to community service. They love to show off their llamas at parades, community festivals and schools. If this is something you are interested in being a part of — call now to join!

4-H State Fair Logo Contest Submissions Due April 15

The Nebraska State 4-H office is pleased to announce the first ever “2005 Discover 4-H, Discover You: Nebraska State Fair” logo contest! Contest rules and information is online at http://lcl.lib.ne.us or you may contact Tracy Prachel at 472-9016. Deadline is April 15.

Kiwani Carnival, April 16

The annual Kiwanis Carnival is a FREE, family event sponsored by Lincoln Center Kiwans. This year, it will be Saturday, April 16, 7-9 p.m. at the Lancaster Event Center in Pavilion 3, Exhibit Hall. The Carnival features games, BINGO, prizes and food! If your 4-H club or family would like to have a booth, please call Lorene at 441-7180 by April 4. (LB)

Sheep Tagging Days

4-H members who will be exhibiting sheep at this year’s county fair need to have their animals tagged by June 15. Deanna Karmazin will be visiting farms the week of May 16. Contact her at 441-7180 to set up a tagging time that works for your family or 4-H club. All lambs which might go on to the Ak-Sar-Ben Youth Livestock Expo need to be DNA tested. At this time, the cost for this testing is unknown. (DK)

4-H Livestock Quality Assurance Training, May 4

Quality Assurance (QA) certification is required for all 4-H or FFA youth wanting to exhibit market animals. Livestock exhibitors who have not yet been certified call Deanna at 441-7180 to set up a time to get certified. There will be a Quality Assurance Training on Wednesday, May 4 at Waverly High School. Time will be announced in the next Nezneve. (DK)

Upcoming Progress Shows

The 4-H office is keeping an up-to-date list of all upcoming livestock progress shows online. Please check out our Web site at lancaster.unl.edu/de/news.html for the current list. If you have a show not listed online, please forward info to Deanna Karmazin at dkarmazin2@unl.edu. (DK)

Teen Council Won’t Meet for 3 Months

4-H Teen Council will not meet in April, May or June. The next meeting will be July 10.

Nicole Pedersen State Awards Book Winner

Lancaster County 4-H member Nicole Pedersen is the state Awards Book winner in the area of plant science. Awards Books are a cumulative record of an individual’s 4-H and other leadership activities.

This honor gives Nicole the opportunity to attend the 2005 National 4-H Congress held Nov. 24-29 in Atlanta, Georgia. This year’s theme “Growing Into the Future” will focus on environmental awareness. During the five day event, 4-H members will participate in educational programs, cultural events and a service-learning experience. On a related note, Nicole placed 4th in the state 4-H Horticulture Judging Contest and represented Nebraska at the National 4-H Horticulture Contest in Wisconsin last year. Congratulations Nicole, on your outstanding 4-H achievements in plant sciences!

4-H Partners with Lincoln City Libraries

The Lancaster County 4-H program will be working with the Lincoln City Libraries, this summer, to spread the word about 4-H and to promote reading.

Volunteer for Summer Reading Program

Middle-school-age 4-H’ers are invited to spend time at a library as a Summer Reading Program volunteer, helping other children participate in summer reading by signing them up, explaining the program and handing out stickers. 4-H’ers are encouraged to wear their 4-H T-shirts and answer questions about the 4-H program. Scheduling is flexible and interested individuals should contact his or her branch library directly starting April 1. Each branch will have a limited number of volunteer slots for 4-H’ers, so call early.

4-H Workshops: Medieval Makiings

Another way 4-H’ers and/or 4-H clubs can volunteer at the Lincoln City Libraries is by helping with one of the “Medieval Makiings” workshops. These workshops will be held at Eiseley Branch Library on Wednesday, June 29, 2:30 p.m., at Bethany Branch Library, Thursday, July 7, 2 p.m., and at South Branch Library, Friday, July 8, 10:30 a.m. Call Tracy, 441-7180 if you are interested in this opportunity.

Reserve Room Space

Did you know your club can reserve community room space for club meetings and activities? Bennett Martin Public Library, Anderson Branch Library, Geme Branch Library, Eiseley Branch Library and Walt Branch Library have community rooms available. To reserve a community room, call Arlene at 441-8503 or go to www.lcl.lib.ne.us and click on Library Information.

“The 4-H Discovery Bags” at Bennett Martin Public Library

Anyone with a Lincoln City Library card may check out one of the following “4-H Discovery Bags” from the Bennett Martin Public Library. The bags are a compilation of 4-H project books, a library books and other resources.

• “The 4-H Discovery Bag for Arts & Crafts” is a one-stop solution for your “Celebrate Art” and “Art in Your Future” project needs. Includes ideas for easy projects that only look complicated.

• “The 4-H Discovery Bag for Wildlife” makes wildlife and conservation projects fun and easy. The bag includes information on birds, wildlife and fish.

4-H Teen Council Ties Quilts for Sarpy County Social Services

4-H Teen Council members tied five quilts at their March meeting as part of a community service project. The Quilted Moose store in Gretna provides kits for quilts to individuals and groups — upon completion, the quilts are donated to Sarpy County Social Services. Other 4-H groups can participate by calling (402) 332-4178.

Respond Now to Be Included in April/May “Hero Pack” Order

Nebraska 4-H is organizing two community service projects for youth to help Nebraska families with a parent serving the United States as a soldier.

“Hero Packs” are backpacks compiled by 4-H members, and contain a variety of 4-H items and a handwritten letter to the family. 4-H clubs or groups who are interested in purchasing materials to compile a “Hero Pack” (cost is approximately $30) must respond as soon as possible to be included on the April/May order.

“Operation: Military Kids in Nebraska” is compiling a list of 4-H members, families and clubs who would be willing to volunteer for these families by doing tasks such as raking leaves, shoveling snow, baby-sitting, etc.

For more information about either project, call Tracy Kuhl at 441-7180. (TK)

Cathy Hurdle

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Cathy Hurdle as winner of April’s “Heart of 4-H Award” in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

Cathy has been a 4-H volunteer for 10 years, serving in many capacities: national leader (Carpe Diem 4-H club), project leader (Teddy Grahams and Star City Kids clubs), Clover College instructor (Fun Sun Pinata, Pizza for You), judge (record books), co-superintendent (County Fair 4-H Table Setting Contest) and fundraising chair (Citizenship Washington Focus ‘08 group). She has also assisted with Teen Council, County Fair setup, County Fair 4-H Food Booth, Kiwanis Karnival and other activities.

Her favorite experience as a 4-H volunteer was working with the Star City Kids in preparing for the Music Contest.

“If was fun watching the kids grow closer together and become confident in their abilities to succeed in the contest,” she says.

Cathy also volunteers for, and is current president, of the Heartland Home Schoolers. She lives in Lincoln with her husband Jim — four of their six children are current 4-H members.

Congratulations to Cathy! Volunteers like her are indeed the heart of 4-H.
Tips for Organizing a Successful Neighborhood Cleanup

Yelena Mitrofanova
Extension Educator

Join a Cleanup Near You!

The best way to immediately improve the quality of life in a community is with a litter cleanup or beautification project. When the neighborhood looks better, everyone feels better about living there. These activities also boost neighborhood pride.

A neighborhood cleanup is a great chance to clean-out clutter from your yard or garage. Also, it is a nice opportu

ness to help your neighbors who may not be able to move heavy stuff around.

You will need time to organize the event. Start planning at least a month or two in advance. Spring is the best time to do a cleanup — before grass and weeds have a chance to grow.

Before you start, buy a "Checklist for Cleanups" and secure the needed resources for the job. If you do not know your neighbors, now is a good time to meet them. Introduce yourself and tell them what you would like to do. Do not ask for a commitment that will come later — just get a feel for the support you have.

Community Focus

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April 2005

Lancaster County Fair Books Now Available

The 2005 Lancaster County Fair will be held Aug. 3–7 at the Lancaster Event Center. The Fair Book has been published — it includes all the information needed to enter an exhibit or participate in a contest. Anyone can enter "Open Class" categories, which include youth divisions (no entry fee for youth).

The Fair Book will be distributed at numerous locations throughout Lincoln and Lancaster County, including the Lancaster Event Center, Lancaster County Extension office, Lincoln City Libraries, grocery stores, and village banks, post offices and co-ops. It will also be available online at www.lancastereventcenter.com.

September Grantsmanship Training

The Grantsmanship Training Program will again be offered to the Lincoln community September 12-16, 2005. The intensive, "hands-on" workshop covers all aspects of researching grants, writing proposals and negotiating with funding sources.

Designed for both novice and advanced grant seekers, the program provides intensive follow-up services, including expert grant proposal reviews for a full year following training. To maximize personal attention, the group size for the workshop is limited.

Since 1997, Lancaster County Extension has hosted the Grantsmanship Training Program. Approximately 150 individuals representing various Lincoln and area agencies have participated to date.

For more information and to register, as early as possible, contact The Grantsmanship Center directly at (800) 421-9512 or go to www.tgc1.com.

Trash collected from the East Campus Community Organization Spring Cleanup 2004.

Time

A good plan will help your group set a direction and document the steps you need to take to organize the neighborhood cleanup. Forming a neighborhood cleanup committee is a great way to get things done efficiently and build ownership at the same time.

Before you start, buy a small notebook and label it "Cleanup Book" to record names, numbers and other important information. It is recommended you document everything and maintain a cleanup file you can use for references and grant applications.

Research your "cleanup area" to get an idea of the support you will need. Consider making sample maps to coordinate placement of roll-offs, drop sites or pickup routes. Make notes on the amount and types of trash, any situations needing special treatment or consultations, a rough estimate of the number of volunteers, names of neighboring businesses and homeowners, etc.

Some of the typical cleanup needs include:

- Volunteers
- Trash bags
- Safety g.g.
- Refreshments
- Gloves/heavy duty
- Buckets for sharp objects
- Insect repellent
- Tools (ropes, rakes, shovels, etc.)
- Trees/wildflower/grass seeds
- Safety vests
- First aid supplies
- Communication equipment
- Gift certificates/coupons
- Money for the neighborhood fund

Now you are ready to build your "community team" for your neighborhood cleanup.

Building a Team

Remember letters work well, but personal contact is the best way to build your team and secure the needed resources for the job. If you do not know your neighbors, now is a good time to meet them. Introduce yourself and tell them what you would like to do. Do not ask for a commitment that will come later — just get a feel for the support you have.

There may be groups within your community that regularly organize community projects. Consider partnering with these or other groups, even if they are not in your neighborhood.

Utilities, businesses and local government also take pride in their communities. Ask them to help with this community effort by donating items, gift certificates or money.

Designate an event photographer to assure you have photos for yourgrant requirements, newsletter articles, annual reports, Web page projections, promotional flyers, etc.

Advertisement/ Promotion

Create a promotional flyer to distribute at local businesses. Specify what will be or will not be accepted; provide options for those items. Inform neighborhood members about trash pickup schedule. Specify the cleanup will occur regardless of the weather. Note: the West "A" and Arnold Heights neighborhood associations have a "Checklist for Cleanups" available on how to dispose of items you cannot accept (hazardous waste, tires, batteries, waste oil, etc.).

Make sure plenty of water, communications equipment and a first aid kit are on-site. Ask what to do in case of injury or emergency. Keep a positive attitude and let not volunteers be overwhelmed; the last thing you want is to overwork your volunteers; you can always schedule another day.

The Lincoln/Lancaster County Health Department has a "Checklist for Cleanups" which can be used to record all required information to obtain grants for future projects. To request this checklist, please, call Harry Heaver at 441-8035.

Post-Event Recognition

Provide lunch/refreshments to all your volunteers after cleanup. You can have a post-cleanup picnic or gathering to let participants share their experiences and build new friendships. It is always nice to reward every volunteer with a small token of appreciation or certification.

Donated T-shirts, shorts and food coupons can also be effective incentives. Take every opportunity to mention the support of your volunteers, especially when talking to the media. You should write thank you letters to key volunteer groups and local businesses/owners. Provide copies of photos for their archives.

Reflect on and record what worked and what did not; so you do not have to reinvent the wheel next year. This information will be essential for new members of the cleanup committee.

Local Resources

Keep Lincoln & Lancaster County Beautiful/Environmen

Hazardous Waste Assistance — for Households and Businesses, 441-8021
City Public Works and Utilities — for Recycling Hotline, 441-6215
Solid Waste Operations, 441-8102
Yard Waste, Composting and Recycling, 441-7180, Web site lancaster.unl.edu
Horse Mini-Clinics Offered in April and May

The Salk Creek Wranglers, sponsored in part by a grant furnished by the Nebraska Horse Council, will be holding mini-clinics Friday nights in April and May from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. The clinics are for all ages and levels of riders. All clinics will be held at the Wranglers Arena located at 4300 S. Cuddington Ave., Lincoln. Rain location is the BKT Equestrian Center at 200 West Calvert St.

Cost is $15 per clinic. There is a $3 discount per clinic for Wrangler members and 4-H members. Additional family member discounts are also available. For additional information contact Chad and Heather Zadina at 488-8694 or Colen Warner at 477-4697.

1. April 1 — Getting Started: Picking the Right Horse and Equipment (demonstration only) presented by Chad and Heather Zadina.
2. April 8 — Intro to Dressage (demonstration only) presented by the Nebraska Dressage Association.
3. April 15 — English Disciplines: English Equitation and Pleasure presented by Diane Shannon.
4. April 22 — Showmanship presented by TBA.
5. April 29 — Western Horsemanship presented by Dr. Kathy Anderson.

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The Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County does not imply approval or constitute endorsement by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County.

Save 10% by registering before April 1!

Free Open House on April 24 and May 1

The Nebraska State 4-H Camp near Halsey will have a FREE Open House on Sunday, April 24, from 1–4 p.m. and the Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center near Gretna will have a FREE Open House on Sunday, May 1, from 1–4 p.m. Bring your family and friends to help kick off the 2005 summer camp season by exploring the facilities and participating in some of the activities that will be offered this summer.

Explore Careers at Big Red Academic Camps

Open to all high school youth, the Big Red Academic Camps are a great way to explore career options and discover the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus! Camps include: Fashion Design, Culinary Art, Golf, Child Development, Movie Making, University Youth Conference, and Horsemanship. Hosted by Nebraska 4-H and 4-H members, the camps held in June and July. Information and applications are available online at 4h.unl.edu/camp/ or by calling Peggy Jeffries at 472-2805.

Discover 4-H Camps!

Early Bird Registrations Due April 1

Register for Nebraska 4-H Summer Camps or Big Red Academic Camps by April 1 to save 10% off the fees. Camps include: Fashion Design, Culinary Art, Golf, Child Development, Movie Making, University Youth Conference, and Horsemanship. Hosted by Nebraska 4-H and 4-H members, the camps held in June and July. Information and applications are available online at 4h.unl.edu/camp/ or by calling Peggy Jeffries at 472-2805.

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Nebraska Wildlife Habitat Contest Early Registration May 10

The Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program (WHEDP) contest, open to all youth ages 8–18, will be held at Eastern Nebraska 4-H Camp near Gretna on June 3 and 4. Learn about the fundamentals of wildlife management and natural resources management through both the contest and associated programs. Early registration is $45/person (includes lodging) and is due by May 10. For more information, go to 4h.unl.edu/hwp or contact Tracy at 472-7180.

Explore Careers at Big Red Academic Camps

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Organizing Lock-In Gives 4-H Teens Leadership Experience

Each January, Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council presents a 5th & 6th Grade Lock-In. Attendees are treated to a fun-filled, overnight event and Teen Council members gain valuable leadership skills. This year’s theme was “A Royal Knight.” More than 50 fifth and sixth graders attended and 33 Teen Council members were involved in the planning, organizing and presenting of 12 hours of activities!

Here is a recap of the evening from a few of the teens:

A Royally, Great Night
It was like a fairy tale all on a Friday night. Actually, it was the annual 4-H Lock-In that was held on Jan. 21. The magic came together at the Lancaster County Extension office where many 5th and 6th grade boys and girls gathered to be swept away into the Dark Ages for a night. What a great night it was, but not without the hard work and planning of the 4-H Teen Council and 4-H staff.

A month before the Lock-In, Teen Council began making decisions on the theme of this year’s Lock-In. The Medieval period was chosen and the research began. Committees were formed to plan for different activities and decorations. Crafts, education, food, games and even costume planning were among the areas we need to prepare. We wanted the night to give a feeling of historical relevance but also have lot of fun! We tried the food, approved the games, crafts, decorations and costumes and knew we were headed for success.

The night of the Lock-In held a lot of preparation before the kids arrived. The creative minds and hands of Teen Council members helped provide a medieval setting with knights in armor, a drawbridge and great costumes.

When the kids arrived, we played get-to-know-you games to help the kids make new friends. They enjoyed the “Market” where they had ham, cheese, fruit and juice. They played games such as charades, string and word games and cards. In crafts, they made their family crest, shields and crowns or princess hats. Kids could also explore their creativity by dressing up in costumes.

Education was provided so that the kids had understanding of the medieval time period. As the night wound down, kids could watch movies or go to sleep—there was definitely more kids staying awake for the movies than those sleeping.

—Kaylee Nelson and Hannah Spencer

Favorite 4-H Activity
I look forward to the 5th and 6th Grade 4-H Lock-In the entire year. It is by far one of my most favorite things to do in 4-H. I think it’s a great experience for both the teens and the 5th and 6th graders. We are not only learning leadership and communication skills, but we get to have fun and be ourselves. The kids aren’t there to judge or criticize; they are there to have fun!

—Karen Clinch

Fifth Lock-In
I have been an active member of 4-H Teen Council for five years and have participated the past five 4-H Lock-Ins. In those years I’ve seen themes such as: Hollywood, Jungle, Mystery and Blast From the Past. Each year I look forward to the Lock-In not only because it is fun for the 5th and 6th graders, it’s fun for the council members as well.

This year’s Lock-In included activities such as making paper crowns, building cardboard box castles and eating delicious foods from the medieval period. I helped out with the games committee which put on a high stakes game of charades, a cutthroat game of “Catch Phrase” and a bewildering game called “Pogo” (which confused even myself).

The night of the Lock-In and went very smoothly thanks to the outstanding work of the Teen Council members. As a veteran member, I was very impressed with the younger members’ enthusiasm to participate in any way they could. It’s comforting to see the future of the 4-H Teen Council and the Lock-In will be in good hands when I leave next year.

—Monica Rentschler

Can You Guess It?

Did you guess it from the March NEBLINE?
Did you guess it? Find out at lancaster.unl.edu

The 4-H Spring Chess Tournament
Saturday, April 9
8:30–9:30 a.m. On-site registration
9:00–9:30 a.m. Check-in
Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry creek Road, Lincoln

The Lancaster County Checkmates 4-H chess club invites all Nebraska 4-H’ers to a chess tournament! The Checkmates Tournament is also open to 4-H and friends age 18 and under. It is nonrated, so United States Chess Federation membership is not required. This is a four-round, Swiss system chess tournament. Players who notate their games will be eligible for special drawings. Chess sets will be provided.

Note: Supervision of youth will not be provided.

Registration Information
Due to limited space, preregistration is encouraged. Preregistration deadline is April 6. Entry fees: 4-H members: $3/Non-4-H members: $5. Payment should be made at time of check in. On-site registration will depend upon availability of space. On-site entry fees for those not preregistered: 4-H members: $4/Non-4-H members: $6.

Registration form, schedule and rules are available at the extension office or online lancaster.unl.edu/4-H.
For more information, contact James Walla, Checkmates leader, at 476-2094 or e-mail jgwbohemian@yahoo.com

U.S. Drought Monitor Map

For the most recent map, visit www.drought.unl.edu

New 4-H Volunteer T-Shirts For Sale
4-H volunteer T-shirts with above pocket design are now for sale at the extension office. Shirts are burgundy, 50/50 blend and available in sizes: S, M, L, XL & XXL. Cost is $6.50.

4-H “Makes a Difference” Wristbands
Green, silicon 4-H “Makes a Difference” wristbands are available for sale as a fundraiser for Citizenship Washington Focus (CFW). Cost is $3. To purchase, contact a CWF member or the extension office.

Clover College, June 21–24
The annual Lancaster County 4-H Clover College is four days of hands-on work shops open to all youth ages 6–18. Youth may sign up for as many or as few workshops as they want. A small fee will be required for most workshops. Look in next month’s NEBLINE for a full list of workshops, information and registration forms.

Can You Guess It?

As of March, 8, Lancaster County bordered on abnormally dry/normal conditions.

Did you guess it? Find out at lancaster.unl.edu

Volunteering does your Head, Heart, Hands & Health good

Choose the best answer.

A. Nanking Cherry Blossoms
B. Rows of Beans
C. A Royally, Great Night
D. No, it’s something else

The answer was Nanking Cherry Blossoms. Did you guess it? Find out at lancaster.unl.edu