5-1993

The NEBLINE, May 1993

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Household hazardous waste collections—1993

Starting your compost pile

Yard wastes, on a national basis, make up approximately 20 percent of the residential waste stream. This works out to about 230 pounds per person per year. Since yard waste disposal methods have long been environmentally unsound and are becoming increasingly expensive, composting offers people an opportunity to contribute to the solution, and benefit from part of the solid-waste disposal problem.

COMPOST

Composting is the biological decomposition of organic matter. Decomposition occurs naturally but it can be accelerated and improved by human manipulation. By adding microorganisms from the soil, oxygen and water to the yard waste, the composting process will produce soil-enriching compost.

Microorganisms (bacteria, molds or fungi, actinomycetes and protozoa) complete most of the chemical decomposition of the material being composted. Tiny invertebrate animals, such as mites, millipedes, insects, sowbugs, earthworms and snails are the primary agents that break up waste debris that are left by the microorganisms.

The length of the composting process depends on a number of factors. These include the carbon and nitrogen contents of the material, the amount of surface area exposed, moisture, aeration and temperatures reached during composting.

BROWNS AND GREENS

When combining organic materials to make compost, the carbon-to-nitrogen (C:N) ratio is important. The proportion of these two elements should approximate 30 parts carbon to 1 part nitrogen by weight. C:N ratios within the range of 25:1 to 40:1 result in an efficient composting process.

As a general rule, high carbon materials are usually brown in color and are called "browns." High nitrogen materials are usually green in color and are called "greens." With this in mind, you could mix "three parts greens with one part browns" for a good organic material compostable mix.

CONSTRUCTING THE PILE

When constructing the compost pile remember four things; particle size, aeration, moisture and temperature. The surface area of the material to be composted can be increased by breaking it into smaller pieces. Increased surface area allows the microorganisms to digest more material, multiply faster, and generate more heat. Although it is not essential to break materials into small pieces for composting, it does accelerate the process.

Aeration replaces oxygen-deficient air in the center of the compost pile with fresh air. Rapid aerobic decomposition can only occur in the presence of sufficient oxygen. As the composting process proceeds, the pile compacts, therefore restricting oxygen movement into the pile. Aeration is accomplished by physically turning or moving the center of the compost pile to the outside and moving the outside of the pile in. Use a pitchfork or potato fork to turn the pile.

Microorganisms can utilize only those organic materials that are dissolved in water. A compost pile moisture content of 40-50 percent provides adequate moisture without limiting aeration. If the moisture content falls below 40 percent, the bacteria will slow down and may become dormant. When the moisture content exceeds 60 percent, nutrients are leached, air volume is reduced, odors are produced and decomposition is slowed. The "squeeze" test is an easy way to gauge the moisture content of composting materials. The material should feel damp to the touch, with just a drop or two of liquid released when the material is tightly squeezed in the hand. If the pile becomes too wet, it should be turned and restacked. Heat generated by microorganisms as they decompose organic material increases compost pile temperature.

Master Composters are available to answer your questions about composting—441-7180.
Tomatoes! Homegrown style

Tomatoes, undoubtedly, are the most popular home grown crop. They are nutritious, easy and convenient to grow. They are popular because they are easy to grow. However, if you want to grow a successful home-grown crop of tomatoes, you need to be patient and wait for the right growing conditions. The ideal growing conditions for tomatoes are a warm temperature, plenty of sunlight, rich soil, and regular watering. If you provide these conditions, you will be able to grow a successful crop of tomatoes.

Pesticides—the correct mix

So much information is packed onto pesticide labels that there is usually so room to include examples of each application. As a result, label examples may inadvertently go untested. This is bad news. Don’t be afraid of小姐 require the minimum amount of pesticide needed for your immediate use. Simple calculations, the following information can help you to prepare a product for your immediate use. For example, if the product label says, “For the control of aphids on tomatoes, mix fluid ounces of pesticide into gallon of water and spray the plant.” You may need to adjust this formula to the amount of spray you will actually need. You can apply for more material to mix by first spraying the plants with water using the same sprayer and nozzle settings you will use for the pesticide.

If from the water test, you determine that your six tomato plants require one quart of liquid to wet all the foliage, then you should mix one quart of water. Because a quart is one-fourth of a gallon, and two fluid ounces mixed into one quart makes the same strength spray recommended by the label. Consumers can solve problems similar to this one with carefull arithmetic, good measurements, and intelligent use of the information provided here.

How to measure:
If you need to determine the size of a square or rectangular area, such as a lawn for herbicidal application, measure the length and width and multiply them. For example, an area measures 10 feet long by 8 feet wide, it contains 80 square feet. (10 x 8 = 80 ft.)

Common area measurements may involve square feet or square yards. 1 square foot (ft²) = 144 square inches (in²) 1 square yard (yd²) = 9 square feet

Most residential-use pesticides are measured in terms of volume. Some common equivalents are:

1 gallon (gal.) = 128 fluid ounces (fl. oz.) = 4 quarts (qt.) = 96 cups (c.)
1 quart (qt.) = 32 fl. oz. = 8 pints (pt.) = 4 cups (c.)
1 pint (pt.) = 16 fl. oz. = 2 cups (c.)
1 cup (c.) = 8 fluid ounces (fl. oz.) = 8 tablespoons (tbsp.) = 24 teaspoons (tsp.)
1 tablespoon (tbsp.) = 1/2 fluid ounce (fl. oz.) = 3 teaspoons
1 teaspoon (tsp.) = 1/8 fluid ounce (fl. oz.)

In measuring teaspoons or tablespoons of pesticide, use only level spoonfuls. Never use the same measuring device for food preparation and pesticide preparation. Keep a separate set of measuring spoons and cups labeled “for garden use only” securely stored with your pesticides.
There is a point at which measurements needed for smaller quantities of pesticides and for domestic use are too small to measure accurately. In such cases, the user can mix the volume larger, realizing that there will be material leftover. After all, a more accurate measuring device, such as a graduated cylinder or a scale, which measures small weights, or for an alternative pesticide or less concentrated formulation of the same pesticide.

Overirrigating lawns is a waste of water

In Nebraska, lawns receive about 40 percent of the water used by a homeowner. During the summer months when water is especially critical, it is not unusual for 65 to 70 percent of the water delivered to a home to be used for lawn irrigation.

Let the condition of the grass, not the soil, not the days of sunshine, be the guide to watering. Watering daily or every other day, just because water is available, can be detrimental to the lawn and a waste of water. To determine when to water, it is helpful to probe the soil to check for moisture. If a core of soil takes six to eight inches deep contains no moisture, then the lawn is likely to be suffering from drought. A core of water or a wire may be used to probe the soil. If the probe goes into the soil fairly easily and a depth of three to four inches is or moist when pulled from the soil, the lawn probably does not need water. The appearance of the grass can be used as an indicator of when to water. The grass will turn yellow when the soil is dry and will turn green when the soil is moist. The appearance of wilting turf indicates that irrigation is needed. To conserve water, irrigation should be done during the night or early morning. Normally there is little, if any, wind at this time, water pressure is higher, and runoff losses are less. When irrigating during the day, it should be done when there is little or no wind.

Designing a successful landscape requires planning

Creating a water-efficient landscape begins with a well-planned design. Sketch your yard with locations of existing structures, trees, shrubs as a base for developing the landscape budget, appearance, function, maintenance and water requirements. Local landscape architects, designers and nurserymen can help in this decision-making. Implementing your landscape design can be done gradually over several years.

Soil preparation

Increasing plant health and conserve water, add organic material to the soil of shrub and flower bed areas. This will improve the water infiltration into the soil. When you irrigate, the water soaks into the ground rather than runs away. Second, the mulch helps hold moisture in the soil, causing the water to stay in the soil. In addition to the benefits derived from conserving water, mulches serve several other purposes. They prevent soil erosion and splashing of soil onto plants and buildings during periods of rain or irrigation. They also provide attractive background for flowers and shrubs. Finally, one of the many uses is to limit weed growth. Homeowners have many materials from which to choose two or three years. Bulbs that multiply themselves, such as daffodils, and bellflowers are used in the landscape.

Although many tulips, daffodils, get overcrowded in time. That is why they are so popular, it doesn’t take a lot of work to get beautiful spring flowers.

Mulching is a many splendid thing

Applying a mulch in your garden or landscape bed is one of the best things you can do for your plants in dry weather. Mulches help plants survive during drought with minimal water. They can improve the rate of water infiltration into the soil. When you apply mulch, the water doesn’t run off the soil, it soaks into the ground rather than runs away. Second, the mulch helps hold moisture in the soil, causing the water to stay in the soil. In addition to the benefits derived from conserving water, mulches serve several other purposes. They prevent soil erosion and splashing of soil onto plants and buildings during periods of rain or irrigation. They also provide attractive background for flowers and shrubs. Finally, one of the many uses is to limit weed growth. Homeowners have many materials from which to choose when selecting a mulch. Leaves, straw, corn cobs, or grass clippings, are popular materials and they are available in your landscape.

Organic mulches should be applied somewhat loosely and two to four inches in depth. This prevents water from running from the surface. When applying a mulch, avoid having it contact the stems of plants in the bed. Try to maintain a one or two-inch space between the mulch and the stem. (DJ)
Field scout training in Lincoln

A field scout training session has been scheduled for May 12, 8:30 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Conference Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road, Lincoln. This day-long session is designed for beginning field crop scouts, or other interested people and will provide basic information on identification of insects, weeds, and crop disorders. Training includes lectures and laboratory sessions. There will be a $10 registration fee for which will include lunch. For more information, contact Barb Ogg, 441-7180.

Additional training materials are available for individual study. Two videotapes cover scouting procedures and insect identification in corn (26 minutes) and soybeans and alfalfa (21 minutes). Each videotape costs $29.95 plus sales tax; both videos may be ordered on one reel for $59, plus sales tax. The Field Scout Manual covers all types of insects, pests and mites, weeds, and diseases that are commonly associated with major Nebraska field crops. Text and color photos provide information on field scouting for insects and weeds. The cost is $28 plus sales tax. To receive this material, send your order and check made payable to the University of Nebraska, to Communications and Computing Services, P.O. Box 830918, University of Nebraska-

When banding herbicides, adjust equipment for best coverage, least damage

Equipment adjustments when applying postemergence herbicides to soybeans can offer increased coverage with less potential damage to the crop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dual Swivel</th>
<th>Drop Hoses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band Width</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Banding using post direct spray

Directed spraying is an application method where pesticides are applied to a specific area. Directed applications reduce crop injury by treating only the lower, less sensitive portions of the crop. The application is directed onto small weeds that may be covered by the crop canopy.

Drop hoses are useful for applying herbicides to the lower portion of tall crops. Drops reduce the risk of crop injury. Depressors can be equipped with dual swivel nozzle bodies which give greater freedom for adjustment. For total row coverage a special nozzle designed for double outlet flat-flat can be used.

A directed application may be focused on the row middles as a substrate for row cultivation. Often twin-jet nozzles are used to provide uniform coverage and to spray pattern directions (30 degrees ahead and behind). These nozzles give adequate and foliage penetration than a single orifice nozzle. Even flat-flat nozzles can be used to treat row middles.

Row banding

Some growers are banding postemergence herbicides to reduce costs. A multiple nozzle configuration often is used when foliage penetration or crop height limits the effectiveness of a single nozzle. Two or three nozzles per row may provide better coverage of small weed species shielded by the canopy.

When the emerging crop is taller than three inches, the top or center nozzle should be removed and used in a two-nozzle configuration. This reduces the risk of crop injury because the crop doesn’t intercept a large portion of the herbicide. To drift and keep the band within the desired area, many crop producers have added shrouds or plastic hooding to the nozzle assemblies.

When sizing nozzles, the procedure is similar to sizing a band application at planting except that the output from more than a single nozzle is reduced. Thus, divide the required discharge within the band by the number of nozzles. During calibration, the output from all nozzles within the band is combined.

Atrazine rates, setback buffers changed

Atrazine and all products containing atrazine have new label restrictions for 1993. The restrictions concern two major provisions:

1. Rate reduction
2. Buffer setback zones next to water

These apply for all soil applications prior to crop emergence. On highly erodible soils (as defined by the Soil Conservation Service).

- If the conservation tillage package, maximum 30% of the soil covered plant residues at planting, a maximum of 2.0 lbs/A (acre) can be applied as a broadcast spray.
- If the soil with a cover residue less than 30%, a maximum of 1.6 lbs/A may be applied.

Atrazine rates (active ingredient)

- Up to 2.0 lbs/A can be applied as a broadcast spray.
- If no atrazine was applied prior to corn emergence, a maximum of 2.0 lbs/A can be broadcast. If a postemergence application is required referred to as the atrazine application may not exceed 2.5 lbs active ingredient per acre per calendar year.

Buffer zones

This product may not be mixed, loaded or used within 50 feet of all wells, including abandoned wells, drainage ditches, and sinkholes. On soils which are not highly erodible:

- By a ground within 66 where field surface perpendicular to the centerline of the river or within 200 or impounded lakes or impoundments of the product is applied land, the 66-foot or more minimum number of larvae per stem. If the highly erodible buffer or setback must be planted to crop, suitable crop as will be designated.

The label revisions were offered voluntarily by Ciba to address potential problems. Please turn to Atrazine: page 6

Scout alfalfa now!

The alfalfa weevil is the most consistent insect pest attacking first cutting alfalfa. To protect economic losses, proper management of this pest is essential during years when weevil populations are high. The best way to manage this pest is to scout first cutting alfalfa fields early. Don’t wait until you see your neighbor spraying his field before you take a good look at your own.

Because development of alfalfa weevil larvac is temperature dependent, damage to alfalfa may be delayed this spring because of cooler temperatures. If you haven’t looked at your alfalfa yet, you should be looking NOW! Early damage looks like tiny shot holes on terminal foliage and buds. Look for small, green or yellow larvae, about 1/8-inch long, with black heads and a light-colored stripe down the middle of the back. Full-grown larvae are about 3/8-inch long.

The following scouting and decision-making methods can be used to help you determine the need for alfalfa weevil management procedures.

Stem Count Decision Method

Carefully break off cut stems 30-50 stems at ground level and put the stems in a steep-sided bucket. Be sure to select stems randomly from different parts of the field. Count the stems and determine their average height above the ground. Count the larvae and compute the average number of larvae per stem. Use the accompanying charts to determine what management action to take. Your choices are to spray right now, sample in one or five days, or wait to cut. After the cut stage, it is probably more profitable to cut the alfalfa than to treat with an insecticide. Use the accompanying charts to determine your action thresholds. The chart you use depends on the price of hay or quality of hay you wish to grow.

![Alfalfa Weevil Chart](image)

Alfalfa Weevil Stem Count Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value of Hay ($/ton)</th>
<th>Atrazine plus application cost ($/acre)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$10</td>
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<tr>
<td>$20</td>
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Stubble Treatment

Frequently, the alfalfa weevil populations can be adequately reduced by timely cutting of the hay. This saves the expense of an insecticide treatment. After cutting and removing the hay, thoroughly examine the stubble for evidence of further feeding. If normal regrowth does not appear after five to seven days, a stubble treatment may be necessary. To calculate the number of days that complete defoliation can be tolerated before an insecticide application will be economical, use the following table. The number of days will vary, depending on the cost of the insecticide treatment, the value of the hay, and whether the hay is cut at first bloom or on a 28-day harvest schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Your Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Insecticide plus application cost ($/acre)</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Value of hay ($/ton)</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Factor: (1st-bloom harvest - 0.0198)</td>
<td>0.0198</td>
<td>0.0198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Days of complete defoliation that can be tolerated</td>
<td>6.3 days</td>
<td>6.3 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To determine, divide A by B or C. The above example is then calculated as follows: D = A/(B * C) = 10.00/(0.0198 * 0.0198) = 6.3 days.

Alfalfa stubble threshold calculation chart

Optimal alfalfa management includes scouting for alfalfa weevil feeding before feeding damage becomes noticeable. For information about alfalfa weevil biology, refer to NebGuide G73-30 (free). Information on insects that can be used for alfalfa weevil is found in EC22-1211, Insect Management Guide for Nebraska Alfalfa, Soybeans, Wheat, Range and Pasture ($2 plus postage, if mailed). Both are available from the Lancaster County Extension Office. (800)
Second "Once-A-Month Cooking" class scheduled for May 11

Due to popular demand, we are scheduling a second "Once-A-Month Cooking" class, May 11, 7 to 9 p.m. If you couldn't get into the first class, here's another opportunity. Return the following registration form and send with your fee by May 5 — payment must accompany your registration (A1).

Once-A-Month Cooking
Tuesday, May 11, 1993
Address ____________________
City ________________________
Zip __________

Making checks payable to Lancaster County Extension
Return to Nebraska State Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County
444 Cherrywood Road • Lincoln, NE • 68528-1507

Eating for pleasure and health: a new EFNEP lesson

What we eat isn't the only thing that affects our health — but, along with how much we smoke, drink and exercise, it does make a difference... When we do our best with the things we can control, we improve our chances of staying healthy.

Do you and your family get a lot of fun in your food? Many times we do, but we also feel guilty about it. EFNEP homemakers told us that they eat food with less fat. This is true whether we are slim or overweight. EFNEP homemakers are taught by nutrition advisors that eating food with less fat means that their families could:

1. Lose excess weight and keep it off more easily.
2. ...spend less money on food. Many foods that are costly, like rich baked goods, ice cream, salad dressings and mayonnaise.
3. ...eat more food with healthy starch and fiber — like bread, rice, noodles, cereal, vegetables, fruit, dried beans and peas.
4. ...get more vitamins, minerals and protein in their food.
5. ...improve their chances of avoiding certain forms of cancer and heart disease.

Fat is a natural part of many foods and is also added to many foods. Sometimes we can see the fat, but much of the fat in our food is added by nutrition advisors that eating food with less fat means that their families could:

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The following changes have been made for this year’s cat show. For further information, refer to the 1993 County Fair Premium List coming out approximately June 1, or call the extension office.

1. 4-H cat entries check-in (Farmland Fbd.)
   - Long hair show entry begins at 8:30 a.m.
   - Short hair show entry begins at 1:30 p.m.

2. 4-H Cat Show (Farmland Fbd.)
   - Long hair show entry begins at 8:30 a.m.
   - Short hair show entry begins at 1:30 p.m.

3. Showmanship will be divided into four divisions in both long and short hair shows. (Junior—under 12; intermediate—12-14; senior—15 and older; advanced senior—exhibitors who have won senior showmanship.)

Please turn to Cat: page 7

Horse Bits

Changes for county fair

The 1993 Lancaster County Fairbook is now at the publishers and should be available soon. Be sure to study the section on the 4-H horse shows in the fairbook to learn about changes.

There are three major changes 4-H horse members need to be aware of this year: 1) county fair 4-H horse show has been moved to the coliseum, 2) entries to county fair for 4-H horses must be received between February 16, 1993, replacing Jana Lamplot. Burson will be on family Focus. (OM) and 3) entries to the county fair for 4-H horses must be received between July 1 and July 8 at the extension office.

County fair horse show schedule
Tuesday, August 3, 9:00 a.m. - English Horse Show
Wednesday, August 4, 8:00 a.m. - Horse Showmanship Contest
Thursday, August 5, 8:00 a.m. - Horse Judging Contest
Thursday, August 5, 11:00 a.m. - Special Needs Classes
Saturday, August 7, 8:00 a.m. - Competitive Trail Ride
Tuesday, August 10, 7:00 p.m. - 4-H Horse Awards Activity

Further information at this time is available from 4-H leaders, horse VIPS committee members and the extension office. Please note that none of these changes apply to the open class horse show.

Horse Identification time

The deadline date for horse identification sheets to be returned to the extension office is June 1 for all 4-H members making county fair entries. However, those members planning to enter district and state events must meet an earlier deadline. District and state registration forms, horsemanship level, individual horses and horse identification sheets must be returned to the extension office by 4 p.m., Wednesday, May 26.

Reminder for team try-outs

4-H members wishing to try-out for special activities should contact the extension office if you are not yet signed up. This includes those interested in horse judging, horse bowl, speech, hippology and demonstrations.

Horse speech and demonstration contest

The Lancaster County 4-H Horse Speech and Demonstration Contest will be held Tuesday, June 1, 7 p.m. Winners of the junior and senior divisions of each contest will advance to the state contest. Contestants must preregister at the extension office by May 25. (WLS)

Help make county fair a success

The Lancaster County Fair can only be a success with the help of volunteers - and we need you! Adults and youth 12 years of age and older are needed to help with entering, judging and displaying of exhibits. Assistants are needed in the areas of food, clothing, home environment, general, engineering and horticulture. Monday, August 1, 3-4 p.m. and Tuesday, August 2, 8:00 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. are the times needed for your help. Assistants will display exhibits and write comments for judges. Volunteers for Fair Fun Day are also needed to lead tours and assist in registration Thursday, August 5 from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. An orientation for Fair Fun Day workers will be held Tuesday, August 3. Please call the extension office to sign up. Your time and energy is much appreciated! (AMM)

1993 pre-fair contest schedule
June 24 - Practice home economics judging—1:30-2:45 p.m. 
Practice style revue—3:00-4:00 p.m.
July 8 - Practice demonstration workshop—1:00 p.m.
July 15 - Home economics judging contest—1:00 p.m.
Horticulture judging contest—9:00 a.m.
July 19 - Practice music contest 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.
July 28 - Style revue judging
July 29 - Music contest—7:00 p.m.

Please mark these dates on your calendar. For further information on any events, call the extension office at 441-7180. (AMM)

1993 4-H Music Contest

KIMBALL RECITAL HALL UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA LINCOLN CITY CAMPUS

Kimball Hall and July 29th is the time and the place, To sing songs and dance with a smiling face. Bringing clubs together to share and have fun, The 4-H Music Contest is where it shall be done.

So put your thinking caps on real tight, And practice, practice, practice, till it’s done right. When the curtain opens and the lights go up, You can be proud to strut your stuff.

We hope that you will join us on this day, Once you see how fun it is—you’re on your way. To building confidence and lots of friends, You’ll never, ever want the fun to end!

Practice day is Monday, July 19th, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Conference Center, 444 Cherrywood Road. To make a reservation, please call the Extension office at 441-7180.
**Design from Page 2**

Adaptability to your soil(s) and climate. We are blessed with an abundance of beautiful native plants which are naturally adapted to the region. Most have lower water demands, fewer pest problems and less fertilizer needs than many non-adapted, exotic plants brought into our landscapes.

Through the support of the nursery industry, native plants are becoming more available in retail nurseries and garden centers. Combining natives with well-adapted exotics creates a beautiful, interesting landscape which conserves water. (DJ)

**Garden Gossip Hotline**

441-7179

Accessible from any phone

Bean leaf beetles attack emerging soybeans

Bean leaf beetles are active and can be searching out early emerging soybeans. Concentrate scouting on early fields of beans because they are most likely to be easily damaged. Adults vary in color, but are usually yellowish-tan to reddish, about 1/4” long, usually with four black spots and a black outside border on each wing over. These spots and the outside edge are the same in all beetles in some individuals, at all beetles have a small black target on the outer edge of the wing near the thorax.

Bean leaf beetle overwinter in the soil to wooded areas near fields and begin emerging in early April. Initially the beetles fly into spring gardens feeding on alfalfa or sweet clover, but they do not damage these crops. The beetles fly into emerging soybean fields and image by feeding on stolons and emerging leaves. For feeding, females begin to lay eggs.

Please turn to Beetle page 8

**Compost from Page 1**

Temperatures. File temperatures between 90 and 140 degrees F indicate rapid composting. Temperatures greater than 140 degrees F reduce the activity of many of the most active organisms. A temperature probe or a soil thermometer can be used to keep track of compost temperatures.

The composting process depends on all the factors discussed: carbon-to-nitrogen ratios, surface area, aeration, temperature and moisture content. The art of composting is balancing these factors to achieve the final product in the desired time frame.

Under optimum conditions and with frequent turning, usable compost might be produced in as little as one month. However, composting can survive most neglect, especially if a one- to two-year wait for finished compost is acceptable.

**Slow or Fast?**

There are two popular methods of composting: holding units or the slow method and turning units or the fast method. Working examples of these methods are discussed in the Composting Demonstration site at the Chet Ager Nature Center, Pioneer Park. Simplifying units are containers or bins that hold yard and garden waste until composting is complete. Using a holding unit is the easiest, but slowest, way to compost. Material should be added to the holding unit as it is generated; no turning is required.

Non-woody materials, such as grass clippings, crop wastes, garden refuse and leaves, will compost in holding units, but decomposition can take from six months to two years.

Turning units complete this process efficiently and safely. Wastes in turning units must be mixed on a regular basis. Frequent turning (every 3 to 7 days) and replenishing moisture levels speeds composting by providing aerobic bacteria with the oxygen and water they need to break down materials.

Materials to be composted should be added to turning units in small batches, rather than in smaller amounts over time. Materials should be stockpiled until there are enough to fill a 4 foot x 4 foot x 4 foot bin. Turning systems require careful preparation of materials and frequent maintenance. These units may also require greater expense or effort to buy or build.

**Uses of Compost**

Use compost as a soil amendment. Compost improves physical, chemical and biological properties of soils. Adding compost will increase the moisture holding capacity of sandy soils and as a result reduce drought damage to plants. When added to heavy clay soil, compost will improve drainage and aeration, therefore reducing water saturation damage to plants. Compost increases the ability of the soil to hold and release essential nutrients. The activity of earthworms and soil microorganisms beneficial to plant growth is promoted with the addition of compost. Other benefits of adding compost include improved seed emergence and water infiltration due to a reduction in soil crusting.

Over time, yearly additions of compost will create desirable soil structure, making the soil much easier to work. Incorporate to two inches of well decomposed compost in the top six to eight inches of soil. Use the lower rate for sandy soils and the higher rate for clay soils.

Leaf compost can be used as a component of potting soil mixes. Generally, no more than one foot to one third by volume of the potting mix should be compost.

**MULCH**

Using organic waste as a mulch is an alternative to traditional composting that also reduces the waste stream. Organic mulches placed on the soil surface of the garden or landscape control weeds, reduce evaporation, modify the soil temperature and reduce soil erosion. The types of yard waste that can be used as mulches include lawn clippings, leaves, pine needles and chopped branches.

The simplest way to dispose of grass clippings is to leave them on the lawn. This actually benefits the grass by returning nutrients and organic matter to the soil. Frequent mowing and even distribution of grass clippings can provide nitrogen equivalent to one fertilizer application. (MJD/D)
"On Your Own in rural America"  

LIVING IN RURAL AMERICA can be the greatest pleasure for you. Keeping it a safe environment takes thought and effort. A new educational program, "On your own in rural America," will be introduced later this year. The program provides ways rural families can discuss self-care, improve safety and well-being skills.

Here's a (4) checklist of 15 things parents and youth can discuss and observe as well as being skills for a safe and fun-filled summer.

1. observe the "no seat-no ride" rule for tractors/trucks/machinery
2. youth don't play around machinery
3. machinery is down to avoid crushing
4. observe "brakes on-keys out" rule for idle power equipment
5. power take off (PTO) in neutral
6. fence ponds and pits
7. machine operators are trained and supervised
8. smoke-free out of reach of children
9. lock up electricity
10. lock up chemicals
11. keys are on equipment
12. warning decals on grain bins/wagons/trucks
13. Family Safety Day observed
14. safeguards against injuries by taking time to be safe.

15. "By buying it" by checking your local library for a copy. If not available locally, libraries can often obtain them from other libraries for you.


Cooking a-La' Heart by Linda Hachfeld and Betsy Eyrks. Please turn to Recipes: page 8

Recipes for reducing fat and cholesterol

If you're trying to cook heart healthy foods, you may want to try some of these cookbooks recommended by the National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics.

"Try it before you buy it" by checking your local library for a copy. If not available locally, libraries can often obtain them from other libraries for you.


Cooking a-La' Heart by Linda Hachfeld and Betsy Eyrks. Please turn to Recipes: page 8

Tax

use of your car. Second, you must keep an accurate record, such as a logbook, of the number of miles you drive each time you drive for business, the date, where you went and business reason for the trip. If you use the car for a trip that's both business and personal, generally, you can deduct only the extra miles required by the business portion rather than the whole trip.

If you hire someone else to help you, that person may be your employee or an independent contractor, be very careful. If you fall someone an independent contractor and they're not, you may end up owing the government more taxes than you can pay.

An employee is someone whose work you control. You tell them when to work, what to work on and how to work. An independent contractor is someone you hire to perform a job. You tell the contractor what should be accomplished, but you have no control over how it is done. It's up to the independent contractor to control how he does the job.

For an employee, you must withhold income and social security taxes as well as pay state and federal unemployment taxes. None of this is required for independent contractors. However, you must be sure to get the social security numbers of any independent contractors before you pay them anything or you may wind up having to withhold taxes from their pay, too. (AMM)

From Page 4

4-H News continued

4-H members traveling to D.C.

Citizen Washington Focus group at March 20 education meeting.

Twenty-four 4-H members from Lancaster County will be leaving June 8 for Washington, D.C. Their 13 day bus journey will take them to Chicago, Detroit, New York City, Gettysburg, Washington, D.C. and Virginia Beach. The destination of this fun-filled trip is Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF) at the National 4-H Center.

CWF is a unique 4-H program available to youth ages 15-19, that combines educational field trips and professional consultations. The delegates will explore their citizenship rights and privileges as U.S. citizens, identify issues facing youth today, meet legislators and appointed officials, practice leadership skills in citizenship and have fun with other 4-H members from across the United States.

The group from Lancaster County is being joined by other youth had all day educational and fun meeting. The delegates learned not only about Nebraska's government, but how our nation's capital is run. The group from Lancaster County delegates and sponsors are: Russell Bergsten, Ryan Bergsten, Alicia Carlotto, Amy Carlotto, Jaime Fuller, Mike Gropp, Jayme Grundman, Sarah Hall, Tyler Hildr, Lindsay Harger, Kristine Knapp, Tina Nowinska, Analisa Prior, Jayne Roseboom, Aaron Schepers, Robin Starely, Marion Talcott, Kim Vance, Brent Wilson, Richard Bergsten, Mandelle Bergsten and Ann Marie Moravec.

The trip was made possible by the Lancaster County 4-H Fund with the money raised last year. This year's trip is planned for the spring. The trip will be again in 1996. A three year rotation is used in order to do various fund-raising activities to help defray the cost of the trip. Youth interested in the 1996 trip are encouraged to call the extension office. Citizenship Washington Focus is an excellent learning experience that delegates will remember forever. (AMM)

From Page 4

Teaching children about money

When it comes to helping our children, the old saying, "Do as I say, not as I do," just doesn't hold water. An example is the strongest teacher. Attitudes, ideas and actions flow almost invisibly from parent to child, generation to generation -- unconsciously for the most part.

Children may imitate your ideas or rebel against them, but you can be sure they'll be affected by them.

If you can, too.

Money is a means, not an end. It's a vital means, though not the

Please turn to Money: page 8

From Page 4

Packing

the things that you take along "just in case". Choose one coordinating color like navy or black. This way you can mix and match outfits and you will need fewer shoes and accessories.

Take only jewelry you can wear with several outfits. Leave your most valuable pieces at home.

Travel better in hard side luggage, but it can be heavy. Frequent travelers may want to invest in travel accessories to conserve space.

Fold clothes in thirds or roll them. Put the lightest things on top. Heavy items should be packed near the hinges. Pack

When traveling, leave an itinerary and phone numbers where you can be reached, with a family member, business co-worker or friend. Let someone know when you've reached your destination. (LB)

From Page 4

Food, Families & Finance News continued

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