



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:

January 25th - Crop Advantage Meeting
in Carroll

January 27th - Crop Advantage Meeting
in Atlantic

February 1st - Confinement Site (Private)
Manure Applicator Certification at 1:30

February 7th - Swine Risk Management
Class for Women

February 10th - FSQA Class 6-8 PM

February 12th - Beginning Farmers
Conference in Ames

After a beautiful harvest season, and a fairly dry end to 2010, we made up for it this week with a pretty significant amount of snowfall in a short span of time. Hopefully we all still remember how to drive in snow from our experiences last winter!!

If you can get yourself dug out from all the snow, take a look at this month's newsletter and take your pick from the many great educational opportunities in the coming months. With a variety of topics, there's sure to be something for everyone!

Stay Warm this month!

-Kate Olson, Program Coordinator

DID YOU KNOW??

Ag and Hort Update is also available online!! The current and past issues are archived on our county homepage: www.extension.iastate.edu/shelby.

Online newsletters also contain active links to get you to websites and publications mentioned in the articles! Contact me to be added to our email list.

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.

Can anything be done to protect trees and shrubs from cold winter temperatures?

It might be possible to protect marginally hardy, small shrubs by encircling the shrubs with chicken wire fencing and filling the enclosure with straw or pine needles. In most cases, however, little can be done to protect trees and shrubs from cold winter temperatures.

Iowa is located in USDA Hardiness Zones 4 and 5. The average annual minimum temperature in Zone 5 is -10 to -20 degrees Fahrenheit. The average annual minimum temperature in Zone 4 is -20 to -30 degrees Fahrenheit. The dividing line between Zones 4 and 5 lies roughly from Council Bluffs to Ames to Dubuque.

The best way to prevent damage caused by low winter temperatures is to select trees and shrubs that are reliably winter hardy in your area. Check out the ISU Extension publication [Deciduous Shrubs](#) to learn more about selection and care of shrubs. Publications are available from the Extension Online Store at www.extension.iastate.edu/store/.

I have several small evergreens in my yard. Do I need to uncover the evergreens if they get buried in snow?

No, there is no need to uncover the evergreens. The snow will not suffocate the evergreens. The snow acts like an insulating blanket and protects the evergreens from desiccating winter winds.

Which trees and shrubs provide food for birds during the winter months?

When attempting to attract birds to the landscape, trees and shrubs that provide food during the winter months are extremely important because natural foods are most limited at this time of year. Trees that provide food for birds in winter include hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), hawthorn (*Crataegus* species), eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) and crabapple (*Malus* species). Shrubs that provide food for birds include red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*), northern bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*), sumac (*Rhus* species), roses (native species and *Rosa rugosa*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* species), nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*) and American cranberrybush viburnum (*Viburnum trilobum*). To learn how to make your backyard more inviting to many birds, order [Bird Feeding: Tips for Beginners and Veterans, G 3176](#) from the ISU Extension Online Store at www.extension.iastate.edu/store.

How do I prevent damage to small trees and shrubs from heavy, wet snow?

The weight of heavy, wet snow can cause considerable damage to small trees and shrubs. In late fall, multi-stemmed evergreens, such as arborvitae, can be wrapped with twine or rope to prevent damage from heavy snows. When heavy, wet snow accumulates on small trees and shrubs gently shake the snow from their branches or carefully brush off the snow with a broom. When cleaning driveways and sidewalks, do not throw heavy, wet snow onto small trees or shrubs. Also, avoid dumping snow onto small trees and shrubs when raking snow off roofs.

How can I prevent damage to trees and shrubs from deicing salts?

Homeowners can minimize salt damage by using deicing salts prudently. Before applying salt, wait until the precipitation has ended and remove as much of the ice and snow as possible. Use deicing salts at rates sufficient to loosen ice and snow from driveways and sidewalks, then remove the loosened ice and snow with a shovel (deicing salts need to be

applied at much higher rates to completely melt ice and snow). Mix salt with sand or another abrasive material. Fifty pounds of sand mixed with one pound of salt works effectively.

Avoid piling salt-laden snow and ice around trees and shrubs. While the amount of salt applied to major roadways cannot be controlled, steps can be taken to minimize damage. As soon as the ground thaws in early spring, water areas where salt accumulates over winter. A thorough soaking should help flush the salt from the root zone of plants. If possible, alter the drainage pattern so winter runoff drains away from ornamental plants. When planting trees near major streets or highways, select salt-tolerant tree species.

What should I do with my poinsettia after the holidays?

If given good care in the home, poinsettias should remain attractive for two to three months. Toss the poinsettia when you grow tired of it or it becomes unattractive.

For those home gardeners who enjoy a challenge, it is possible to get the poinsettia to bloom again next season. Cut the stems back to within four to six inches of the soil in March. The poinsettia also may be repotted at this time. When new growth appears, place the poinsettia in a sunny window. Continue to water the plant when the soil surface becomes dry to the touch. Fertilize every two weeks with a dilute fertilizer solution.

In late May, move the poinsettia outdoors. Harden or acclimate the plant to the outdoors by placing it in a shady, protected area for two to three days, then gradually expose it to longer periods of direct sun. The poinsettia should be properly hardened in seven to 10 days. Once hardened, dig a hole in an area that receives about six hours of sunlight and set the pot into the ground. To obtain a compact, bushy plant, pinch or cut off the shoot tips once or twice from late June to mid-August. Continue to water and fertilize the plant outdoors. The poinsettia should be brought indoors in mid-September. Place the plant in a bright, sunny window. The poinsettia is a short-day plant. Short-day plants grow vegetatively during the long days of summer and produce flowers when days become

shorter in the fall. To get the poinsettia to flower for Christmas, the plant must receive complete darkness from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. daily from early October until the bracts develop good color, usually early to mid-December. Protect the plant from light by placing it in a closet or by covering with a box. During the remainder of the day, the poinsettia should be in a sunny window.

When should I sow geranium seeds indoors?

Geraniums are relatively easy to grow from seeds. However, geranium seedlings are slow growing. Geranium seeds should be sown in early to mid-February to produce flowering plants for spring. Flowering occurs approximately 13 to 15 weeks after sowing. Suggested seed-grown geraniums for Iowa include varieties in the Elite, Orbit, Maverick, and Multibloom Series. (A series is a group of closely related varieties with uniform characteristics, such as height, spread and flowering habit. Generally, the only characteristic that varies within a series is flower color.)

What should I do with my amaryllis after it is done blooming?

Some individuals discard their amaryllis after it is done blooming. However, it's possible to save the amaryllis and force it to flower again next year. Proper cultural practices must be followed to successfully grow and reflower amaryllis bulbs. After the flowers fade, cut off the flower stalk with a sharp knife. Make the cut one to two inches above the bulb. Don't damage the foliage. In order for the bulb to bloom again next season, the plant must replenish its depleted food reserves. The strap-like leaves manufacture food for the plant. Place the plant in a sunny window and water when the soil surface is nearly dry. Fertilize every two to four weeks with a dilute fertilizer solution. The amaryllis can be moved outdoors in late May. Harden or acclimate the plant to the outdoors by initially placing it in a shady, protected area. After two or three days, gradually expose the amaryllis to longer periods of direct sun. The amaryllis should be properly hardened in seven to 10 days. Once hardened, select a site in partial to full sun. Dig a hole and set the pot into the ground. Outdoors,

continue to water the plant during dry weather. Also, continue to fertilize the amaryllis once or twice a month through July. Bring the plant indoors in mid-September. Plants left indoors should be kept in a sunny window.

In order to bloom, amaryllis bulbs must be exposed to temperatures of 50 to 55 F for a minimum of eight to 10 weeks. This can be accomplished by inducing the plant to go dormant and then storing the dormant bulb at a temperature of 50 to 55 F. To induce dormancy, place the plant in cool, semi-dark location in late September and withhold water. Cut off the foliage when the leaves turn brown. Then place the dormant bulb in a 50 to 55 degree location for at least eight to 10 weeks. After the cool requirement has been met, start the growth cycle again by watering the bulb and placing it in a well-lighted, 70 to 75 F location. Keep the potting soil moist, but not wet, until growth appears. The other option is to place the plant in a well-lighted, 50 to 55 F location in fall. Maintain the amaryllis as a green plant from fall to early to mid-winter. After the cool requirement has been met, move the plant to a warmer (70 to 75 F) location.

Which plum varieties can be successfully grown in northern Iowa?

Several hybrid plum varieties developed at the University of Minnesota are reliably hardy in northern Iowa. These hybrid plums include 'Alderman' (burgundy red skin, yellow flesh), 'Pipestone' (red skin, golden yellow flesh), 'Superior' (red skin, yellow flesh) and 'Underwood' (dull red skin, yellow flesh). The aforementioned hybrid plums are self-unfruitful. (Self-unfruitful trees cannot produce fruit from their own pollen.) A pollinator, such as 'Toka,' needs to be planted to pollinate the hybrid plums. 'Toka' produces small red fruit with yellow flesh in addition to being an excellent pollinator. 'Mount Royal' is a self-fruitful European plum variety that is hardy in northern Iowa. 'Mount Royal' produces small fruit with bluish black skin and greenish yellow flesh. [Why Fruit Trees Fail to Bear, PM 1083](#), an ISU Extension publication available for download from the [Online Store](#), further explains the factors affecting a tree's ability to begin and continue to bear fruit.

New Publication Helps Farmers Increase Drying Efficiency with Dryeration

New ISU Extension publication addresses techniques for dryeration and combination drying to increase the drying rate for high-temperature corn dryers.

When harvest conditions require high-temperature grain drying, the dryer system may be the bottleneck that limits harvest rate. A new publication from Iowa State University Extension addresses techniques for dryeration and combination drying to increase the drying rate for high-temperature corn dryers.

“[Dryeration and Combination Drying for Increased Capacity and Efficiency](#)” (PM 2089K) is available to download from the Extension Online Store, www.extension.iastate.edu/store/.

This publication illustrates dryeration techniques and management considerations to increase both drying capacity and overall energy efficiency. Topics include delayed cooling, moisture testing, system design and combination drying using both high-temperature and low-temperature systems to achieve optimal results.

“In high-temperature systems, moisture is removed from the corn kernels faster than the moisture can equalize within the kernels,” said Shawn Shouse, ISU Extension agricultural engineer. “The dryeration process allows this moisture to move towards the surface of the kernel where it can be removed more efficiently.”

“Implementing dryeration or combination drying requires additional planning, but the energy savings are considerable,” said Dana Petersen, ISU Extension program coordinator with the Farm Energy Conservation and Efficiency Initiative.

The publication is part of a series of farm energy conservation and efficiency educational materials being developed through the [ISU Farm Energy Conservation and Efficiency](#) educational initiative.

The purpose is to increase farmers’ awareness of opportunities for improving efficient use of farm energy. The initiative also will help farmers explore alternatives to reduce farm energy demand and to improve their farms’ overall profitability in a rapidly changing energy environment.

For more information, go to

<http://farmenergy.exnet.iastate.edu>.

Iowa Learning Farms Offers Webinar Series in 2011

The [Iowa Learning Farms](#) is offering another avenue of learning in 2011, hosting a series of webinars on the third Wednesday of each month, beginning in January. The webinars will be held over the noon hour through Adobe Connect. All that is needed to participate is a computer with Internet access.

The topics discussed will be beneficial for technical service providers, watershed project coordinators, extension specialists and anyone else interested in the topic of the month. The topics and speakers for the first few months are:

- Jan. 19 – “The Culture of Conservation,” Jacqueline Comito, ILF program manager and anthropologist
- Feb. 16 – “Will the rain ever stop?” Christopher Anderson, ISU Climate Science Program
- March 16 – “Cover Crop Management,” Jeremy Singer, research agronomist with the National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment
- April 20 – “Nitrogen Management and Water Quality,” Matt Helmers, ISU associate professor, ISU Extension water quality engineer
- May 18 – “Bioreactors: Benefits and Potential Challenges,” Laura Christianson, graduate student, ISU Agriculture and Biosystems Engineering
- June 15 – “Impacts of Bacteria on Water Quality,” Michelle Soupier, ISU Agriculture and Biosystems Engineering assistant professor

To connect to the webinars, go to:

<http://connect.extension.iastate.edu/ilf/>. Visit the ILF website to download a PDF file with detailed instructions. Also, watch the ILF website for topics and speakers throughout 2011, www.extension.iastate.edu/ilf/, as well as archived sessions to view.

[Iowa Learning Farms](#) is a partnership between the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, [Iowa State University Extension](#), [Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture](#), Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources; in cooperation with Conservation Districts of Iowa and the Iowa Farm Bureau.

Swine Risk Management Workshop for Women set for Feb. 7th in Harlan

Women interested in learning about swine marketing are encouraged to attend a free, half-day seminar on February 7th from 1-5 p.m. at the Shelby County Extension Office. ISU Specialists in Marketing, Farm Management and Swine production will present a class on risk management, including hedging, options, Livestock Gross Margin and Risk Protection insurance. The session is designed for any skill-level and includes hands-on computer model simulation of marketing tools, as well as interactive class discussion to increase understanding of concepts. Pre-registration is required for this class, and a minimum registration number must be met for the class to be held. For more information, or to register for this workshop, contact the Shelby County Extension Office, or ISU Swine Field Specialist Dave Stender at 712-225-6196.

2011 Pasture Management Update Is January 27

Update session covers the latest pasture management recommendations.

Cow and calf producers interested in learning the latest pasture management recommendations have the opportunity to attend the 2011 Pasture Management Update on Jan. 27. The seminar will take place at St. Patrick's Parish Center in Corning, Iowa from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Speakers from Iowa State University and ISU Extension, the Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation at Iowa State and Dow AgroSciences will share their expertise on subjects ranging from weed management and hay quality to pasture lease agreements and the Iowa fence law.

"Producers attending the seminar will gain some information that will assist them to improve the management of their pasture and grazing animals, which will result in giving the producers the opportunity to be more profitable," said Brian Peterson, chair of the Southern Iowa Forage and Livestock Committee (SIFLC).

With a goal to provide an interactive event, speakers will provide information to the audience in a format that gives ample opportunity for questions from the producers during the presentations, he said. The Southern Iowa Forage and Livestock Committee, the Iowa Forage and Grasslands Council, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Iowa State University Extension sponsor the event.

The registration fee is \$5, payable at the door. For more information, contact Melissa Maynes or Chris Nelson at 641-322-3184, or Joe Sellers at 641-203-1270.

Schedule: 2011 Pasture Management Update

9:30-10 a.m. – Registration

10 a.m. – Weed and Brush Management Recommendations Wayne *Pew, Dow AgroSciences*

10:45 a.m. – Iowa Fence Law Review
Erin Herbold, Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation, Iowa State University

11:30 a.m. – Review of 2010 Hay Quality, Cow Feeding Recommendations

Joe Sellers, ISU Extension Beef Program Specialist

12 p.m. – Lunch

12:45 p.m. – Pasture Lease Agreements: Who Owns Rights to Cornstalks in Crop Rental Agreements?

Erin Herbold, Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation

1:30 p.m. - Cost Effective Grazing Management Improvements: How Do You Afford High Priced Grazing Lands? *Joe Sellers, ISU Extension*

Note: We are still looking for beef producers in Shelby County to participate in a forage testing program! If you are interested, please contact Kate in the office!!

..and justice for all

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Many materials can be made available in alternative formats for ADA clients. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC

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

Food Safety Workshops for Fruit and Vegetable Growers Offered in Seven Locations

Growers interested in improving food safety and post-harvest handling of fruits and vegetables can learn both at Iowa State University Extension workshops this winter. The workshops will be held during January and February at seven Iowa locations and will also cover the implications of recent federal food safety legislation on small growers.

“Fruit and vegetable growers work to deliver a safe product from farm to table,” said Margaret Smith, program coordinator with ISU Extension's value added agriculture program, and co-team leader for the workshops. “This may require additional planning and implementation of new practices and protocols on the farm.”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s good agricultural practices (GAPs) address microbial food safety hazards for unprocessed fruits and vegetables from the farm to retail. “These good agricultural and management practices are important to ensure safety as well as quality of most fruits and vegetables sold to consumers or retail foodservices in the unprocessed form,” said Cathy Strohbehn, ISU Extension specialist, associate professor of hotel and restaurant and institution management, and workshop co-team leader.

“There are actions producers can take at each step - growing, harvesting, washing, sorting, packing and transporting – to meet these objectives, with the added benefit of presenting a competitive advantage within the market,” Strohbehn said. Topics to be covered during this full-day workshop include microbial risks, the regulatory landscape, production and safety issues and the development of a food safety plan based on GAPs principles. Participants will receive a Certificate of Completion of On Farm Food Safety Training, suitable for framing at points of sale.

The workshops are funded by a two-year competitive grant to Strohbehn and Smith from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Paul Domoto, ISU Extension specialist and professor of

horticulture, and Lester Wilson, ISU professor of food science and human nutrition are additional project team members on this grant. More information about the project can be found at www.iastatelocalfoods.org.

The workshops will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Locations and registration contacts include:

- Jan. 27** – Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport/ Conference Center. To register, contact Sue Woods at the Value Added Agriculture Program at ISU Extension at 515-294-9483 or swoods@iastate.edu.
- Feb. 2** – Muscatine County Extension Office, Muscatine. To register, contact Shirley Grimm or Vera Stokes at 563-263-5701 or sgrimm@iastate.edu.
- Feb. 3** – North Iowa Community College, Oelwein. To register, contact Teresa Wiemerslage at 563-794-0599 or wiemer@iastate.edu. For more information, visit www.iowafreshfood.org.
- Feb. 4** – Linden Residence Hall, Ames. To register, contact Darrin Vander Plas at 515-294-2892 or farm2isu@iastate.edu. For more information, visit www.dining.iastate.edu/farm/.
- Feb. 8** – Griswold Community Center, Griswold. To register, contact Bahia Barry at Golden Hills RC&D at 712-482-3029 or bahia.barry@rcdnet.net.
- Feb. 9** – Downtown Sioux City Library, Sioux City. To register, contact Laura Kuennen, Local Food Systems Coordinator at 712-276-2157 or Lkuennen@iastate.edu.
- Feb. 10** – North Iowa Fairgrounds 4-H Building, Mason City. To register, contact Mark Schutt at Prairie Winds RC&D at 641-923-3606 or mark.schutt@ia.usda.gov.

Fees for the workshop are \$50 per person and \$25 per second family or business member, which includes take home reference materials, a meal and refreshments. Contact your local workshop site for scholarship information.

Established by the 1987 Iowa Groundwater Protection Act, the Leopold Center supports the development of profitable farming systems that conserve natural resources. More information about the Leopold Center is available on the web at: www.leopold.iastate.edu, or by calling the Center at 515-294-3711.

Estrus Synchronization Planner Now Available to Beef Producers at No Charge

Thanks to financial support from a multi-state extension group, beef producers are now able to get the Bovine Estrus Synchronization Planner at no charge. Garland Dahlke of the Iowa Beef Center (IBC) at Iowa State University (ISU) said the Beef Reproduction Task Force decided that providing the spreadsheet tool for free was a good way to share expertise with producers and be better able to offer assistance and updates. Access and additional information are available through the IBC website. “We know that this is a popular tool among producers and we want them to have the most up to date breeding and scheduling information,” Dahlke said. “In addition to the most current version, we also provide a wealth of supporting documents so people can get the most from the product. We at IBC appreciate being asked to host this data and spreadsheet access and look forward to working with producers everywhere.”

The Beef Reproduction Task Force comprises extension beef and other specialists from eight universities: ISU, Kansas State University, University of Nebraska, South Dakota State University, University of Missouri, University of Illinois and University of Florida. The group’s objectives include improving understanding of physiological processes of the estrous cycle, procedures available to synchronize estrus and proper application of these systems. The Estrus Synchronization Planner is one result of this collaboration designed specifically for use by cattle producers. “Those who’d like to download the planner are asked to register with their name, address and e-mail address,” Dahlke said. “This is primarily for us to be able to provide updates to those we know are using this tool. Your information will not be shared outside the task force and is not available for other purposes by anyone else.” To learn more about the Estrus Synchronization Planner and to register for access to the spreadsheet itself, visit the IBC website at http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/estrus_synch.html. 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/>.

Beginning Farmers Conference Feb. 12 Prepares and Inspires Young Farmers

The Beginning Farmer Network (BFN), an organization made up of Iowa State University students interested in entering farming, is sponsoring the Beginning Farmers Conference on Feb. 12, at the Scheman Center, Iowa State University, Ames. The conference will feature keynote speakers Loren Kruse, Successful Farming Magazine editor-in-chief and Bill Northey, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture. “The conference gets incoming farmers and exiting farmers thinking about the things they will be faced with as they work together,” said Chad Fertig, former BFN president and a conference organizer. “It’s an inexpensive way to learn and get ideas swirling.”

Three sets of one-hour breakout sessions will cover topics ranging from commodity marketing and tax management, to farm succession and land leasing operations. Session speakers from the Iowa Agriculture Development Authority, Farm Service Agency, Beginning Farmers Center, Center for Agriculture Law and Taxation and Iowa State University Extension are on the agenda.

“Attendees should feel that they have the resources available to start farming,” said Fertig. “The conference helps those going into farming to better understand farm succession – which includes government programs for beginning farmers, commodity markets, production issues like land leasing and machinery sharing.”

More information, including online registration and a detailed conference agenda, is available at <http://www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/beginningfarmer/register.html>. Registration also can be made by calling (515) 294-6222. The registration fee is \$40 prior to Feb. 1; \$50 after that date. Registration includes all conference materials, lunch and networking opportunities.