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### NEBLINE, February 2014

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# The NEBLINE

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County

## 4-H Garbology Uses Science to Teach Environmental Responsibility

Teri Hlava & Vicki Jedlicka  
UNL Extension Assistants

**M**ORE THAN 4,000 local youth are learning environmental science and stewardship through “Garbology” and “Trash to Treasure” 4-H programs. Through hands-on science activities, students learn:

- what waste is, where it comes from, and where it goes,
- how people’s daily actions impact the environment, and
- how to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle to conserve natural resources.

What are “Garbology” and “Trash to Treasure”? Garbology is not in the dictionary, but in Lancaster County, it means the study of garbage (“ology” = Latin for “study of”). Garbology is taught in 162 second-grade classrooms. Trash to Treasure reinforces Garbology concepts and is used in 14 afterschool programs.

Teachers and parents report students often lead their families in recycling efforts at home because of what they learn.

Phyllis Owen, grandparent, says, “Sophia took the lessons in Garbology very seriously and changed the way her family began to think and act. Three years later, the family continues their recycling habits and awareness.”

Both Garbology and Trash to Treasure consist of a teachers guide and kit. The kit includes supplies for the activities as well as supplemental materials (student books, teacher resource books, posters and DVDs).

Second grade teachers usually spend up to 15 classroom hours teaching Garbology. Trash to Treasure offers more flexibility for afterschool leaders because of the various activities targeting different grade levels.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County coordinates these programs in partnership with the City of Lincoln Recycling Office, Lincoln Public Schools, and many Lancaster County schools and afterschool programs. UNL Extension Assistant Teri Hlava coordinates both programs. She gives a presentation about “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” to nearly all participating classrooms and many afterschool sites.

### NEXT ISSUE

Tips on how to ‘Reduce, Reuse and Recycle’ in your home, with emphasis on the growing problem of old electronics.

### Garbology for 2nd Grade

The Garbology 4-H School Enrichment program is part of the science curriculum for Lincoln Public Schools second-graders. Many other Lancaster County schools teach it as well. The lessons and experiments are based on science concepts (scientific inquiry, prediction, observation, discussion and conclusion).

Garbology was originally developed in the early 1990s by several local organizations, including UNL Extension in Lancaster County. In 2002, Extension revised it with the help of the City of Lincoln Recycling Department and Lincoln Public Schools to meet the Nebraska and National Learning Standards of Excellence.

Last year, several updates were made:

- Teachers guides were updated with current information.
- Each LPS school was given eleven new different student book titles and three new different DVDs.
- The eight largest LPS schools were given an additional nine book titles and one additional DVD.
- Eight additional papermaking kits were created for schools to check out as needed.



Students do hands-on science experiments such as making miniature landfills to compare how quickly different materials decompose. Second graders observe, discuss, record and make conclusions.

Candace Jurchen, second-grade teacher at Trinity Lutheran School, says, “I am impressed that my second-graders are so dedicated to recycling and thinking about where our garbage goes after having our Garbology lessons! We have found that by thinking more about our trash, we have less of it to throw away and more to recycle! I appreciate the efforts to help the children become more responsible, especially in their own households. I am grateful to have this resource available for my kids.”



In the papermaking activity, students make their own paper from previously-used paper

### Trash to Treasure for Afterschools K–5

Extension developed Trash to Treasure in 2007 for elementary afterschool programs. A few middle school afterschool programs also participate.

Activities are divided into different grade levels, Kindergarten through fifth grade. The teachers guide also includes ideas for field trips and service-learning projects.

Dan Payzant, director of the afterschool program at Irving Recreation Center, says, “Students particularly enjoy the hands-on activities, especially the optional



One activity about “Reduce, Reuse and Recycle” is making new greeting cards from used cards.

paper-making component. Having kits available from Lancaster County Extension is a real benefit to our youth programs. We save time and other

resources when we are able to rely on this kind of quality, professionally developed 4-H curriculum.”

### CONNECT WITH US

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University of Nebraska–Lincoln  
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444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68528-1591

# Baking is a Fun Way for Families to Spend Time Together

Lisa Franzen-Castle, RD, PhD  
UNL Nutrition Specialist

Baking is an inexpensive family activity that provides opportunities for families to share baking traditions, recipes and family heritage that can be handed down through each generation. February is Bake for Family Fun Month and the Home Baking Association ([www.homebaking.org/familyfun](http://www.homebaking.org/familyfun)) encourages families to spend time together in the kitchen. Below are some tips on how to get started.

Baking tips from the Home Baking Association:

**1. Do some prep work.** Prep by reading and trying the recipe first. Add 20 to 30 minutes to explain, show and guide beginners and 15 minutes for intermediates or experienced bakers. Divide it into two sessions, if needed, or pre-measure or prepare some steps beforehand.

**2. Keep it clean.** Remember to wash hands and countertops before starting and cleaning up after you're done. Provide separate towels for hands and dishes and frequently wash pot holders. Aprons or large T-shirts are great for keeping clothes clean during the baking process.

**3. Take it one step at a time.** Read the recipe, gather ingredients and make sure nothing was left out. When short on time, or working with beginning or young bakers, prepare some steps ahead or do some steps one day and complete the mixing or baking the next.

**4. Use the right tools.** Pour liquids (water, oil, milk, honey, corn syrup) in a clear liquid measuring cup placed on the countertop. Read amount at eye level. Use standard dry measures for dry ingredients (flours, sugar, cocoa, brown sugar, cornmeal). Use measuring spoons for small amounts less than 1/4 cup (4 tablespoons).

**5. Do a safe kitchen checklist.** Turn handles of pans toward the center of the stove so



USDA SNAP Photo Gallery

sleeves or people passing by won't catch on them and spill. Keep cupboard doors and drawers closed unless in use. Always use only dry hot pads or oven mitts because heat goes through damp mitts. When stirring or checking for doneness, tilt the lid away from you so steam is released away from your face.

**6. Oven ins and outs.** Before preheating, make sure the oven racks are in the right place for the pans and recipe. Preheat the oven as the recipe directs — allow 10 minutes. Place pans in the oven so they do not touch each other or the oven sides. Do not place pans on racks directly below or above another pan. Keep clean, dry oven mitts or pads close by.

**7. Baking can be a learning experience.** Children and adults learn a lot together in the kitchen. The results of cooking or baking together contributes to stronger relationships at home and in groups and children learn time management, team skills, following directions and problem solving.

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444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln



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## The NEBLINE

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Photo on front page flag and page headers by PRANGE Aerial Photography

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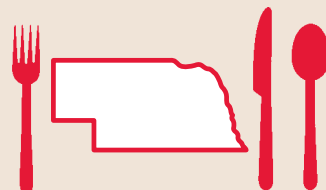
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## HEALTHY EATING

ENJOY NEBRASKA FOODS!

Alice Henneman, MS, RD, UNL Extension Educator

### PUDDING FACES

As a fun way to encourage younger children to include milk in meals, serve "pudding faces" for dessert or snacks. Make with a favorite flavor of instant pudding and fat-free milk. Let children decorate their own pudding face using such add-ons as raisins, grapes, apple wedges, almonds, orange slices, blueberries, raisins, chocolate chips and bananas.



Alice Henneman, UNL Extension in Lancaster County

### MEXICAN SKILLET RICE

(6 servings)

- 1 pound lean ground beef or turkey
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups cooked brown rice
- 1 16-ounce can pinto beans, drained
- 2 4-ounce cans diced green chiles
- 1 medium fresh tomato, seeded and chopped (optional)
- Fresh cilantro for garnish (optional)

In large skillet over medium-high heat, cook meat until brown, stirring to crumble; drain. Return meat to skillet. Add onion, chili powder, cumin and salt; cook until onion is tender. Stir in rice, beans and chiles; thoroughly heat. Top with tomato and garnish with cilantro if desired. Serve immediately.

Nutrition Facts per serving: Calories 313; Total Fat 9g; Cholesterol 29 mg; Sodium 340 mg; Total Carbohydrate 43 g; Dietary Fiber 6 g; Protein 17 g

Source: Recipe courtesy of the USA Rice Federation.

#### ALICE'S NOTES:

- If desired, lower the sodium further by cutting back or omitting the salt, especially if your beans are canned with salt.
- When I tried freezing some of this recipe for later use, I was quite pleased with the results. As I was reheating it in the microwave at work, several people commented on how good it smelled!

## Valentine's Day = Family/Friends Love/Celebration

**Lorene Bartos**

*UNL Extension Educator*

Valentine's Day is around the corner. The stores have already stocked the shelves with Valentine's candy, cards, decorations and flowers. This is a good time to think of ways to share love and caring with family and friends. Consider ways your family can celebrate together.

Some fun ways to show you care include:

- Make note cards or use post-it-notes to leave messages on

mirrors, in lunches or other special places.

- For those with a sweet tooth make a candy bar wrapper with a special thought or message. Consider using the miniature bars.
- Plan a special time with each family member or special friend during the week of Valentine's Day. It may be doing a special activity — baking, crafts, sports, going for ice cream or another treat or whatever that person likes to do.
- Make special treats such as Rice Krispie Bars in the shape

of kisses, wrap them in foil and add a special message.

This would be a nice idea for teachers, family members or co-workers.

- Make special foods on Valentine's Day or when you celebrate. Foods in the shape of hearts — pancakes, cookies, cakes, sandwiches, pizza, jello jigglers, etc. Use a heart shaped cookie cutter to make the shapes easily.
- Make valentine's to share with school mates, friends and family. Handmade items are always special.

## Keeping Connected with Grandchildren Helps Mentor, Teach and Love

**Editor's note from UNL Extension Educator Maureen Burson: "Science of Parenting" blog by Iowa State University Family Life specialists is one of the resources we recommend to parents participating in the Co-Parenting for Successful Kids class who request additional information about parenting. To subscribe, go to <http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/scienceofparenting>.**

**Donna Donald**

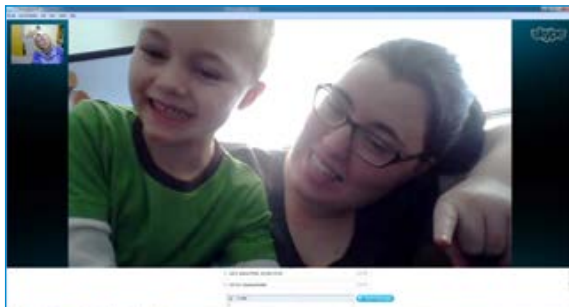
*Iowa State University Extension Family Life Specialist*

I am the proud grandmother of seven young adults. They range in age from 14–24. Obviously they are well beyond the days of cuddling on my lap or arriving at the door with little suitcase in hand ready for a sleepover. As grandchildren grow up, it becomes a challenge as to how to keep connected.

Fascinating information from a new AARP survey reveals more than 80% of grandparents speak to their grandchildren on the phone at least once a month. More

than a third communicate via new technology — like Skype, Facebook, texting. So I started asking myself if I fit these results. I use Facebook for keeping up day-to-day. I text when I want a quick check-in. Phone calls follow if we need a longer conversation.

And what do we talk about?



"Skype" is one way people can communicate on computer or mobile phones.

Again I'm right in tune with the survey results. The AARP survey says 50% talk about morals and values; religion and spirituality; peer pressure or bullying; illegal drugs; and drinking and alcohol use. Dating or sex are topics for 37% of the grandparents. I have to laugh as I often start conversations with some of the grandkids with this question, "And are you making good choices?"

The data about frequency of communication, as well as topics, fits well with grandparents serving a role as mentor and teacher. We have a wonderful chance to help grandchildren by sharing our experiences and knowledge, all wrapped up in a big dose of love.

A personal aside — I always end my texts with *Love, Gma*.

How often do you communicate with your grandkids and what do you talk about?

*Source: "Science of Parenting" blog, Iowa State University Extension, November 2013*



## ASK LORENE

FAMILY LIVING TIPS

Lorene Bartos, UNL Extension Educator

### Q: Why do high-efficiency (HE) washing machines suggest running a maintenance cycle?

**A:** Because HE washing machines use less water and the front-load models have an airtight seal, the maintenance of these machines is different than the top-loading ones you may be used to. Low wash temperatures may prevent some soils from completely rinsing out of the HE washing machines. Because oily soils and some dirt-type soils are especially sensitive to lower wash temperatures, over time these soils may accumulate in the HE washer. This can lead to the growth of bacteria and mold, which can create odors in the HE washer.

You can usually avoid these potential problems by using a maintenance cycle, which involves running a full wash cycle without any laundry in the machine. Ideally, this should be done once a week or, at minimum, once a month. Some HE washers have a special cycle. Check the user's manual and follow its directions. If your machine doesn't have a designated maintenance cycle, here's what to do:

1. Select the hot water setting. If there isn't one, then select a "white" or a "stain" cycle setting.
2. Select the "extra rinse" option, if offered.
3. Add liquid chlorine bleach to the bleach dispenser. Fill to its maximum level.
4. Run the cycle through its completion.
5. If the HE washer doesn't have a second rinse option, manually select an additional rinse cycle to ensure no chlorine bleach remains in your washer.

If your HE washer still has unpleasant odors, repeat steps 1 through 5 as necessary.

*"Ask Lorene" by mail: Attn. Lorene Bartos, UNL Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, NE 68528; email [lbartos1@unl.edu](mailto:lbartos1@unl.edu); or phone 402-441-7180.*



## Take Time to Play

**A conference for those who provide child care.**

**Saturday, April 5**

**8 a.m.–3:30 p.m.**

**Lancaster Extension Education Center  
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE**

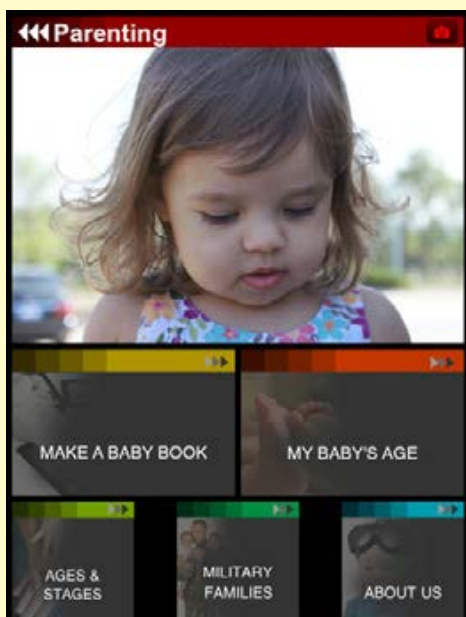
Cost is \$20 (includes lunch from Brown Baggers/refreshments)

**Pre-registration is due March 21**

For more information, call 402-441-7180 or go to <http://lancaster.unl.edu/family>

*In-service hours will be given for this conference.*

## Parenting App from UNL



Questions you have about taking care of your child are just a finger tip away. "U R Parent" is an app for iPhones, iPads, and Android phones which provides user-friendly information on parenting and child development. It is geared to the specific age of your child. Currently, the app covers a child's first year — in the near future it will cover up to six years old.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension Educators partnered with "Just in Time Parenting" (part of national eXtension) to develop the app using research-based information. UNL Extension Educators Angela Abts, Gail Brand, Tonia Durden, Jeanette Friesen, Lisa Poppe and LaDonna Werth helped with development.

Unique features include:

- information about children's ages and stages
- the ability to customize the app to your child and replace pictures with your child's in the app's timeline
- a baby book to record your baby's firsts along with keeping their immunizations dates in a handy place

You can download the app free from the Apple iTunes app store and Google Play. Links available at <http://ianrhome.unl.edu/mobileapps/urparent>.



## Subscribe to a FREE Parenting Electronic Newsletter!

Each month you will get information specific to your baby's age and your baby's needs. Learn about:

- How your child is developing,
- How to care for your child and keep your child healthy,
- How to help your child learn and be happy!

The newsletter is written by a team of university researchers and educators and based on the latest research.

Receive your free newsletters by email — monthly for children 1 to 12 months of age, then every other month for children 1 to 5 years old. Just go to [www.extension.org/parenting](http://www.extension.org/parenting).

## Growing Nuts Seminar, Feb. 27

The Nebraska Nut Growers Association (NeNGA) & Heartland Nuts 'N More cooperative are sponsoring a Nut Orchard Planning free seminar on Thursday, Feb. 27, 7–9 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Rd. If you want to plant just a couple nut trees or an orchard, this informative seminar will help you plan for success.

John Knorr, president of NeNGA will present the planning, planting and caring phases. Larry Martin, president of Heartland Nuts 'N More, will present the harvesting, processing and marketing topics. There also will be professional growers to help answer questions.

Topics will include:

- Planning phase will consist of a discussion on your goals, expectations and required resources to start a nut orchard. Information on the characteristics of different nut trees that have been cultivated for our area and the best soils to grow great nuts will also be presented.
- Planting phase will cover the planting considerations from seed to seedlings and grafted tree selections.
- Caring phase will cover the tasks required to bring a seed or seedling to a productive producing nut tree.
- Harvesting tasks will cover harvesting techniques.
- Processing techniques and the marketing your nuts will be discussed.
- Details of the seedling cost-share program will be covered.

NeNGA and University of Nebraska–Lincoln have worked together for 37 years in the cultivation of high-quality cultivar nut trees. Hundreds of farmers, both large and small grow nut crops in Nebraska. Black walnuts and pecans are favorites, with



Edna Gates, one of the founding members of the Nebraska Nut Growers Association, is shown next to pecan trees in her three-acre nut orchard.

chestnut, hickory, heart nut, butternut, and hazelnuts starting to increase in popularity. Growing an orchard can be enjoyed as a family project or income to the landowner.

### Seedling Cost-Share Program

Current and prospective growers have an opportunity to participate in a growers' 50 percent nut tree seedling cost-share program. This program is sponsored by the Nebraska Forest Service and Heartland Nuts 'N More, with technical support from NeNGA.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**HEARTLAND NUTS 'N MORE**  
President, Larry Martin  
206 West 2nd Street, Box 439  
Valparaiso, NE 68065  
[www.heartlandnutsnmore.com](http://www.heartlandnutsnmore.com)  
402-784-6887  
email: [lottanuts@windstream.net](mailto:lottanuts@windstream.net)

**NEBRASKA NUT GROWERS ASSOCIATION (NeNGA)**  
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402-788-2717  
email: [joknorr@attglobal.net](mailto:joknorr@attglobal.net)

## Starting Onions from Seed

Sarah Browning  
UNL Extension Educator

Planting onions from small bulbs or "sets" is not the best way to grow large onions for storage. Plants grown from sets often begin blooming in mid-summer and stubbornly refuse to stop. Once that happens, onion bulbs don't increase much in size.

### Onion Sets

Onions are biennials. They grow foliage and a bulb the first season, then bloom and set seed in their second growing season. Growing the sets counts as one growing season, although it was definitely a short one, and the plants are primed to reproduce by setting flowers after you plant them in the garden. This makes onion sets a great way to grow green onions, but not the best way to grow onions for long-term storage.

Because of onions biennial nature, plants grown from seed or transplants, don't bloom the first year and can develop larger bulbs. Many mail-order companies and garden centers now carry onion transplants in spring, but you can also grow your own.

### Growing Onion Transplants

Onion transplants can be grown in approximately 10–12 weeks. Sow seeds in late February or early March for planting outdoors in early May. Plant seeds 3/4-inch deep in a seed-starting soil blend and keep them evenly moist. Once they sprout, provide the seedlings with bright light from a sunny, south-facing window, or better yet, provide supplemental light with fluorescent fixtures placed a few inches above them for 12–14 hours each day.

Transplant the little, grass-like seedlings outdoors as soon as garden soil is dry enough to work thoroughly and daytime temperatures reach 50°F. Onion



A portion of the onion bulb usually develops above ground. A light mulch will conserve soil moisture.

transplants will tolerate light frosts. Place them 4 inches apart in wide row plantings. When using "wide" rows plants are not placed single file in one long row, but spaced throughout a row ranging from 6–36 inches across. Use a row width convenient for you to reach from both sides, to make harvesting and weed control easier.

### Direct Seeding

Onions can also be direct seeded. This is a good option if you can't find your favorite cultivar as a transplant. Plant seeds as soon as the soil can be worked, usually from mid to late March. Wide row spacing also works well when planting onion seeds. Plant the seeds 1/4–1/2 inch deep in the soil. Space rows 12–18 inches apart. Once the plants have 5–10 leaves, they can be thinned so the remaining plants are spaced 3–4 inches apart and the harvested plants used as green onions.

### Growing On

Onions grow best in well-drained soil, 6.5 pH, with a high level of organic matter. Raised beds, 4–6 inches high, work well to provide good soil drainage if the native soil is heavy. They also need plenty of sunlight, and regular watering. The installation of drip irrigation the length of the rows makes watering easier and more uniform.

Don't be concerned if a large portion of the bulb develops above ground.

## Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training

Commercial/noncommercial applicators are professionals who apply **restricted-use** pesticides for hire or compensation, on property that is not owned or rented by themselves or their employer. **Anyone** who applies pesticides to the property of another person, either **restricted- or general-use** products, for control of pests in lawns, landscapes, buildings or homes must also have a commercial pesticide applicators license. Public employees (those employed by a town, county, state) applying mosquito control pesticides whether restricted or general use, must also hold a commercial or noncommercial certification.

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) is responsible for the certification and licensing of pesticide applicators in Nebraska. A commercial/non-commercial license is good for three years.

### Initial and Recertification

To become licensed as a new commercial/noncommercial applicator, professionals must pass a written examination. All participants must be tested in the general standards category, then each chooses one or more additional categories for testing.

Once licensed in a category, professionals can maintain their commercial certification by attending a recertifica-

tion training session or by passing a written examination, with a few exceptions as explained below.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension offers training to prepare those seeking a pesticide applicators license for the first time, and recertification for those needing to keep their license active. The program cost for both initial and recertifying participants who register online is \$60/person; for those registering by mail, fax or at the door, the cost is \$70/person.

In 2014, the UNL Extension in Lancaster County will offer training and testing in the following categories:

- general standards (00)
- agricultural pest control – plants (01) (*initial only*)
- ornamental and turf pest control (04)
- aquatic pest control (05)
- right-of-way pest control (07)
- structural/health related pest control (08)
- wood destroying organisms (08w)
- public health pest control (09)
- wood preservation (10)
- fumigation (11)
- wildlife damage control (14)

You may only participate in the general standards (00) and two category sessions on any training date.

*Note: Due to time and space limitations, training will not be offered in all the categories on every day of training. Check*

*the schedule listing when each category training will be offered.*

**Initial commercial certification training and testing sessions** will be offered at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, on the following dates:

- Tuesday, Feb. 4 (categories offered 00-01-04-07-09-11-14)
- Thursday, Feb. 27 (categories offered 00-01-04-07-08-08w-10)
- Thursday, April 10 (categories offered 00-04)

The general standards session will begin at 8:30 a.m. and other categories at 1 p.m. or 3 p.m.

It is highly recommended you obtain and review the written study materials prior to attending. This will greatly improve your chances of passing the written examination. Study materials for all commercial categories may be purchased online at <http://pested.unl.edu> (click on "Classes & Study Materials").

**Commercial recertification training sessions** will be offered at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road on the following dates:

- Thursday, Feb. 6 (categories offered: 00-04-05-07-08-08w-11)
- Tuesday, Feb. 25 (categories offered: 00-04-05-07-08-08w-11)
- Thursday, March 20 (categories offered: 00-04-07-08-08w-11-14)

The general standards session will begin at 9 a.m. and other categories at 1 p.m. or 3 p.m.

*Note: There are no certification training sessions for Agricultural Pest Control - Plant (recertification), Agricultural Pest Control - Animal, Fumigation of Soil, Forest Pest Control, Sewer Root Control with Metam Sodium, Seed Treatment, Aerial Pest Control, Regulatory Pest Control (subcategory) and Demonstration/Research Pest Control (subcategory). There are self-study materials which will prepare the applicator to take the examinations in these categories. The only way to certify or recertify in these categories is to pass a written examination.*

For statewide training locations, dates and categories, go to <http://pested.unl.edu>. For more information about the trainings in Lancaster County, call 402-441-7180.

### NDA Licensing Procedures

Commercial applicators meeting the requirements for certification or re-certification will receive an invoice from the NDA for \$90 for the license fee. When NDA receives the fee, the license will be issued.

For more information about pesticide licensing, go to [www.agr.ne.gov/pesticide](http://www.agr.ne.gov/pesticide).

## 2014 Flower All-America Selections



Photos: All-America Selections



### Gaura 'Sparkle White' 2014 AAS Bedding Plant Award Winner

'Sparkle White' gaura will bring a touch of airy elegance to the garden with its long slender stems sporting a large number of dainty white flowers tinged with a pink blush. This beauty is perfect mass planted in sun-drenched landscape beds, in groupings with other perennials or in larger containers. Home gardeners will appreciate that this season-long bloomer also has excellent heat tolerance and a more uniform flowering habit than other seed gauras. Choose a sun to partial sun, well-drained location. Plant gaura 'Sparkle White' at 18–20 inches apart.

### Sunflower 'Suntastic Yellow with Black Center' 2014 AAS Bedding Plant Award Winner

'Suntastic' is a new dwarf sunflower perfect as a cheery long-blooming potted plant or window box accent or maybe to add a burst of color to a sunny garden bed. Gardeners will love the number of flowers each plant produces: up to twenty 5–6 inch flowers per plant in three successive blooming periods. 'Suntastic' will bloom in less than 65 days after sowing so by starting indoors, sunflower lovers can get their favorite bloom fix early in the summer.

### Petunia 'African Sunset' 2014 AAS Bedding Plant Award Winner

'African Sunset' wowed the judges with an attractive, "designer color" in shades of orange flowers that proved itself against other similarly colored petunias currently available. Gardeners are always looking for a petunia that grows evenly and uniformly in the garden while producing a prolific number of blooms all season-long and this beauty certainly fills that need. Mounded spreading plants are 12 inches tall spread up to 20 inches.

Source: All America Selection,  
[www.all-americaelections.org](http://www.all-americaelections.org)

## GARDEN GUIDE

### THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate

Prune fruit trees and grapes in late February or early March after the worst of the winter cold is passed but before spring growth begins.

Do not start your vegetable transplants indoors too early. Six weeks ahead of the expected planting date is early enough for the fast-growth species such as tomatoes. Eight weeks allows enough time for the slower-growing types such as peppers.

Check stored bulbs, tubers and corms. Discard any that are soft or diseased.

This year plan to grow at least one new vegetable that you have never grown before; it may be better than what you are already growing. The new dwarf varieties on the market which use less space while producing more food per square foot may be just what you are looking for.

Check any vegetables you have in storage. Dispose of any that show signs of shriveling or rotting.

Order gladiolus corms now for planting later in the spring after all danger of frost has passed. Locate in full sun in well-drained soil.

Branches of forsythia, pussy willow, quince, spirea and dogwood can be forced for indoor bloom. Make long, slanted cuts when collecting the branches and place the stems in a vase of water. Change the water every four days. They should bloom in about 3 weeks.

Send off seed orders early this month to take advantage of seasonal discounts. Some companies offer bonus seeds of new varieties to early buyers.

Late February is a good time to air-layer such house plants as dracaena, dieffenbachia and rubber plant, especially if they have grown too tall and leggy.

## Appreciating Raptors



Rebeka D. Wallace, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org



Vern Wilkins, Indiana University, Bugwood.org



Anita Rtenour (puliarf), www.flickr.com



Vern Wilkins, Indiana University, Bugwood.org

Some raptors which overwinter in Lancaster County are (L–R) red-tailed hawks, sharp-shinned hawks, Cooper's hawks and American kestrels.

### Barb Ogg UNL Extension Educator

During the wintertime, bird-loving people fill their bird feeders to attract songbirds. But, hungry hawks will sometimes eat at the feeder, too. They won't eat the seeds, but prey on the seed-eating birds.

We sometimes receive phone calls asking for advice about dealing with hawks hanging around or sitting high in trees above bird feeders. You cannot shoot or trap hawks and other raptors — both are illegal. Even if you think these birds of prey are "bad" birds, they are protected by federal wildlife laws and important in the balance of nature. It is also important to realize birds do not recognize rural and urban boundaries.

First, you might take a good look at your bird feeder and see whether it is placed near

natural sheltered areas like trees or shrubs. Evergreens are ideal harborage for songbirds — the thick foliage buffers winter winds and offers year-round hiding places from predators.

If you are greatly concerned about hawks, you may consider not filling the bird feeder for a few weeks or a month or so. The lack of food will force songbirds to go elsewhere, and the hawks will eventually abandon your area in favor of "better pickings." If you hesitate to stop feeding the birds for fear they will starve, you can stop worrying. Studies have shown a backyard bird feeder only provides a small amount of the food birds eat each day. Most songbirds get the majority of their diet from natural food sources, even in the winter.

A second option is to continue feeding all the birds, with the eventual loss of a few songbirds. Rather than mourning the loss, remember,

in the balance of nature, predation eliminates the weaker individuals, which strengthens the bird species population over time. Raptors rarely hunt healthy, strong and swift animals because it is too strenuous. Instead, they select the weak, the old, the young and the inattentive.

You may even get to witness the act of predation, which is an amazing act and the subject of television documentaries. The successful hunting hawk at your feeder is an example of the

survival of the fittest.

According to the National Wildlife Federation, some raptors overwintering in eastern Nebraska include: northern harrier, sharp-shinned hawk, red-tailed hawk, rough-legged hawk, Cooper's hawk, American kestrel and merlin. Bald eagles also overwinter in eastern Nebraska and are found along rivers and lakes.

Source: Field Guide to Birds of North America.

### Providing Water for Birds

Many people who set up a bird feeder to watch songbirds in the winter don't always recognize how important water is. In Nebraska, water is frozen during the coldest weather and unavailable to birds. You will greatly increase numbers of birds at your feeder by providing open water during the wintertime. Heated bird baths are available where bird feeders are sold. For more information about providing water for birds, check out [www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/notes/BirdNote09\\_ProvideWater.pdf](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/notes/BirdNote09_ProvideWater.pdf)

## Owls are Raptors Too

Most owls are nocturnal and will not usually prey on songbirds feeding at bird feeders. But, they could attack night-roosting birds.

Unlike most other birds, owls have large, front-facing eyes and excellent depth perception in low-light conditions. They have acute directional hearing. Owls are some of the quietest flying birds, swooping silently to snag unsuspecting prey with their sharp talons.

During the winter, owls primarily feed on small mammals, such as mice, voles and rabbits. Like hawks, they will kill domesticated poultry. Most susceptible are free-ranging poultry or poultry living in an uncovered pen. A headless bird carcass is the work of an owl.

To prevent predation by hawks and owls, it's a good idea to either cover your bird yard with secure bird netting or to house poultry at night.

All hawks and owls are protected under the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act.



Vern Wilkins, Indiana University, Bugwood.org

Eastern screech owl



## HEART OF 4-H VOLUNTEER AWARD

### Jean Nability

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Jean Nability as winner of February's "Heart of 4-H Award" in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

Jean has volunteered about five years with Lancaster County 4-H, and before that, about five years with Seward County 4-H.

In this county, Jean has helped in various ways:

- a project leader for the 4-H Explorers club
- 4-H Clover College instructor and volunteer
- co-superintendent of the 4-H Poultry Show at the Lancaster County Super Fair
- volunteered at the 4-H Food Booth at Super Fair

"I like being a 4-H volunteer because it keeps me actively involved with my kids," Jean says. "My favorite experience as a 4-H volunteer is definitely county fair. From the hustle and rush of getting projects and animals ready and in on time, to the hours spent just hanging out with family and other 4-H friends during each day of the fair."

Lancaster County 4-H thanks Jean for donating her time and talents. Volunteers like her are indeed the heart of 4-H!

*Volunteers are needed to help lead 4-H clubs. If you would like to learn more about 4-H volunteer opportunities, call 402-441-7180.*



### Excellence Awards Due March 1

The Governor's Agricultural Excellence Awards are sponsored by the Nebraska 4-H Foundation and Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA). Each year, 25 4-H clubs are awarded \$500 to be used as described in the award application form completed by the club.

Clubs may use the award dollars for many different programs. A few examples are: conferences or workshops for others in the community, trips or tours for club members, community improvement projects. The intent is to increase 4-Hers awareness of agricultural careers. Consider "agricultural" in the broadest terms for this program.

Forms are due by March 1. Applications are online at [www.ne4hfoundation.org](http://www.ne4hfoundation.org). If you have questions, contact Sinda Dux at [sdux2@unl.edu](mailto:sdux2@unl.edu) or 402-472-1178.

### 4-H Photography Themes

The 2014 4-H Photography Nebraska Theme classes are structured to encourage 4-H'ers to explore potential careers in photography.

Unit II, Pet photographer career exhibit print — Pet photographers know just how much pet owners love their animals and capturing pets in print is a great way to honor that relationship. Capture photos of your favorite pets and consider creative locations and whimsical props for your photo shoots.

Unit III, Editorial photographer career exhibit print — Editorial photographers take pictures that highlight the topics being written about in books, magazines, and newspapers. Editorial photos should be creative, powerful images that tell an intriguing story. Capture editorial photos that tell Nebraska's story.

### 4-H/FFA Market Beef Weigh-In, Jan. 30

4-H and FFA exhibitors showing market steers or heifers at the Lancaster County Super Fair, Nebraska State Fair and/or Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Stock Show must identify and weigh-in their projects on Thursday, Jan. 30, 6–8 p.m. at the Lancaster Event Center – Pavilion 2.

4-H'ers planning on exhibiting market beef at State Fair or Ak-Sar-Ben must have DNA sampled. There is a \$6 per head charge. It is encouraged to have DNA pulled at the time of weigh-in. Exhibitors have until April 1 to identify, weigh and pull DNA on any market beef that may go to State Fair or Ak-Sar-Ben.

Please note: all other market livestock possibly going to Nebraska State Fair or Ak-Sar-Ben will need to be DNA sampled, with a later due date to be announced.

### 4-H Crocheting Workshop, Feb. 8

4-H youth ages 10 and up are invited to learn how to crochet a washcloth utilizing the single crochet stitch at the "Basic Crocheting" workshop on Saturday, Feb. 8, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. No cost — all supplies will be provided. Adults are welcome to attend to help 4-H'ers. Must preregister by Feb. 5 by calling 402-441-7180.

If you previously attended this workshop, you are welcome to attend again. 4-H'ers may enter washcloths at the Lancaster County Super Fair under 4-H Clothing — Level 1 Crochet.

### 4-H Pillow Sewing Workshop, Feb. 22

4-H youth ages 8 and up are invited to learn beginning sewing skills and make a pillow at the "Pillow Party" sewing workshop on Saturday, Feb. 22, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. No cost to attend. Adults are welcome to help.

Bring your sewing machine, basic sewing equipment (scissors, pins, measuring tape), etc. Also bring 1/3 yard and 2/3 yard contrasting fabrics, pre-washed, 100% cotton (no plaids, no knits) and matching thread. Pillow forms provided. Sign up by Feb. 19 by calling 402-441-7180.

4-H'ers may enter pillows at the Lancaster County Super Fair under 4-H Clothing - Sewing for Fun.

### 4-H Paws-On Dog Workshop, March 6

UNL Extension will present its annual statewide 4-H Paws-On Dog Workshop on Saturday, March 8, 9 a.m.–3 p.m. at the Greater Lincoln Obedience Club Building, 5740 Johanna Road, Lincoln. This workshop aims to help 4-H members learn more about dog care and improve their 4-H dog training and showing skills. Topics include obedience, agility, showmanship and many other skills. Bring a crate and show leads to work with. Fee is \$15 per person, which includes a lunch. Registration form will be at <http://companionanimal.unl.edu>. Registration must be postmarked by March 1.

### 4-H Jammie Sewing Workshop, March 15

4-H youth ages 8 and up are invited to practice their basic sewing skills and make jammie bottoms at the "Jammie Jamboree" sewing workshop on Saturday, March 15, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. No cost to attend. Adults are encouraged to attend to help 4-H'ers.

Bring your sewing machine, basic sewing equipment (scissors, pins, measuring tape, etc.), simple pull-on pajama bottom pattern, pre-washed flannel or 100% cotton fabric (no one-way design fabrics or plaids) elastic as recommended by pattern and matching thread. Also bring a sack lunch. Sign up before March 12 by calling 402-441-7180.

4-H'ers may enter jammie bottoms at the Lancaster County Super Fair and styled in Style Revue under Clothing Level 1.

### Pick-A-Pig Club Accepting New Members

The Pick-A-Pig 4-H club will accept new members in February and March. All youth ages 8–18 are welcome. Learn all about raising a pig and showing it at county fair. The pigs are raised at one central farm. Call Harry Muhlbach at 402-430-7304 with any questions.

## HORSE BITS

### 4-H Horse Incentive Program Has Begun

Any Lancaster County 4-H'er can participate in the Lancaster County 4-H Horse Incentive Program and log hours/points by participating in various horse-related activities Jan. 1–June 30.

Starting this year, a belt buckle will be included as a gold-level reward option. However, due to the high cost, a buckle can only be chosen as an incentive reward one time by a 4-H'er and by seniors only.

Horse Incentive Program guidelines and forms are available at the Extension office and online at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/horsenews.shtm>.

### State 4-H Horse Stampede Entries Due Jan. 31

The annual 4-H Horse Stampede will be held Saturday, March 1 at the UNL Animal Science Building on East Campus. Stampede includes the 4-H state horse-related competitions which do not require a horse: Horse Bowl, Public Speaking, Demonstration and Art Contest. Open to 4-H'ers ages 10–14 enrolled in the 4-H horse project (with the exception of the Art Contest).

Lancaster County 4-H Council will pay the contest entry fees for Lancaster County 4-H'ers. Entry forms are due to the Extension office no later than Jan. 31.

Additional information on the individual competitions and entry forms are online at <http://animalscience.unl.edu/web/anisci/ANSCExtensionEquine4HHorseStampede>. Stampede T-shirts will be available to participants for \$5 if pre-ordered, or \$15 the day of the event until gone.

### Changes in 4-H State Horse Contests

Beginning this year, all 4-H district and state horse show participants must be 10 years of age and be under 19 years of age by Jan. 1 of the current calendar year. Where age groups are offered, a junior is 10 years of age and no older than 14 years of age as of January 1. A senior is 15 years of age and must not have reached the age of 19 years on or before January 1 of the calendar year of competition.

All advancement level requirements will remain the same for district and state contests.

In addition, entry fees will be increasing in order to account for inflation and the rising costs of running the state contests. The entry fees will increase from \$5 to \$10 per class or contest.

### Horsemanship Level Testing Dates

Now is a good time to start thinking about new 4-H horsemanship level goals! The 2014 group testings will be held in Lancaster Event Center – Amy Countryman Arena on the following Tuesdays evenings: April 15, April 29, June 3, June 24 and July 1.

## Watch Chicks Hatch Online with EGG Cam!

<http://go.unl.edu/eggcam>



Embryology resources include incubation, candling, and more!



Find us on Facebook!

Lancaster County 4-H and 4-H Council invite ALL 4-H'ers, 4-H families and volunteers to



# 4-H Achievement Celebration

**Tuesday, Feb. 11 • 6:30 p.m.**

**Lancaster Extension Education Center**  
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln

*Hayley Thramer, former Husker volleyball player and student coach, will speak about sportsmanship!*

**4-H members, clubs and volunteers receiving awards, scholarships or pins will be mailed detailed information.**



Part of Nebraska 4-H Month!

**Congratulations to all 4-H youth who commit themselves to excellence!**

*Light snack provided.*

"2013 4-H Year in Review" video!

## Discover, Learn and Grow at 4-H Summer Camps

2014 4-H Summer Camp brochures are now available online at <http://4h.unl.edu/camp> and at the Extension office. Camps are open to all youth ages 5–18 (need not be in 4-H). With locations at Gretna and Halsey, there are nearly 50 camps ranging from half day to seven days/six nights!

The 4-H camps and centers all meet over 300 standards established by the American Camping Association. It is the mission of Nebraska 4-H Camps and Centers to provide unique educational opportunities that empower people of all ages to be active in the pursuit of self-improvement in a safe, inclusive, and fun environment.



**Save 10% by registering before April 15!**



### 4-H Council Camp Scholarships

Lancaster County 4-H Council is offering two full scholarships to attend a 4-H summer camp at either of the two Nebraska 4-H Camp locations: Gretna or Halsey. Applicants must be age 9 or older and currently enrolled in Lancaster County 4-H. Application deadline is May 1 — preference given to applications submitted by March 1. Applications are available at the extension office and at <http://go.unl.edu/hqw>.

### Applications Open for 4-H Camp Staff

The two 4-H Camps in Nebraska are currently accepting applications for summer staff. The camps offers outstanding opportunities for young adults to learn leadership skills, work with youth in outdoor settings, gain valuable experience for future careers, and make lasting memories. Need not be in 4-H to apply. Must complete Counselor Training at one of the sites.

• **Summer Program Staff (ages 18 and above)** — Seasonal, paid, full time staff who live at camp mid-May to August who are responsible

for daily programming and teaching groups of all ages. Application deadline is Feb. 15.

• **Junior/Senior Counselors (ages 15 and above)** — Cabin supervisors who volunteer and select which weeks they can work throughout the summer. Provide valuable leadership to a group of campers by day and assist with cabin supervision at night. Application deadline is May 1.

More information and applications are online at <http://4h.unl.edu/camp>.

### 4-H Clubs Needed to Help Provide Booths at Kiwanis Karnival, April 12

The annual Kiwanis Karnival, a FREE family event, is sponsored by the Lincoln Center Kiwanis. This year, it will be held Saturday, April 12, 6–8 p.m. at Elliott Elementary School, 225 S. 25th St., Lincoln. The Karnival features carnival type games for the kids, bingo for adults, prizes, snacks, fun, and fellowship. Lincoln Center Kiwanis has sponsored this event for over 50 years — providing prizes and snacks. 4-H clubs are needed to provide carnival-type booths. This is a great community service and leadership activity for clubs. If your 4-H club or family would like to have a booth or for more information, call Lorene at 402-441-7180. Come join the fun!

### Spring Rabbit Show

**Saturday, March 29, 9 a.m.**  
Registrations 7:30–8:30 a.m.  
**Lancaster Event Center – Exhibit Hall**  
84th & Havelock, Lincoln

Open to all youth 8–18



**Awards will be given!**  
**CLASSES:** Fancy Rabbits, Commercial Rabbits, Pet Class, and Pee Wee Class.

**REGISTRATION FEES: \$2.50 per rabbit or cavy, \$1 fur class, \$1 Showmanship.**

**FREE CONTESTS:**  
**Rabbit Quiz & Breed ID**

All rabbits must be tattooed in the left ear (available at the show 7:30–8:30 a.m. — \$1 per rabbit). All rabbits must be in carriers with leak-proof bottoms.

**For more information, call Bob at 402-525-8263 or Marty at 402-441-7180**

Sponsored by Lancaster County 4-H Rabbit VIPs Committee and UNL Extension in Lancaster County

**Opportunity to learn and practice your showmanship!**

**RAFFLE FOR MANY PRIZES!**  
Tickets 3 for \$1 or 20 for \$5. Please bring an item for raffle such as crafts, rabbit items, plants, Easter/Spring items, books, etc.





# EXTENSION CALENDAR

All events will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, unless otherwise noted.

## January

- 21 Guardian/Conservator Training ..... 1:30–4:30 p.m.
- 22 Private Pesticide Applicator Training Session ..... 9 a.m.–12 noon
- 23 Private Pesticide Applicator Training Session ..... 6:30–9:30 p.m.
- 30 4-H/FFA Beef Weigh-In, Lancaster Event Center - Pav. 2 ..... 6–8 p.m.
- 31 Lancaster County 4-H Deadline for Horse Stampede Entries

## February FEBRUARY IS NEBRASKA 4-H MONTH

- 1 Private Pesticide Applicator Training Session ..... 8:30–11:30 a.m.
- 4 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Initial Training and Testing Session ..... 8:30 a.m.
- 4 Gardening at Lunch Webinar: Small Fruits, online only ..... 12:05–12:55 p.m.
- 4 4-H Council Meeting ..... 7 p.m.
- 6 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training Session ..... 9 a.m.
- 8 4-H Crocheting Workshop ..... 9 a.m.
- 9 4-H Teen Council Meeting ..... 3 p.m.
- 11 4-H Achievement Celebration ..... 6:30 p.m.
- 14 Extension Board Meeting ..... 8 a.m.
- 18 Guardian/Conservator Training ..... 1:30–4:30 p.m.
- 22 4-H Pillow Party Sewing Workshop ..... 9 a.m.
- 25 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training Session ..... 9 a.m.
- 27 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Initial Training and Testing Session ..... 8:30 a.m.

## Meet the Extension Board

The Lancaster County Extension Board serves as an advocate for UNL Extension in Lancaster County. Members of the board are appointed by the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners. The Extension Board provides guidance to Extension staff in establishing and accomplishing Extension education program goals and objectives. Annually, it assists in developing an operating budget and local educational priorities. The board meets monthly (usually the second Friday at 8 a.m.).

Extension board members for 2014 are:

- Jim Bauman, *President*
- L. Ronald Fleecs, *Vice President*
- Ryan Mohling, *Secretary/Treasurer*
- Allen Blezek (newly appointed)
- Luann Finke
- Marty Minchow
- Jim Newman (newly appointed)
- Paula Peterson (newly appointed)
- Susan Sarver
- Sharlyn Sieck, *4-H Council representative*



Outgoing Extension board member Wes Daberkow (left) served two terms, including three years as president. Pictured with Extension Educator Gary Bergman (right).

## Gardening at Lunch Webinar Series

Learn about various aspects of gardening from UNL Extension experts. Join us for an exciting “Gardening at Lunch” webinar series, right from your desk at work or home. During each program you can listen and interact with the speakers. You will need a computer with Internet access and sound to participate. Cost is \$10 per program.

Must register for each program at <http://marketplace.unl.edu/extension> (click on Educational Programs). Registration will close one hour prior to the start of the webinar. For more information, contact Nicole Stoner at [nstoner2@unl.edu](mailto:nstoner2@unl.edu) or 402-223-1384.

Webinars are held Tuesdays, 12:05–12:55 p.m.

- **Feb. 4: Small Fruits** — Learn about Saskatoon berries, Honeyberries, Aronia berry, Elderberry, Cornealian cherry and bush cherries.
- **March 4: For The Birds** — Experience the sights and sounds of Southeast Nebraska birds along with Nebraska bird research results.
- **April 1: 8 Steps to a Better Lawn** — Learn the eight essential steps to manage or improve your existing lawn.
- **May 6: Gardening for Pollinators** — Learn all about pollinators and their benefits.



## Earth Wellness Festival Needs Volunteers



Volunteers are needed for the 2014 Earth Wellness Festival on Wednesday, March 26 and Thursday, March 27 at Southeast Community College in Lincoln. Approximately 3,000 fifth-graders from 45 schools participate in this annual event which involves students in creative and

innovative environmental education activities. This is the 20th anniversary of Earth Wellness Festival.

Each year, more than 175 volunteers take part in the festival activities as classroom escorts, presenter assistants, registration assistants and presenters. Volunteers are essential to the success of this event.

You may choose to volunteer one or both days. In return, you receive the opportunity to participate in a rewarding volunteer experience, a festival T-shirt, coffee, rolls and lunch. For more information, contact Tonya Bernadt at [tbernadt5@unl.edu](mailto:tbernadt5@unl.edu) or 402-472-2712 by March 3. Visit <http://lancaster.unl.edu/ewf> to register online.



To kick off Earth Wellness Festival's first festival in 1995, then City of Lincoln Mayor Mike Johanns read a proclamation and participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony. 2014 will be the 20th anniversary of the festival.



## NEBRASKA MASTER NATURALIST

Explore. Contribute. Connect.

The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program is an adult education program, focused on providing volunteers with hands-on experiences in Nebraska's natural resources. Participants spend 60 hours with Nebraska's finest educators, learning both in the classroom and in the field about topics such as Nebraska ecosystems, plants, animals, nature interpretation, conservation and more.

Upcoming trainings:

- Thursdays through Saturdays from April 3–26 or May 1–17 in Omaha and Lincoln (Fontenelle Forest, Glacier Creek Preserve, Spring Creek Prairie)
- Sunday through Saturday from June 8–14 at the Niobrara Valley Preserve near Ainsworth, Nebr.

Registration is \$250 and discounts may be available. Apply today at <http://naturalist.unl.edu> or call 308-382-1820.

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