12-1996

The NEBLINE, December 1996

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Lancaster County Extension's Web Site on the Internet

John Gonzalez
Extension Assistant – Computers & Communications

Please visit http://ianrwww.unl.edu/ianr/lanco/nehline/


The N E B L I N E
University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension
Lancaster County

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Just what kind of information is currently available on the Lancaster County Web site?

- http://ianrwww.unl.edu/ianr/lanco/hort/
  Horticulture: Read publications; see gardening tips for every month of the year; watch a slide set on composting; and learn about the Master Gardener Program.

- http://ianrwww.unl.edu/ianr/lanco/ag/
  Ag/Acreage: Read publications; learn about the Acreage and Small Farm; visit The Electronic Coffeehouse; see news—weather—ag markets; learn about links to other related sites.

- http://ianrwww.unl.edu/ianr/lanco/4h/
  4-H and Youth: Learn about 4-H Cloverbuds; more to come here!

- http://ianrwww.unl.edu/ianr/lanco/safety.htm
  Nutrition & Food Safety: Learn about programs, publications, and links; subscribe to “FoodTalk,” the electronic newsletter; learn about the games: “Pyramid Power: The Food Guide Game” and “Don’t Get Bugged by a Foodborne Illness.”

- http://ianrwww.unl.edu/ianr/lanco/enviro/
  Environment and Natural Resources: Learn about earth wellness festival, and Groundwater/Surface Water; more to come!

- http://ianrwww.unl.edu/ianr/lanco/nebline/
  The NEBLINE: View this publication on-line before the printer gets it and see back issues for the entire year. (JAG)
Over the garden fence

Don Janssen
Extension Educator

Q. I thoroughly enjoyed the amaryllis that I received for Christmas. What do I do with it now that it’s done flowering? Will it flower again?

A. Amaryllis bulbs can be refloretted annually for years. The easiest way is to keep them growing and let them flower at will. It will usually happen once or twice a year. If you want an amaryllis to flower around the holidays, water and fertilize it to keep it growing through the summer. Gradually withhold water in the fall to send it into dormancy, and then let the bulb rest for a couple of months. Four to eight weeks before Christmas, place the pot where it will get plenty of bright light and begin to water it again. It should soon send up a leafy flower stem, which will bear the spectacular, lily-like amaryllis flowers. Don’t worry if the leafy stem comes up before or at the same time as the flower stalk.

Q. How can I test leftover vegetable seeds to see whether they will grow this next year?

A. Place 10 seeds on a moist paper towel and place the towel in a plastic bag. Check the seeds after a couple of days and then daily for a few days. The number of seeds that sprout multiplied by 10 is your germination percentage. A germination rate of 80 percent or higher means you can plant the seeds as usual. Less than 40 percent means you should probably discard the leftovers and buy new seed. What you do if the germination rate falls between 40 and 80 percent depends on how much you are depending on the crop from that seed. If you can compensate for the lower germination rate by sowing seed more thickly and save a significant amount of money by doing so, using the seed makes sense. If you have only a dab of seed left and you will have to buy more, anyway, using the old seed probably isn’t worthwhile. If the questionable seed is from the main harvest of a primary crop, poor performance could leave you with no time to get new seed and explain it in time for the crop to mature. (DJ)

Cyclamen care

Cool temperatures and bright light are the prescription for success with cyclamen. Place this flowering plant in an east window, near, but not touching, the glass. A daytime temperature of 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit and a night minimum of 50 degrees Fahrenheit should keep it blooming well into next year. The white, red or pink flowers grow tall with nodding stems above the rosette of heart-shaped, blue-green or dark green leaves. The foliage is marked with white veins and light-green spots. Water the cyclamen when ever the soil begins to feel dry and try to keep the soil around the roots moist at all times. Water with lukewarm water and be careful to keep it off the foliage and stem, because the plant is very suscep tible to crown rot. Fertilize the plant with a houseplant fertilizer at half the recommended strength every two weeks while it is flowering. When new flowers cease to appear and the leaves turn brown, reduce the frequency and amount of water and place the pot in a cool spot. After flowering, let it rest until warm, spring weather arrives. Repot in a mixture of equal parts houseplant potting soil and perlite, from which the corne above the soil place. In a sunny window or in a protected spot outdoors where it will be shaded during the brightest part of the day. (MM)

Protect gift plants

When moving plants to or from your heated car, move quickly. Plan your itinerary so you drop off plants before you make other stops. Leaving plants in an unheated car for even a short time can injure or kill them.

When you deliver your gift plants, help the recipients find them.

Drain water in the fall to send it into dormancy and reduce it. A common complaint in growing rubber plants indoors is the yellowing leaves with dead spots on the edges. This is usually caused by overwatering. Bottom drainage helps remove surplus water.

Houseplants with large leaves and smooth foliage such as philodendrons, dracaena and rubber plant, benefit if their leaves are washed with a damp cloth to remove dust.

A home weather station that includes a minimum-maximum thermometer, a rain gauge and a weather log is a good gift for a gardener.

December garden hints

♦ Remove snow from evergreen shrubs to prevent the branches from breaking. Tap the branches gently.

♦ Place Christmas trees away from fireplaces, radiators, heat vents and anything else that could dry the needles. Keep your Christmas tree well watered from the time it is brought home until it is discarded.

♦ Minimize traffic on a frozen lawn to reduce damage.

♦ Check belts and spark plugs. Clean off dirt so equipment will be ready to go when you need it next spring.

♦ Drain the fuel tank of lawn mower or tiller before putting the equipment away for the winter.

♦ Clean and sharpen lawn and garden tools and store them in a dry storage area.

♦ After Christmas, your live tree can be moved outside and be redecorated for the birds. Anchor the tree in a bucket full of damp sand. Put on strings of popcorn and cranberries. Apples, oranges, leftover bread and pine cones coated with peanut butter then dipped in birdseed can also be added. For best results, push the edible ornaments well up into the tree.

♦ Start reviewing and expanding your garden notes to help with next year’s plans.

♦ Check fruits, vegetables, corns and tubers that you have in storage. Sort out any that show signs of disease and dispose of them. (MM)

Keep trees fresh

The best advice to keep a fresh tree is to mount it in a stand that holds at least one gallon of water and check the water level at least once daily. If the water level in the tree stand drops below the cut surface, a seal will form just as it does on cut flowers, and the tree will be unable to absorb water.

A properly-watered Christmas tree will stay fresh and green for months. A neglected tree may dry out, drop needles and be a potential fire hazard in a week. (DJ)

A flowering plant may be just the thing for those hard-to-buy-for folks on your Christmas gift list. Whether it’s a traditional Christmas plant like poinsettia, cyclamen or Jerusalem cherry; or a relative newcomer like the kalanchoe or Begonia, take time to wrap it well before you transport it. Holiday plants are greenhouse grown, so they won’t last long if they’re exposed to cold temperatures.

If you’re taking a plant directly from the florist’s shop to the recipient, ask the seller to bundle it thoroughly against the cold.

If you take the plant home for a few days before delivering it, protecting it is your job. Wrap several layers of newspapers around the pot and several more around the whole plant. Then place the plant in a heavy paper bag or box. This will keep the roots from being chilled and hold warm air around the top.

When moving plants to or from your heated car, move quickly. Plan your itinerary so you drop off plants before you make other stops. Leaving plants in an unheated car for even a short time can injure or kill them.

When you deliver your gift plants, help the recipients find them.

Keep in mind that most Christmas gift plants do not tolerate extreme hot or cold drafts well. They do best in temperatures on the cool side (60 to 70 degrees for a short time) and with plenty of bright light.

They will probably be chilled and injured if placed on a cold window sill, however, especially if draped or shades are pulled over them at night. A table near a window is better.

Avoid placing them where they’ll be hit by blasts of cold air from an exterior door or gusts of hot air from a furnace duct. Heat from a wood stove, fireplace, or heat-producing appliance like a television set will also speed gift plants’ decline. (D3)

Ugly mix prevents theft of evergreens

You may wish to prevent your ornamental evergreen trees from being stolen during December. Each year, Christmas tree thieves steal shaped evergreen trees from unsuspecting land owners. Hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars worth of losses occur and the stress of unexpectedly seeing only a stump where a valuable tree once stood is an unpleasant experi ence for landowners.

Cornell University’s Cornell Plantations in Ithaca, New York, uses a special concoction referred to as Ugly Mix to deter thieves. The planting of evergreens during the Christmas season. Invented in 1983 by

extension educator.
Nebraska Soybean Day and Machinery Expo

The Nebraska Soybean Day and Machinery Expo is scheduled for Friday, December 13, at the Saunders County Fairgrounds in Wahoo. Beginning at 9:00 a.m., area farm operators can visit with representatives from seed, herbicide, fertilizer and equipment companies. The latest in farm equipment, provided by local implement dealers, will be on display for farm operators to view in the heated pavilion at the fairgrounds.

Throughout the day, topics pertaining to crop production, marketing and utilization will be presented by farm operators, University of Nebraska researchers, Extension specialists and private industry representatives. The topics covered are timely and tailor made for area growers. Highlighting the program agenda are Todd Intermill and Doug Smith, better known as "the Canadian and the Fat Guy." Along with their insights on modern farming events, their presentations are chock full of clean comedy and humor. Both are knowledgable farm operators—Todd is from South Dakota and Doug is from Ontario, Canada. Together these two operators will share their farming experiences with modifying planter equipment and other pieces of farm equipment in the production of soybeans. Participants will find this to be informing and entertaining.

The 1997 Crop Protection Clinic will be held in Lincoln, and will be sponsored by the Nebraska Soybean Board and private industry representatives. For more information, please contact Keith Glewen, Saunders County Extension Educator at 402-624-8030. (DV)

Agronomy Highlights 1996

The annual review of agricultural activities and accomplishments by the UNL Department of Agronomy has been a popular event among farmers from across Nebraska for several years. Agronomy Highlights will provide a complimentary noon meal for all participants who preregister by Wednesday, December 11. Reservations are required for the noon meal and may be made by contacting JoAnn Collins, UNL Agronomy Department, 402-472-2811. There is no fee for attending the general sessions and related educational programs.

Agronomy Highlights participants in 1995 obtained CCA Continuing Education Units (CEU's). Application has been submitted to obtain credits for attending this year's session. Information on this decision will be provided closer to the date of the program. (WS)

Crop Protection Clinic

The Agronomy Department is scheduled to provide the latest information on plant diseases, weeds and insects that pose a threat to Nebraska agriculture. The 1997 Crop Protection Clinic will be held in Lincoln on Monday, January 6, so be sure to mark your new calendar now. This annual clinic is designed to provide the latest information on plant diseases, weeds and insects that pose specific problems for agricultural activities in agronomy, poster illustrations and technical demonstrations. The entire program is designed specifically to meet the interests and needs of the crop producer. It has been a popular event among farmers from across Nebraska for several years. Agronomy Highlights will provide a complimentary noon meal for all participants who preregister by Wednesday, December 11. Reservations are required for the noon meal and may be made by contacting JoAnn Collins, UNL Agronomy Department, 402-472-2811. There is no fee for attending the general sessions and related educational programs. (WS)

"Part-time Farming"

Have you just purchased an acreage? Considering investing in agricultural enterprises? Do you consider yourself a small-scale farmer? If so, you're looking for help, consider the video that will help make your operation a big success: "Part-time Farming."

"Part-time Farming" is a five-part video series that focuses on: (1) field crops; (2) farm management and specialty enterprises; (4) haylands and pastures; and (5) livestock, poultry and horses. Just one hour of "Part-time Farming" provides numerous tips that will save you costly mistakes and precious time. Learn at your leisure to effectively develop your country environment and improve your quality of life. "Part-time Farming" is presented in a down-to-earth fashion that everyone can relate to. Learn at your convenience in the comfort of your home. To obtain your copy of "Part-time Farming," send $16.99 payable to Lancaster County Cooperative Extension to "Part-time Farming," 444 Cherry Creek Road, Lincoln, NE 68528-1507. Please include questions about "Part-time Farming" to 402-441-7180 or e-mail cnty5025@unlvm.unl.edu. (DV)

Compost marketing

Grass and leaf compost is available from two sources, depending on the quantity needed. Small quantities of high quality compost is available from any one of several landscapers in the Lincoln area and from General Excavating (67th & Cornhusker Hwy). A fee is normally charged for the purchase of the material and for delivery.

The City of Lincoln, Recycling Office, is accepting bids from large-quantity users for screened compost the first and third Fridays of each month. A minimum of 100 cubic yards of compost must be obtained and there is a minimum bid of $3.00 per cubic yard that must be made for consideration. Purchasers must provide their own transportation. Loading can be provided by the city for an additional $2.00 per cubic yard. Copies of the bid proposal forms can be obtained by contacting the Recycling Office at 441-7043. (WS)

Rural $ense
Environmental Friendly Holidays

With the holiday season here we think of decorating, parties, entertaining and gifts. As planning is done for the holidays and celebrations, it is important to keep the environment in mind. When decorating, consider decorations that can be made from reused items or can be reused. Sharing decorations that are no longer used in your home with family, friends and charity or local organizations will give those unused items a new life. Be sure to consider safety when decorating. Candles are a nice touch, but never leave them burning overnight or when you leave the house.

Consider using reusable table service when entertaining. The throw-away plates, napkins, cups, glasses and eating utensils are decorative and save on clean up, but think of the waste that goes with this. Many plastics can be reused by putting them through the dishwasher or washing them. They would work great for picnics or quick family meals.

Gift wrap is another item that produces a lot of waste and adds to the expense of gift giving. Think about using newspaper, paper or plastic bags, or fabric for gift wrap. Decorate your bags with stamping, art work or stickers. Gift tags and cards can be made also. Be creative. This is a fun activity to involve the family. As your family prepares for the holidays, think about the environment. Reduce, reuse and recycle.

Cybercase of the Invisible Itches

Barb Ogg
Extension Educator

The internet and the World Wide Web has given Extension personnel new ways to help clients. The following note was forwarded to me via the internet about a month ago from "Martha." She was looking for information on the internet about her friend's problem with insect bites. NEBRILE readers might be interested in this series of e-mail messages.

To Whom it May Concern:

Martha is very concerned about complaining of these mites/bugs, etc, being “all over her” on her face, eyelashes, all over her body. She has been itching unmercifully. She is not the type of person you would expect to have anything like this.

She went to a doctor yesterday and he told her she had lice. I have been all over the internet and I can’t find this anywhere. He gave her insect killer and told her to bath in it.

I am worried that the doctor doesn’t know what she has, and I am afraid that this is contagious and I do not want myself or my family to get this. Have you ever heard of lice? Do you know where I can go to get more info on this. I’m sure her doctor won’t tell me. Any help you can give me, I would certainly appreciate it.

Thank you.

Martha

Dear Martha:

I can understand your concern for your friend and for your own health and that of your family. Please read all of my message before you decide to share it with your friend.

There is a good reason why you couldn’t find anything on the internet about “mites.” I am an entomologist and have never studied about mites in medical entomology classes, and cannot find anything about mites in my reference textbooks. My conclusion is that “mites” do not exist.

The question remains, if there are no such things as “mites,” then what is making your friend itch so badly. I may be able to shed some light on what the problem might be.

First, with the exception of a few different mites, all insects that bite humans can be easily seen with the naked eye and identified. This includes lice, fleas, bedbugs, mosquitoes, biting gnats, etc.

Continued on page 11

Bluff Road Landfill Rates Have Increased, But Are Still Low

If you have taken a pickup load of trash to the Bluff Road Landfill lately, you may have been surprised to find that the rates have increased. If you live in town or own a business that generates trash, you may have also had rate increases from your private refuse hauler.

Many people don’t realize that no tax dollars are used to support the landfill’s operations, transfer station operation, composting or recycling programs. The landfill operates like a business and must maintain a positive cash balance just like any other privately owned business. Monies used to operate the landfill come from refuse haulers and citizens through gate fees. Monies are also generated from the sale of recyclables.

Why have fees increased?

If Fees have increased primarily because state regulations have required the construction of environmental protection features at the Bluff Road landfill and closure and monitoring of the old landfill site.

The fee increases are significant, but the actual rates are still lower than the average landfill fees in Nebraska. (BPO)


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<th>Sept. 1996</th>
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Cut up the world

Cut an apple into quarters. Put aside three of the quarters. What do these represent? The oceans of our world, the Blue Planet. The fraction left is 1/4 of the apple. Slice it in half and set aside one of the halves. This is the part that people can’t live or work on—the poles, deserts, swamps and mountains. What’s left? 1/8th of the apple. This is where the humans live, but not necessarily where they grow their food. When you purchase food, it is likely there is more of the 1/8th than the 1/4th set aside. What’s left? 1/32nd of the apple. The three pieces that you set aside represent the places where the soil is too poor or barren—here it’s too rocky, wet, cold or steep to produce food. These three pieces also represent the cities, houses, highways, shopping malls, schools, parks, factories, parking lots and miniature golf courses where people live, play and work—but do not grow any food.

Cut the 1/32nd piece of apple that’s left and carefully peel it. Look at this scrap of apple peel. It represents the fertile surface topsoil of the planet, the thin skin of the Earth’s crust upon which humankind totally depends. It is less than five feet deep and it is quite a fixed amount of food-producing land. You may now eat the rest of the apple, but carefully save this tiny piece of apple skin. Treat it as if your life depends on it. (AH)

Biodegradable plastic from corn

University of Nebraska researchers at the Industrial Agricultural Products Center (IAPC) are exploring the characteristics and possible uses of polyactic acid (PLA)—a compostable bioplastic resin made of cornstarch through fermentation processing. PLA is versatile and water resistant but rapidly breaks down within four to five weeks in a compost pile. The heat, moisture and microbe combination is key to the PLAs degradation because if PLA is buried in the soil alone for 10 months, it doesn’t break down. Some of the projects the IAPC are working on are:

• How to use PLA in woven and knitted fabrics (Lois Hamilton, IANR textiles)
• Compostability of PLA bags filled with grass clippings and restaurant food
• Encapsulating of insects using PLA as a timed-release application (Dennis Robinson, NU Medical Center)
• Posticide containers for agricultural chemicals
• PLA coated paper cups

In addition to this environmentally sound, compostable bioplastic, this research may result in new markets for Nebraska corn. (IBO)

ANNOUNCING—earth wellness festival is Thursday, March 27, 1997 at Southeast Community College-Lincoln. Annually, over 3,300 Lancaster County fifth-graders and their teachers attend to participate in this exciting environmental education program. Over 400 volunteers and presenters help at the day-long festival.

Volunteers are needed to help in a variety of activities at the event. If you would like to volunteer at the festival or would like information on other ways to support this important program, contact Soni at 441-7180. (SE)

1996 Safe Drinking Water Act: will it affect you?

Water system operators will need to be certified by the EPA, although small communities will be eligible for financial assistance from USDA-CSREES to determine impact of Natural Resources and Environmental Management Education programs. The grant funds are designated to support an impact evaluation study. A member of the committee that reviewed the grant proposals stated that earth wellness festival is representative of many other youth programs in the nation that are funded by USDA-CSREES. Dr. Paul McCawley, USDA-CSREES, felt that the earth wellness festival “flagship” study will provide important documentation of impact and serve as a model for similar environmental education programs.

The evaluation study will be used to document the program’s impact on the community and help determine direction as we strive to “educate future stewards of the earth.” (SE)
Keep your family calm

As the holidays approach, parents seem a little more strained than usual, as though they already are suffering from overload. Of course, this pressure comes from work demands, upcoming travel and meal plans as well as wanting their kids to have the best holidays ever. But when parents mistakenly assume that they have to do everything, they’re bound to feel tense and unhappy. Ironically, what kids need most for a joyful time are reasonably relaxed parents who can enjoy the festivities with them. If you want to change the pattern so you and your family get the most from this season, try:

1. Be so busy you neglect your kids. Between the demands of work, travel, family reunions, meal preparation, and yes, sports, many of us do not give enough time to our kids during the holidays.

2. Slow down and recon-nect. You need at least 10 minutes of your uninterrupted attention, each day. As soon as you get together at the end of the day, put everything else on hold. Kids need to reconnect and so do you. Sit down on the couch, give them an extra hug, and just listen to whatever they have to say. If you promised to read a child a story, now is the time to do it.

3. Simplify whatever you can. Make your meals small but nutritious.

4. Get kids into the kitchen. Find a way to include your kids in cooking whenever you can, especially when guests are coming. Participating in the family kitchen will make your kids feel that they are hosts along with you, and they’ll feel even more hospitable toward the guests when they arrive.

5. You’re spending too much time away from home. There are office parties, and your schedule demands you work many evenings. Then there’s all that shopping to do.

6. Tell them you miss too. Kids need to know that you feel awful when you’ve had to spend so much time away. Explain why you need to be involved in these extra activities, and promise you’ll find some time for them on the weekend.

family living

Families make positive changes through Nutrition Education Program (NEP)

The Nutrition Education Program (NEP) changes through Nutrition Education Program (NEP) changes through Nutrition Education Program. The Lancaster County NEP staff is funded as follows: 2.75 positions funded through USDA Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP); 2 positions through USDA Food Stamp Grant; and 1 position jointly funded through Lancaster County and Lincoln Housing Authority (LHA). Nutrition advisors Linda Detsauer, Louena Fitch, Charlene Morris, Nobuko Nyman, Sondra Phillips, Marilyn Waldron and Barb Yllescas provide group and individual family nutrition education. Nutrition education is available in both English and Spanish. For more information on how to enroll, contact Maureen Busson at 441-7180. (MB)

Families make positive changes through Nutrition Education Program (NEP)

Thank you LaDonna Pankoke, Glamour Girls Club; Jean White, Emerald Club; Ernestine Egger, Princeton Homemakers Club and Darleen Isley, Firth Homemakers Club for organizing the evening.

When Doris Cunningham’s name was read I remember I learned how to make hats in her basement, many years ago. When Ramona Dietmeyer’s name was called I remember she was Mrs. America. FCE club work has come to an end now for 1996. We are looking ahead for a good year in 1997. Sorry to say we only have 17 clubs this coming year, a loss of six clubs. But we will work hard to be a good FCE group in ’97.

Mark your calendar for January 27, 1997, 1 p.m., for our first meeting of the year. We will set our goals for the new year.

By the time you read this analysis, you will be thinking of Thanksgiving and that brings the Holiday Season.

I had a call this evening from our oldest granddaughter and she wanted to know if we could go shopping for her Christmas outfit this week because they are having a music program at school Monday night. So Thursday night I will begin my Christmas shopping.

My thought for the month—By the time you read this the Holiday Season will be here, so, “Have a Happy and Safe Holiday Season”.

—Alice Doane, FCE Council Chair

Families make positive changes through Nutrition Education Program (NEP)

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Family and Community Club holds achievement meeting

The Lancaster County Family and Community Council held its annual achievement meeting. After dessert and musical numbers by the Renz Nest and the Country Pals 4-H Club, members and clubs were recognized. Donna DeShon displayed her needlework picture which won second place at the State FCE Convention with her picture titled “Novea.”

The Lancaster County Family and Community Club Council held its annual achievement meeting. After dessert and musical numbers by the Renz Nest and the Country Pals 4-H Club, members and clubs were recognized. Donna DeShon displayed her needlework picture which won second place at the State FCE Convention with her picture titled “Novea.”

Members of FCE for 40 years:

(Above) to (Below):

(L) to (R) Clarrice Orc, Kathryn Dwinell, Doris Cunningham, Donna Gill, Donna Holka.

(Below) Donna DeShon placed second at the State FCE Convention with her picture titled “Novea.”

Families make positive changes through Nutrition Education Program (NEP)
Leader training lessons

Leader training lessons, for FCE and other community organizations, is a train the trainer opportunity open to anyone wishing to present a program at their club or organization or for individual development. January’s leader training lesson is scheduled for Tuesday, January 7 at 1 or 7 p.m. The lesson “The Giving Tree” will be presented by Don Janssen, Extension Educator. This lesson will discuss why trees are important and the benefits of trees.

The February leader training lesson is scheduled for Tuesday, January 28 at 1 or 7 p.m. The lesson “Linking Family and Community Strengths” will be presented by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator. This lesson will help participants look at their roles and responsibilities in the community and how working together will build a better community.

If you are not in an FCE club and would like to attend, please register by calling, Pam or Lorene at 441-7180, so information packets can be prepared.

(LB)

Holiday joy doesn't mean heavy debt

Giving gifts is a holiday tradition. Unfortunately, for too many Americans going into debt is now part of that custom. Overspending doesn’t do parents or children any good—parents dig too deep into their wallets or pocketbooks for presents that youngsters sometimes don’t appreciate. Instead, shoppers should set up a plan, basing gift amounts on the overall budget, current debt situation, and personal values and feelings.

Aside from creating a budget and sticking to it, consumer experts advise making time now for holiday shopping. People tend to spend more as the holidays approach. Parents should have ideas about what to give children and know the price range of presents before they enter the store.

Some other holiday shopping tips to consider:
• Draw names to cut down on overall gift costs.
• Instead of buying gifts for everyone on your list, consider a group gift. For example, consider a group membership in a community organization or club.
• Couples and friends can pool money to buy gifts for each other.

Nutrition & food safety web site

Visit our internet web site at: http://ianrwww.unl.edu/ianr/lance/family/safety.htm
You can:
• Learn about Extension programs
• Access Extension publications
• Connect to other internet nutrition and food safety sites.

Family reunions

Every family has their own history and traditions. Many families get together this time of year for Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, and Christmas. Some gatherings are small, while others are more like conventions. Some are the old-fashioned potluck affairs, while others are gatherings at resort or vacation areas.

While family gatherings can be very different, they also have much in common. Reunions bring together family members from far and near to share their lives with each other. This is especially important for youth, because it gives them a sense of belonging.

Why is this sense of belonging important? Children need to know what their roots are; they are a part of a larger framework than just the nucleus family. This contributes to a feeling of connectedness and being a significant part of society.

Family reunions benefit other generations as well. Reunions give the older generation a chance to pass along part of society.

Reunions give the older generation a chance to pass along part of society.

Holidays are the time…

Holidays are the time for families…
To put aside their differences, to show they truly care.
By reaching out to each other.
Holidays are the time for giving and sharing.
For it is “better to give than to receive”
Holidays are the time for forgiving,
The hurtful word, the careless deed.
Holidays are the time for renewing,
The hurtful word, the careless deed.
Holidays are the time for renewing,
The hurtful word, the careless deed.
Holidays are the time for forgiving,
The hurtful word, the careless deed.

Source: Balance Newsletter, Herb Lingren, Ph.D., Extension Family Life Scientist. (LB)

For a low fat holiday treat, enjoy this dessert idea from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that helps you meet the recommended food group servings. EACH SERVING PROVIDES: 1/4 serving from milk group and 1/2 serving from bread group.

Chocolate Mint Pie
Graham Cracker Crust:
1-1/4 cups crushed Graham crackers
3 tablespoons margarine, melted
Mix graham cracker crumbs and margarine thoroughly.
Reserve 1/4 cup of crumb mixture for top of pie. Press remaining crumb mixture into 8-inch pie pan so the bottom and sides are completely covered.

Filling:
1 envelope unflavored gelatin (1 tablespoon)
1/4 cup cold water
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup cocoa
2 tablespoons cornstarch
2 cups skim milk
4 drops peppermint extract


Nutrients per serving: Calories, 175; Total fat, 6 grams; Saturated fat, 1 gram; Cholesterol, 1 milligram; Sodium, 175 milligrams. (AH)

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352 The Breads, Cereals, Rice and Pasta Group
353 The Fruit Group
354 The Meat, Poultry, Fish, and Dry Beans Group
355 The Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese Group
356 The Vegetable Group
357 Using the ‘Nutrition Facts’ Section on Food Labels
358 Alternative to High-Fat Fast Foods
359 Avoid Choker Foods for Young Children
360 Avoiding Mealmate Hassles with Preschoolers
361 Constipation During Pregnancy
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363 Easy Tips for Eating Less Fat
364 Eating for Two During Pregnancy
365 Foods for Athletes
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Healthy eating
Alice Henneman, R.D., L.M.N.T., Extension Educator
Focus on 4-H

Members of the Flamingos 4-H Club have much to be proud of. This busy group of 4-H members have been making a difference in their community.

During National 4-H Week, the club set up informational booths at several Northwest area schools. Flamingos members handed out 4-H flyers, displayed pictures of their club activities and answered questions youth had about joining 4-H. Several youth who visited their booths signed up to join 4-H!

The Flamingos participate in many other community service projects. The club has “adopted” a local nursing home. On Halloween they decorated the home and made door decorations for the nursing home residents. The club is currently preparing for their annual Christmas candy shopping trip to the nursing home. Club members also participate in honey sales for A.R.C., fold bags for the Lincoln Food Bank and make valentines for the V.A. Hospital, the nursing home and the People’s City Mission.

Recently two members from the Flamingos attended a Conflict Resolution Skills Workshop put on by the Lincoln/Lancaster Mediation Center. Club members meet monthly at the Lancaster Extension Education Center with business meetings run by elected youth officers.

The club enjoys many fun field trips and has an annual Pool and Pizza Party after the fair. Some of the projects members have worked on include small pets, cooking, crafts and wildlife conservation. The club also works with the Stack Shack at county fair.

The Flamingos are starting an exciting program this year. College students from the University of Nebraska, who have been active in 4-H, will be leading workshops and working on projects with the members.

Leaders for the Flamingos 4-H Club are Sharon Green and Sherri Ramirez. Club members include Katie Donahue, Abby Fleming, Victoria Green, Kelsey Lamb, Matt Lamb, Jamie Mohr, Amy Nichols, Amber Ramirez, Abigail Standley, Brian Standley, Tarissa Westerholt and Tiffany Westmoreland.

We would like to feature your club in the Nebraska. Drop us a note or give us a call and let us know what great things 4-H is up to in your neighborhood! (AF)

Winter care of your horse—Part II

In November we featured several winter care preparations that will aid you and your horse survive winter. This month we continue with “The Worst Problem—Frozen Water” and “Hoof Care is More Important When it is Wet.”

All of the information was taken from the Animal Horse Information System written by Robert N. Oglesby, D.V. M.

“The Worst Problem—Frozen Water”

There is no greater aggravation than toting water in the cold when the pipes or hoses freeze. Plan ahead and have hydrants installed where the horses are watered. You will bless them daily as the temperatures stay below freezing. You still must daily remove and drain hoses. Horses do not drink as much in the winter, but recently this fact has been questioned.

When temperatures go below freezing, it is easier to fill the buckets half full, if you can check them more frequently. This will keep you from coming down to a bucket full of ice. A little ice on the top can be easily broken and removed. A little ice on the bottom can be defrosted with water put on top. If frozen solid, a few gallons of hot water will melt it.

Occasionally you see a recommendation to salt the water to encourage drinking. Adding salt increases the amount of water needed to stay healthy. Your best bet is to insure your horse has fresh water available at all times. The water should be in a convenient and relatively comfortable location out of the worst conditions.

Hoof Care is More Important When it is Wet

Boots may need special attention during the winter. Consider having the shoes removed if you will not be riding the animal for three or more months.

Nails weaken the walls and the shoes help hold in dirt. Going barefoot will also toughen the soles. For problem feet there is no better prescription than being barefoot for several months.

If your horse has problems with wall cracks that originate at the bottom, you can do something to help. The cracks are usually due to excessive drying that comes from repeated wetting and drying. Walls also crack from being allowed to grow too long. Regular application of a hoof dressing combined with timely trimming will insure that come spring, your hoof walls will be ready to hold nails.

Another frequent problem in the winter is the thresher, that black, smelly gunk that together with frost, though rarely a cause of lame- ness, it can lead to other serious problems. Threshing may cause a hoof problem, a formalin-based hoof paint will quickly dry up the rotting mess. (CB)

Horse Bits

The 4-H Horse VIPS Committee elected their 1997 officers and youth representatives. The 4-H Horse VIPS Committee is responsible for planning 4-H horse one-day and weekend clinics for youth and leaders, district horse shows and the county fair horse show. The committee meets every month on the second Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. at 4-H horse club leaders, parents, interested volunteers and youth are always encouraged to attend. For further information, contact the Extension Office or better, yet plan to attend the next 4-H Horse VIPS meeting; introduce yourself to the new officers and volunteer to serve on one of the committees—education, county fair, pre-districts, awards.

1997 4-H Horse VIPS Committee Officers

Chair—Franklin Manning, first vice-chair—Keith Dey, second vice-chair—Bob Bonner, secretary—Jaci Nielsen, treasurer—Justina Westerholt, members—Katie Donahue, Abby Fleming, Victoria Green, Kelsey Lamb, Matt Lamb, Jamie Mohr, Amy Nichols, Amber Ramirez, Abigail Standley, Brian Standley, Tarissa Westerholt and Tiffany Westmoreland.

4-H Horse VIPS Fair Planning Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 6:30 p.m. Anyone interested in planning and serving on any horse fair committee should plan to attend this meeting. Bring your 1996 fair book, suggested changes and your own dinner. Drinks will be provided. (CB)

Free baby chicks

Baby chicks will be.hatching around February 6, March 14 and May 9 as a result of Embryology, a 4-H school enrichment program. If you live on a farm or acreage and wish to receive free chicks, please call Tina at 441-7180 to arrange your pick-up of chicks. Chicks will be available on or near the above mentioned dates. (ALH)

Award book winners recognized

This year’s Lancaster County 4-H phone-a-thon Committee would like to say THANKS for taking the time to visit with the 4-H member who called. Without caring individuals, like you, the phone-a-thon would not have been a success.

Our biggest THANKS goes out to the 20 youth that volunteered their time and energy. We know that youth today have extremely busy schedules between school, sports, church, etc. and it is not easy to give up an entire evening. Thank you for going the extra mile! (LJ)
It's the tops

4-H Cloverbud clubs and families can now purchase a wonderful curriculum series from Ohio State University. The material is fun, age-appropriate, discovery-oriented and formatted in a way that is very family-friendly.

The Ohio State University 4-H Cloverbuds curriculum is divided into the following areas (lesson topics follow):

Science/Technology (Experimenting with the 5 Senses; Making Air Work; Weather Fun).

Community Expressive Arts (Cloverbud Display; Cloverbud One Act Play; Planning A Community Art Exhibit).

Healthy Life Style (Making Healthy Food Choices; Fitness is Fun; Safe at Home).

Environmental/Earth Science (Nature Fun; The Problem of Pollution; Helping Our Environment: Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle).

Personal Development (My Feelings; Experiencing Disabilities; I am Special).

Citizenship/Civic Education (Heart to Heart: Celebrating Valentine’s Day with Nursing Home Residents; Food Drive: Jumping-Jack-athon; Our Flag).

Consumerism/Family Science (Managing Time; Be Smart with Money; Television: Making a Choice).

Plants and Animals (Pets; Our Feathered Friends; Super Seed Fun).

You will find plenty of fun, "hands-on" activities in this series and years of exploring for you and your club/family. Children have an opportunity to be meteorologists, be a fat detective, discover a "magic can" and the fun of making "recycled paper." They can get their hands into mud as they make their own bird nests or learn special songs for nursing home residents. All of these and more are included in the curriculum from Ohio State University.

The next issue of NEBLINES will feature another premiere 4-H Cloverbuds curriculum from Michigan State University. For more information on how to obtain the Ohio State University curriculum, call Soni at 441-7180. (SE)

4-H rabbit VIPS

“What’s Hopping”

The 4-H rabbit VIPS elected their new officers for 1997 at their October meeting. Several new faces were elected and plans for a spring “bandsy-ity” clinic met with a positive response.

The 4-H Rabbit VIPS Committee meets January through October on the third Thursday at 7:00 p.m. All club leaders, parents, interested volunteers and youth members are always invited to attend.

1997 4-H Rabbit VIPS Committee Officers

Chair—Bob Howard, vice-chair—Dave Kaminski, secretary—Terri Bramhall, superintendent—Gordon Maahs, assistant superintendent—Mary Howard, youth representatives—to be announced in January.

Congratulations! (CB)

Kwanza for Cloverbuds

Looking for an educational activity for your 5-7 year-olds in December? Kwanza (Keh-Wahn-zah) is celebrated by some African-American families from December 26 to January 1. This celebration honors families, cooperation and sharing. It is also in honor of traditional African harvest festivals and people remember their family histories.

4-H Cloverbuds and their families can learn about Kwanza by exploring Family Celebrations Around the World from Michigan State University. Stop by the Extension office or call Soni for more information. (SE)

Dog training offered

4-H dog project members are invited to join the Rompin’ Rovers every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. starting January 7 for training classes. Classes are held in the 4-H Complex Arena, State Fair Park. Members and their dogs go through a full rotation of training each Tuesday including obedience, agility and handling. Independent members or clubs are invited to train with the Rompin’ Rovers led by Leon and Melody Jensen. Wear warm clothes to training classes since the building is not heated. For additional information, contact Autumn at the Extension office. (AF)

Minutes of the meeting

At the 4-H Water Riches in-service for teachers, Pat Kurtenbach (Elliott) and Amy Lieb (St. Peter’s) discover the properties of soils. Pat pours water into a cup filled with loam to see how fast water travels through this soil. (ALH)

Soapy sculptures

Would you like to make gifts for the holidays? Why not make soap? Youngsters can shape snowballs and snowmen with this soap. Or make soap eggs and put them in an egg carton. Remember to be creative! Here’s what you need to do.

MATERIALS:

2 cups of Ivory Snow detergent
4 tablespoons water
Food coloring
Bowl

PROCESS:

1. Pour detergent in bowl.
2. Mix water and food coloring to desired shade.
3. Using your hands, gradually work colored water into soap until it forms a clay of sorts.
4. Add more water if the mixture is too dry or more soap if it is too wet to work.
5. Sculpt into interesting shapes. (ALH)

Sharpen your skills in 4-H projects

4-H leader training for foods and clothing areas will be held Thursday, February 6, 6:30-9:30 p.m. All leaders and parents are encouraged to attend. Participants will have the opportunity to attend both sessions that evening. Watch future NEBLINES for details. (LH/ALH)

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Club’s service work wanted for Colgate Award

Enter your club’s community service projects in the 24th Annual Colgate Youth For America Campaign and your club could win a cash grant up to $2,000! Service work completed between March 1, 1996 and March 1, 1997 is eligible to compete in this great program which honors the work of youth clubs including 4-H, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Boys and Girls, Boys & Girls Clubs of America and girls inc. Entry forms are available in the Lancaster County Extension Office and must be submitted by March 15, 1997. Projects will be judged based on originality as well as the extent of community involvement or benefit. Each club can enter multiple projects. Contact LaDeane Jha or Autumn Fowler at 441-7180 for more information. (AF)

Teachers learn by doing!

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Friendly Faces 4-H Group

Today we went to the Fabric Gallery to look at and feel different fabric. We learned how to use them in patterns and about the many kinds of textures.

These were our group’s favorites:

Favorite Fabric—Rayon, because it’s smooth, satiny and Special
Occasion Fabric.

Favorite Color—Purples, Burgundy, Light Blue, Pink and Black.

Favorite Design—Plaids, Florals and Reversible Patterns. We had a wonderful time tourign!
New work habits for a radically changing world

Proper use and upkeep of smoke detectors is important

Need an engaging presentation for your organization’s next meeting? Consider one of the experts from the UNL Speakers Bureau, a group of distinguished faculty and staff who want to share the university’s wealth of expertise with people across the state. The Speakers Bureau is offered free of charge to your group. UNL Public Relations will help you book any of these speakers.

Kris Baack, Clinical Assistant Professor of Special Education and Communication Disorders — Communication Challenges; The Language of Leaders

Bio: Dr. Baack is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst with a specialty in education. He has spent 17 years helping teachers and caregivers develop the best possible methods to support individuals with autism. He is dedicated to providing practical solutions to the challenges faced in the delivery of services.

Bob Shangraw, Director of the Center for Environmental Science and Technology — Sustainability Leadership: Why is it important and how to start?

Bio: Bob Shangraw is the Director of the Center for Environmental Science and Technology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His research focuses on environmental sustainability in the areas of water, energy, and waste. He is also the co-founder and President of the Nebraska Environmental Council, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting environmental stewardship among youth and adults in Nebraska.

Johnnie Bishop, Assistant Professor of Anthropology — Why Does Society Matter?

Bio: Johnnie Bishop is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His research focuses on the social and cultural aspects of human behavior, with a particular emphasis on the role of community and social networks in shaping individual behavior. He is dedicated to promoting a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between individuals and their communities.

Sharon Foulke, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies — Critical Thinking: How to think critically and communicate effectively

Bio: Sharon Foulke is an Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research focuses on critical thinking and communication, with a particular emphasis on the role of media and technology in shaping individual behavior. She is dedicated to promoting a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between individuals and their communities.

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Cybercase of the invisible itches
continued from page 4

The most likely mite problem is the scabies mite, but scabies are usually found in the folds of the body where the skin is very thin, like the hands and wrists. This doesn’t sound like the body where your friend is having the problem. Scabies are very easy to see and diagnose by a dermatologist and other doctors. I assume your friend does not have scabies, otherwise the doctor would have identified it as such.

However, there are mites that are not so easily seen by the eyes, and this is a frequent complaint. People who see parasites in great detail. The condition is not something like this, very intelligent, always very active in the community. She is 57 years old and had an aneurism in her brain about two years ago, and if this is the case, I’m sure this is what has caused it. She went to a psychiatrist a few times after the surgery, but she told me that she was feeling much better. She went to a psychiatrist a few times after the surgery, but she told me that she was feeling much better.

Her two sons live in other states and she has no other family here. I know she will not go to a psychiatrist because she believes these “mites” are real and I don’t think anyone can convince her differently. Thanks again, Barb, for your help.

Barb Ogg
Barb Ogg, Extension Educator
University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County

Dear Barb,
I appreciate your concern and response more than you know. Some of my friends have said the same thing you have about the “imagination” part. The doctor also prescribed a drug called pimocide (a person) that I didn’t know about when I first posted this letter to you. I believe it is for a psychotic condition.

If this is her imagination, I don’t know what to do. She is just not the type of lady that you would expect to have something like this, very intelligent, always very active in the community. She is 57 years old and had an aneurism in her brain about two years ago, and if this is the case, I’m sure this is what has caused it. She went to a psychiatrist a few times after the surgery, but she told me that she was feeling much better.

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Martha

Cybercase of the invisible itches
continued from page 4

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Crop Pest Management Update—Kearney

December 3
4-H Honors Banquet ................................................................. 7:00 p.m.

December 8
4-H Teen Council Meeting ....................................................... 3:00 p.m.

December 9
Extension Board Meeting......................................................... 7:30 p.m.

December 10
4-H Council Meeting ................................................................. 7:30 p.m.

December 11
4-H Horse VIPS Fair Planning Committee Meeting ............... 6:30 p.m.

December 12-13
Nebraska Soybean Day & Machinery Expo
—Saunders County Fairgrounds, Wahoo ........................................ 9:00 a.m.

December 13-14
Returning to the Farm Program
—East Campus Union, UNL, Lincoln

December 14
Fair Board Annual Meeting ................................................. 9:00 a.m.

December 17
Agronomy Highlights—Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln

January 6
Crop Protection Clinic ......................................................... 8:30 a.m. (registration)

January 7
FCE Leader Training Lesson “The Giving Tree” .............. 1:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Keep your family calm
continued from page 6

- Observe the rule of two. When you’re planning your holiday calendar, keep in mind that it’s best to accept a maximum of two obligations a week that take both you and your partner away from the kids. They may tolerate your absence for two nights, but change it to three, and there will be much more difficulty.

- Savor the upcoming traditions. Set your priorities and don’t get lost in trivia. Keep your family rituals sacrosanct, even if it means missing the neighbors’ caroling party or a dinner with out-of-town friends. Take the time you need to truly enjoy the meaningful rites your kids look forward to all year.

- The kids get tired and grumpy. It’s hard to keep kids from getting so wound up they can’t settle down when it’s time to go to sleep. After all, there’s excitement in the air. Their friends are in a frenzy of anticipation, and the feeling is contagious.

- Stick to their schedule as much as you can. Try to get the kids up in the morning and to bed at night at their regular hours. Keep mealtimes more or less the same as often as possible. This will help kids stay calm.

- Lower your standards. That will reduce your anxiety. If your kids eat too much candy, or miss two hours’ sleep one night, it doesn’t ultimately matter.

- Hang on to small rituals. When the kids do go to bed late, take time for the little rituals that make them feel secure. It’s OK to skip the bath—but don’t skip the bedtime story and the hugs and kisses!

- Expectations are too high. Prepare for some disappointment. Sometimes, no matter how you’ve tried to keep your children’s expectations from soaring out of sight, they’ll find themselves let down over some aspect of the holidays.

- Be empathetic. Say you know they felt bad not to get the bike they wanted, or that the party they’d looked forward to wasn’t really much fun. Let them complain, and don’t try to talk them out of their feelings. They just need our sympathy.

- Offer a substitute that satisfies—your uninvaded attention. Most children cheer up instantly when they hear the words, “Let’s try out the hockey game you got,” or “Let’s see how your new kitchen works.” If the parent sits down and plays with their children for an hour, that gift of time will probably make up for any disappointment.

- Don’t be hurt by your own expectations. We all have fantasies of how magical the holidays will be. The fact is they hardly ever live up to our dreams. Don’t expect your family to appreciate all the effort you put into making the holidays special. Even the gifts you receive may be disappointing. Try to be philosophical—be glad for the things that go right, and count your many blessings.

Source: Balance Newsletter, Herb Lingren, Ph.D., Extension Family Life Scientist. (LB)