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Got Bed Bugs? Don’t Panic! There are Steps You Can Take

Barb Egg
UNL Extension Educator

One thing I’ve learned with the latest bed bug resurgence, is not all insects are treated alike. Some insects get no respect...cockroaches and termites fit into that category. Never mind German cockroaches can carry thousands, if not millions of bacteria on their bodies, including salmonella, shigella, staphylococca, and E. coli. Termites do millions of dollars worth of damage to structures every year. Educational programs about cockroaches and termites are very important to people who have to deal with them. But, most of the time, ordinary folks don’t pay much attention. Bed bugs are different. The mere thought of small insects sneaking out of hiding places and feeding on our blood during the night gets everyone’s attention. With the exception of senior citizens who remember life before WWII, most of us have never grown up with bed bugs. Those of us who have grown up in such a sanitary world, are totally unprepared for bed bugs.

A major reason for all the media attention is bed bugs are hard to control. Researchers have found most bed bug populations (88%) are resistant to pyrethrin and pyrethroid products. Many professional-use and over-the-counter products are either pyrethroid or pyrethrins, even those with the words Red Bug prominently displayed on the label. Because of this resistance, pest control professionals cannot usually eradicate bed bugs with a single treatment. It will take two or three very thorough treatments to control bed bugs. When bed bugs are well-established in a home or there is a clutter problem, eradication may not be achieved even after five treatments.

Almost every workday, I get phone calls about bed bugs. These phone calls are from pest control professionals wanting to “pick my brain” to find out if there is something new that will help them do a better job. Other callers are hospital administrators, trying to figure out what to do when a patient brings bed bugs into the hospital. People who are getting ready to travel want to know how to prevent bringing bed bugs home. Landlords want to know what works; sometimes they ask about taking pesticide applicator training so they can do their own treatments.

Bed bugs are reddish brown and have flattened bodies (magnified view).

Immediately after feeding, bed bugs are bright red and have engorged and elongated body (magnified view with pin head).

At left -- approximate size.

The most frustrating calls come from low-income people living in high-density housing who have bed bugs. In Nebraska, like other states, it is the responsibility of landlords to provide a pest-free environment for their tenants. But, because bed bugs are hard to control, treatments are expensive and not all landlords are willing to spend the money necessary for eradication. Because bedrooms must be treated, pesticide applications must be done carefully. I generally recommend people hire a pest control professional who can do the best treatment and do it safely.

Advantages of hiring pest control professionals is they have experience in treating bed bugs and know where to treat, they have application equipment that allows them to treat cracks and crevices, and they can purchase products not available in hardware stores. The very last thing I want is to have someone misuse a product and get sick. Many over-the-counter products are still harmful and must be used carefully.

The following steps will be helpful for people who suspect they have bed bugs. I have also included suggestions for people who do not have the resources to hire a pest control company and may wish to tackle the problem themselves.

1. First, make sure you have bed bugs. Search for bed bugs in and around the bed. Take the mattress off the bed and flip over the box springs. This is the most likely place you’ll find bed bugs. Tear off the dust cover and look where pieces of wood are nailed together. Lift where fabric is stapled to the wood framing... bed bugs like to live in tight places like this. If people sleep on the sofa at night, it also may be infested. Take or send the bed bugs to an expert who can identify them. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County offers free pest diagnostic services. The public can bring samples to the office at 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln) Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

2. If bed bugs have been identified and you rent, talk to your landlord. If he decides to hire a pest control professional to treat your home, you’ll need to be as cooperative as possible to help solve this problem. You should know the pest control professional will apply insecticides but will not do the rest of the steps given below. These are actions you must take to help eradicate bed bugs.

3. If you find bed bugs during your search, use a vacuum cleaner to suck them up. This is a very important step in reducing the bed bug population right away and more effective than chemicals. When most people hear the word vacuuming, they think of vacuuming carpets. While bed bugs can be found in carpets, they are most likely to be found in cracks and crevices in and around the bed itself. Bed bugs leave tell-tale signs in places where they hide; look for spots and smears, and vacuum those places thoroughly.

see BED BUGS on next page
What About Chemicals?

I think it is best to let pest control professionals do chemical treatments; all, they are trained and licensed to do these treatments safely. They also have access to professional-use products not readily available.

As I mentioned earlier, bed bugs will infest to pyrethroid and pyrethrin insecticides and these are the most common over-the-counter products available. These products may kill bed bugs, but you will need to find and directly treat all the locations where bed bugs are hiding. There will be no long lasting residual control after the insecticide is dry. So, if you choose to do treatments yourself, you need to use these products as contact treatments. Right now, this is the trick to eradication of bed bugs. Spraying insecticides along baseboards and on the legs of the bed won’t do much to control a bed bug infestation.

Over-the-counter products claiming to be “green” or safe may not be very effective against bed bugs. There has been a recent explosion of products coming on the market claiming to control bed bugs, but not all of these products have actually been tested against bed bugs. You should choose a product that has an EPA registration number on the label.

Some locations can be best treated with dust formulations, like in the voids, behind electrical receptacles, and switch plates. Diatomaceous earth has shown to give good results, although it is not very fast acting. This can be purchased at hardware stores or online. It can be placed in many locations where bed bugs hide and is safe for use on mattresses.

When Not to do

• Do not use any product that is not labeled for indoor use.

• Do not spray the mattress with any product unless it is specifically said you can.

• Do not treat linens with any insecticide.

• Do not buy and use over-the-counter formulations (live bugs). These do not work against bed bugs.

• Do not buy and use over-the-counter aerosols. They are expensive for what you buy and do not work very well.

• Do not even consider using a chemical that does not have an EPA registration number. There have been news reports of fires started when flammable liquids have been used to kill bed bugs.

• Do not buy or use boric acid. It does not kill bed bugs. Boric acid is useful for cockroach control because roaches groom themselves and boric acid is a slow acting stomach poison. Bed bugs cannot ingest it.

Now’s the Time to Build Bird Nest Boxes and Shelves

Soni Cochran
UNL Extension Associate

In only a month or so, birds will soon be choosing their favorite nesting sites. Are you ready? This is a great time to prepare for spring by building birdhouses and shelves to help attract your favorite backyard birds. It is important to get your houses and shelves made and hung up near where the birds begin arriving so start building now.

Decide what birds you want to attract. Find out what birds are common in your area and what they need for a nesting site. American robins and barn swallows are common nesting birds in many parts of the country. Black-capped chickadees, wrens, bluebirds, woodpeckers, and purple martins also nest in bird houses and will use nest boxes. These birdhouses need to be in place by April so you can begin choosing their nest boxes. Get your houses up by March to attract wood ducks and owls.

Materials: Birdhouses can be made from a variety of materials such as wood siding, PVC pipe, or natural items like gourds. Gourds are easy to grow, might be infested must be treated with a little planning and care, you can grow your crop this year and have gourds to work on next winter.

Any good, solid, unfinished wood is generally the best construction material for bird houses. Cedar, pine, and poplar are easy woods to work with and very durable. If you are reusing unfinished scrap woods from other projects. Galvanized or aluminum nails work best because mosquitos with roughened shanks are better than smooth nails. Screws work better.

Paint: If you can use durable cedar, you won’t need to paint your new nest boxes. If you are using another type of wood, use an exterior latex paint. Natural wood is okay. Sanded or dull green are generally the best colors. The exception is Purple Martin houses. These houses are painted white to reflect the heat. Never paint the interior of any nest box and don’t paint the entrance hole.

Drainage & Ventilation: Drill a few small holes in the bottom of your nest boxes. This helps with drainage. You should also have ½-inch gaps or drill holes along the top of the sides to help with ventilation.

Entrance Holes: Birds can be very picky about their entrance holes. Certain birds need specific-sized entrances. Do not make an outside perch. The birds don’t need them and all you are doing is helping make a spot for predators to sit. In Nebraska, hang your bird houses with the entrance facing southeast or northeast. This provides some protection from cold spring winds.

Exit Stairway: To help the baby birds learn to get out of the nest box, roughen the inside portion of the hole just under the entrance. This can be done by sawing grooves or punching holes like a stairway with a screwdriver.

Accessibility: Make sure your nest boxes and shelves are easy to inspect. This will help you the nest boxes clean. Clean boxes are more likely to be used by birds.

Biting bug infestation. http://lancaster.unl.edu

Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the University of Nebraska–Lincoln is implied.
Designing a Windbreak

Don Janssen  
Retired UNL Extension Educator

The best designs for windbreaks depend on their intended purpose and the characteristics of the site where they will be located. Windbreaks can be planted to enhance wildlife, provide snow protection for humans and livestock, and provide wind protection to dwellings in both winter and summer. Windbreaks also prevent soil erosion caused by wind and reduce water runoff from agricultural lands. Typical windbreaks consist of conifers, deciduous trees, and shrubs. Conifers provide dense foliage to reduce wind speed. Tall deciduous trees extend the area of wind protection with their height. Shrubs trap snow, add beauty to the windbreak, and provide wildlife habitat.

The area protected by a windbreak is determined by the windbreak’s average height. Generally, windbreaks protect an area 10 to 15 times the average height of the trees. Windbreak row trees should be located approximately 150 to 250 feet upwind of the protected area in order to allow for snow deposition. Windbreaks are most effective when planted perpendicular to prevailing winds. Windbreaks for winter protection should be located on the north and west side of the farmstead. Summer wind protection is provided by planting on the south and east sides of the farmstead. The number of tree rows and the plant species used will be determined by the intended purposes of the individual windbreak and the amount of space available. Typical windbreaks include two or more rows of conifers and one or more rows of deciduous trees and shrubs. Windbreaks with two legs or one planted on two sides of the protected area will provide better protection than a planting on one side only.

 Assistance with windbreak planning and design is available from Nebraska Forest Service District Foresters, Natural Resource Conservation Service offices, Natural Resources District offices, and local extension offices.

For more information

UNL Extension publication "How Windbreaks Work," (EC 1763) at www ani.pub . unl . edu/sendit/ec1763 .pdf and NebGuide "Windbreak Design" (G-1304) at www . ani . pub . unl . edu/sendit/ g1304 .pdf. Both are available at the extension office.

The windbreak should be oriented perpendicular to the prevailing wind directions. Because of wind turbulence around the end of a windbreak, the windbreak should extend 100 to 200 feet beyond the area needing protection.

Financial Recordkeeping Training, March 3

One of the most popular in-depth extension programs, a Computerized Farm Financial Recordkeeping Training, will be offered Thursday, March 3, 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road in Lincoln. Pre-register before Feb. 18. Preregistration with payment is required to hold your registration.

The concepts taught in this training are applicable to several inexpensive, computerized recordkeeping software programs, with slight modifications in procedure. This training will be taught hands-on using Quicken Deluxe in the classroom. All instruction will be presented in a hands-on teaching style with participants sitting at computers performing the tasks being demonstrated. Many folks comment the handouts are one of the best aspects of the training. Registration fee: • One person at a computer: including a meal and set of handouts — cost $50. • Two people at a computer: with two meals and one set of handouts — cost $80. • Bring your own computer with Quicken Deluxe 2011 installed and save $10.

For a brochure with detailed information and registration form, visit the extension office, go to http://lancaster.unl.edu/ag and look under "Upcoming Workshops," or call (402) 441-7180. Space is limited, so register early!

Private Pesticide Applicator Certification

Federal and state law says a private pesticide applicator must be certified and licensed to buy, use, or supervise the use of a Restricted-Use Pesticide (RUP) to protect an agricultural commodity on property they own or rent — or — on an employer’s property if the applicator is an employee of the farm or ranch. No pesticide license is needed if the applicator will only be applying General Use Pesticides (GUPs) or if you hire a commercial applicator to apply RUPs to your property.

If you do not have a current private pesticide certification and you plan to buy or apply any RUP products, you will need to receive the same certification training as described below for people who need to be recertified. All training sessions meet the requirements for both initial certification or recertification as private pesticide applicators. If your private applicator certification expires in 2010, you will receive (or have already received) a notification letter from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA). Be sure to keep the letter from NDA and bring it with you to the training session you choose or when you pick up study materials.

Regardless of the certification method chosen, all applicants will receive an invoice from the NDA for the $25 license fee. Note: we cannot collect the license fee at the extension office. The certification and license is good for three years, expiring on April 15, 2013 for those who certify this spring. You should receive your new license within three weeks.

Private pesticide applicators will have four alternative methods to obtain either recertification or initial certification.

Traditional Training Sessions, Jan 27, 29, & Feb. 2

Three private pesticide applicator training sessions have been scheduled in 2011 at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road in Lincoln.

The dates and times are:
• Thursday, Jan. 27, from 8:30–11:30 a.m.
• Saturday, Jan. 29, from 8:30–11:30 a.m.
• Wednesday, Feb. 2, from 6:30–9:30 p.m.

A $30 extension training fee will be collected at the training session (make checks out to Lancaster County Extension).

Self-Study Option

The second option is to pick up the self-study book and associated materials at the extension office. You are expected to read the chapters, then you must answer the written test questions in the back of the book. When you bring the book back to the office, the test will be graded by our staff while you wait (usually about five minutes). You will have an opportunity to see the test results and see the correct answers to any questions you have missed. The $60 training fee for this method of obtaining certification will be collected when the home-study book is picked up.

Testing Option

The third option is to take a written (closed-book) examination given by the NDA, Friday, April 15, 2011 from 8:15–11:45 a.m. at the Department of Agriculture (NDA). Be sure to keep a copy of your $25 license fee at the extension office. The certification and license is good for three years, expiring on April 15, 2013 for those who certify this spring. You should receive your new license within three weeks.

Testing Option

The third option is to take a written (closed-book) examination given by the NDA, Friday, April 15, 2011 from 8:15–11:45 a.m. at the Department of Agriculture (NDA). Be sure to keep a copy of your $25 license fee. You will need to wait to receive your new license within two weeks after you receive a passing grade on your written test.

Certify at a Crop Production Clinic

Private applicators may receive initial certification or recertification by attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Crop Production Clinics held in January. This year’s clinics will be over by the time this newsletter is published.
A functional food is a food that contains an active compound that provides health benefits beyond basic nutrition. Protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals are the basic nutritional needs but other components in food also contribute to your health.

Types of Chocolate

Chocolate products are made from cocoa solids, cocoa liquor, and cocoa butter in varying proportions. Dark chocolate may contain up to 70 percent cocoa; milk chocolate products contain less cocoa. To develop the taste, cocoa beans are fermented and dried, and the shell removed. The resulting nibs are ground into cocoa liquor, which is processed into cocoa solids and cocoa butter.

Unsweetened chocolate, bitter chocolate, or baking chocolate is pure chocolate liquor. Milk chocolate is made by adding fat and sugar to cocoa liquor and cocoa butter. Dark chocolate has a high cocoa content. Bittersweet chocolate is chocolate liquor plus sugar, cocoa butter, and vanilla. Usually, bittersweet chocolate has less sugar and more liquor than semisweet chocolate but the terms bittersweet and semisweet are used interchangeably. Semisweet chocolate is dark chocolate with low sugar content. Milk chocolate is made by adding sugar and milk powder or condensed milk to cocoa butter and cocoa liquor. White chocolate is made from sugar, cocoa butter, and milk solids. White chocolate does not contain cocoa liquor.

Storage of Chocolate

Chocolate is sensitive to temperature and humidity. Store chocolate between 59 and 63°F in low humidity. Chocolate can absorb aromas from other foods. Keep chocolates wrapped to prevent absorption of moisture and aromas.

Chocolate solids

Cocoa butter

The amount of the anti-oxidant flavanol compounds in chocolate products depends on the type of chocolate and the processing method. Dutch-processed chocolate will have lower levels of antioxidants. Dark chocolate is higher in these compounds, whereas white chocolate is very low in antioxidant flavanol compounds.

Cocoa butter contains stearic acid and small amounts of plant sterols. Studies on stearic acid from chocolate demonstrated a neutral cholesterolemic response in people who consumed the chocolate-enriched diet, which was high in saturated fat. The fat and sugar content of chocolate does increase calories associated with chocolate consumption. The addition of milk to chocolate products may be of concern to people who are lactose intolerant. Chocolate may be added to chocolate products, and people allergic to tree nuts of peanuts should avoid these products. Read the ingredient label for added ingredients that may cause a health problem.

Magnesium is a mineral found in significant amounts in chocolate products. Low dietary magnesium may be a risk factor for hypertension, stroke, and cardiac arrhythmias. Women in the U.S. generally do not meet the recommended dietary amount (RDA) for magnesium. A serving of milk chocolate (44 grams) provides 8 percent of the RDA for magnesium. Milk chocolate products contribute calcium to the diet.

Source: University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension publications “Chocolate — a Functional Food?” (HEF 5999) by Julie A. Albrecht, Extension Food Specialist; Carol J. Schwarz, Extension Educator; and Marylyn Schnepf, Professor, Nutrition and Health Sciences. To read the complete publication, go to http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/hsتعديل/be/h5999.pdf.
Precautions need to be taken pictures, then on to the drawers. It is surprising what you might find. Next I light even to get to the closets.

Please try to come to the Council Meeting, Jan. 24. These are your clubs. Being ideas for the Sizzling Summer Sampler as well as State Convention. Also, February is Valentines Day, so remember the significant other or even service personnel.

Familial and snowy conditions in the Be especially alert during heavy levels of poisoning can be fatal, and drowsiness. Extremely high may include headache, nausea, carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected annually by a qualified professional. If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Never run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not blocked with snow, ice, or other materials. Only use barbecue grills — which can produce carbon monoxide — outside. Never use them in the home, garage, porch, or near building openings.

Follow house and car instructions when using portable generators during power outages. Safe use is critical, so fumes do not enter the home. Remember to keep battery-powered units indoors and in all vehicles. To avoid potential fire hazards with space heaters, fireplaces, and other appliances, follow these precautions:

- Use a sturdy, metal screen to prevent contact burns, which are even more common than flame burns.
- All heaters need space. Keep things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least three feet away from heating equipment.
- Use heating equipment that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Never use the oven for heating. Many safety professionals warn against using any type of portable space heaters indoors due to fire risks and potential fire hazards. Fuel burning space heaters give off carbon monoxide and other air pollutants. If you must use one in a temporary situation, make sure to let it run for at least five minutes before using.

For more information, go to www.nfpa.org.

For children, Valentine’s Day is great fun. Making the bags for the candy and cards at school provides excitement. Instead of buying store bought cards, see if a child and a couple of his or her friends would rather make their own Valentine’s cards together. Get some construction paper, scissors, glue and let the children go at it. This will help promote creativity while cutting back on the rising cost of manufactured cards. Source: Kathy Prochaska-Cue, Ph.D., UNL, Family Economist.

Time Most Important for Valentine’s Day

Looking to make a big impression on your partner on Valentine’s Day? It may mean going overboard. Buying someone flowers doesn’t always have to mean buying them roses. Think about the person and try to do something special for them.

For children, Valentine’s Day is a great way to get the family together and assemble dishes for the week or the night before so they are ready to go when you get home. It will be great for your family to have a hot meal ready and all the great aroma that comes along with cooking food! Finally, there is no better time to change your meal planning strategy than now! Every time you change your meal plan, costs are saved. There is nothing more compelling to try to impress one another. This doesn’t mean going overboard. Buying someone flowers doesn’t always have to mean buying them roses. Think about the person and try to do something special for them.

Planning Ahead continued from previous page

Planning Ahead continued from previous page dishes can be put together ahead of time. This is a great way to get the family together and assemble dishes for the week or the night before so they are ready to go when you get home. It will be great for your family to have a hot meal ready and all the great aroma that comes along with cooking food! Finally, there is no better time to change your meal planning strategy than now! Every time you change your meal plan, costs are saved. There is nothing more compelling to try to impress one another. This doesn’t mean going overboard. Buying someone flowers doesn’t always have to mean buying them roses. Think about the person and try to do something special for them.

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Top 2011 Garden Trends: Gardening with a Purpose

Put your garden gloves on and join the fun because "gardening with a purpose" is taking root.

The purpose may be to grow your own food or create urban "green" sanctuaries, but planting for a greener good is changing neighborhoods and communities, one garden at a time. Big city mayors are promoting gardening programs in schools, connecting students with nature, growing food, and "greening" their urban communities.

Since last year, according to the latest GWA Garden Trends Research Report, half of those surveyed said they have gardens in their backyard, while more than one-quarter have gardens in their front yard. With vegetable gardening up almost 20 percent and community gardens up 60 percent over last year, growing food for the table is certainly on the rise along with gardening with native plants. Backyard conservationists and gardeners are transforming yards, gardens, rooftops, and even suburban alleys into green and productive spaces, knowing they are making a positive impact.

Here is a look at top emerging garden trends for 2011:

Gardening with a Purpose — In the wake of the shocking Gulf coast images of oil-sheen waves and coated wetlands and wildlife, people are taking measures to protect and conserve valuable natural resources. This year we all need to work together to rejuvenate, regenerate, and restore Mother Earth. Choosing eco-friendly products over toxic chemicals is a pro-active step to making our world cleaner and greener.

Since healthy plants start with healthy soil, people are looking for sustainable and organic soils.

According to the recent National Gardening Association’s Lawn & Garden Survey, 9 out of 10 households want to manage their lawns and gardens in an environmentally-friendly way.

Eco-Scaping — Terms like "sustainable" and "biodeviority" were seldom heard a decade ago, but today are part of our vocabularies. The move to de-lawn large tracks of turf and transform lawns into sustainable landscapes is achievable with the right plants for the right spot that use less water and pesticides.

Edible Ornaments — There is rising consumer interest in edibles: small fruit bearing shrubs and smaller trees. Fresh berries like raspberries and blueberries you can pick right from home are spiking in popularity. According to a recent survey by the Garden Writers Association, about 16 percent more American households planned to add a vegetable garden and an additional 12 percent planned on adding an herb garden. Why? More than three-fourths of respondents felt veggies are less expensive with better taste, quality, and nutrition.

Sustainable Containers — Annual flower sales were down almost 20 percent last year. It appears gardeners see them as "luxuries" they can replace with long-blooming perennials and ever-blooming shrubs. They deliver all-season color without the high maintenance for. small space gardens, growing food in containers makes sense. Containers brimming with fragrant herbs like basil, rosemary, or thyme are attractive and aromatic additions for indoors and outdoors. Blended containers with herbs and vegetables provide a one-two combo that can’t be beat for freshness and convenience.

 Succulents — Dry gardening with less water is bubbling across the nation. From college dorm rooms to home gardens, succulents are a perfect choice. These easy sustainable plants produce showy flowers along with thick, fleshy foliage that stores water. Drought tolerant and able to thrive in a variety of conditions, succulents are perfect for small gardens and large landscapes.

Indoor Gardening — Extend nature’s influence by bringing the outdoors in with houseplants. From “steampunk” Victorian hipster décor rocking among young urbanites to upscale suburban homes, orchids, ferns, and palms are now wildly popular. Chic and easy to grow, orchids are graceful additions to any room. Plus these hard-working beauties clean indoor air from volatile organic compounds and provide oxygen.

Phalaenopsis (moth) orchids are perfect choices for easy growing, colorful, and exotic plants that look as comfortable in 21st century homes as they did in Victorian days.

Growing Up with Vertical Gardening — Vertical gardens are becoming increasingly popular and will grow far beyond anything we can envision. Businesses are seeing the productivity, environmental quality, and return on investment that indoor plantings and vertical living walls are bringing to their projects. Climbing plants can be used to provide privacy, screen ey-sores and draw the eye upward to create the illusion of space.

Urban Farming & CSA’s — In step with the move to reinvigorate communities with gardens, urban farming, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms are sprouting up. Urban farming ‘micro-farms’ are converting small spaces in blighted areas into thriving farms that produce fresh produce for inner city communities. According to the Slow Food Movement, farmer’s markets and CSAs are up a whopping 60 percent.

New Urbanism — Sustainable urban communities offering convenient and enjoyable places to enjoy an urban lifestyle are rising in popularity. Best-stop parklets replace concrete additions to outdoor plazas for sunning and socializing, are popping up throughout cities and small towns where, believe it or not, loitering is encouraged! These new “parklets” convert concrete parking stalls along a block for relaxing, eating, and enjoying green spaces with flowering shrubs, trees, and paths. Planting water wise plants, collecting rainwater, homes, and apartments with lawns and more plants encourages better stewardship of our earth and we reconstitute us as fellow stewards of our resources and our communities.

Growing Asparagus in the Home Garden

Asparagus is the earliest spring vegetable for most Nebraska gardeners and a high value garden crop. Asparagus is a nutritious food, and with proper care an asparagus planting can be productive for 20 or more years.

**Purchasing Asparagus Crowns**

For most home gardeners, asparagus is best planted from one-year-old, healthy, disease-free crowns, purchased from a reputable grower. A “crown” is the root system of a one-year-old asparagus plant that was grown from seed. Each crown can produce 1/2 lbs. of spears per year when fully established.

For the adventurous grower, asparagus can be purchased from seed. The 6-inch tall plants kept in the small seedlings until they become established can be time consuming. If the seeds are spaced a few inches apart, the crowns will have to be dug and transplanted to their permanent, wider-spaced location in the garden after one year. For those who wish to choose one of the new all-male hybrid asparagus varieties that have been developed by Rutgers University (such as ‘Jersey Knight,’ ‘Jersey Supreme,’ and ‘Jersey Giant’). These all-male cultivars can out-produce older female cultivars, such as ‘Mary Washington’ and ‘Martha Washington.’ 

As a rule of thumb, long male hybrids also avoid the weed problems caused by new asparagus seedlings.

**Planting**

Asparagus can be planted as soon as the soil can be worked, possibly in late May after the soil has warmed up to about 50°F. There is no advantage to planting the crowns in cold, wet soils. They will not grow until the soil warms and there is danger of the plants being more susceptible to Fusarium crown rot if crowns are exposed to cold, wet soils over a prolonged period. Plant the asparagus at either the west or north side of the garden so that it will not shade the other vegetables and will not be injured when the rest of the garden is tilled.

Dig a furrow no deeper than 5 to 6 inches. Research has shown that the deeper asparagus crowns are planted, the more total yield is reduced. Apply about 1 lb. of 0-46-0 (triple superphosphate) or 2 lbs. of 0-20-0 (superphosphate) fertilizer per 50 feet of row in the bottom of the furrow before planting. This will make phosphorous immediately available to the crowns. Omitting this procedure results in decreased yields and spear production will not be as vigorous.

Place the crowns into the furrow on top of the fertilizer. The fertilizer will not burn the crowns. Space the crowns 1-1/2 feet apart in the row. If more than one row is planted, space the rows five feet apart from center to center. Wide between-row spacing is necessary because the vigorously growing ferns will fill in the space quickly. Wide spacing also promotes rapid drying of the ferns to help prevent the onset of fungal diseases. After planting, back fill the furrow to its original soil level. It is not necessary to gradually cover the crowns with a few inches of soil until the furrow is filled in. However, do not compact the soil over the newly filled furrow or the emergence of the asparagus will be severely reduced. Spears should emerge within one week in most soils.

Asparagus is very drought tolerant and can usually grow without supplemental watering because it seeks moisture deep in the soil. However, if rainfall is insufficient when planting or afterwards, the bed may need to irrigate the crowns. Otherwise the plants will become stressed and vigorous growth will be impeded.

**Harvesting**

Not harvesting asparagus during the first planting year, will ensure good root development and energy storage. Spears will be produced from buds on the crown, elongating to a height of about 8 to 10 inches. The plant’s fern-like foliage will produce food for the plant and then move it down to the crown for next year’s spear production.

Harvest lightly for only 3 to 4 weeks the second year. In subsequent years, harvesting can begin when the newly emerging spears reach 6 to 8 inches tall, usually about April in eastern Nebraska, and continue for 6 to 8 weeks. Remove the spears by cutting or snapping them off at the soil surface.

For highest yields, choose Nebraska—Lincoln hybrid cultivars, and enables gardeners to choose the best seeds and cultivars. Nebraska–Lincoln Extension provides unbiased, research-based answers to these and many more questions, so that acreage owners have the information they need to manage their rural living environment, through the Acreage Insights Web site, http://acreage.unl.edu.

Acreage Insights features timely information on the topics of landscapes, livestock, wildlife, pest and weed management, soil and septic system management, and entrepreneurial opportunities for acreage owners. Subscribe to our monthly email newsletter, view videos presentations and demonstrations on timely topics, or follow Acreage Insights via Facebook and Twitter. You can even submit questions, using the “Ask An Expert” feature, and get answers from UNL Extension experts to your troublesome acreage problems.

In February, the Web site will feature a short video on “Understanding Seed Catalog Terminology,” which explains the meaning of common horticulture terms, such as hybrid and cultivar, and enables gardeners to choose the best seeds and plants for their landscapes.

All this information and more can be found at http://acreage.unl.edu.

Sarah Browning, Extension Educator

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**Nut Orchard Seminar, Feb. 17**

The Nebraska Nut Growers Association (NeNGA) is sponsoring a Nut Orchard Planning, Planting, Care, and Harvesting seminar on Thursday, Feb. 17, 7–9 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry creek Rd., Lincoln. If you want to plant one nut tree or an orchard, you should find this seminar informative so you can plan for success. NeNGA and University of Nebraska–Lincoln have worked together for 30 years in the cultivation of high quality cultivar nut trees like pecan, walnut, hickory, and chestnut. There will also be an update on hazelnut development for our area.

Everyone has different expectations and goals when planting nut trees. This seminar will introduce you to most aspects of what it takes to accomplish your goals and expectations. There will be professional growers on hand to answer your questions.

- Planning phase will cover information on the characteristics of different nut trees that have been cultivated for our area.
- Planting phase will cover planting consideration.
- Caring phase will cover tasks required to bring a seedling to a productive producing nut tree.
- Harvesting tasks will cover harvesting techniques, processing, and the marketing your nuts.

**Source:** All-America Selections

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**Urban Agriculture**

http://lancaster.unl.edu
Community Service Grants Due March 2

The Governor’s Agricultural Excellence Awards are sponsored by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) in cooperation with the Nebraska 4-H Foundation. These awards recognize 25 4-H clubs each year for the work of the individuals in the club and the community service work of the entire club. Recognition is in the form of $500 checks issued to the club’s treasury to be used for 4-H programs, activities, and scholarships. For complete directions and applications go to http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h or at the extension office.

Meet the 2011 Lancaster County 4-H Council

Lancaster County 4-H Council represents the interests of youth, parents, and leaders. 4-H Council is responsible for determining long- and short-term goals and policy for Lancaster County 4-H. They also raise funds by operating a food booth at the Lancaster County Fair. These funds help support 4-H programs, activities, and scholarships. Here is this year’s 4-H Council:

Officers: Quentin Farley (President), Spencer Farley (Vice-President), Lynnette Nelson (Treasurer), and Rachel Pickrel (Secretary).

Members: Elizabeth Frohsh, Mike Frohsh, Miranda Gunneron, Mark Hurt, Katie Lloyd, Mike Lloyd, Ann Pickrel, Jennifer Cusick-Rawlinson, Abby Spencer, Jessica Stephenson, and Stephanie Wachter.

4-H/FFA Market Beef Weigh-In, Feb. 3

4-H/FFA market beef weight in will be held Thursday, Feb. 3, 6–8 p.m. at the Lancaster Event Center – Pavilion 3. Any market steer or heifer planning to show at county fair, state fair, or Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Livestock Show must weigh-in and get DNA processed at this time.

Crocheting Workshop, Feb. 5

All youth ages 8 and up (need not be enrolled in 4-H) are invited to learn how to crochet a dishcloth. Utilizing the single crochet stitch at a free basic crocheting workshop on Saturday, Feb. 5, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Event Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road, Lincoln. All supplies will be provided. Adults are welcome to attend. Must preregister by Feb. 2 by calling (402) 441-7180. 4-H'ers may enter dish cloths at the county fair under 4-H Clothing — Level 1 Knit or Crochet.

4-H Horse Stampede, Feb. 19

The 4-H Horse Stampede will be held Saturday, Feb. 19 at the Animal Science Building on UNL East Campus. Lancaster County has several 4-H'ers competing in these statewide competitions. The schedule is as follows:

- Art Contest Judging and Display, 8:30 a.m.–2 p.m.
- Demonstration Contests, 8 a.m.
- Public Speaking Contests, 8:30 a.m.
- Horse Bowl, 1 p.m.

These are fun contests! I would highly encourage those of you who aren’t familiar with Stampede to stop in and see what it is all about. Support our county 4-H’ers and see if the contest might be something you would enjoy doing in the future. These competitions do not require a horse.

Between Stampede events, you may want to check out the UNL Equestrian Team who will be hosting an intercollegiate show in the R.B. Warren Arena (also located in the Animal Science Building). Several former Lancaster 4-H’ers are on the UNL team!

No admission fee for either the Stampede or Equestrian Team show.

Crocheting — Level I Knit or Crochet.

Now is a Good Time to Choose 4-H Diamond Clover Goals

The Nebraska 4-H Diamond Clover Program is a statewide program which encourages 4-H members to engage in a variety of projects and activities. Every 4-H'er who participates can earn recognition! Youth can progress from Level 1 up through Level 6. At the beginning of the 4-H year, youth choose goals from a provided list and at the end of the 4-H year, fill out a report which documents their accomplishments. For each level, the Nebraska 4-H Diamond Clover program provides a list of age-appropriate activities, increasing in numbers and difficulty for each level.

For more information, go to http://4h.unl.edu/diamondclover or call (402) 441-7180.

R.B. Warren and Grand Island Saddle Club 4-H Scholarships Due March 1

One $500 scholarship and four $1,000 scholarships are available for 4-H'ers enrolled and active in the Nebraska 4-H Horse Program. For complete directions and applications go to http://go.unl.edu/4h4. Applications must be postmarked by March 1.

2011 Horsemanship Level Testing Dates

Mark your calendars! The 2011 group testing will be at the Lancaster Event Center on the following dates:

- Tuesday, April 19, 6 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 3, 6 p.m.
- Tuesday, June 21, 6 p.m.
- Tuesday, June 28, 6 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 5, 6 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 1, 9 a.m.

Please RSVP at least by one week in advance with Marty at mcruickshank3@unl.edu or (402) 441-7180.

4-H Youth Eat Up Equine Nutrition Clinic

Approximately 90 4-H members, their families, and leaders attended a clinic on equine nutrition held in December at the extension office. Jennifer Cusick-Rawlinson lead clinician. Some of the areas covered include feeding options, deciding what to feed, body condition scoring, reading labels, cost saving tips, solving common equine nutrition problems, weighing feed samples, converting girth measurement to weight estimates, and completing a feed chart for horsemanship levels II and III. The clinic was followed by lunch.

4-H Youth and 4-H Volunteers Make a Difference in 2010

The Governor’s Agricultural Excellence Awards are sponsored by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) in cooperation with the Nebraska 4-H Foundation. These awards recognize Nebraska’s heart of 4-H! 4-H members are indeed the heart of 4-H!

One favorite 4-H volunteer was Trina Brown. Volunteers like her are the reason why 4-H is the heart of 4-H! 4-H is proud to announce Trina Brown as winner of February’s “Heart of 4-H Award” in recognition of outstanding volunteer service. Trina started volunteering with 4-H as a parent volunteer when her daughter began 4-H six years ago. Trina started the Super Shamrocks club three years ago and is organizational leader.

Every year, she and her club members volunteer at the Lancaster County Fair setting up displays and taking a shift at the 4-H food booth. This will be the second year Super Shamrocks is recognized as Nebraska’s Club of Excellence.

“I enjoy working with the kids,” says Trina Brown. “As they learn new skills and interact in volunteer community projects, they really open up and come alive with all the possibilities in front of them. My favorite experience as a 4-H volunteer was when we made pillows as a group project. After finishing, I asked the 4-H'ers what they had learned. One girl raised her hand and said she learned it is much easier and faster just to buy a pillow. I had to smile at that! Valuable lesson learned.”

Congratulations to Trina. Volunteers like her are indeed the heart of 4-H! Nominate your favorite 4-H volunteer by submitting the form available at http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h or at the extension office.
Lancaster County 4-H and 4-H Council invite ALL 4-H’ers, 4-H families and volunteers to

4-H Achievement Night
Thursday, Feb. 10 • 6:30 p.m.
Lancaster Extension Education Center
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln

Evening Starts With a Dessert Potluck
Please bring a dessert to share (plates and utensils provided).

Lancaster County 4-H congratulates all 4-H youth who commit themselves to excellence!
4-H members, clubs and volunteers receiving awards, scholarships, or pins will be mailed detailed information.

Pillow Party, March 12
All youth ages 8 and up (need not be enrolled in 4-H) are invited to learn beginning sewing skills and make a pillow at the Pillow Party on Saturday, March 12, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. 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) and matching thread. Pillow forms provided. No cost to attend. Adults are welcome. Sign up by March 10 by calling (402) 441-7180. 4-H’ers may enter pillows at the county fair under 4-H Clothing - Sewing for Fun.

Jammie Jamboree, April 2
Learn basic sewing skills as part of the 4-H Clothing Level 1 project and make jammie bottom on Saturday, April 2, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. Open to all youth (need not be in 4-H). Adults are welcome.

Bring your sewing machine, basic sewing equipment (scissors, pins, measuring tape, etc.), pull-on pajama bottom pattern (one simple pattern is Simplicity 3553), prewashed flannel or 100% cotton fabric (no one-way design fabrics or plaids) and matching thread. Also bring a sack lunch. Sign up by March 31 by calling (402) 441-7180. Jammie bottom may be entered at the county fair and styled in the Style Revue for Fun.

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

Spring Rabbit Show
Saturday, March 19, 9 a.m.
Location To Be Announced

All rabbits must be tattooed in the left ear (available at the show). All rabbits must be brought in solid bottom cages which are leak-proof with a CLOSED, solid bottom.

RAFFLE FOR MANY PRIZES!
RAFFLE FOR MANY PRIZES! TICKETS 3 FOR $1.

For more information, call Rodney at (402) 782-2186 or Marty at (402) 441-7180
Sponsored by Lancaster County 4-H Rabbit UPR Coordinator and UNL Extension in Lancaster County

Speech Contest, May 1
The 2011 4-H Speech Contest will be held Sunday, May 1, 1:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. Register by April 25 by calling (402) 441-7180 or emailing dkarmazin2@unl.edu with your name, speech title & your age division. Contest divisions:

• Cloverbud: 5–7 years old, read or recite any short story, nursery rhyme, poem, pledge, etc.
• Novice: 8–9 years old, 2 minutes in length, any topic related to 4-H
• Junior: 10–11 years old, 3–5 minutes in length, any topic about a 4-H experience
• Intermediate: 12–13 years old, 3–5 minutes in length, encouraged to talk about a 4-H project you would like others to enroll in.
• Senior: 14–19, 5–8 minutes in length, a timely topic related to 4-H

Pillow Party, March 12

All youth ages 8 and up (need not be enrolled in 4-H) are invited to learn beginning sewing skills and make a pillow at the Pillow Party on Saturday, March 12, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. Open to all youth (need not be enrolled in 4-H). Scholarship is based on need. 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/hypv.

Clover College Instructors and Volunteers Needed
4-H Clover College will be held June 14–17 at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Clover College is four days of fun-filled, hands-on workshops for youth ages 6 and up. If you have workshop ideas, or if you would like to teach a workshop or volunteer to help, please contact Tracy at (402) 441-7180. All help is very much appreciated!

4-H Clubs Needed to Help Provide Booths at Kiwanis Karnival, April 9
The annual Kiwanis Karnival, a FREE family event is sponsored by the Lincoln Center Kiwanis. This year, it will be held Saturday, April 9, 6–8 p.m. at Elliott Elementary School, 225 S. 26 Street, 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.

4-H Speech & PSA Contests
Opportunity to Practice Communication Skills

The Speech & Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contests provide 4-H’ers the opportunity to learn to express themselves clearly, organize their ideas and have confidence. Contests are open to all 4-H’ers ages 8–18 (by January 1 of the current year) — need not be enrolled in a specific project. Youth may choose to participate in either or both the Speech and PSA contests. For resources, guidelines, and examples go to http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Contest/speech.shtml.

Speech Contest, May 1
The 2011 4-H Speech Contest will be held Sunday, May 1, 1:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. Register by April 25 by calling (402) 441-7180 or emailing dkarmazin2@unl.edu with your name, speech title & your age division. Contest divisions:

• Cloverbud: 5–7 years old, read or recite any short story, nursery rhyme, poem, pledge, etc.
• Novice: 8–9 years old, 2 minutes in length, any topic related to 4-H
• Junior: 10–11 years old, 3–5 minutes in length, any topic about a 4-H experience
• Intermediate: 12–13 years old, 3–5 minutes in length, encouraged to talk about a 4-H project you would like others to enroll in.
• Senior: 14–19, 5–8 minutes in length, a timely topic related to 4-H

PSA Contest, Due April 25
In the Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest, 4-H’ers submit a 60 second “radio commercial” promoting 4-H. The PSA contest will be held via audio only (not in person). Submit a PSA via CD playable on any standard stereo equipment to extension by Monday, April 25. (New this year, no tapes please.) If you do not have the capabilities to record a PSA, contact extension to set up a recording time. Results and comment sheets will be handed out at the 4-H Speech Contest on Sunday, May 1.

State 4-H asks for PSAs to be non-county specific so winning PSAs can be aired on radio statewide (for example, say “call your local extension office”).
• All PSAs must use the state theme as the basis for their PSA.
• The 2011 PSA theme is “Taking the Lead.”

4-H PSA’s must include the following tag line within the last ten seconds of the PSA: “Learn more about the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension 4-H Youth Development Program at 4h.unl.edu and ‘Know How. Know Now.’” The tag line is included in the 60 second time limit.

As always, background noises and sound effects are encouraged.
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) is a program developed and co-sponsored by the IRS with assistance from local coalitions which offers free tax help to low- to moderate-income individuals who need assistance preparing their federal and state tax returns. As part of local VITA efforts, the Lincoln Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Coalition led by Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties, will provide free tax preparation services at several sites in Lincoln.

In 2010, the Lincoln EITC Coalition filed over 5,000 free tax returns which resulted in over $6 million in refunds to our local economy. Approximately 35% of those refunds (or over $2 million) was from the EITC.

The EITC is a special tax benefit for working people who earn low to moderate incomes. Updated for 2010: The maximum amount of income you can earn and still get the maximum amount of income benefit for working people is 35% of those refunds (or over $2 million) was from the EITC.

For more information about VITA sites in Lincoln, call 2-1-1, or go to www.community-actionnetwork.org. For VITA sites outside of Lincoln, call 1-877-659-7870.

What to Bring to Have Your Taxes Prepared at a VITA Site

• W-2’s from your employer, 1099’s for miscellaneous income, and W-2G’s for gambling income
• 1099’s for interest, dividends, unemployment, retirement, and other income
• Social Security cards or ITIN letters (for your, your spouse, your children, and other dependents)
• Copy of last year’s tax return (very helpful)
• Child care information (provider’s ID number and address and receipts for amount paid)
• Blank check or savings account information for direct deposit
• Statements of student loan interest, mortgage interest and property tax
• List of any other income and expenses

Lincoln’s Free Tax Preparation and Filing

Lincoln VITA Sites and Hours

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites offer FREE tax preparation and filing of Federal and State of Nebraska returns Jan. 22–April 15 unless otherwise noted.

ANDERSON LIBRARY 3635义乌 Avenue
• Tuesdays, 4:30–7 p.m. (closed April 5)
• Wednesdays, 4:30–7 p.m. (closed April 6)

ASIAN COMMUNITY & CULTURAL CENTER 2615 O Street
• Monday–Friday by appointment, call (402) 477-3446

BENNETT MARTIN LIBRARY 14 & 6 Streets
• Tuesdays, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. (Jan. 25–Feb. 22)
• Wednesdays, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. (Jan. 26–Feb. 23)
• Sundays, 1:30–4 p.m.

EISELEY LIBRARY 1530 Superior Street
• Mondays, 1–7 p.m. (closed Feb. 21)
• Thursdays, 1–7 p.m.

GOOD NEIGHBOR CENTER 2677 Y Street
• Tuesdays, 6–8:30 p.m. (Feb. 1, 8, 15 only)
• Sundays, 1–4 p.m. (Jan. 30, Feb. 6, 13 only)

INDIAN CENTER 1100 Military Road
• Mondays–Fridays by appointment, call (402) 438-5231 ext. 105

COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP 210 O Street
• Mondays, 5–7:30 p.m. (Jan. 24–April 11)
• Tuesdays, 5–7:30 p.m. (Jan. 23–Feb. 27)
• Tuesdays, 5–7:30 p.m. (Jan. 26–Feb. 23)
• Thursdays, 5–7:30 p.m.
• Fridays, 9–11:30 a.m. (Jan. 23–Feb. 25)

NEBRASKA EAST UNION Enter on Holdridge & 35th & follow signs
• Mondays, 5–8 p.m. (Jan. 24–Feb. 20)
• Tuesdays, 8–9 p.m. (Jan. 23–Feb. 20)
• Wednesdays, 5–8 p.m. (Jan. 26–Feb. 20)
• Saturdays, 1–5 p.m. (Jan. 23–Feb. 27)
• Sundays, 1–5 p.m. (Jan. 23–Feb. 20)

NEBRASKA UNION
• 14th & R
• Mondays, 5–8 p.m. (Feb. 26–March 9)
• Tuesdays, 5–8 p.m. (March 1–9)
• Wednesdays, 5–8 p.m. (March 2–9)
• Saturdays, 1–5 p.m. (Feb. 26–March 9)
• Sundays, 1–5 p.m. (Feb. 27–March 9)

WILLIAMS LIBRARY at Arnold Elementary, NW 48th Street & West Cuming
• Tuesdays, 7–9 p.m. (Jan. 25–Feb. 22)
• Wednesdays, 4:30–7 p.m. (Jan. 26–Feb. 23)

University of Nebraska–Lincoln students are providing free tax preparation services at the UNL Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites, and have done so for the past four years. Free parking and childcare is also provided at the UNL sites.

Dr. Linda Moody, assistant director of Service-Learning, says, “Our students gain real world experience through this service opportunity. Not only do students learn tax law and how to complete tax returns, they learn from the community members as well. This valuable experience has helped students gain valuable work experience leading to internships and entry-level employment.”

In 2010, UNL student volunteers prepared 785 tax returns which generated $1,400,000, including $373,000 of Earned Income Tax Credit. The 26 student volunteers donated 1,200 hours to help low- and moderate-income families electronically file their returns. Those receiving refunds have said they plan to pay off bills, repair a car, or pay their mortgage.

The UNL students will prepare tax returns at the Nebraska East Union Jan. 22–Feb. 20 and at the Nebraska East Union on city campus Feb. 26–March 9. The sites are open Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. and Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 5 to 8 p.m.

UNL students are also providing expertise at six targeted sites.

New 4-H Embryology Staff Member Joins Extension

Karen Madden joined UNL Extension in Lancaster County in December as an extension assistant for the 4-H Embryology school enrichment program. She will coordinate the Embryology science unit in schools and give presentations in classrooms.

Each spring, approximately 4,000 Lancaster County third graders in 175 classrooms at 53 schools incubate, candle, and watch egg hatch. During the 21 day incubation period, students care for chicken eggs and study the stages of the developing embryo. Students “candle” their eggs by holding a light to the egg to reveal a silhouette of the chick inside.

Karen will also coordinate chicks hatching on EGG Cam, part of the Lancaster County Embryology Web site at http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Embryology.

Prior to joining extension, Karen was a Family and Consumer Sciences middle school teacher in Lakewood, Colo. She has a BA in Consumer Affairs with a Business minor and an MA in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, La.

Karen Madden sets eggs in an incubator for EGG Cam.

What to Bring to Have Your Taxes Prepared at a VITA Site

• W-2’s from your employer, 1099’s for miscellaneous income, and W-2G’s for gambling income
• 1099’s for interest, dividends, unemployment, retirement, and other income
• Social Security cards or ITIN letters (for your, your spouse, your children, and other dependents)
• Copy of last year’s tax return (very helpful)
• Child care information (provider’s ID number and address and receipts for amount paid)
• Blank check or savings account information for direct deposit
• Statements of student loan interest, mortgage interest and property tax
• List of any other income and expenses

EXTRA NEWS

Karen Madden joins 4-H Embryology Staff Member Joins Extension

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Prior to joining extension, Karen was a Family and Consumer Sciences middle school teacher in Lakewood, Colo. She has a BA in Consumer Affairs with a Business minor and an MA in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Louisiana Tech University in Ruston, La.
Lancaster Ag Society Seeks Nominations for Hall of Fame

At the 2010 Super Fair, the Lancaster County Agricultural Society unveiled a new Ag Society Hall of Fame located at the Lancaster Event Center. This hall of fame will formally recognize those individuals who have dedicated time and effort to the Lancaster County Agricultural Society beyond the normal volunteer hours and have made significant contributions to the establishment, development, advancement or improvement of the Lancaster County Fair. Last year’s inductees were Gordon Chapelle, Larry Hudkins, Franklyn Manning, and Charlie Willnerd. If you know of a person who is deserving of this honor, please nominate them. Nomination forms and more information can be requested by calling the Lancaster Event Center at (402) 441-6545. Nomination forms will be due by May 1, 2011.

Horsin’ Around, Feb. 12–13

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension is presenting the 18th Annual Horsin’ Around conference Feb. 12–13 at the R.B. Warren Arena in the Animal Science Complex on UNL East Campus. Clinicians are Shane Dowdy and Jamie Hartman. The clinic is open to participants of all ages. Adult registration is $30 for the weekend or $20 for one day. For youth 18 and under, registration is $20 for both days or $15 for one. Registration closes Feb. 7. If the clinic doesn’t sell out, adult registration will be available at the door for $40 for the weekend and $25 for one day — youth registration at the door will be $30 for the weekend and $20 for one day. For more information or to preregister, go to http://go.unl.edu/hsr or call (402) 472-6411.

Master Conservationist Entries Due April 1

Nebraska adults and youth in both rural and urban areas who have implemented soil and water conservation practices are eligible to enter the 2011 Master Conservationist Recognition program. The deadline for entries is April 1. There are categories for youth groups, and individuals, residences, communities, and private businesses as well as production agriculture (farming and ranching). Master Conservationist program brochures are available at the UNL Extension office and online at http://owh.com (click on the “in the Community” link).

Open House Events

RED LETTER DAY

Monday, Feb. 21 — an all-day open house experience for high school seniors.

JUNIOR WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays from March 2 to April 27 — a Husker Weekday tailored for juniors.

BIG RED OPEN HOUSE

March 7, April 15 or April 22 — Spend a day on campus learning more about academics, student life, scholarships, and Husker spirit!

SUPER SATURDAY

April 2 — A visit day built by students for students!

For more information or to register, see http://admissions.unl.edu
Watch Chicks Hatch Online with EGG Cam!

http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Embryology

Now streaming video in near real time!
Embryology resources include incubation, candling, and more!

Become a Facebook Fan!

4-H Summer Camp Brochures Now Available

2011 4-H Summer Camp brochures are now available online at http://dh.unl.edu/camp and at the extension office. The three 4-H camps are open to all youth ages 5–18 (need not be in 4-H). With three unique Nebraska locations at Halsey, Gretna, and Alma, there are more than 40 camps ranging from half day to four days/three nights!

UNL Extension, through its 4-H Youth Development Program, has been operating 4-H Camps for over 40 years. The 4-H camps and centers all meet over 300 standards established by the American Camping Association. Brochures have complete information about all camps. Discover the adventure!

Applications Open for 4-H Camp Staff

The three 4-H Camps in Nebraska are currently accepting applications for our 2011 summer staff. All positions provide endless opportunities for growth in a fun, fast-paced outdoor atmosphere.

You may apply for a variety of positions:

• **Camp Staff** — Salaried youth ages 18 and older who lead camp programs. Spend mid-May to August working full time to provide day to day leadership of camp activities and teaching groups of all ages. A great summer job for college students with any major. Initial application deadline is Feb. 1.

• **Cabin Mentors** — Youth ages 17 and up who provide cabin supervision and assist in leading camp programs. Mentors receive an honorarium for their service and are scheduled according to their availability.

• **Camp Counselors** — Youth ages 15–18 who need not be in 4-H. With over 100 volunteer teens providing valuable leadership to a group of campers by day and assist with cabin supervision at night. Camp counselors are scheduled according to their availability and counseling is a fantastic opportunity for any young person. Application deadline is May 1.

More information and applications are online at http://dh.unl.edu/camp — need not be in 4-H to apply.

Explore Career Options at Big Red Academic Camps

The 2011 Big Red Summer Academic Camps are a chance for youth grades 9–12 to spend time investigating an interest or potential career, explore the UNL campus, meet people from across the state and have lots of fun. Held in June, Big Red Summer Academic Camps features 12 career exploration camps hosted by Nebraska 4-H and University of Nebraska–Lincoln faculty members. The camps are residence camps held on UNL campus. Housing and food are provided.

After spending several fun-filled days exploring a specific topic such as movie-making or food molecular biology, youth showcase their work at a special “capstone event” which family members are invited to attend. Brochures and registration forms are available at http://bigredcamps.unl.edu or at the extension office. For more information, call (402) 472-2805. 4-H members are encouraged to apply for a scholarship — application is on the Web site. Save $50 by registering before April 1!

**Big Red Academic Camps**

- **3D Animation/Virtual World Creation**
- **Arts and Entertainment**
- **Culinary Arts and Food Science**
- **Entrepreneurship**
- **Environmental Science**
- **Filmmaking**
- **Geology and Paleontology**
- **The Outdoors**
- **Textile Design**
- **Unicameral Youth Legislature**
- **Veterinary Science**

* New camp for 2011. Big Red Summer Academic Camps reserves the right not to hold a camp due to low participation numbers.