



Shelby County Extension

906 6th St, Harlan, IA 51537

Phone: (712) 755-3104

Fax: (712) 755-7112

Email: xshelby@iastate.edu

Online: www.extension.iastate.edu/Shelby

Upcoming Events:

October 24th- 4-H Recognition Event
November 3rd- PQA Plus Training in
Red Oak

Harvest is in full swing, as I see more and more beans leaving the field every day, and some getting a start on corn too. It's amazing what a difference a week or two of really great weather can make in the landscape!! Remember to slow down and be safe as you're out and about on the roads, whether you're in the heavy equipment, or just happen upon it while driving. Harvest is a busy time for all in this area, but it's always worth that extra minute to stay safe! I hope you can find a few tips and tidbits in this month's newsletter to help get you through harvest and thinking about next year. Happy Harvest!!

-Kate Olson, Program Coordinator

DID YOU KNOW??

Ag and Hort News is also available online!! Each month's newsletter is posted online, and past issues are archived on our county homepage: www.extension.iastate.edu/shelby. Just click on the Ag and Hort News in the county news feed and find the month you are looking for!! Best of all- online newsletters contain active links to get you to websites and publications mentioned in the articles! If you would like to receive an email when the latest issue is posted online, just email me (keolson@iastate.edu) or get a hold of me at the Extension office with your email address!

Ask the ISU Garden Expert

Get answers to all your yard and garden questions at www.yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu. For specific questions, call the Hortline at (515) 294-3108, or email hortline@iastate.edu, Monday-Friday from 10 a.m. to noon and 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.

How can I propagate a willow?

On a mild winter day in late February or early March (temperatures should be above freezing), go out and collect cutting material. Prune off branches that are about 1/2 inch in diameter. Bring the branches indoors and cut the branches into 12-to-18-inch sections. Bundle the 12-to-18-inch long cuttings together with string or twine. Place the bundled cuttings in a plastic bag that contains some lightly moistened peat moss. Place the plastic bag in the refrigerator. In early April, remove the cuttings from the refrigerator and stick the cuttings into the ground. Place the bottom 6 to 8 inches of the cuttings in the soil. Willow cuttings root quite easily. The cuttings should begin to root and leaf out within a few weeks. An alternate rooting method is to place the cuttings in a container of water indoors. Regularly change the water. When the cuttings have developed good root systems, remove them from the water and plant outdoors.

What are the best storage conditions for apples?

The temperature and relative humidity during storage are critical for maximum storage life. Optimum storage conditions for apples are a temperature of 30 to 32 F and a relative humidity between 90 and 95 percent. When provided with optimum storage conditions, 'Jonathan' and 'Red Delicious' apples can be stored up to three to six months. Apples stored at a temperature of 50 F will spoil two to three times faster than those stored at 32 F. Apples will shrivel during storage if the relative humidity is low.

How do I over-winter cannas indoors?

Cut the plants back to within 4 to 6 inches of the ground a few days after a hard, killing freeze. Then carefully dig up the canna clumps with a spade or garden fork. Leave a small amount of soil around the cannas. Allow them to dry for several hours. Afterwards, place the cannas in large boxes, wire crates or in mesh bags. Store the cannas in a cool (40F to 50F), dry location.

Can I place weeds and diseased plant debris from my vegetable garden in my compost pile?

My suggestion would be to place weeds that are producing seeds and diseased plant debris in biodegradable bags and have the material picked up and composted by a municipal or commercial composting facility. The temperatures in home compost piles seldom get high enough to kill weed seeds and disease pathogens. However, the weed seeds and disease pathogens will be destroyed by the higher temperatures at municipal and commercial composting facilities. The compost produced by composting facilities can often be purchased by home gardeners and commercial landscape companies.

How long should I continue to water trees planted in late summer?

The roots of trees continue to grow until the ground freezes. If the weather is dry, continue to water newly planted trees until the soil freezes in winter. Small trees usually require watering for one or two growing seasons. It may be necessary to periodically water large trees for three to four years.

The weather forecasters are predicting a frost for tonight. Can I harvest the green tomatoes on my tomato plants and ripen them indoors?

Yes, green tomatoes can be ripened indoors. Just before the first frost, remove all mature, greenish white fruit from the vines. They should be solid, firm, and free of defects. Remove the stems, then clean and dry the fruit. Individually wrap each tomato in a piece of newspaper. Store wrapped tomatoes in a cool (60 to 65 F), dark location, such as a basement or unused bedroom. The wrapped fruit can be placed in a single layer in a box or on a table. Inspect the tomatoes frequently and discard

any damaged or decaying fruit. When the tomatoes begin to color, remove the newspaper and place them at room temperature. The tomatoes should ripen in a few days. An alternate method is to leave the green fruit on the vine and pull up the entire plant. Hang the tomato plant upside down in a cool, dark location. Pick the fruit as they ripen.

How do I over-winter my gladiolus bulbs?

Carefully dig up the plants with a spade in late summer or early fall. Gently shake off the soil from the bulb-like corms. Then cut off the foliage one to two inches above the corms. Dry the corms for two to three weeks in a warm, dry, well-ventilated location. When thoroughly dry, remove and discard the old dried up mother corms located at the base of the new corms. Remove the tiny corms (cormels) found around the base of the new corms. Save the small corms for propagation purposes or discard them. Place the corms in mesh bags or old nylon stockings and hang in a cool, dry, well-ventilated location. Storage temperatures should be 35 to 45 F.

New Publication Touts Benefits of Prairies in Iowa

The tallgrass prairies that once covered Iowa contributed to the state's fertile soil, but Iowa State University researchers say this endangered ecosystem offers many other benefits to landowners.

A prairie can reduce soil erosion and nutrient pollution, help stabilize the hydrology of a watershed, increase the number of beneficial insects, be used to graze livestock or grow biomass for renewable energy production. A prairie also provides habitat for many wildlife species and songbirds, and it can store carbon from the atmosphere to reduce greenhouse gases.

These are some of the benefits outlined in a new publication, [Incorporating Prairies into Multifunctional Landscapes, PMR 1007](#). The publication was written by Meghann Jarchow, a Ph.D. candidate in the ISU Department of Agronomy, and her advisor, Matt Liebman, ISU's

Henry A. Wallace Endowed Chair of Sustainable Agriculture. Both are members of a research team supported by the [Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture](#).

The research team is developing multi-year cropping systems for Iowa that integrate annuals and perennials. Their work also is motivated by a concern to evaluate both the productivity and environmental impacts of cropping systems.

“Within the next few decades it is likely that the conditions surrounding agricultural production will have changed,” Jarchow explained. “As these changes occur, other types of cropping systems that are less reliant on stable weather, government subsidies and low fossil fuel costs than corn and soybean are likely to become more desirable cropping system options. Prairies are one of those other types of cropping systems, which is why it is important for farmers and landowners to be familiar with these alternatives.”

Tallgrass prairies developed in Iowa more than 10,000 years ago. Before European settlement, prairies covered most of the central United States. Today nearly all of Iowa’s prairies have disappeared because of the growth of agricultural production, according to the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. It is estimated that less than 0.1 percent of Iowa’s native prairies remain.

The publication looks at ways that prairies can be incorporated into farms, how they affect nearby crops and resources to establish your own prairie. Jarchow, whose background is in plant ecology, provided many of the full-color photographs in the publication.

The publication was sponsored by the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, Leopold Center and ISU Agriculture and Natural Resource Extension. *Incorporating Prairies into Multifunctional Landscapes*, PMR 1007, is available from the ISU Extension Online Store at www.extension.iastate.edu/store/.

Seven Tips for Improving Crop Insurance Coverage During Harvest

With the 2010 harvest fast approaching, a great deal of yield variability can be expected in many fields. Farmers with crop insurance coverage need to be organized to submit timely claims for indemnity payments or provide records for Actual Production History (APH), according to Steven Johnson, Iowa State University Extension farm and ag business management specialist. Johnson offers the following seven tips to help with crop insurance coverage during harvest.

Notify your crop insurance agent.

Contact your agent within 72 hours of the initial discovery of damage and no later than 15 days after the end of the insurance period. The end of the period is the earlier of total destruction of the crop on the insured unit, or harvest of the unit or Dec. 1.

“If you initially discover damage within 15 days of harvest or during harvest you may be required to leave representative samples of the unharvested crop for inspection by a crop insurance adjuster,” Johnson said. Samples must be at least 10 feet wide and extend the entire length of each field in the unit. An optional unit typically will be an individual field within a section of land by separate ownership.

Keep records organized.

In case of loss or APH audit the insured farmer must keep records separate for each unit. Enterprise unit coverage is common and it combines the production of all fields of that crop in the county together. Optional units will be combined if the production is commingled, which often occurs when insured farmers get busy during harvest.

“It may be necessary to keep production separate for each farming practice, type of crop and variety depending on the crop being harvested and crop insurance coverage in place,” he said.

(article continues on next page)

Measure old-crop grain.

Production stored on the farm from previous years must be measured by a crop insurance adjuster prior to adding any new-crop bushels. For bushels stored on the farm and not at a loss, keep written records of bin markings, truckload identifications and combine monitor records in case of a future APH audit. For loss situations, when production from more than one unit and/or insurable and uninsurable acreage will be stored in the same storage structure, an inspection by an adjuster should be requested.

Specify load information.

Maintain a ledger by crop and record the loads of production by unit and field number, and date of harvest. Identify the truck or wagon used to transport the grain to the storage structure and the estimated volume of each load.

Retain evidence of delivery.

Production delivered to a commercial elevator or processor will require evidence of the delivery amount. Individual load tickets alone will not suffice, but a load summary and/or settlement sheet is required for verification of 100 percent of the production delivered, not just the insured farmer's share.

"Individual load tickets may be needed in addition to the summary and/or settlement sheets and can include specifics such as the farm identification," said Johnson. "Have a written third party verification available, or settlement of a claim, whenever possible."

Maintain records of production fed to livestock.

In the event production must be fed prior to a claim being worked by the adjuster, the insured farmer is responsible for maintaining detailed records. That is a formal, consistent, written record system of fed production. You need to have the records available at the time the claim is prepared.

Keep in touch with your agent.

Cooperate with your crop insurance agent and the adjuster in an investigation or settlement of a claim. "You need to understand the emotions that

come with harvest," he said. "And always practice farm safety."

Forage Testing Project Open to Iowa Producers

This year's weather has been one for the record books, and that's not good news for the state's cattle producers. Dan Loy, interim director of the Iowa Beef Center (IBC) at Iowa State University (ISU) said continued rain has made hay baling extremely difficult, resulting in over-mature hays, rain damaged hays and lack of hay supplies in some areas.

"Our beef team has developed a forage testing and cattle feeding project to help producers manage their poor forage conditions and prevent calving problems," Loy said. "This forage testing project is a multi-pronged approach by ISU Extension beef program specialists to determine the nutrient value of this year's forages, assist in balancing feed rations for cattle performance and educate people about forage nutrient values and rations."

IBC, the Grass Based Livestock Working Group from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Forage and Grassland Council and the Southern Iowa Forage and Livestock Committee are sponsoring the first phase of this project this fall: collecting and testing forages. Additional sponsors are being sought for the education portion of the project and a second year of testing. This project currently includes a 50 percent cost share on sample testing for producers, thanks in part to a collaboration with Dairyland Laboratories in Wisconsin.

In addition to receiving information on quality of their forages, producers might use test results to prove losses under the Farm Service Agency's Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program.

Denise Schwab, ISU Extension beef specialist who is helping lead the project, said county extension offices are vital links in the project. *(continued)*

“The extension beef specialists will work directly with county offices to provide all necessary sample bags, information forms and mailing envelopes, and do necessary monitoring of samples and sample locations,” she said. “We consider county offices our partners in this project, from publicizing its availability to helping direct producers to the appropriate people and resources to participate in the project. Producers will bring their samples to the county office, so the county office staff are vital to the success of this project.”

While most of the samples will be weather-impacted hay samples, Loy said the project also will include some silage samples.

“We want to be sure we have adequate sample numbers to be able to offer ration balance assistance yet this fall for winter feeding,” he said. “So, if you’re interested in taking part, or you have questions about the project, contact your county ISU Extension office or your beef specialist soon.”

A listing of extension beef specialists and their contact information is available at www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/fs.html. Those who would like to learn more about forage sampling can download, print and use this newly updated publication from IBC, “Forage Sampling and Sampling Equipment” at www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1098B.pdf

IBC was established in 1996 with the goal of supporting the growth and vitality of the state’s beef cattle industry. It comprises faculty and staff from ISU Extension, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and College of Veterinary Medicine, and works to develop and deliver the latest research-based information regarding the beef cattle industry. For more information about IBC, visit www.iowabeefcenter.org or check out the IBC blog at <http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/iowabeef/>.

...and justice for all
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Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.

ISU Extension’s 2011 Garden Calendar Says Good Health is a Gardening Bonus

Gardeners, novice and experienced, will be inspired by Iowa State University Extension’s 2011 garden calendar. The full-color, 12-month calendar is filled with stunning photography and information. Monthly “gardening is good for you” messages and health tips have been added to the gardening tips traditionally featured in the extension garden calendar.

Calendar co-authors Cynthia Haynes and Richard Jauron, extension horticulture specialists, considered public interest in healthy living when they created the 2011 calendar. “Everywhere you look, you see information on ways to improve your health - how to exercise, what to eat, what not to eat - that made us think of all the ways gardening can help people stay healthy,” Haynes said.

This encouraged Haynes and Jauron to focus the calendar on the physical, emotional, nutritional and psychological benefits of gardening. “We have included a few health tips in the usual line-up of gardening tips throughout each month,” Haynes said. “And we had a lot of fun working on them!”

The authors believe the calendar will provide new gardeners with information that helps them improve their gardening practices, while helping experienced gardeners find new and different things to try. Their goal is for all gardeners to become better gardeners, to garden more efficiently and effectively as they meet their gardening needs and objectives- whether that is for consumption, profit, beauty or some other reason.

Gardening is GOOD for you- 2011 Garden Calendar, PM 815 is available for \$6 from the ISU Extension online store at www.extension.iastate.edu/store or at the Shelby County Extension office. Persons interested in purchasing multiple copies should call ahead to the extension office so we can order extra copies in advance. This is the 33rd edition of the ISU Extension garden calendar.