Ten Tips for Wise Volunteering

If you have some time to share or give to make a difference, these tips help you make a good choice and match.

1. Research the causes or issues important to you

Look for a group that deals with issues about which you feel strongly. You may already be giving money to one of these organizations and may be a good place to volunteer.

2. Consider the skills you have to offer.

While most nonprofits are eager to find volunteer help, they have to be careful when accepting the services you offer. You may be asked to come for an interview, fill out a volunteer application, describe your qualifications, and your background — just as you would at an interview for a paying job.

3. Consider volunteering as a family.

Virtual volunteering is an easy and rewarding way to get involved with the 2010 USA National Games for Special Olympics! See page 10

Volunteering is an easy and rewarding way to get involved with the 2010 USA National Games for Special Olympics!
Calibrating Hand-Held Sprayers

Do you need to spot spray weedy patches in the lawn or pasture with a hand-held sprayer? We will discuss a simple step-by-step calibration procedure that ensures you apply the correct amount of pesticide to comply with the product label and so you will achieve satisfactory results.

In order to apply the recommended amount of chemical through a sprayer, you need to know the steps:

1. The quantity of total spray output you will be applying per unit of area, e.g., gallons per acre (GPA); and,
2. The recommended amount of product to apply per acre.

I recently came across a simplified method of calibrating hand-held sprayers. This methodology works for calibrating either compressed air (pump up) sprayers or sprayers with a motor driven pump to create pressure (hand guns). The following procedure illustrates the steps required to properly calibrate hand-held sprayers. Most of the procedure is the same whether you are using a compressed air or powered sprayer. Illustrated text applies only to compressed air sprayers.

1) Note the “full” mark on the spray tank. There will be space above the mark for compressed air.
2) Determine the useful volume of the spray tank by measuring the volume of water needed to fill an empty tank to the full mark.
3) Using only water, fill the container to the full mark. Start the motorized pump or pressurize the tank, then test the spray pattern. Add pressure and/or adjust the spray tip until you are satisfied with the spray pattern.
4) Measure and mark a test area 18.5 feet x 18.5 feet square.
5) Spray the test area in the manner you would normally do when controlling the target pest and record the time in seconds to treat the test area.
6) Pump up the pressure again and spray into a container for the same number of seconds it took to “treat” the test area (step 5). Fill and measure the fluid ounces (fl.-oz.) caught in the container. The number of fl.-oz. caught in the container will be equal to the gallons of spray you would have applied had you sprayed a full acre (GPA).

Determine the Amount of Chemical to Add to the Tank

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How to Measure Small Quantities of Pesticide

You could measure small quantities of pesticide using a number of different measuring devices. Three common examples are:

• A measuring cup (Design a measuring cup for garage use only. Never use the same cup that is used for cooking.
• A tablespoon (Tbsp) (If you will be using an old tablespoon from the silverware drawer, check volume by pouring water from a measuring spoon into the spoon designated for pesticides to check the actual volume.)
• A disposable syringe calibrated in milliliters (These are sold at veterinary supply and farm supply stores). This is my personal favorite because you suck chemical into the syringe instead of pouring chemical from the bottle into an open measure which can spill on your hands or clothes. A syringe accurately measures any volume up to its full capacity.

The calculations below demonstrate how to compute the chemical needed for our example using these three fluid volume measuring devices.

• 1.9 fl.-oz./8 fl.-oz./Cup = 0.24 Cup per tank. Add just under 1/4 cup of product per tank.
• 1.9 fl.-oz./x 2 Tbsp per ounce = 3.8 Tbsp. Add just under 4 Tbsp per tank.
• 1.9 fl.-oz./x 29.6 milliliters/ml./fl.-oz. = 56.2 ml. Add just over 56 ml per tank.

New Tall Fescue Varieties Worth Consideration

Tall fescue is a pasture grass we often have resisted using because it can contain some compounds that can harm livestock. Bruce Anderson, UNL forages specialist, says that is changing. Tall fescue is a high yielding and persistent cool-season grass. Compared to other grasses, fescue grows especially well in the fall so it often is used for winter grazing.

Traditional fescue varieties often have an internal fungus, or endophyte, that produces chemicals that help the plant resist insects and diseases, which is good. But some of the chemicals also affect body temperature regulation, blood flow, and feed intake in livestock. These can be very sensitive. Mares can abort or have stillborn foals, or they may fail to produce milk. Cattle, we often see rough hair coats and some spent standing in water or shade during summer.

Cows produce less milk and often have difficulty conceiving. Intake can be especially low during summer, so weight gains also are low. In winter, a condition called ‘fescue foot’ can cause animals to lose hooves, ears, or tails during cold weather.

Many new fescue varieties, though, have been developed to be either ‘endon free’ or their they contain a novel, safe endophyte. These fescues are very safe to graze. Research here in Nebraska under both dryland and irrigated conditions has shown many of these varieties are highly productive and have good survival in our area. Many producers are beginning to use them very successfully in their grazing programs. Anderson suggests they are especially well suited for cow-calf operations. He has even planted some on his own farm.

Tall fescue used to be a grass we avoided, but since new varieties do not have the toxins of old fescues, consider using it for your new plantings. Think about it.

Source: Bruce Anderson, UNL Forage Specialist

Farm Views
Page 2
April 2010
Heat Treatments for Bed Bugs

Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

One reason bed bug infestations are increasing is because they are resistant to pyrethroids, the most commonly used insecticide products used inside homes. This resistance is widespread. University of Kentucky researchers have discovered bed bugs collected across the U.S. have one or two gene sequences that enable them to detoxify pyrethroid insecticides. This explains why we are seeing problems with bed bug control.

Other treatment approaches are needed. One of the newest approaches is to use heat to eradicate bed bugs. Like all animals, bed bugs have an optimal range of temperatures for survival. Studies show adult bed bugs immediately die at 120°F. Their eggs die at 122°F.

Plunkett’s Pest Control is using heat treatments in Lincoln and other places in Nebraska. They are using a Thermal Remediation system developed by Temp-Air. Mike McHale, Plunkett’s Multi-Housing Operations Manager and Mike Volnek, Service Supervisor, were kind enough to let me tag along on a recent job so I could learn about how this system works.

The treatment begins, Plunkett’s technicians place 24 wireless temperature sensors in the most insulated areas of the apartment. These sensors send temperature data to an on-site computer where technicians can remotely (and more comfortably) monitor temperatures. Some items, like candles, aerosol canisters, malodorous foods and medications do not tolerate temperatures above 120°F. These items were removed from the apartment or placed in the refrigerator.

Heat must be distributed evenly so furniture was pulled away from walls, drawers were pulled out, and boxes were emptied. Mattresses were set on edge. Residual insecticides were applied to outside-facing walls to prevent bed bugs from migrating outward once the heat is turned on.

Once the prep work was done, technicians placed large electric heaters in the apartment along with large fans to circulate the heat.

According to McHale, once the sensors temperatures reach 120°F, they continue heating for 4-6 hours or more, depending on the infestation level. This extended heat treatment makes sure all bed bugs and their eggs are killed.

This system uses four electric heaters per apartment which run on 220 volts. Most apartments don’t have the electrical capacity to run them, so the Thermal Remediation system has a generator housed outdoors in a trailer.

There are several advantages of heat treatments. First, inhabitants are not exposed to insecticides, especially in sleeping areas. It is unnecessary to discard beds and furniture and laundering isn’t needed. Another advantage; Plunkett’s guarantees heat treatments at least for a period of time. They won’t guarantee the apartment free of all future infestations, only the current one.

This treatment is pretty invasive. Because all the furniture is moved around, it will take some time for the inhabitant to put the place back together. It is also fairly expensive. McHale told me they charge $1,400 to heat treat a 900-square foot apartment.

For more places Thermal Remediation is being used for bed bug control, check out http://www.thermal-remediation.com/news.aspx.

Wildlife Repellents an Option in Certain Situations

Understand the strengths and weaknesses of repellents before you buy the “hype.”

Each year, our office receives many calls from folks who are upset with local wildlife damaging plants and property. Many people want to know if there is something they can spray or sprinkle on their plants or yard to keep animals out. The short answer is “No.” Repellents are an option for wildlife damage reduction, but rarely work the way you want. Before you spend your money on repellents consider the following:

1. Animals can just walk on by. The first problem with repellents is, animals can simply walk past an offensive smell. Think of all the times you have smelled bad and repulsive odors. Did it stop you from going where you needed to go? Probably not. Now consider it from an animal’s point of view. It has a choice. Continue to eat and smell a bad smell or not smell a bad smell and starve. Which path do you think it will take? How about state parks, the most commonly used cross commercially available repellents.

2. Animals get used to repellents. Repellents can become familiar. Let’s say you do find a repellent that seems to drive animals away from your property — a perimeter repellent. Perimeter repellents use an animal’s fear of predators to work. For example, if you used coyote urine, you may reduce woodchuck damage because coyotes eat woodchucks. The woodchucks smell the urine you’ve applied and avoid the area — for a time. The problem is it won’t take long before the woodchuck realizes it is smelling cotties but it doesn’t see them. If the woodchuck is starving, it will enter the area and risk an encounter with a coyote. It will not choose to starve.

3. Mistaken Cause. A third problem with repellents is a problem I think the repellent they used may have worked, when in fact, the repellent didn’t work at all. Here’s an example: Let’s assume you have a skunk under your deck. Your neighbor tells you to throw mothballs out of their dens or just ignore them and make them less desirable for deer to gnaw on. The products are quite effective, but they don’t, they will starve. No repellent can drive away an animal that only has death as an alternative option.

Is There Anything That Works?

There are some repellents that may work for you in certain situations. Remember none of these are going to be 100 percent effective — they are only one of the tools you should be using. Here are some examples:

1. **Olfactory Repellents** — Smell. Some products are designed to harass a animal’s desire to touch. Sticky products are used to repel pigeons who don’t like gooey feet. These products also collect dirt and can effect the appearance of a building. The sticky product can also trap small birds which results in cruelty — especially if you aren’t familiar with the product and apply it improperly.

Source: Internet Center for Wildlife Damage

FOR MORE INFORMATION
For research-based information on how to handle wildlife damage problems, visit the Internet Center for Wildlife Damage Management at http://icwdm.org/.
Microwave ovens can play an important role at mealtime, but special care must be taken when cooking or reheating meat, poultry, fish, and eggs to make sure they are prepared safely. Microwave ovens can cook unevenly and leave “cold spots,” where harmful bacteria can survive. For this reason, it is important to use the following safe microwaving tips to prevent foodborne illness.

### Microwave Oven Cooking

- Arrange food items evenly in a covered dish and add some liquid, if needed. Cover the dish with a lid or plastic wrap; loosen or vent the lid or wrap to let steam escape. The moist heat created will help destroy harmful bacteria and ensure uniform cooking. Cooking bags also provide safe, even cooking.
- Do not cook large cuts of meat on high power (100%). Large cuts of meat should be cooked on medium power (50%) for longer periods. This allows heat to reach the center without overcooking outer areas.
- Stir or rotate food midway through the microwaving time to eliminate cold spots where harmful bacteria can survive and for even more cooking.
- When partially cooking food in the microwave oven to finish cooking on the grill or in a conventional oven, it is important to transfer the microwaved food to the other heat source immediately. Never partially cook food and store it for later use.
- Use a food thermometer or the oven’s temperature probe to verify the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature. Cooking times may vary because ovens vary in power and efficiency. Always allow standing time, which completes the cooking, before checking the internal temperature with a food thermometer.
- Cook foods to the following safe minimum internal temperatures:
  - Beef, veal, lamb steak, and chops: 145°F
  - Turkey: 160°F
  - Ground beef and lamb: 160°F
  - Fish: 145°F
  - Leftovers: 165°F
- Stuffed poultry is not recommended. Cook stuffing separately to 165°F.
- All poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F.
- Cooking whole, stuffed poultry in a microwave oven is not recommended. The stuffing might not reach the temperature needed to destroy harmful bacteria.

### Microwave Defrosting

- Remove food from packaging before defrosting. Do not use foam trays and plastic wraps because they are not heat stable at high temperatures. Melting or warping may cause harmful chemicals to migrate into food.
- Cook meat, poultry, egg caserole, and fish immediately after defrosting in the microwave oven because some areas of the frozen food may begin to cook during the defrosting time.
- Do not hold partially cooked food to use later.
- Cover foods with a lid or a microwave-safe plastic wrap to hold in moisture and provide safe, even heating.
- Heat–ready-to-eat foods such as hot dogs, luncheon meats, fully cooked ham, and leftovers until steaming hot.
- After reheating foods in the microwave oven, allow standing time. Then, use a clean food thermometer to check food has reached 165°F.

### Containers & Wraps

- Only use cookware specially manufactured for use in the microwave oven. Glass, ceramic containers, and all plastics should be labeled for microwave use. Plastic storage containers such as margarine tubs, take-out containers, wax paper, and plastic wrap should be safe to use. Do not let plastic wrap touch foods during microwaving.
- Never use thin plastic storage bags, brown paper or plastic grocery bags, wax paper, or aluminum foil in the microwave oven. These containers can warp or melt, possibly causing harmful chemicals to migrate into the food.
- Microwave plastic wraps, wax paper, cooking bags, parchment paper, and white microwave-safe paper towels should be safe to use. Do not let plastic wrap touch foods during microwaving.
- Avoid microwaving foods in their take-out containers unless labeled microwave-safe.

### Recipe: Three Bean Chili

- 3 (15 ounce) cans beans (suggest a colorful mix—such as red, black, and Great Northern beans)
- 1 (16 ounce) jar salsa
- 1 (28 ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon chili powder

Combine all ingredients plus 2 1/2 cups of water. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 10-30 minutes or longer, if you prefer. Serve and top with shredded cheese, if desired.

### Recipe: Black Bean Soft Tacos

- 1 medium onion
- 1 (15 ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup chopped green chilies
- 1 tablespoon chili powder

In a nonstick skillet, sauté onion in olive oil, tomatoes, chilies, and chili powder. Bring to boil and simmer until thickened. Spoon onto tortilla and top with cheese, if desired.

### Recipe: Nachos with Beans

- 1 (15 ounce) can pinto beans
- 8 ounce grated or melted cheese

Drain and rinse beans. Heat in taco seasoning, if desired. Beans can be chilled or heated. Place other ingredients in serving dishes so each person can "make their own" nachos, starting with the tortilla chips.

### Stretch Your Food Dollar by Using Beans as a Main Dish

Beans are called a "super food" for good reason. A bean is actually a seed, packed full of nutrients. Beans are a vegetable that provides important vitamins and minerals. They are also a low-fat, low-sodium, cholesterol-free source of protein, and are also part of the meat and beans group. Beans are a unique food that counts as either a vegetable or protein, but not both at the same meal.

Beans are a very good source of calcium, phosphorus, and iron and may reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers because they contain anti-oxidants. They are inexpensive and widely available. Beans do not have a strong flavor on their own, so can easily take on and complement other flavors in food. They can complement meats or take the place of meat, as a protein source in a meal.

### Recipes with 5 Ingredients or Less

- **Three Bean Chili**
  - (8 servings)
  - 1 cup chopped tomatoes
  - 1 cup rinsed and drained pinto beans
  - 1 cup (4 ounce) can chopped green chilies
  - 1 (15 ounce) can diced tomatoes
  - 1 (16 ounce) jar salsa

Combine all ingredients plus 2 1/2 cups of water. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 10-30 minutes or longer, if you prefer. Serve and top with shredded cheese, if desired.

- **Black Bean Soft Tacos**
  - (8 servings)
  - 1 medium onion
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- **Bean Salad**
  - (6 servings)
  - 1 (15 ounce) can garbanzo beans or other variety
  - 1 cup chopped celery or green pepper
  - 1 cup chopped tomatoes (fresh or canned)

Mix ingredients together. Can be served over torn lettuce leaves.

- **Apple Bake**
  - (6 servings)
  - 1 (16 ounce) can pork and beans
  - 2 golden delicious apples, cored and cubed (other variety, if you prefer)
  - 2 tablespoon brown sugar
  - 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

Microwave Method: Combine ingredients in a 1 1/2 quart saucepan. Simmer until the apples are tender. Stir occasionally.

- **Nachos with Beans**
  - (6 servings)
  - 1 (15 ounce) can pinto beans
  - 8 ounce grated or melted cheese

Drain and rinse beans. Heat in taco seasoning, if desired. Beans can be chilled or heated. Place other ingredients in serving dishes so each person can "make their own" nachos, starting with the tortilla chips.
Cleaning Window Screens

Southeast District FCE Meeting
Thursday, April 22, 2010
10 a.m. registration and coffee
Union Bank Community Room, 328 West Third,
Wahoo, NE (next to Court House and jail)
Please Bring: Kleeneze and/or hand sanitizer for local schools
Program includes:
Hearth Fire Lesson – Woman to Woman...
“Forgetfulness or Alzheimer?”
Presentation – ‘Hands” by Luella Peterson
Registration deadline by Monday, April 5.
Form in FCE Speaks.

Give Your Appliances an Energy Boost

Lower the thermostat so the water never gets hotter than 120°F. Besides saving energy, this will prevent scalding injuries.

Washing machine: Small loads may use less water, but they consume almost as much energy as large loads. So, think before you load! If possible, wait until you have a full load before running the washing machine. For optimum cleaning, follow the laundry detergent manufacturer’s recommendations for the proper amount of detergent. And if you own an HE washer, be sure you’re using a detergent specially formulated for your machine.

Clothes dryer: Cleaning the lint trap before each load will help avoid a fire hazard and make your clothes dryer faster, which saves energy.

Refrigerator: Keep the door seals and their contact surfaces clean. This will reduce energy consumption and extend the life of the seal. Before cleaning, turn off the temperature controls and, if possible, unplug the unit. Clean the seals and corresponding surfaces with a solution of one part chlorine bleach to one part warm water. Use an old toothbrush to get into the crevices in the seal. Wipe the solution off with a clean, damp cloth and then dry with a second clean cloth or paper towel. A yearly vacuuming underneath and behind the unit will also help it run more efficiently. Unplug the refrigerator and then use a crevice tool or a feather duster to clean the coil and all the metal parts.

Freezer: If you don’t own the frost-free variety, defrost whenever there’s more than a quarter-inch of buildup. Be sure to unplug the unit before you begin. Once the frost is gone, clean the inside of the freezer with a solution of warm water and liquid dish detergent. Rinse with fresh water and wipe dry. Try these simple tips to save energy and the environment.

More Fun in Your Family Life!

There’s hardly a family expert who would not agree with the message family fun is vitally important for healthy living. If you merely teach children how to cope with problems you haven’t taught them how to experience joy. We’re finding in our research just because a person isn’t down doesn’t mean he or she’s up. Here’s how to practice this important life skill:

1) Make ordinary things fun. One great thing about fun, it doesn’t have to cost anything, and it doesn’t have to take extra time. Psychologists say happiness is actually just a way of looking at your life, being willing to use any opportunity to laugh, that might come your way.

2) Teach your children the magic of anticipation. Kids learn from their parents how to look forward to things. It’s important to sit down with your children daily and talk about upcoming happy events — to show them how to anticipate good times. It doesn’t have to be a major event, like a trip to Disney World or a holiday with tons of presents. Simple things, like talking about next weekend, will do just fine.

3) Help your children be realistic about what’s going to happen. You get little kids in the mood for anticipating the wonderful things about to take place, and suddenly their imagination knows no bounds. You don’t want to be a spoiler, but you also don’t want to let your child’s version of things swing wildly away from what’s practical.

4) Get in the habit of savoring the moment. Children tend to be absorbed in the experience, while adults may step back and reflect on it. Parents should be careful not to push their child in to adopting their analytic style. It’s okay to let your child simply experience the wonderment of something, like rolling in a pile of leaves. Don’t make her think she has to put a label on what she’s feeling.

5) Take plenty of strolls down memory lane. It’s okay to reminisce about old times, to savor things that happened in the past and keep them alive in your child’s memory. Taking photographs and gathering souvenirs are very good ways. Also, tell stories about things the child has done.

6) Encourage your children’s playful side. You can show your kids how to be light, how to take pleasure from life, how to be pleased with themselves. When you laugh at a child’s jokes — even the early rudimentary ones like putting his shoes on his ears — you’re helping him develop what the world will later call his marvelous sense of humor, and when you put your shoes on your ears — he knows you’re showing your child you share completely in his sense of fun.

Source: Dobra Schroeder, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Educator

AARP Driver Safety Course, May 4

The AARP Drives Safety program is the nation’s first and largest classroom course, designed especially for those 50 and older. The AARP course will be presented in Lincoln as a 4-hour session on Tuesday, May 4, 8 a.m. – 12 noon at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherryview Road. A certified AARP instructor will teach the session. Cost is $13 for AARP members and $16 for non-members payable at the door. To register for the class call 414-7180.

The course is geared especially to your safety needs. You will learn:

• Simple yet effective driving techniques
• New traffic laws and rules of the road.
• How to deal with aggressive drivers.
• Techniques to handle driving situations such as left turns, right-of-way and blinds spots.
• How to safely use anti-lock brakes, air bags and safety belts.

No test. For more information about the course call 1-888-227-7669.
Easter Lily Care

Mary Jane Frogge
UNL Extension Associate

When buying a 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 that is about two times as high as the pot. You also should check the flowers, foliage and buds for signs of insects and disease.

At home, keep your lily away from drafts and drying heat sources such as appliances or heating ducts. Bright, indirect light is best with daytime temperatures of 65–75°F. Water the plant only when the soil feels dry to the touch, but do not over water. To prolong the life of the blossoms, remove the yellow anthers (pollen-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 the Easter lily outdoors as soon as the ground can be worked. Select a sunny site 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 remove the mulch until new growth begins in the spring.

Blue false indigo grows three to four feet tall and three to four feet wide in an upright habit. This exceptional perennial grows across a wide range of zones and is one of the most adaptable native species. Newly emerging shoots produce violet-blue, lupine-like flowers in erect 10-inch racemes atop flower stems extending well above the foliage mound of clover-like, bluish-green leaves. The spring flowers are present for three to four weeks. The flowers give way to inflated seed pods which turn charcoal black when ripe and from which flower arrangers consider to be ornamental. The common name, blue false indigo, refers to the use of this perennial by early Americans as a dye.

Baptisia australis is an excellent plant to anchor the back of the border. It is also valuable for cottage gardens, native plant gardens and native area of prairies and meadows. It is best as a specimen or planted in small groups. Blue false indigo can be used with bulbs and other spring flowering perennials to make interesting combinations.

Each spring and fall as you clean-up your yards and gardens, there is always a large pile of leaves, grass clippings and other duff material to be removed. Instead of throwing it away, recycle it. One of the key components of good composting is brown or dried organic matter as well as green grass clippings. So, now is the time to utilize these materials in a compost pile. Learn how to be successful with composting by attending a composting workshop or demonstration sponsored by UNL Extension in Lancaster County and the City of Lincoln Recycling Office.

Upcoming Composting Workshops and Demonstrations

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Baptisia australis, 2010
Perennial Plant of the Year

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Each year, members of the Perennial Plant Association vote on the Perennial of the Year. The Perennial Plant Association’s goal is to recommend perennial plants that meet the following characteristics: low maintenance, relatively pest and disease resistant, multiple seasonal interests, and readily available.

Source: Perennial Plant Association
Tips for Organic Gardening

Laurie Hodges
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Weeds compete with vegetables for light, water, and nutrients. Weeds interfere with harvesting and can harbor many insects and diseases. While completely eliminating weeds in the garden is not realistic, several strategies can help limit or reduce weed competition.

First, reduce the weed seed bank. Raw manure, immature compost, hay or straw may contain weed seeds. Clean all tillage equipment after use to prevent contamination from adjacent garden sites. Definitely do not allow weeds to form seed heads. Seeds can lay dormant for years and continue to infest the garden soil. These seeds can be carried by wind, water, and birds.

Mulches — Mulches shade the soil to prevent weed seed germination and smother the growth of weeds. Both organic and plastic mulches are available to gardeners. Mulches can be added to the soil throughout the growing season, or the crop can be seeded or transplanted into an established mulch. Another form of mulch is cover crops that are grown during the summer. These crops can be grown during the summer to suppress weeds for the fall garden. Examples of cover crops are: buckwheat, annual rye, buckwheat and barley.

Plant Spacing — The critical weed competition period is from the time organic crops are right after planting. Thus, weed control is critical to prevent competition for nutrients and water. Deep cultivation or the planting of plants or between rows to shade the soil rapidly can aid in weed management but requires added fertilizer and irrigation management to keep the plants healthy and productive.

Cultivation — Three or four weeks before planting, the soil can be tilled and weeds can be allowed to germinate and emerge. The weeds can be tilled in to the soil several times before the crop is established. This technique will reduce the weed population by breaking their natural cycle of emergence in the vegetable garden. Deep cultivation will bring weed seeds closer to the soil surface and may increase weed seed germination.

Vegetable Type — Certain vegetables are relatively more competitive with weeds. For example, potatoes (Irish and sweet), winter squash, sweet corn and tomatoes can effectively compete with weeds. Vegetables with deep and extensive root systems and all vegetative growth are the best competitors.

Transplanting — Use transplants if possible. Transplants enable a uniform stand of the crop and allow the vegetable plants to get a head start over any weeds that emerge. Plant transplants at their optimum stage of growth. Transplants which are too large when planted will become stunted, grow slowly, and may not produce as well.

Drip irrigation keeps foliage dry and conserves water. Mulch retains moisture and reduces weed growth.

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When to Water

To many people, one of the most enjoyable aspects of home gardening is watering. It is also very important. However, many gardening problems, such as poor yield, poor quality, poor fertility, bitter fruit, sunscald, disease problems, and a dozen other things, can be related to poor or improper watering techniques. Gardening is a form of resource management. As with any other crop, it is best to avoid using animal manure in home compost or vegetable gardens as there is a potential risk of the animal manure containing human pathogens. Green manure refers to incorporating a green crop, such as clover or rye into the soil about two weeks before planting to increase soil fertility. Compost and green manure help provide nitrogen and increase organic matter.

Certain vegetables are seed transmitted. Don’t save seed from the garden for planting the following year. A number of diseases attack vegetable foliage and fruit. Diseases caused by fungi cannot be controlled with fungicides. For example, as soon as a fungus problem, irreversible damage has already been done. Cloudy, damp mornings encourage the growth of fungus spores. When such conditions exist, you should keep your sprinkler or spray schedule or remove contaminated plants.

Plan for Disease Prevention

Home gardens are often bothered with diseases and pests at harvest. Many gardeners have found proper planning and following recommended control practices keep vegetable losses to a minimum.

Select a well-drained garden site to prevent damping-off and other problems associated with wet soil. Organic matter (straw, leaves, crop residue) is essential to productive soil, but can also increase the occurrence of some diseases. To avoid a buildup of disease, remove diseased plants from the garden. Almost every reader has seen the expected root zone of next year’s crop. This should be done in the fall if possible. Watering plants in the evening causes leaves to remain wet for an extended period and increases the chance of leaf diseases. Plants watered in the morning, dry quickly, resulting in fewer problems. Drip irrigation also reduces foliage diseases.

Grow vegetables in the same location only once every 3-5 years. If this cannot be done, at least plan your garden so you don’t grow vegetables of the same family group in the same area season after season. Family groups are: (1) watermelon, cucumber, squash, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, pumpkin; (2) cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, rutabaga, kale, turnip, mustard, kohlrabi; (3) spinach, broccoli, collard; (4) pepper, tomato, potato, eggplant; (5) carrot, parsley, parsnips; (6) onions, garlic, leek; (7) sweet corn and (8) beets.

Organic vegetable crops are more disease resistant than conventionally grown vegetables. Organic matter is an essential component of organic gardens. These include acetic acid (vinegar), citric acid, and corn gluten. Commercial products are available.
Jammie Jamboree, April 10
Learn basic sewing skills as part of the 4-H Clothing Level 1 project and make jammie bottoms on Saturday, April 10, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry creek Road, Lincoln. Open to all youth (need not be in 4-H). Adults are welcome.
Bring your sewing machine, basic sewing equipment such as scissors, pins, measuring tape, etc., pull-on pajama bottom patterns (one simple pattern is Simplicity 3553), prewashed flannel or 100% cotton fabric (no one-way design fabrics or plaid) and matching thread. Also bring a sack lunch. Sign up by April 9 by calling 441-7180, jammie bottoms may be entered at the county fair and styled in the Style Revue under Clothing Level 1.

April 11 Deadline For 4-H Pick-a-Pig Project
The pick-a-pig project was designed to give urban youth the opportunity to participate in a 4-H Livestock project. There is a minimal cost to participate. The 4-H member will be required to attend weekly meetings and training sessions at a local farm. Those participating will learn about swine production, nutrition, management, and how to keep records. They will get the experience of showing swine at the Lancaster County Fair. For more information or to sign up, contact Deanna at 441-7180 or dkarmazin2@unl.edu. Sign up deadline is April 11.

State Horse Stampede Results
Several Lancaster County 4-H members participated in the State Horse Stampede held at UNL East Campus in February. Congratulations to all! Below are the purple ribbon winners.

ART CONTEST
Senior Division: Eli Deenmont (Reserve Champion), Ashley Wiegand (Honorable Mention), Ivy Deenmont, Nicole Oestmann, Jessica Scheve, Ian Schuster, and Lexi Wolfe
Junior Division: Alyia Whitehall

DEMONSTRATION CONTEST
Senior Division, Individual: Cory Peters (Reserve Champion)
Senior Division, Team: Eli Deenmont and Hannah Ronnau (Reserve Champion)
Junior Division, Teams: Leri and McKenzie Wolfe (Champion), Ivy Deenmont and Spencer Peters (Reserve Champion)

QUIZ BOWL
South Prairie Wranglers 4-H Club: Maria Luedtke, Megan Luedtke, Erika Henson, Leri Wolfe, coach Kendra Ronnau (Third Place)

4-H/FFA Sheep Weigh-In, May 6
4-H/FFA members planning to exhibit market sheep need to have their lambs officially tagged and weighed by June 15. A county-wide sheep weigh-in date has been set for Thursday, May 6, 6-8 p.m. at the Lancaster Event Center – Pavilion 2. Due to time constraints and budget, Deanna will no longer be able to come to each farm individually.

4-H/FFA Livestock Training Clinic, May 8
All 4-H & FFA livestock exhibitors are invited to attend the free 2010 Livestock Show Training Clinic on Saturday, May 8, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Lancaster Event Center – Pavilion 1 (note this new time). Experts in the field will be giving live animal demonstrations and will focus on showing, fitting, nutrition and management of cattle, sheep, swine and goats. A free lunch will be sponsored by Southeast Nebraska ADM Dealers. Pre-registration is required. To sign up, contact Deanna at 441-7180 or dkarmazin2@unl.edu. May 3. This event is sponsored by Lancaster County 4-H and ADM Alliance Nutrition.
Youth Learned Crocheting at 4-H Workshop
Nearly 25 youth learned crocheting basics at a 4-H Basic Crocheting Workshop in February. Crocheting is part of the 4-H Clothing project. Photos are online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/dh.

4-H Pillow Party Taught Basic Sewing Skills
At a 4-H Pillow Party in February, 17 youth learned basic sewing skills as part of the 4-H Sewing for Fun project. They all went home with a pillow they sewed! Photos are online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/dh.

4-H Speech Contest
The 2010 4-H Speech Contest will be held Sunday, April 18 at 1:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry creek Road, Lincoln. The Speech Contest provides 4-H’ers the opportunity to learn to express themselves clearly, organize their ideas and have confidence. Register by April 12 by calling 441-7180 or emailing dkarmazin2@unl.edu with name, speech title and age division. Contest divisions and requirements:
- **Clover Kid:** 5–7 years old, read or recite any story, nursery rhyme, poem, pledge, etc.
- **Novice:** 8–9 years old, 2 minutes in length, any topic related to 4-H.
- **Junior:** 10–11 years old, 2–3 minutes in length, any topic about a 4-H experience.
- **Intermediate:** 12–13 years old, 3–5 minutes in length, any topic related to 4-H will project you would like others to enroll in.
- **Senior:** 14–19, 5–8 minutes in length, a timely topic related to 4-H.

For speech resources and examples check out our Web site at http://lancaster.unl.edu/dh/SpeechContest.shtml.

PSA Contest
In the Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest, 4-H’ers submit a “radio commercial” recorded on a cassette tape or CD by Monday, April 12. PSA must promote 4-H and should be 60 seconds. State 4-H asks for PSAs to be general enough to be used anywhere in Nebraska at anytime of the year. Sound effects and background noises are encouraged (copyrighted material may not be used). If you do not have the capabilities to record a PSA, contact Deonna at 441-7180 to set up a time.

NEW for 2010!
- All PSAs will use the state theme as the basis for their PSA. The 2010 PSA theme is “Meet the Future.”
- All 4-H PSA must include the following tag line within the last ten seconds of the PSA: “Learn more about the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension 4-H Youth Development Program at 4h.unl.edu and know how 4-H can help you.” The tag line is included in the 60 second time limit.

Results and comment cards will be handed out at the 4-H Speech Contest on Sunday, April 18. Additional contest information, PSA guidelines and examples can be found at http://lancaster.unl.edu/dh/Contest/speech.shtml.

4-H Camp Scholarships
The following scholarships go towards attending Nebraska 4-H summer camp(s). Application deadline is May 1 — preference given to applicants submitted by March 1. Applications are available at the extension office and at http://lancaster.unl.edu/4hPrograms/award.shtml.

Windstream 4-H Camp Scholarship — Thanks to the generosity of Windstream Communications, two Lancaster County 4-H members will receive scholarships to attend a 4-H summer camp at the Eastern Nebraska 4-H Camp near Greta! Applicants must be 9 or older and currently enrolled in 4-H. Scholarship is based on need.

Joyce Vahle Memorial Scholarship — $100 scholarship is awarded to a 4-H’er between the ages of 14 to 18 years old towards attending 4-H camp. Applicants should be currently, or have had at some point been, enrolled in at least one sewing project.

4-H/FFA SUPER FAIR NEWS
The Lancaster County 4-H & FFA Fair Book contains entry information for 4-H & FFA members exhibiting in 4-H/FFA. Fair Books have been mailed to all 4-H & FFA families. It is also available at the extension office and online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/dh.

Livestock Clinics
- **Sheep Fitting Clinic:** Thursday, Aug. 5, 2–3 p.m.
- **Swine Fitting Clinic:** Thursday, Aug. 5, 3–4 p.m.
- **Cattle Fitting Clinic:** Thursday, Aug. 5, 3–4 p.m. (followed by the Cattle Fitting Contest)
- **Dairy Clinic:** Friday, Aug. 6, 10 a.m.

4-H & FFA Gate Admission
4-H/FFA families can get a free 4-H/FFA car pass from the extension office (available July 1–Aug. 6). A 4-H/FFA car pass is good for gate admission for all passengers in one vehicle each day Aug. 5–9. 4-H/FFA families are asked to enter Gate 3.

Premium Payouts Procedure
No checks will be issued! No changes or corrections will be made on premium amounts after 14 days.

**Static Exhibits and Contests:** Premium payouts for all static exhibits and contests held before and during the fair must be picked up on Monday, August 9, 7–11 a.m. in the Fair Board Office. With proper identification, parents, guardians, 4-H club leaders, FFA chapter advisors will also be permitted to pick up and sign for exhibitor premiums. A 4-H & FFA animal exhibitors will receive premium payouts as they exit the show arena.

**Horse Exhibitors:** Premium payouts will be made to 4-H members, their parents or their 4-H leaders on Monday, August 9, 10 a.m. in Pavilion 2. The entire 4-H club must have removed all bedding from each stall in order for premiums to be received. Signatures from all representatives receiving payments will be required.
The eggcam science curriculum. In the 2008–09 school year, 4,230 students is a required part of Lincoln Public Schools third grade core appreciation for the development and success of the 4-H School

Embryology Program Recognized

The Nebraska Poultry Industries and the Poultry & Egg Division of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture presented a plaque to University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County at the 2010 Nebraska Poultry Industries convention, “In appreciation for the development and success of the 4-H School Enrichment Embryology Program.” Embryology is taught in 53 Lancaster County Schools and is a required part of Lincoln Public Schools third grade core science curriculum. In the 2008–09 school year, 4,230 students learned about embryo development and life cycle by incubating fertilized eggs in classrooms. Embryology is also on the Web at http://lancaster.unl.edu/eggcam, featuring EGG Cam which gives Web viewers a bird’s-eye view of chick hatching. The Web site has received over five million accesses since 2002.

Approximately 6.7 million school-aged children in the United States have disabilities. Involving youth with special needs in 4-H can result in a satisfying experience for all involved.

Defining Youth With Special Needs

Special needs youth include children with a wide range of disabilities, that is, limitations on their ability to perform certain skills. Common disabilities include physical, mental, and developmental disabilities such as Attention Deficit Disorder, Autism, and Down’s Syndrome.

Involving Youth With Special Needs

Involving special needs youth in your club or activity may take some special consideration but can be quite easy if you follow these steps:

- Learn about and help other 4-H’ers understand the disability with respect for the child’s feelings and preference for privacy. This can be accomplished by talking to the child’s parents, researching online or at the library, contacting local support of advocacy groups (i.e., Muscular Dystrophy Association, etc.), or attending local Special Olympics, where you can see how trained volunteers work with a variety of children with special needs.

- Find out how the disability affects the particular child with whom you are working. Remember that each child with a disability is an individual. This means that different children with the same disability may display a variety of characteristics. Talk with the parents to become familiar with the child’s ability levels, special challenges, and other individual needs.

- Modify the project or activity to match the ability level of the child. For example, a child in a wheelchair could participate in a science project by designing a raised garden bed or participating in container gardening. Modification may also mean modifying program requirements. For example, in an animal science project, youth without a disability may be required to take care of the animals on their own, while a special needs child may be paired with a teen leader or older 4-H members for assistance through team work. Look at the objectives of the project or activity and help the child set reachable goals to meet the objectives. The child should be involved in the setting of the goals and the adaptation of the program as much as possible. The modifications to the program must be designed to meet the child’s ability levels and the goals of the project, while still challenging the child to consistently improve his or her own personal best. The important factor here is to focus on the similarities among special needs youth and not to concentrate on the differences. All youth have a basic need to belong and to feel accepted by the group.

- Additional special leader training/support. Help with learning about and understanding appropriate accommodations and educational resources available through the county 4-H office.

- Advertise specific leader training/support. Help with learning about and understanding appropriate accommodations and educational resources available through the county 4-H office.

Special Needs Guidelines

Here are some guidelines to remember when working with special needs youth:

- Involve the child and his/her parents, as much as possible, in setting goals and modifying the program to meet the child’s needs.

- Treat each child, special needs or not, as an individual who has certain talents, skills, strengths, and needs.

- Provide positive recognition and positive reinforcement. Make sure your expectations for each child are based on efforts made toward reaching a set goal. Don’t be “easier” on a special needs child just because of the disability.

- Remember that the 4-H motto, “I’m taking care of myself,” does not always mean blue ribbons and other awards. Personal growth (ability to handle frustration or communicate better), gaining and using new knowledge (planting and taking care of a garden), and feelings of accomplishment (succeeding in any new challenge) can be important factors (whether the disability may seem) are also important accomplishments.

- Take the time to learn, and to teach other 4-H’ers, the correct terminology for the child’s disability, as well as any equipment which the child may use. Sometimes the common terms are considered insensitive or rude.

- Many people with physical disabilities would prefer to discuss their disability rather than have everyone ignore it or pretend not to see it. How this is handled should be determined by consulting the child and his/her parents.

- Differentiate the areas where the child’s abilities are diminished or different and where they are “normal.” For example, people often shun visually impaired people as if they also cannot hear. Don’t assume anything about a child’s 4-H office, disability; remember that each child is an individual.

- With mainstreaming in schools becoming a common practice, today’s youth often have a greater awareness of disability and comfort zone in interacting with their special needs peers than in the past. Usually the child who is “different” ceases to be a problem for the other children in a group if all adults reach the same comfort level.

Source: Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Cooperative Extension, “4-H for Youth With Special Needs” (part of a New Jersey 4-H Leader Training Series) online at www.nj4h.rutgers.edu/volunteering/
Cell Phone Recycling Project in April

Do you or anyone you know have any cell phones to dispose of? If so, please drop them off at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, anytime during the month of April. We are able to take any make and model of cell phone. This is a fund-raiser for Lancaster County 4-H Citizenship Washington Focus group.

Lancaster Ag Society Seeks Nominations

The Lancaster County Agricultural Society will be unveiling a new Ag Society Hall of Fame located at the Lancaster Event Center. Nomination forms and more information can be requested by calling the Lancaster Event Center at 441-6545. Nomination forms are due by May 1.

Husker Sunday at Westfield Gateway, April 25

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln will be at the Westfield Gateway Shopping Center on Sunday, April 25 for the first-ever Husker Sunday event. Husker Sunday is designed to help high school juniors and seniors find information on what college life is like at UNL. Students of all ages and adults can attend to experience a glimpse of college life at UNL. Representatives from UNL undergraduate colleges and student affairs offices such as Scholarships and Financial Aid, University Housing and Admissions will be on hand. Meet Heisman Trophy winner and Husker legend Eric Crouch! Highlights of the event include free T-shirts to all high school students who visit each exhibit and drawings for a free laptop computer and University Bookstore gift card. Westfield Gateway mall will offer additional promotions and discounts on Husker Sunday. More information about Husker Sunday is available online at huskersunday.unl.edu.
Pedersen’s Plant Service Project Earns 4-H Diamond Clover Program’s Highest Honor

Editor’s note: Kyle Pedersen is the first Lancaster County 4-H member to earn the top Level 6 in the Nebraska 4-H Diamond Clover Program, a relatively new statewide program. Youth can progress from Level 1 up to Level 6. Level 6 requires a major service-learning project that benefits a 4-H member’s community.

Kyle Pedersen
Lancaster County 4-H member

My project had two parts. The first part was to move plants from a garden owned by an avid gardener to a children’s home, and the second was to start a 4-H club for the children living at the home. I taught the club members how to take care of plants, and they were able to have their own garden.

The idea to move the plants came from the owners of the children’s home. It was fun to see how the truckloads of transplants survived and thrived in their new home (around flagpoles, office building, and the four homes). The plants were a good improvement to the homes, but I got the idea of forming a 4-H club when I saw the children on the grounds and imagined how they could benefit from the 4-H learning experience.

I started the 4-H club and we did a project at each meeting to help introduce the kids to 4-H. I enjoyed seeing the excitement in the children when they formed their own club and participated in club activities (planting shamrocks, making cookies and tray favors for a retirement center, growing a vegetable garden, and learning to identify flowers, vegetables, trees, and weeds). I helped the community by working with the kids and by beautifying the landscape while carrying on the gardener’s legacy. I felt like I had made a difference by giving the kids a 4-H experience they would not have had otherwise.

Nearly 200 plants were transplanted from a gardener’s yard in Fall 2008.

The plants were moved to Christian Heritage Children’s Home.

The Heritage Clovers 4-H club was formed for CHCH youth to learn about plants and help with maintenance of the garden.

Most of the plants survived being transplanted.

Watch Chicks Hatch Online with EGG Cam!
http://lancaster.unl.edu/eggcam

Now with streaming video in near real time!

EGG Cam will feature poultry hatching through the end of May!

Teen Council 4-H’ers Lead Lock-In

In January, more than 20 4-H Teen Council members organized and led the overnight 4-H Lock-In for 45 fourth & fifth graders. The teens prepared snacks, led games, presented craft activities and more.

Making Friends at the Lock-In
The 4-H Lock-In is a great way for kids to make new friends as well as get interested in 4-H. This year’s theme was Juke Box Hero. We had many different activities for the 4th and 5th graders to do including home made guitars, creating music videos, learning about musical instruments as well as snacks and games. I think all of the kids had a great time, and I know all the teens enjoyed putting it together. The Lock-In is a hit every year.

— Jeff Cassel, Teen Council Vice President

Music in the Making
The 2010 Teen Council Lock-In was a music themed extravaganza. 4th and 5th graders learned about different instruments and made some of their own. They also learned different dances like the cupid shuffle. They participated in games, crafts, education, and food before settling down and watching movies until they drifted off to sleep. The next morning the spy teens woke the children. Milk, juice, and doughnuts were served for breakfast. The Lock-In was a successful night that went swimmingly.

— Kyle Pedersen

Fun for All!
I thought that our Lock-In this year was a great success. The music theme was great for both boys and girls. The kids loved making their own music videos, learning about instruments, and interacting with the Teen Council members. We had a really fun group of leaders who kept the night rolling. There was fun had by all!

— Ellen Muehling, Teen Council President

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Making Friends at the Lock-In
The 4-H Lock-In is a great way for kids to make new friends as well as get interested in 4-H. This year’s theme was Juke Box Hero. We had many different activities for the 4th and 5th graders to do including home made guitars, creating music videos, learning about musical instruments as well as snacks and games. I think all of the kids had a great time, and I know all the teens enjoyed putting it together. The Lock-In is a hit every year.

— Jeff Cassel, Teen Council Vice President

Music in the Making
The 2010 Teen Council Lock-In was a music themed extravaganza. 4th and 5th graders learned about different instruments and made some of their own. They also learned different dances like the cupid shuffle. They participated in games, crafts, education, and food before settling down and watching movies until they drifted off to sleep. The next morning the spy teens woke the children. Milk, juice, and doughnuts were served for breakfast. The Lock-In was a successful night that went swimmingly.

— Kyle Pedersen

Fun for All!
I thought that our Lock-In this year was a great success. The music theme was great for both boys and girls. The kids loved making their own music videos, learning about instruments, and interacting with the Teen Council members. We had a really fun group of leaders who kept the night rolling. There was fun had by all!

— Ellen Muehling, Teen Council President