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Visioning Process Can Help Communities Shape Their Future

By Yelena Mitrofanova
UNL Extension Educator

Small communities throughout Lancaster County, as well as throughout the whole country, have experienced demographic and physical changes. These changes affect not only land use patterns of the particular community, but also social needs of its residents. For instance, an aging and increasingly diverse population means many communities must re-evaluate how and what they provide in terms of housing, education, social services and infrastructure. Because change happens all the time, a community must decide the specific criteria they will use to judge, manage and even direct change.

In the 1980s, many local governments began long-range planning efforts and created comprehensive development plans to provide a road map for community growth. As a rule, comprehensive plans consisted of evaluating present conditions, identifying problem areas and suggesting solutions on how to overcome existing problems and manage change.

The majority of Lancaster County communities now have obsolete comprehensive plans which were developed 25 to 30 years ago and did not articulate community values or provide a rational sense of direction.

Many Lancaster County communities today experience requests for re-zoning, demands for affordable housing and need to provide better infrastructure. Unfortunately, decisions about these issues are frequently made in the absence of a real vision of how residents want their communities to look in the future.

Thus, the new concept of public participation called community visioning process has emerged in the last decade. Visioning is a process by which community defines the future it wants. Through public involvement, communities identify their purpose, core values and vision of the future, which are then transformed into a manageable set of community goals and an action plan.

Visioning process does not replace other forms of community planning: comprehensive plan, land use, transportation and capital improvement plans. Actually, visioning is a useful tool in comprehensive planning and can be easily included in the comprehensive planning process. Moreover, it can occur parallel to data collection, analysis and provide a foundation for developing community goals and objectives.

A planning process must be participatory, but usually community residents are involved in the last stages of comprehensive planning. For a planning process to be effective, it must incorporate the people’s vision, not only the planners or local community officials. The goals and action plans should be firmly rooted in the goals and values of the local community residents.

What is Visioning?

• A process by which the community defines its future.
• A citizen-based process to identify core community values, goals and strategies.
• It is a foundation to develop a community comprehensive or strategic plan.
• A process identifying desirable changes for the future.
• A process visualizing what community could be like or should be in 10 to 15 years.

Why Visioning?

• Emphasizes community assets rather than needs.
• Assesses community options and opportunities on the basis of shared purposes and values.
• Stresses early and continuous community involvement in the process.
• A visioning process brings a community together as people recognize their shared values and purposes; creates a sense of ownership in community residents and serves as a foundation to comprehensive plan.

When is a Visioning Process Needed?

• When there is a confusion about where the community is heading — see VISIONING on page 10

Bennet residents involved in Community Visioning Project

The Village of Bennet is the first community in Nebraska going through a community visioning process. Bennet is a small, rural community (about 600 people) located 18 miles southeast of Lincoln.

Last year, members of the Bennet Planning Commission started updating its comprehensive plan and wanted to have broader public input in the process. They contacted the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension office and asked for assistance. Extension Educators Yelena Mitrofanova, Dennis Kahl and Phyllis Schoenholz offered to facilitate a community visioning process.

First Town Hall Meeting

The first Visioning Town Hall Meeting was held in September at Bennet Elementary School. About 75 people participated in the meeting and learned what a visioning process is and why it is important.

Community residents then set up three committees: task groups: logistics, communication and research. Each committee consisted of five to six people. The logistic committee was responsible for setting dates, inviting participants and the physical arrangements of listening sessions, town hall meetings, etc. The communication committee was responsible for getting the word out and informing the public and local media about upcoming visioning events and reports/results of these events. Finally, the research committee worked with Hanna-Keelan Associates planners — hired to update Bennet comprehensive plan — and assisted them in information gathering.

The Extension Educators facilitated the work of committees/task groups and conducted nine Listening Sessions held in December and January.

Listening Sessions

It is very important for both planning and visioning processes to get as diverse see BENNET on page 10
Lemon Dill Egg Salad

6 hard-cooked eggs, chopped
2 green onions, finely chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
2 strips bacon, crisply cooked and crumbled
½ cup red bell pepper, chopped
½ teaspoon lemon pepper
1 teaspoon dill weed
¾ cup reduced fat ranch salad dressing

Toss all ingredients together and chill for at least 1 hour. Good with sliced tomatoes and lettuce leaves on a French roll. Serves 4.

Recipe Source: Iowa Egg Council

Have You Tried Kohlrabi?

Kohlrabi looks a little like a creature from outer space. It is somewhat like a cross between cabbage and turnips. Kohlrabi may be cut into strips and eaten raw. Or, toss it into salads. Stir-frying is another possibility. Here are a few tips to help you choose and use kohlrabi:

• A small- or medium-sized kohlrabi (under three-inches in diameter) may be most tender.
• Trim the bulb and pare all traces of the fibrous under-layer beneath the skin before eating.
• Remove the leaves and store kohlrabi in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper. It may maintain good quality for about one week.

Easter Egg Handling Tips

Easter eggs can be decorated in so many ways. Be sure and include the children to make it a fun, family event. Eggs can be decorated with food coloring or commercially available egg dyeing kits. There is literally no end to the creative possibilities for individual expression on an eggshell.

Egg Handling and Safety Tips

There are some important safety handling notes to remember this year when you’re decorating, cooking or serving these eggs and egg products are handled a great deal more than usual around Easter. Remember to:

• Wash your hands thoroughly with warm soapy water and rinse them before handling the eggs when cooking, cooling, drying and hiding them.
• Be sure and inspect the eggs before purchasing them, making sure they are not dirty or cracked. Dangerous bacteria may enter a cracked egg.
• Store your eggs in original cartons in the refrigerator.
• As long as the eggs are NOT out of refrigeration over two hours, they will be safe to eat.
• Do not eat eggs that have been out of refrigeration more than two hours.
• If you are planning to use colored eggs as decorations, (for centerpieces, etc.) where the eggs will be out of refrigeration for many hours or several days, discard them after they have served their decorative purpose.

Easter Egg Hunt

When hiding eggs, consider hiding places carefully. Avoid areas where the eggs might come into contact with pets, wild animals, rodents, insects or lawn chemicals. Refrigerate your eggs again after they’ve been hidden and found. Discard any cracked eggs. Make sure you find all the eggs you’ve hidden to eliminate the chances of animals eating spoiled eggs.

The Perfect Hard-Cooked Egg

The FRESHER eggs are, the HARDER they are to peel, so you’ll want to buy your eggs a week or two in advance. Whether you hard- or soft-cook your eggs, this method is incorrectly called boiled eggs. Although the cooking water must come to a boil, eggs should not be boiled because high temperatures make them tough and rubbery. Place eggs in a single layer in a saucepan. Add enough water to come at least one inch above the eggs. Cover and quickly bring just to a boil. Remove pan from heat and let eggs stand 15 minutes. Immediately remove cold water over the eggs until cool. A gold-gray ring may appear around a hard-cooked egg yolk. It’s unattractively, but this ring is caused by a chemical reaction involving sulfur (from the egg white) and iron (from the egg yolk), which naturally react to form ferrous sulfide at the surface of the yolk. The reaction is usually caused by overcooking, but can also be caused by a high-acid food and iron in the cooking water.

Eliminate the ring by avoiding overcooking and by cooling the eggs quickly after cooking. Run cold water over the just-cooked eggs or place them in ice water (not standing in water for long period) until they have completely cooled. Then refrigerate the eggs in their shells until you’re ready to use them. Hard-cooked eggs may be refrigerated up to one week.

Egg Salad Week

After you’ve gathered the eggs at the Easter Egg Hunts, remember the week after Easter is Egg Salad Week. It is a week dedicated to the dozens of delicious ways to serve hard-cooked eggs. Try some easy and elegant salads, deviled eggs, or egg salad sandwiches. When left in their shells, hard-cooked eggs will remain edible in the refrigerator for one week.

Easter Egg-Handling Tips

The Food Bank of Lincoln is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to alleviate hunger by collecting and distributing food through a network of over 200 non-profit programs throughout Southeast Nebraska. Food is donated by the food industry, producers, wholesalers, retailers and grocery chains. Food is inspected for safety by the donor and again by the Food Bank to ensure safety. The Food Bank provides free food to nonprofit agencies and organizations for a nominal warehouse handling fee.

In 2003, the Food Bank of Lincoln distributed 5,634 meals per day. To learn more, go to http://www.lincolnfoodbank.org or call 466-8170.

To Volunteer

The Food Bank has 11 full-time employees and depends on the help of volunteers to aid in all aspects of food distribution. Because of the loss of a food distribution partner, the need for volunteers has increased this year.

Volunteers are asked to volunteer for two-hour time periods. Times are available 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4 p.m.

Volunteers can help:
• Pick-up donated food
• Sort, stock and pack food
• Deliver promotional materials
• Prepare mailings
• Telephone follow-up
• Speak to groups
• Work at special events, such as upcoming food drives on May 13 (Postal Food Drive) and Aug. 9 (Dine Out to Help Out)

If you are interested in volunteering, call Cheri at 466-8170, ext. 106.

Food Bank Needs Volunteers, Donations

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To Give Donations

The most needed items include:
• canned meats
• canned fruits and vegetables
• cereal
• peanut butter
• coffee
• toilet tissue
• diapers

The Food Bank accepts anything which can help with the distribution of food such as:
• shelving
• vehicles
• equipment
• monetary donations.

Monetary donations are also accepted. Donations to the Food Bank are tax deductable. Donations can be taken directly to the Food Bank at 4840 Doris Bair Circle, Lincoln, Monday through Friday between 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. The Food Bank also holds several annual food drives with drop-off barrels for donations at various locations.
Tease-Proof Your Child

Teasing is part of growing up for both the teaser and the teased. The more parents know about this troubling behavior, the more a parent can help their child endure and survive these incidents.

Teasing can be far more painful than broken bones and sore knees. Children cannot easily recover. Kids who are targets of persistent teasing may have difficulty studying, sleeping and eating, often suffer from severe stomachaches and dread the day. Most parents at some point will become concerned as they watch their child endure teasing. It’s important to teach your child how to handle teasing properly by closing the container securely after each use or choosing child-resistant blister cards, which do not need to be re-secured.

More than 90 percent of poison exposures occur in the home. Of the more than 2 million poison exposures, 52.7 percent occurred among children younger than age six.

The most common poison exposures for children were ingestion of household products such as cosmetics and personal care products, cleaning substances, pain relievers, foreign bodies and plants.

For adults, the most common poison exposures were pain relievers, sedatives, cleaning substances, antidepressants and bites/stings.

Poison Prevention Tips
Basic poison prevention tips to follow are:
• Keep all chemicals and medications locked up and out of reach.
• Use child-resistant packaging—properly disposing by closing the container securely after each use or choosing child-resistant blister cards, which do not need to be re-secured.
• Keep items in original container.
• Leave the original labels on all products and read the label before using.
• Do not put decorative lamps and candles containing lamp oil where children can reach them. Lamp oil can be very toxic, if ingested by young children.
• Always keep the light on when giving or taking medicine. Check the dosage every time.
• Avoid taking medicine in front of children. Ask how or why the medicine is used. Ask the doctor or pharmacist about the medicine as “medicine,” not candy.
• Clean out the medicine cabinet periodically and safely dispose of unused and outdated medications.

Poison Prevention

Poison Prevention is important year round. Poison Prevention Week draws attention to these facts:
• U.S. poison control centers handle an average of one poison exposure every 15 seconds.
• More than 90 percent of poison exposures occur in the home.
• Of the more than two million poison exposures, 52.7 percent occurred among children younger than age six.
• The most common poison exposures for children were ingestion of household products such as cosmetics and personal care products, cleaning substances, pain relievers, foreign bodies and plants.
• For adults, the most common poison exposures were pain relievers, sedatives, cleaning substances, antidepressants and bites/stings.

Poison Prevention

FCE Scholarship Applications Due

May 1

A $300 scholarship provided through Lancaster County FCE Council is available for a graduate of a high school in Lancaster County or a permanent resident of Lancaster County majoring in Family and Consumer Science or a health occupation. This is open to full-time students beginning their sophomore, junior or senior year of college in the fall of 2006 or who have completed two quarters of study in a vocational school. Applications are now due May 1 (note new date) in the extension office.

Applications Due

March 27

FCE Council meeting will be Monday, March 27, 7 p.m. (Note back to Monday for an evening meeting.) The program will be the Mayoral parade and the visitors from Nebraska. All FCE members are invited to attend. Call Pam at 441-7180 by March 20 so supphckets can be prepared. Beltline and Live and Learn Clubs are hosting the meeting.

FCE News & Events

Leader Training Lesson, March 23

The next community and FCE leader training lesson titled “Optimism: Challenges and Rewards” will be given by UNL Extension Educator Alice Doane on Thursday, March 23, 1 p.m. This lesson will examine how a person can set up to be odd or different to ways in which their child is perceived. An environment of support and strong personal feelings can protect children from teasing.

Make sure your child let the teaser know how he or she feels about the teasing. It’s important to teach your child how to handle teasing properly by closing the container securely after each use or choosing child-resistant blister cards, which do not need to be re-secured.

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Basic poison prevention tips to follow are:
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Poison Prevention
Oats for Extra Pasture, Hay and Silage

Bruce Anderson
UNL Extension Forage Specialist

Pasture and hay could be sparse again this spring unless we receive lots of rain. Planting oats might be one of the surest ways to have something for your cattle to eat.

With dry subsoils and pastures weakened by several years of drought, growing extra forage this spring might be wise. I think oat forage could be more important than ever this spring.

I like oats for several reasons. First, oats can be grazed earlier than anything else you plant this spring, often ready about a month after planting. It grows during cool spring weather when we are most likely to receive some rain and when soil moisture is most efficiently produced. Forage. So risk is low and seeding is relatively cheap. Plus, you can use oats several ways. If you don’t need the grazing, make hay that’s ideal for young livestock by cutting when oats just begin to head out. Or, you can increase yield by about one-third and cut oats in the milk stage for hay that’s excellent for stock cows. If you get lucky and receive enough rain so that neither hay or pasture are needed, you still can cut oats for grain and straw. Or, oats planted under irrigation, can be grazed or cut for hay early enough to permit double cropping to soybeans or a summer annual forage crop or even for corn for silage.

Drill about three bushels per acre by late March and oats will be six to eight inches tall and ready to graze in late April or early May. With good soil moisture and 30 to 60 pounds of nitrogen, oats can provide a couple months of grazing for one or two cows per acre. You probably need a cheap and reliable temporary feed source this year. Oats may be your best option.

Consider Burning Shelled Corn as an Alternative Heating Fuel

Tom Dorn
UNL Extension Educator

Shelled corn, a relatively new heating fuel, is a heating alternative worth consideration. Like wood stoves, corn stoves have people a few extra dollars in energy costs as temperatures drop this fall. Shelled corn is appealing for two reasons. First, dry, shelled corn is a abundant. Corn with a moisture content of 15 percent or less enters a stove at 0.41 million Btu per unit weight and moves more freely through the auger than high-moisture corn. Second, the corn does not have to be top quality, but stoves are designed for lines of pieces of cobs. Manufacturers make stoves specifically designed to burn dry granular fuels such as shelled corn. In common designs, the fuel travels through a storage hopper and fed into the burning chamber by a small auger. The speed of the auger can be adjusted to control the amount of corn burned and heat produced. A small fan blows oxygen into the chamber and allows combustion to take place. Outside air is normally used but this to preserve air inside the room that has already been heated.

A combustion continues, a heat exchanger removes heat from flue gases. These gases are used to heat air room pushed through the stove by a fan and back into the room.

Corn burning stoves are sold in a variety of styles and sizes. They can be sold as space heaters, hot-air furnaces or boilers for use in hot water radia- systems. However, the greatest difference is the size of the fuel hopper. Some stoves hold only enough fuel for one day while others may hold up to a 10 day supply. Some manufacturers are developing stoves that burn corn at the bottom of the hop- per to radiate heat into the sur- rounding room. Because electricity is not required to stoke the fire and move the heat, electrical outages will not cause the stove to shut down. Although a corn-burning stove has many advantages, it is important to make sure such an investment is worthwhile.

Before purchasing a stove for personal use, consider the following:

• How much heat is needed to maintain the desired tempera- ture? Different stoves have different levels of heat output. • Does the layout of the house allow heat to move from room to room? A corn-burn- ing stove should not be ex- pected to heat entire space if the floor plan doesn’t allow it. • Is the stove inexpensive? • Does the stove vent through an exterior wall? • How easy is the stove to operate? • Will the stove be used as a primary or secondary heat source? Smaller stoves and fuel hoppers cannot be expected to warm an entire house for long periods of time.

• Will the stove be used for winter operation? Space is re- quired to keep corn dry when

For More Information
The farm newsletter appears in the UNL Acreage & Small Farm newsletter online at http://acreage.unl.edu/newsletter/Dec2005.htm.
Tornado – Will You be Ready?

Whether or not you decide you need a shelter in your house, you can take two important steps to protect yourself and your family during a tornado: prepare an emergency plan and put an emergency supply kit together. If you decide to build a shelter, your emergency plan should include notifying local emergency personnel and family members or others outside the immediate area you have a shelter. This will allow emergency personnel to quickly free you if the exit from your shelter becomes blocked by debris.

Emergency Supply Kit

You should also prepare an emergency supply kit and either keep it in your shelter or be ready to bring it with you if you need to evacuate your house. Prepare the kit in March so it has fresh supplies ready for the upcoming tornado season.

Some of the items the emergency supply kit should include are:

- an adequate supply of water for each person in your household
- a first-aid kit.
- flashlight (do not bring candles or anything that lights with a flame)
- battery-operated radio
- cellular phone
- extra batteries

Shelter Location

There are several possible locations in your house for a shelter. Perhaps the most convenient and safest is below-ground level, in your basement. If your house doesn’t have a basement, you can install an in-ground shelter beneath a concrete slab-on-grade foundation or a concrete garage floor. Basements and in-ground planters provide the highest level of protection against missiles and falling debris. Another alternative shelter location is an interior room on the first floor of the house.

Septic Tanks Must Be Pumped

By Sharon Skipton
UNL Extension Educator

As of January 1, 2004, it is illegal in Nebraska to pump septic tanks, including homeowners pumping their own tanks. These regulations are enforced by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The regulation governing of septic tanks and land-application of the septic has recently gone into effect in rural Nebraska areas.

The new law makes it illegal without the certification from DEQ to pump or repair a septic tank system. Over 200 individuals throughout the state are currently certified to engage in work related to on-site systems in Nebraska, including over 200 certified to do septic tank pumping.

There are also Federal regulations and re-cordkeeping requirements for the proper disposal, including land-application, of sewage. The Private On-site Wastewater Treatment System Contract Certification, and System Registration Act requires anyone who works on a septic system to apply to NEQD to become certified to perform the work. The requirement for certification includes pre-installation tasks such as doing a site evaluation, a soil evaluation or a percolation test. It also covers all aspects of working on a system including designing, installing, inspecting, repairing or altering. And, it includes pumping and disposal of septage.
All-America Selection Flowers for 2006

**Zinnia**

*Zowie! Yellow Flame*  
**Flower Award Winner**

‘Zowie! Yellow Flame’ is the first semi-tall zinnia with a unique bicolor pattern. Each bloom features a scarlet-rose center and yellow petal edges. There is no other zinnia with this fiery design. In addition, this bicolor pattern is consistent from one plant to another. As expected, there are more desirable traits from ‘Zowie! Yellow Flame.’ Gardeners will be glad to learn ‘Zowie! Yellow Flame’ is easy to grow from seed or young bedding plants. ‘Zowie! Yellow Flame’ will prove its long life with a scarlet-rose hue that lasts throughout the growing season with dazzling flower spikes that are dozens shades lighter than its closest comparison. This new color is desirable for garden use as it widens the color choices for blue flowering annuals. Belonging to the mint family, ‘Evolution’ is easy to grow. Gardeners can begin with seed or young bedding plants with the confidence ‘Evolution’ will provide continuous color from early summer to the first hard frost. ‘Evolution’ is low maintenance. No deadheading is needed for all season color. Relatively disease and pest free, ‘Evolution’ will perform best in a full-sun location. There are two more advantages ‘Evolution’ offers gardeners. The plants are quite adaptable and can be grown in patio contain- ers or ceramic pots. The lilac flower spikes can be cut, dried and used as everlasting flowers for bouquets, decorations or craft projects. ‘Evolution’ deserves a sunny spot in your garden for its non-stop color.

**Ornamental Pepper**

*Black Pearl*  
**Flower Award Winner**

‘Black Pearl’ is a handsome plant with black foliage. In the standout quality is ‘Black Pearl’ looks better as the season progresses. The plants branch and widen developing into a black pyramid shape without pinching, pruning or grooming. ‘Black Pearl’ is exception- ally heat tolerant and requires minimal water and fertilizer. It is easy to grow from seed. There are no serious insect or disease problems. As the plant matures, the black peppers turn red, adding a new color to the plant. While edible, the peppers are very hot. Use with care! ‘Black Pearl’ is an effective background plant particularly with silver, white or pastel flowering annuals in the foreground. Never out of bloom, ‘Black Pearl’ has already been selected as a “most popular” new plant by con- sumers visiting a trial ground. Its foliage, color and low care will affect many gardeners. It performs exceptionally well in containers and deserves to be featured in more gardens.

**Nicotiana**

*‘Perfume Deep Purple’*  
**Bedding Plant Award Winner**

‘Perfume Deep Purple’ flowers are shaped like stars. The stars shine at night and this when ‘Perfume Deep Purple’ begins its performance. The unique quality is the strong fragrance which scent the air in the evening. The fragrance is not wasted during the day when many people are working. The nightly release of the perfume will encourage gardeners to re- lax and linger in their gardens. The rich, lavish deep purple flower color is another unique trait, distinct from other nico- tianas. ‘Perfume Deep Purple’ is easily grown from seed, young bedding plants or flowering pot plants. Nicotiana needs a sunny location and is perfectly adapt- able to container culture. This is a good indication of a healthy root system. Look for shiny peppers. The plant grows well with other cool tolerant annuals, such as snapdragons or diantthus. Exceptional garden performance can be expected from ‘Diamonte Coral Rose.’

**Viola**

*Skippy XL Red-Gold*  
**Cool Season Bedding Plant Award Winner**

‘Skippy XL Red-Gold’ is the first Viola cornata to earn the prestigious AAS Award. Three improvements were exhibited in AAS trials. The unique combination of colors is first to be observed. ‘Skippy XL Red-Gold’ flowers are ruby red with a red-violet shading below the golden yellow face containing whisks. This combination is found only on ‘Skippy XL Red-Gold.’ The flower shape and size are definitely improved. The round 1.5-inch flower is similar to a pansy and larger than many viola blossoms. The lasting and enduring flower color pro- vided by ‘Skippy XL Red-Gold’ is another notable trait. The freedom of bloom is attributed to the plant’s ability to bud and flower under a wide range of temperatures. It is this adapt- ability that results in continu- ous bloom.

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**Easter Lily Care**

When buying an Easter lily, look for a plant with flowers in various stages of bloom from buds to open or partially opened flowers. Foliage should be dense, rich green in color and extend all the way down to the soil line. This is a good indication of a healthy root system. Look for a well-proportioned plant, one about two times as high as the pot. You should check the flowers, foliage and buds for signs of insects and disease. At home, keep your lily away from drafts and dry heat sources such as air conditioners or appliances or heating ducts. Bright, indirect light is best with day- time temperatures of 65 to 75 degrees F. Water the plant only when the soil feels dry to the touch or do not over water. To prolong the life of the blossoms, remove the yellow anthers (pol- len-bearing pods) found in the center of each flower.

Do not throw away your Easter lily after it is done blooming. You can save the bulb and plant it outdoors. Easter lilies can be replanted outside after the blooms are gone. Plant outdoors as soon as the ground is cold. Select a sunny spot with well-drained soil. Set the top of the bulb six-inches below the soil surface. Cut off the old flowers, but leave the stem and leaves. Do not cut back the stem until it dies down in the fall, then cut it off at the soil surface. After the soil surface freezes in late fall, mulch the soil and do not renourish it. New leaf growth begins in the spring.

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**Garden Guide**

**Things to do this Month**

By Mary Jane Fogre, UNL Extension Associate

Consider planting flowers which may be used for Christmas arrangements. Some of the best are strawflowers, statice, celosia and gloxinia amaranth.

Do not restrict yourself to buying plants in bloom. Petunias that bloom in the fall are usually grown in row or flat. Many flowering plants will ac- tually be set back and cease to flower for about a month. Plants without blossoms will actually bloom sooner and grow well with less light.

To extend the blooming period of gladiolus, plant early and late- season selections each week until the middle of June. Choose a sunny location and plant the corms 4-6 inches deep and 6-8 inches apart.

Seed bore spots in your fucshia or bluegrass lawn.

Scatter annual poppy seeds in flower borders. The fine seeds need not be covered. The plants grow rapidly and provide colorful flowers in early summer.

In combination with poor soil, plant nasturtiums for a colorful show. They require warm soil to sprout and start blooming in about 50 days.

Too much water and fertilizer produces excess leaves and few flowers.

When chrysanthemums show signs of life, dig up and divide large plants. Discard woody portions and replant divisions 12-15 inches apart.

Cut flower spikes back to the ground on dahlias, lilies, and other spring flowering bulbs as the flowers fade. Do not cut the foliage until it dies naturally. The leaves are necessary to produce strong bulbs capable of reflowering next year.

Do not add organic matter to the soil when planting trees. It does not help the plant become established and it may create conditions that encourage the roots to stop inside the planting hole instead of spreading out to seek surrounding soil. Dig a large planting hole, but fill it with the original soil removed from it.

The last Friday in April is National Arbor Day. Plant a tree or support an organization which does.

Prune spring blooming shrubs such as forsythia and spirea after they have completed flowering.

Remove sticks, rocks and other debris from your lawn to prevent damaging your lawn mower and other lawn-care equipment in preparation for the coming season.
The Important First Step is “Reduce”

We all know how important it is to recycle. But let’s stop and think about why we recycle. For many people, it’s to reduce waste and save landfill space. By recycling, we don’t have to throw things away, helping us to conserve our precious resources. Recycling is working, but recycling alone cannot solve all of our solid waste problems.

Remember the three “R’s”: reduce, reuse and recycle. Which one comes first? It’s reduce. And it’s first for a reason. It’s better not to create waste than to have to figure out what to do with it. As Benjamin Franklin said, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

Waste reduction begins when you make purchasing decisions. Decisions you make while shopping can save you money and reduce the amount of trash that goes to the landfill. A family of four can save approximately $3,000 a year by buying products in the largest size they can use and by buying reusable items. "Reduce unnecessarily.""-

Avoid Unnecessary Packaging

More than $1 of every $10 we spend on food goes toward packaging. One-third of the trash from households is product packaging. Product packaging has its purpose, such as making products safer and supplying information. But many items are overpackaged.

• Large-quantity items usually have less packaging per unit, lowering your costs. This could include purchases such as laundry soap, shampoo, toilet paper, pet food and cat litter. For food items, select the largest size you can use before spoilage would occur.

• Buy cereal in a large box instead of individual serving size.
• Buy juice in concentrates and use reusable bottles. Examine product labels for single-serving packages.
• Reject excessively packaged products.

Express your Opinion

• Contact manufacturerers about packaging. If you believe a product has too much packaging, write the manufacturer. Go a step further and compliment manufacturers who use the minimum amount of packaging needed.
• Also, ask store managers to stock products you prefer.

Buy Reusable and Recyclable Products

• Buy reusable products. Disposables such as razors and paper towels create unnecessary waste unless safety is a factor. 
• Buy and use reusable or refillable products. Refillable pens, markers and shopping bags are two examples of reusable products.
• Buy products from "post consumer" recycled materials. These materials were used by a consumer before being recycled. Buying products made with recycled materials creates a demand for recyclable material. This raises their value, making them more appealing for future recycling efforts.
• Buy products that can be recycled such as glass, tin, aluminum, newspaper, cardboard and some plastics.

Rent or Borrow Items You Only Need Temporarily

• Rent products you only need temporarily. Sometimes a borrowed or used item is available and would better fit your needs rather than buying a product.
• Renting reusable dishes and linens for events and gatherings can prevent using disposable cups, plates and silverware.
• Renting items can save you money and time, and it can reduce the amount of trash created at an event.

In 2004, roughly 310,500 tons of waste was disposed of by Lincoln and Lancaster County residents — this represents 2,353 pounds of garbage per person for the year.

Shop S.M.A.R.T (Save Money and Reduce Trash)

Waste reduction begins when you make purchasing decisions. Decisions you make while shopping can save you money and reduce the amount of trash that goes to the landfill. A family of four can save approximately $3,000 a year by buying products in the largest size they can use and by buying reusable items.

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Energy Savings Start with an Energy Reduction Plan. Considering the average family spends $1,300 a year on energy bills, finding ways to cut energy is important. Tips for energy conservation include:

**Lighting**
- Turn off non-essential lights and appliances.
- Install dimmer switches on lights.
- Use outdoor lights with photocell units or timers to go off during the day.
- Replace lights in high-use areas with fluorescent.
- Use task lighting instead of brightly lighting an entire room.

**Heating and Cooling**
- Check the insulation in the attic, ceiling, exterior and basement walls, floors and crawl spaces to see if it meets the levels recommended for your area. Suggested R-values include: ceilings below ventilated attics, R-49; ceiling between floors, R-38 to R-60; walls, R-18 to R-28; floors over unheated crawlspaces, R-25; crawl spaces if dry, R-11 to R-19; basement interior walls, R-11 to R-19; and basement exterior walls, R-10 to R-15.
- Double-pane windows and proper insulation will reduce your heating and cooling costs.
- Insulate ducts—many are so leaky that when 25 percent of the conditioned air is lost before it arrives at the target room the duct is trying so hard, wanting more than 20 percent of the energy used to condition the air.
- In the winter, close window coverings during the day to hold out heat.
- Open window coverings in the winter to let in solar heat.
- Close shades and blinds at night.
- Caulk and weatherstrip windows and doors that leak air.
- Install programmable thermostats— you can save as much as 10 percent a year on heating and cooling by turning the thermostat back to 10 to 15 percent for eight hours.
- In the winter, turn your thermostats down to 68 degrees or below.
- During the heating season, close unoccupied rooms.
- Whole house fans help cool the home by pulling cool air and exhausting warm air through the attic.
- Watch placement of lamps or TV sets near air-conditioning thermostats.
- Keep fireplace dampers closed unless there is a fire going.
- Clean and replace furnace filters once a month or as needed.
- Plant trees or shrubs to shade air-conditioning units.

**Movement**
- When deciding which products to buy, read the labels on the products. If the product label says type of product can be cleaned up with water, the product probably is not toxic or hazardous. A good example of this type of product is latex paint. The paint can label will say you can clean brushes and your hands with soap and water. Latex paint is less hazardous and less toxic.

**Hazardous Products**

- Products are considered hazardous if they are:
  - Flammable or Combustible: They can easily ignite.
  - Explosive or Reactive: They can detonate or explode through exposure to heat, sudden shock or pressure.
  - Corrosive: They can cause a chemical reaction that can burn or destroy living tissue or other materials.
  - Toxic: They are capable of causing injury or death through ingestion, inhalation or skin absorption.

**Read the Label**

Labels of hazardous products are required by law to include certain warnings. Hazardous product labels often list the principal hazards such as “flam-mable,” “causes burns to skin and eyes,” or “vapor harmful.” Key words to look for are called “Signal Words.” Signal words indicate the level of toxicity of the product. Purchase the products with the safest or lowest level of hazard.

- **No Word:** If the labels contain no signal word or special warnings, or if it explains you can use water or soap in clean up, the product is safe to use.
- **Caution:** The product is slightly toxic. This product with this signal word on the label is not as safe as the first product but is safe to use than products with any other signal word on the label.
- **Warning:** The product is moderately toxic. This product is more hazardous than one with “caution” on the label.
- **Danger:** The product is highly toxic, doing so invites dangerous accidents. If you see the word “danger” or “poison” on the label.

**Minimize Your Risk**

Make sure the product you want to buy poses the lowest level of risk by reading and understanding the label. Purchase the product with the lowest level signal word. If the label does not contain words like “Flammable,” “Corrosive,” “Explosive,” “Reactive,” “Poison,” “Toxic,” or “Hazardous,” the product may be safe to use.

The words “natural” or “organic” do not indicate a safe product. A product labeled “all natural ingredients” can still contain hazardous materials. If you feel uncomfortable with the ingredients or the instructions for use, do not purchase the product.

**Keep Windows on the South Side of Your House**

Keep windows on the south side of your house clean to maximize solar gain.

**Use Windbreaks to Deflect Winter Winds from Your House**

Use windbreaks to deflect winter winds from your house.

**Appliances**

- **Energy savings start with an energy reduction plan.** Considering the average family spends $1,300 a year on energy bills, finding ways to cut energy is important. Tips for energy conservation include:

**Who To Contact For More Information**

CITY OF LINCOLN
- Recycling Operations (recycling hotline) – 441-8215
- Solid Waste Operations (landfills disposal (Location) – 441-8092
- Waste Water Operations (wastewater or sewage assistance) – 441-7961
- Water Production & Distribution (water distribution, quality or conservation questions) – 441-8459
- Wasteshed Management (storm drain, erosion control or mud in street) – 441-8459
- Parks and Recreation Department (parks and green space) – 441-7847
  - http://lincoln.ne.gov

LINCOLN-LANCASTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
- Hazardous Waste (assistance for households and businesses) – 441-0201
- Air Quality – 441-8040
- Keep Lincoln and Lancaster County Beautiful – 441-8003
  - http://lincoln.ne.gov

WASTECAP OF NEBRASKA (Business recycling assistance) 436-2383 http://waste.capne.org

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN EXTENSION IN LANCASTER COUNTY
- (Information on recycling, yard waste alternatives, agricultural pesticide container recycling, and more) – 441-7180
  - http://lancaster.unl.edu

Businesses Toxics Reduction

The second step is to reduce the hazard. Buy materials least hazardous or toxic possible to do the job. Many manufacturers now make citrus-based or water-based paints. Buy latex and water-based paints. Avoid products that base on such words as “danger,” “danger” or “poison” on the label. If a product requires users to have special training or protective equipment, that is a potentially hazardous product.

Solvent substitution information is available on several sites:
- EnviroLexicon at http://es.epa.gov
- The Western Regional Pollution Prevention Network (WRPPN) at http://www.wrppn.org/ira

When deciding which products to buy, read the labels on the products.
Lincoln’s Compost, LinGro, Recycles Grass and Leaves

LinGro Compost Recommended Application Rates

LinGro Compost is a natural choice for improving the quality of turf and soil. LinGro Compost should be incorporated into the root zone of plants and turf to be most effective. Apply 1/8 to 1/4 inch of compost, till into six inches of soil. In heavy clay soils, it is recommended that the compost be thoroughly mixed into the soil. Establon</p>

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Recycling is Easy and Conserves Resources

One of the easiest things for people to do to help conserve resources is to recycle. If you currently don’t recycle, please start. If you use aluminum cans or newspapers, you can recycle other items such as glass bottles, #1 or #2 plastic containers, cardboard or junk mail. If you recycle at home, consider starting a recycling program at work. If you recycle at work, consider starting to recycle at home.

In fiscal year (FY) 2004-05 a total of 6,550 tons of recyclables were collected at the recycling drop-off sites in Lincoln and Lancaster County. This represents an 8.4 percent increase over the 6,042 tons of material collected in FY 2001-02. The amount of material recycled last fiscal year represents an all-time high for the amount of recyclables collected through the drop-off program. Not only does recycling conserve limited resources, it also saves valuable landfill space. Since 1992, government-sponsored recycling programs have added close to 4 years to the life of the landfill. If we stopped recycling and let everything be buried in the landfill we would close the landfill seven years sooner, in 2023 instead of the current projection of 2030. In the first two years of the decade we saw a 5 percent decline in the amount of material recycled at the drop-off sites. We are very pleased we have reversed that trend and more material is being recycled. We’d like to continue this increase, and in order to accomplish it, we need your help. Make a pledge and increase the amount of material you recycle and buy recycled-content products. For more information on recycling, please check our Web site at www.lincoln.ne.gov. Type in the keyword recycle. You can also contact the recycling office at 441-8215.

It’s Easy to Recycle in Your Neighborhood!

There are 5 Newspaper Only and 19 Multi-Material Recycling Drop-Off Centers located in Lincoln and 5 Multi-Material Sites in the County. Here’s what materials are acceptable at the Multi-Material Recycling Sites.

Recycling of aluminum cans saves 95% of the energy required to make the same amount of aluminum from its virgin source. One ton of aluminum recycled saves the energy equivalent of 40 barrels of oil.

RECYCLING

In Lincoln

Drop-Off Site Locations

North

N.W. Roundhouse Dr. & 33rd Streets
UNL Food Stores Warehouse, 122 N. 17th Street
University Place, 47th & St. Paul Streets
Gates of Praise Church, 70th & Vine Streets
Russ’s Market, 63rd & Platte Avenue
Centro Plaza, 48th & "R" Streets
Southeast Community College, 88th & "O" Streets
48th Street Transfer, 5101 N. 48th Street
Air Park Recreation Center, 3710 N.W. 46th Street
Highlands Fire Station 5435 N.W. 1st Street

South

Leon’s Food Mart, 32nd & South Streets
Union College athletic field parking lot, 53rd & Calvert
East High School Seacrest Field parking lot, 70th & "A" Streets
Hamilton College parking lot, 19th & "L" Streets
Trabert Hall, 12th & South Streets
Pepsi Cola Distribution Facility, 1901 Windhoek Drive
Russ’s Market, 1550 S. Coddington limited hours of operation
Russ’s Market, 33rd & Highway 2

NEWSPAPER ONLY Drop-Off Sites

North

UNL East Campus Parking Lot
Bank of America 21st

South

St. John XXIII Center 3710 Sheridan Boulevard
Willard Community Center Folsom & West 5th Streets
All Saints Lutheran Church 6251 Pioneers Boulevard
Indian Village 13th & High Streets

YES

Newspapers
Inserts OK
Put newspapers in paper bag
Cardboard Boxes
Flatten cardboard paper (i.e. cereal boxes) OK
All boxes must be flattened and placed inside recycling containers
Cans
All food and beverage cans
Rinse, clean and flatten aluminum and tin cans and place in separate recycling compartments
Glass Bottles and Jars
All food and beverage glass Green, brown and clear glass OK
Labels OK
Rinse clean. Take off lids. Separate by color and place in separate recycling compartments.
Plastic #1 and #2 Containers
All #1 and #2 plastic bottles and containers
Labels OK
Rinse clean. Take off lids. Place in separate recycling compartments.
Residential Mixed Papers
Mail, magazines, office and school paper and telephone directories
Put clean paper together in a paper bag
Keep newspapers separate.

NO

Contact 441-8215 for more information on proper separation of recyclables.

"for our families for our future"

Designed by Citizen Information Center 3/15/06

Private Curbside Recycling

The following recyclers provide the convenience of curbside recycling for a monthly fee:

Midwest Recycle Recycling Enterprises Star City Recycling
475-0244 421-6655 890-4320

Additional Communities
Benben Refuse Transfer Station Davy Refuse Transfer Station Fifth Community Center Hickman City Park Panama Refuse Transfer Station Waverly, Waverly Plaza

Private Curbside Recycling

The following recycler handles recycle in their customer area:

Kurzer Bros. Recycle Schaal Refuse Service Weber & Sons
423-0191 423-2705 423-8204

It is against the law to deposit any material other than what is accepted.

Call 441-8050 if you see persons depositing material illegally.

Contact 441-8215 for more information on proper separation of recyclables.
Clover Mites Invading Local Homes Already

Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

With the recent warm sunny days, people are already reporting clover mite invasions. Watch for this tiny pest crawling in windows and doors, especially where the sun warms the house. The clover mite is an eight-legged relative of spiders and ticks. It is slightly smaller than a pinhead and has a red-brown body. They have an unusually long pair of front legs, which distinguishes them from the wood louse (see photo). They appear as brick-red specks crawling around windows, drapes, curtains and furniture.

Clover mites do no damage or injure humans. They are so tiny they come and go through tiny cracks accidentally. They cannot survive inside. Outdoors, they feed on turfgrass and other plants, but do not seem to cause any damage.

Management Strategies

Outdoor—Effective control means preventing entry into buildings in the spring or the fall. The best way to prevent entry is to remove grasses and weeds in a three-foot strip around foundations, as many mites may cross mulch and pea gravel to enter the home anyway.

A chemical barrier outside the home may help reduce or prevent infestations inside the home. Treat five to ten feet out from the base of the foundation and a few feet up on the walls. Successful chemical control requires a very thorough treatment and may need to be repeated because many products on the market registered for clover mite control are short-lived. Treat when daytime temperatures will be at least 60 degrees F because chemical effectiveness may be reduced with cooler temperatures.

Indoors—Clover mites inside are best controlled with a vacuum cleaner. Avoid crushing or smearing the mites, especially on fabrics, because they may leave a red stain. It is not recommended to use chemicals indoors for clover mites. A vacuum cleaner works just as well and eliminates pesticide exposure.

Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University entomologist, suggests putting a fine layer of dust around windows, in cracks and other areas where clover mites may enter. Try using talc—containing baby powder, diatomaceous earth and even baking soda. The mites coated with the fine dust will die in the barrier. Clover mites are so tiny they stick easily almost to any type of sticky tape. Place double-sided masking tape on window sills or other areas where mites are entering to catch the tiny mites as they cross the tape. When the tape becomes filled with mite bodies, simply peel it up, throw it away and replace, if needed.

Many people think all ants are winged, but ant colonies eventually produce ants with wings. These are the reproductive—queens and kings—that fly away to start new colonies. Queens and kings do not keep their wings very long. After they have found a new colony location, they shed their wings.

Swarming occurs when colonies are mature and there is plenty of room for the colony to afford to put extra resources into swarming. Most of the colony stays in the original location—only the swarvers leave. Some ant species even swarm in the wintertime—usually when the ant colony is under the slab of a house or in a warm location. In Nebraska, most ant colonies swarm during the spring and summer months.

Ant swarming is a natural phenomenon that occurs regularly, but most people don’t notice, unless it occurs under the basement slab or in the walls of the house. When this happens, it might be a good idea to have the ant species identified to see if it is an ant species which damages wood, like carpenter ants.

Vacuuming swarmers is safer than using insecticides and just as effective. If they swarm inside the house, they die quickly, even if you don’t do anything.

Sometimes people think swarming termites look like swarming ants. See figure at left to see how they are different.

Bring specimens to the UNL Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherry Creek Road, Suite A, for identification, between 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays.

Q. Why are woodpeckers beating on my house?

Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

With the arrival of warmer weather, male woodpeckers mark their territory with a rhythmical pecking sequence, known as drumming. In addition to establishing territories, drumming also attracts female woodpeckers. Drumming is predominantly a spring phenomenon, when nesting behaviors begin. Woodpeckers do not hurt themselves with this activity. Drumming seldom results in a roof damage to wood or metal surfaces other than possible paint removal.

Woodpeckers can do more damage to wood-sided homes when they are feeding for insects or excavating nest cavities. Exclusion methods are best because they are consistently effective.

Springtime Bird Frequently Asked Questions

Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

Q. Why are woodpeckers beating on my house?

A. After their young hatch, grackles become very tidy in order to prevent predators from finding the nest. Fecal matter from the young birds is covered with a sac-like membrane which enables the adults to dispose of the waste easily away from the nest. Bird baths and swimming pools are an attractive disposal site because the water reduces the smell from the fecal matter.

Q. Blue jays and swallows have been attacking our cat and have even swooped down on us! Why are they doing this? How can we protect ourselves from these dive-bombing birds?

A. Birds are very territorial when they have a nest of babies. When a cat, dog or human comes anywhere close to their nest, they see a predator that is a threat to their babies. This dive-bombing behavior is a very effective tactic meant to drive predators away from their nest of young. Until the baby birds leave the nest, they are vulnerable to a predator that may come anywhere close. The dive-bombing is very effective, although the birds are unlikely to hurt you. Wearing a hat or carrying an open umbrella over your head may make you feel safer.

Q. Swallows have been trying to build a mud nest above our door. How do we discourage them?

A. Swallow nests take time and energy. We recommend that you build a nest beneath an overhang or ledge. How? 1) Removal of a rough surface of a wall and/or overhang makes a site less attractive for swallows. Wood, stucco, masonry and concrete surfaces are favorable surfaces for nest attachment. Nests are rarely attached to metal. Cover attachment surfaces with a thin layer of masonry cement.

Q. Why are there so many red-winged blackbirds everywhere this spring?

A. A fresh water source for drinking, an open habitat for foraging, a supply of mud of the proper consistency for mud building, and a suitable surface for nest attachment beneath an overhang, create ideal conditions for blackbird nesting. The males are likely to sing loudly when they see a potential mate. They are very territorial and will attack other birds that they feel are intruding on their territory.
Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Kitt Saathoff as winner of April’s “Certificate of 4-H Award” in recognition of outstanding volunteer service. Kitt has been a 4-H volunteer for 6 years and is an organizational leader of two 4-H clubs, The American Culs and Crazy Clovers. Members in both clubs complete a wide variety of projects, including clothing, food, celebrate art and photography. She has also been an instructor at Clover College for several years. “I have enjoyed being a leader and watching my daughter and their friends having fun doing the things I remember enjoying as a 4-H’er,” says Kitt, “I enjoy spending time with kids. 4-H provides activities for my daughters and I to enjoy together. Most of the activities I enjoy as an adult, I learned from 4-H.”

A Lancaster County 4-H alumnus, Kitt was a 4-H Ambassador and camp counselor. Her mother, Linda Dempsey, was leader of Kitt’s club. Linda still volunteers for 4-H, assisting with Kitt’s 4-H clubs and Clover College classes. Kitt lives in Lincoln with her husband Steve and their daughters Elle and Annabelle. She is owner of A Page In Time scrapbooking store. Kitt also volunteers at their church and their daughters’ schools.

Congratulations to Kitt! Volunteers like her are indeed the heart of 4-H! Congratulations to Kitt’s club! Kitt’s club received a $1000 scholarship award from the American Legion Oratorical Contest in Indianapolis, Indiana on April 22-23.

Kitt Saathoff

The 4-H Speech and Public Service Announcement (PSA) contests are open to all 4-H members. Need not be enrolled in a specific project. Register by Friday, April 7 by calling extension at 441-7180. For more information, contact Kristy Karriman.

PSA Contest, April 20

The PSA contest will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center on Thursday, April 20 at 6:30 p.m. PSA’s must be 60 seconds long. The emphasis is on the presentation of a PSA for radio. Contestants must give their PSA in person, no prerecorded tapes allowed. After the contest, youth qualifying for districts will record their PSAs on tape with the help of extension staff. Tips for writing successful PSAs can also be found online at http://4h.unl.edu/programs/communication/psa.htm.

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Livestock Judging Contest, March 25
All 4-H youth are invited and encouraged to attend the Capitol Pork Producers 5th Annual Livestock Judging Contest. This event will be held Saturday, March 25, 10 a.m. in the Kimmel Building on the Otoe County fairgrounds. A free lunch will be provided. If you plan on attending, please let Deanna know so she can assist in a car pool. If you need anymore information call 441-7180.

Quality Assurance Training, May 9
Lancaster County will be holding a Quality Assurance training on Tuesday, May 9 at 7 a.m. If you have not attended a training yet through your school or club, please plan to attend. This year’s topics for the quality assurance trainings are animal handling, carcass and product quality. Every 4-H and FFA youth planning to exhibit livestock this year must complete this certification class prior to June 15. Call Deanna at 441-7180 for further details.

4-H Day at Omaha Royals, April 30
The Omaha Royals are hosting the first annual 4-H Day at Rosenblatt Stadium, 1202 Bert Murphy Ave, Omaha. All 4-H members, family and friends will receive half off admission to see the Royals in action against Colorado Springs Sky Sox on Sunday, April 30 at 1:35 p.m. Tickets and reservations must be made in advance as a group (minimum of 10). For more information call Jeremie Larkin at 402-738-5132. All 4-H families and friends are encouraged to wear a 4-H gear.

Jammie Jamboree, June 17
Join us at the Jammie Jamboree and make jammie bottoms on Saturday, June 17, 9 a.m. Bring the Simplicity pattern 5338, preswathed flannel or 100% cotton fabric for the bottom edge and matching thread. Also bring your sewing machine, basic sewing equipment such as scissors, pins, measuring tape, etc. and a sack lunch. Adults are welcome. Sign up by June 12 by call 441-7180. Open to non-4-H youth, Jammie bottoms may be entered at the fair and styled in the Style Revue.

Clover College, June 20-23
Do you want to learn some new and exciting things? Do you like making projects and meeting new people? Plan to attend one or more of the workshops at the 2006 Clover College! Open to 4-H and non-4-H youth ages 6–18. Look in next month’s Nebraskaline for a full list of workshops, information and registration forms. A small fee will be required for most workshops. Call Tracy if you have any questions or may be interested in volunteering to assist with various workshops.

Two New Resources for Clubs

Computer CD — A 4-H Resources CD is now available for each 4-H club. The CD provides information on the 4-H career portfolio, officer guides and a 4-H video. Stop by and pick up your copy!

Videotape — The “Winter 4-H Warm-up” 4-H leader training was videotaped and is available for checkout. Helpful handouts are also available. For more information, contact Tracy, 441-7180.

Kiwannis Karnival, April 22
The annual Kiwanis Karnival, a free family event is sponsored by the Lincoln Center Kiwanis. This year, it will be held Saturday, April 22, 7–9 p.m. at Eliot Elementary School, 225 S. 26 Street, Lincoln. Eliot school students and their families will be invited to share the fun.

The Karnival features carnival type games for the kids, bingo for adults, prizes, snacks, fun and fellowship. Lincoln Center Kiwanis has sponsored this event for over 50 years providing prizes and snacks.

4-H clubs are needed to provide carnival-type booths. This is a great community service and leadership activity for clubs. If your 4-H club or family would like to have a booth or for more information, call Lorene at 441-7180. Come join the fun.

Kyle Pedersen is Plant Science State Awards Book Winner

Lancaster County 4-H member Kyle 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 Kyle the opportunity to attend the 2006 National 4-H Congress held Nov. 24–28 in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Horse VIPS Committee is planning two free clinics for Lancaster County 4-H members ages 8 through 18. To participate in either clinic, please RSVP to Joyce Agena by calling 486-0355 or e-mailing memagena@wmconnect.net. A limited number of horses and riders will be allowed although all are welcome to come and observe.

Dressage Clinic, March 28
A Dressage Clinic will be held at the Lancaster Event Center on Saturday, March 28 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Western riders are encouraged to attend as well as dressage riders. Equipment and boots are required.

Felice Rose (2006 county fair dressage judge) is the clinician. Felice who was born and raised in Nebraska says for those of you that have been dressage judges for years by the seat of her pants kept thinking that there had to be a better way of doing it! She has studied under Lowell Boomer who started the USDF.

She was hooked on dressage immediately and has now been riding dressage for 28 years. “It changed my whole perspective on riding. I realized you had to get into your horse’s head and be a partner with them. I really enjoy starting horses, the basics, once you have that the rest is easy!”

Train Clinic, April 25
A Trail Clinic will be held April 25 at the Event Center beginning at 5:30 with a possible follow-up clinic at a later date for those who attended the first session.

Kim Bowen and Kate Knapp are the clinicians. Kim and Kate have schooled State (Ne-Ks-Ok-Tx) and Regional Trail and All-Around Horse shows. They have schooled, shown or owned Nebraska Hi-PT horse in various events including the 2006 State clinic, Region 4-4-H Horse Clinic, or $25 for both. For more information call Monte Stauffer, 444-7804, Rick Schmidt, 426-4827 or Karna Dam, 426-9455.

• Registrations 7:30–8:30 a.m.
• Working Ranch Horse
• Trail Clinic or $25 for both. For more information call Monte Stauffer, 444-7804, Rick Schmidt, 426-4827 or Karna Dam, 426-9455.

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Community Focus

Visioning

• When your community does not have agreement on such issues as growth and change.
• When there is lack of hope and the future looks dim.

Visioning is a useful tool in community planning; it can assist a community in identifying important and current issues, understanding of its strengths, weaknesses and challenges of meeting community needs and pulling community residents together in developing a shared vision based on community values.

Who should determine a community’s future, other than its residents? Should it be a consultant hired by the local government to develop a plan, a state or federal agency making decisions about highway bypass or a private developer constructing a residential subdivision or a strip mall? All these implications could have a large impact on a community’s future. A small group of individuals in the community may be making decisions about the community’s future without input from a broad range of residents.

Community residents need to participate in and actively envision the future of their community; otherwise, it will be determined for them.

and thorough input from the community as possible. Participation makes for a better vision and comprehensive plan; the more people are involved, the more input; the more input, the better quality and quantity of information. With better information better decisions can be made to improve the quality of life.

The Listening Sessions lasted approximately one hour and included the following groups:
• Senior Diner members
• Bennet Elementary School staff
• Business owners
• Youth
• Parents with young children

Each session targeted one specific demographic segment of the community and two listening sessions were held as open public meetings allowing anyone living in Bennet to participate in the process. The participants were asked three questions:
1. What are the major problems and challenges in your community?
2. What are the major strengths and assets of your community? How can they be used?
3. What is your vision of Bennet 10 to 15 years from now?

Results of the Listening Sessions

The listening sessions were quite successful and attended by 106 community residents. The answers were recorded by facilitators and analyzed and compiled into a report. Through the report, the major themes were identified:

Major Issues & Concerns:

- Lack of appropriate infrastructure (water quality issues)
- Fear of growth
- Business district development
- Recreation opportunities

Major assets of Bennet:
- Small town atmosphere
- Great school system
- RV camp environment
- Proximity to Lincoln

Second Town Hall Meeting

A second Visioning Town Hall Meeting was held in February. The results of the listening sessions were presented back to the community. Residents then divided into small groups and discussed the results of the listening sessions.

Afterwards, a Citizen Advisory Committee was formed. The primary role of this committee is monitoring the visioning process, assisting the Village Board and Planning Commission in establishing communication linkages between the citizens and local officials, ensuring incorporation of vision statement and the results of the listening sessions into the comprehensive plan.

Next Steps

Information from the entire community visioning process is being used by local officials and the Citizen Advisory Committee to develop a vision statement. Hanna-Keehan Associates is developing a comprehensive plan for Bennet based on the community input. The comprehensive plan is expected to be finished by the end of April.

At Nebraska, this Lincoln Student Works Smarter, not Harder

Alexis Wismer, a junior industrial and management systems engineering major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a Lincoln Christian alum, knows there isn’t one solution for every problem. In her skills to came up with new ways for more rewarding. This year, she is redesigining laparoscopic surgical Center and observed surgery, but the work on their tools. “It’s a research – I have gotten to know.

New City of Lincoln Web Site Addresses Neighborhood Issues

Wondering how to get that pot hole fixed? Tired of the neighbors barking dog? Acting with Citizens to Improve our Neighborhoods (ACTION), a new interactive system on the City of Lincoln’s Web site is now available to answer your non-emergency inquiries. The ACTION system includes a list of about 70 topics, covering issues in all departments. Dangerous sidewalks, special event permits, electrical outages, junk cars and illegal dumping are just a few of the issues covered.

To get answers to your concerns, visit http://www.lincoln.ne.gov/ asp/action/default.asp

Extension Can Facilitate Community Input

In addition to helping facilitate a comprehensive visioning process for the Village of Bennet, Extension Educator Yelena Mitrofanova has also worked with the Villages of Roca and Firth to conduct community attitudes surveys. The Firth Village Board has decided to undertake a visioning process.

UNL Extension can be a resource for communities in southeast Nebraska to help gather community input and facilitate citizen participation in the process. For more information contact Yelena at 441-7180.

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like glass, Plexiglas® or sheet metal.

2) Install netting over the attachment area or hang strands of monofilament fishing line from the eaves so the swallows will bump into it.

3) Install metal projections along the junction of the wall and eave to prevent the movement of swallows while the eaves are closed.

4) Install a concave surface under the eaves. Nest removal should be initiated at the first sign of nest-building because it is illegal to remove nests with eggs or young. Nests can be washed down with a hose. Persistent swallows may attempt to rebuild nests several times before abandoning this effort. Frightening swallows is not effective. Repellent is not effective. An adhesive repellent used for roosting birds (Tanglefoot) may actually improve nest adherence. The use of toxonics, trapping and shooting are against the law; swallows are classified as migratory insectivorous birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

Formosan Termites in Wood Mulch?

Have you received a recent e-mail about the possibility of Formosan termites in discount stores’ bagged mulch? These e-mails are not providing factual information, but are causing a lot of anxiety.

The facts:

Formosan subterranean termites are more destructive than the eastern subterranean termites that are most common in Nebraska. But, they are a tropical termite species and rarely found above 35 N latitude. They are not likely to survive very well in Nebraska.

Whether Formosan termites could withstand the shipping and bagging process in large enough numbers to form a new colony is possible, but highly improbable.

The possibility of Formosan termites moving in wood damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita was recognized many months ago. The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry imposed a quarantine to prevent the movement of Formosan subterranean termites in wood debris outside the quarantined area. According to Bob Odom, Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry: “The email is not accurate and doesn’t even mention the quarantines this department put in place last fall to keep Formosan termites from spreading.”

Woody debris cannot be moved out of quarantined areas without first submitting a plan for treatment.

I’ve had my people looking into these issues to make sure there are no violations of the quarantine. I’ve also had our invasive pest expert contact the stores mentioned in the e-mail and we’ve yet to find any validity to the claims in the e-mail,” Odom said.

“In my opinion, someone is using the Internet to cause hysteria about a problem that doesn’t really exist. If there are people out there who know about someone violating the quarantines, then they need to report it to us. We’ll shut the culprits down real quick but it has to be reported,” Odom said. “I think the quarantines are doing the job, though. We’ve worked with the debris contractors, the Corps of Engineers and FEMA to handle the debris and quarantines.

According to snopes.com, a Web site dedicated to dispelling internet urban legends, Home Depot does not get its wood mulch from the New Orleans area.

After reading this, if you are still concerned, use municipal mulch. Many Nebraska municipalities purchase mulch from tree trimmings which should be safe and termite free.

If you want to use bagged mulch and are still concerned, lay the bags of mulch out in the warm sun for a few hours. According to Mike Merchant, Urban Entomologist at Texas A&M University, raising mulch temperatures to 120 degrees for an hour or more is generally sufficient to kill all insect life. A recent press release from Kansas State can be found at: http://www.oemat.k-state.edu/news/topstory.asp

The lesson learned is don’t believe everything you read on the Internet!

For further information, contact your local University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension office or phone 402-441-7180.
**4-H’ers Help Install Flower Garden at Northeast Family Center**

By Spencer Farley
4-H member

A special place in Lincoln for me is the Northeast Family Center at Whitehall Mansion. I’ve grown up going to the Mansion with my mom for meetings and special family gatherings. Whitehall Mansion is a great old house about a hundred years old.

Two new playgrounds were being donated and I wanted to help. The installation was moved from the summer to fall during school hours. Since I couldn’t help put the playground in, my mom and I tried to think of other ways to help.

We came up with the idea of planting hybrid iris along the playground fence to help beautify the area. Our project started out small, but before we knew it our garden grew to 25 feet by 58 feet and would include plants and flowers that would bloom all season. With a project this big we needed help.

I am a member of the Lincoln Iris Society. I asked my fellow members if they would be willing to help, I was a little nervous getting up and speaking to the whole group but they were wonderful! Not only did they agree to help, but they voted to donate money to the project! Members also donated hybrid iris, daylilies and other plants.

I called on some local businesses to donate needed chemicals and flowering bulbs. We even got a park bench!

More than 25 4-H Teen Council members and parents helped shape and put granite stepping stones in the garden. Some Teen Council members also helped with planting.

It was really fun seeing all the people come together and work on the project. In all, we had nearly 100 volunteers. Even my best friend, who has never gardened, helped! The garden has nearly 500 flowering bulbs, around 200 hybrid iris, 30 hybrid daylilies and many other flowers and grasses. All donated. It was fun seeing the garden come together. Giving something back to the community feels good.

Special thanks to Jean Pedersen (a 4-H parent and Extension Master Gardener) who helped with this community service project.

Northeast Family Center is seeking volunteers to help maintain the garden throughout the season and give educational tours to requesting groups. If you are interested in helping, please call 471-3700.

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**Special Thanks**
Spencer Farley and his family would like to thank the nearly 100 volunteers who helped with this community service project. Special thanks to Jean Pedersen (4-H parent and Extension Master Gardener) who was very involved in the planning, designing and installation of the flower garden.

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**Food Safety Tips for Teens Online**

If you’re a teen, tween or work with this age group, you can download a PowerPoint “Cold Pizza for Breakfast: MyPyramid Food Safety Tips for Teens & Tweens Who Cook” at http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/pizza.shtml. To view the PowerPoint directly on the Web, click on the slide show link.

This is a great way to learn about food safety in the kitchen and will complement your 4-H food and nutrition projects! There are LOTS of graphics with teens and tweens giving food safety advice. It ends with a game of “Keep or Toss.”

These materials were developed by University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, Nebraska Department of Education and the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department.

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**2006 Nebraska Agricultural Youth Institute Conference**

The Nebraska Agricultural Youth Institute (NAYI) is a conference open to high school juniors and seniors interested in agriculture. The 2006 NAYI conference will be held July 9-13 at the Kauffman Center on University of Nebraska-Lincoln City Campus. The conference is a five day educational exposure to many areas of the agriculture sector.

All meals, lodging and conference fees are paid by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. Applications and further information can be obtained from the extension office. Applications are due April 19.