



Webster County Acreage Living

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Snow Fencing Decisions

Content provided by Greg Brenneman, ISU Extension Ag Engineer Specialist

Most snow blows through a good snow fence. Research shows that the best snow fences are about half solid and half openings and will form drifts 25 to 30 times as long as the fence height.

Usually either wooden picket fences or plastic snow fences are used and are similar in effectiveness. Plastic fences are easier to handle but it is critical to have a good installation. If end posts loosen, the fence will sag and become ineffective. Costs of plastic fence vary. Plastic fence is considerably less costly than wood fence; however, a high quality plastic fence may cost almost as much as a wood fence.

Long-term, planting a living snow fence of evergreens and shrubs 150-250 feet from the road traps snow between the living snow fence and the road. Also, building up driveways allows snow to blow across rather than drifting on to them.

Keep grass and weeds mowed alongside roadways. This vegetation can trap snow on the roadway. Leaving standing corn or undisturbed cornstalk stubble will trap snow out in the field and minimize the amount of snow that can drift onto a roadway.



Snowmobile Safety

Content provided by the Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation

One in five snowmobile-related emergency department visits in the U.S. involve youth under 18 years. Injuries occur from being thrown from a snowmobile or hitting a stationary object. The majority of fatal injuries involve injuries to the head and neck. Non-fatal injuries include contusions and fractures.

Key Factors to Using a Snowmobile Safely:

- Wearing an approved snowmobile helmet and appropriate protective clothing.
- Driving experience and judgment.
- Maximum of one operator with one passenger.
- No towed sleds or skiers.
- Operator age of at least 16 years.

Strategies that Promote Safe Snowmobile Operation among Youth:

- Adult supervision based on skill level.
- Minimum operator age of 16 years.
- Safe operation on designated trails.
- Awareness of other snowmobile traffic.
- Proper maintenance of snowmobile.
- Awareness of changing weather conditions.
- Match youth's skills and abilities with the snowmobile size.
- Be responsible and a good role model.



Managing Firewood Insects

Content provided by Laura Jesse, ISU Extension Entomologist

Picture this. It is the middle of winter and you are snuggled up in front of a crackling fire with a warm mug of hot chocolate in one hand and a garden catalog in the other. You are daydreaming of spring when, from out of nowhere, a large beetle buzzes past your head. How in the world did a huge beetle get into your house in the middle of winter? In all probability, you need look no farther than the stack of firewood next to your fireplace. In addition to warmth, firewood can sometimes bring these unexpected hitchhikers into our homes. Luckily, most of them pose no danger to us, our homes or our belongings.

There are a number of reasons insects find your firewood attractive. They may be nesting in the wood, feeding on the wood or over-wintering under the bark. There are a couple of things you can do to minimize the number of insects entering your home from your firewood. First, stack firewood off of the ground. This aids in drying and makes it more difficult for insects to crawl into the woodpile. Second, leave firewood outside until a day or two before it will be burned. Insects in firewood stored outdoors will generally require a couple of days to warm up before becoming active.

We strongly advise against using insecticides on firewood. Treating firewood with insecticides has little benefit and is potentially dangerous. Most insecticides will not penetrate deep enough into wood to kill the insects. Additionally, storing and burning insecticide-treated firewood indoors could pose a health hazard, as the insecticide may be vaporized into the living area of your home.

There are several groups of beetles that feed on wood, which can accidentally be brought into your home in firewood. These insects can be a nuisance if they emerge from your firewood, but they will not harm the wood in your home. Longhorned beetles are attracted to dying, freshly cut or recently killed trees.

There are a wide variety of insects that over-winter under the bark of trees and in wood piles. When you warm this wood by bringing it into your home, these insects will wake up and come crawling out. Pillbugs, centipedes, millipedes and ground beetles are commonly found in firewood. None of these insects will harm you or your home. They need only be picked up and removed.

There are, however, two insects that may cause problems if you keep firewood stacked against your house – termites and carpenter ants. Termites may feed on wood that was stacked directly on the ground. There may be mud tunnels visible on the outside of the wood and within the log itself. Termites brought into your home in firewood cannot establish a new nest and will not damage your home or our furniture.

Any wood that remains moist for an extended period of time becomes a likely candidate for infestation by carpenter ants. Carpenter ants do not feed on the wood. They merely hollow out galleries or nest in the wood. If infested firewood is brought into the house, the ants may warm up and move out of the wood. This can be an annoyance, but the odds of these ants establishing a nest in your house are very low.



Tips for a Low-Cost Holiday Meal

Content provided by Paulelda Gilbert, ISU Extension Nutrition & Health Specialist

Most people want their holiday meals to be special, but you don't have to break the bank to do it! The key to a great holiday meal is some good food and a lot of great companionship and fun. Here are some specific tips:

- **Use Less!** When it comes to holiday meals, many families have a tradition of having much more food than is needed.
- **Serve Healthy Foods.** They give you more value for the dollar.
- **Make it Yourself.** In almost every case, it will cost more if you buy the frozen convenience food or package mix.
- **When it come to Turkey.** Whole turkey is less expensive per serving than a turkey roll. Turkey drumsticks can be an inexpensive main dish for a small family.
- **Beverages.** Serve water to drink along with other beverages.
- **Get Your Money's Worth out of the Leftovers.** Handle leftovers safely so that they will be used for meals in the days ahead.
- **Paper Products.** Don't buy fancy paper plates, napkins, cups, or decoration items.
- **Use Good Shopping Habits.** Plan your menu, read ads, use store brands and generic products.



Winterizing Your Home

Content provided by Shawn Shouse, ISU Extension Ag Engineer

Like it or not, winter is near. It is time to winterize your home. The trick is remembering to do this before ice, snow and cold winds make the tasks much more uncomfortable.

Heating System – If you have a wood-burning stove or fireplace, make sure the chimney is clean and unobstructed before use. Check gas furnaces for venting problems or heat exchanger cracks if you smell any exhaust in the house. This can be a life-threatening situation! Change furnace filters frequently through the heating season. Check your fuel supply. If your furnace blower motor requires oiling, take care of it now. Having furnaces checked and adjusted by a qualified technician can save you fuel and help prevent the discomfort of down-time later this winter.

Water System – Disconnect and drain garden hoses. A hose attached to an outside faucet can keep it from draining and cause even “frostless” faucets to freeze and burst. If you have outside faucets that are not freeze-proof, you may need to shut off and drain water lines inside. If you have water lines in an unheated crawl space, you may need heat tape to keep them from freezing. Newer heat tapes may be thermostatically controlled and tolerant of overlap. Older tapes could overheat and cause fires if they are overlapped on themselves. Water lines located under cabinets on outside walls sometimes freeze in extreme weather. Placing insulation between the wall and water line, or leaving cabinet doors open during extreme cold can help prevent problems.

Attic – Check your attic insulation. Open attics are an easy place to add insulation and save heating costs. At least 12 inches of insulation is recommended for attics. Seal any openings in the ceiling. Warm, moist

air that leaks into the attic can cause condensation that rots wood and ruins insulation.

Walls and Foundation – Openings in exterior walls (outlets, switches, etc.) should be sealed to prevent warm air moving out into the wall or cold drafts coming in. Gaskets are available to place under the faceplate of an outlet or switch to prevent drafts. Foam-in-place insulation also works well for sealing leaks in walls. Insulating basement walls can produce big heat savings, but don't use straw or hay bales around the outside of the foundation. Bales attract rodents and are not very effective insulation when exposed to wind. Do not apply plastic sheeting to the outside of house walls. Plastic on the outside traps moisture and contributes to wet insulation and wood decay.

Windows – You can reduce heat loss through windows by increasing the insulating properties of the window and by reducing the air leaking through the window. Insulation can be added by increasing the number of layers in the window. Storm windows, thermal (double or triple) pane glass and plastic films are the most common methods of adding layers. Insulating drapes closed at night will also reduce heat loss. But remember that closing drapes will also allow the windows to cool to lower temperatures and increase condensation on the glass.

Garage – Check for any products (paint, garden products, etc.) that should not be allowed to freeze. Make sure that garden hoses and unprotected water lines are drained. Dig out the snow shovels, snow blower, battery booster and other items that will likely be needed in the coming months. Starting the snow blower now can save hours of frustration and cold fingers later.



Protecting Your Livestock Water from Freezing

Content provided by Greg Brenneman, ISU Extension Ag Engineering Specialist

Whether you have one dog or 50 head of cattle, you need to provide them with water all winter long. In many cases, the easiest way to keep the water from freezing is to use submersible electric heaters. For safe operation, you must have a power supply with a third wire ground.

Energy-free waterers are also available for new installations. These waterers' channel heat up from the ground below and use lots of insulation to conserve the water's energy. If properly adjusted,

they seem to work well in Iowa. An important factor is to have the waterer sized to the number of livestock so that they drink enough water to keep it working.

Providing protection from the wind, having the waterer in the sun, and adding insulation to the outside of a water tank can help conserve heat and keep water available longer during cold weather. When adding insulation, be sure to protect the insulation from animal chewing, manure, and spilled water.



Laundry Tips on Getting Out Difficult Stains

Content provided by ISU Extension publication PM-858 Quick'n Easy Stain Removal

Chewing Gum: Apply ice to harden gum. Crack or scrape off excess. Treat with gel, stain stick, or aerosol pretreatment spray. Rub with heavy-duty liquid detergent. Rinse with hot water. Repeat if necessary. Launder.

Fingernail Polish. Do not use nail polish remover (or acetone) on acetate, triacetate, or modacrylic fabrics; nail polish remover will dissolve these fabrics. Take these fabrics to professional dry-cleaners and identify the stain. For other fabrics, use nail polish remover, acetone, and the spot treatment method.

Hog confinement odor: Wash clothes with heavy-duty detergent and add $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup household ammonia to each load. Do not mix ammonia and bleach in same wash load; together they produce toxic fumes. Ammonia can be used on colored fabrics, but it occasionally alters a garment's color.

Iodine: Iodine is removed quickly with sodium thiosulfate, which is sold in photo supply stores as "acid fixer." If the photo supply fixer solution contains chemicals other than sodium thiosulfate, do not use it. Iodine also may be removed with some commercial stain removers.

Mildew: To remove mildew, first shake or brush item outdoors. Pretreat darkest stains with heavy-duty liquid detergent. Launder in hot water with a heavy-duty detergent. Bleach as safe for fabric. Mildew attacks and destroys fibers, so bleaching may not restore fibers to white.

Odor: Most odors are removed by laundering. For persistent odor problems, place calcium carbonate crystals, activated charcoal, or baking soda in an open container and store with clothes. Or sprinkle baking soda directly on fabric and let stand; then shake or vacuum and launder.

Pesticides: If full-strength liquid concentrate spills on clothes, handle only with rubber gloves. Discard clothing immediately. Laundering does not remove concentrate to a safe level for reuse of clothing, even for reuse as rags. Launder other pesticide-contaminated clothing separately. If visible staining from diluted spray of pesticide residues remains after laundering, rewash using hot water, heavy-duty detergent, and a full water level. Then line dry. Read ISU Extension publication *Family Pesticide Safety: What to Do When Clothes Are Soiled With Pesticide*, PM-1663b, for more detailed laundering instructions.

Rust: Commercial rust removers found in grocery stores are effective and safe for most fabrics; however, rust removers that contain hydrofluoric acid are extremely toxic and can burn the skin and damage appliance finishes. A solution of oxalic acid crystals in water also removes rust stains, but the crystals are often difficult to find. Rust stains cannot be removed in normal laundering. Chlorine bleach makes them permanent.

Scorch: If fabric is thick and fuzzy, brush to remove charring. Rub liquid detergent into scorched area. Launder. If stain remains, bleach using all-fabric bleach. Fabric will be weakened permanently in the scorched area. Melted or glazed synthetic blends cannot be restored fully.

Smoke, Soot: Shake off excess soot outdoors. Launder in washing machine using heavy-duty liquid or powdered detergent as recommended by the manufacturer, one cup of water conditioner, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of all-fabric bleach. Use water temperature appropriate for the fabric. Air dry. Inspect for smoke odor. Repeat as necessary.

Urine: Rinse in cold water and launder. For stains on mattresses, (1) sponge with cloth using detergent solution, (2) rinse with cloth using vinegar solution, (3) let air dry, and (4) if odor remains, sprinkle with washing soda or calcium carbonate; wait one day, then vacuum.

Deodorant: Apply liquid detergent; wash in warm water. Aluminum or zinc salt build up from deodorants may be impossible to remove.

Perspiration: Apply liquid detergent or soak in warm water with presoak for 15 to 30 minutes. Launder in hot water if safe for fabric.

Lead Pencil: Use an art gum eraser to lift off excess, but avoid rubbing the fabric. For delicate fabrics, use spot treatment methods. For most durable, washable fabrics, use a pretreatment aerosol product, stain stick, or stain removal gel. Then rub in heavy-duty liquid detergent. Rinse in warm water and launder.

For further information on stain removal, contact the Webster Co. Extension Office (515-576-2119) and ask for publication PM-858, *Quick'n Easy Stain Removal* or download this publication at <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM858.pdf> or call the ISU Extension Answer Line at 800-262-3804.



Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisonings

Content provided by Tom Greiner, ISU Extension Engineer

In the United States more than 5000 people per year die from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Thousands more are injured. Some never recover and continue to suffer from memory, hearing, and vision loss; organ damage; and personality changes. Parkinson-like symptoms and Alzheimer's can be caused by exposure to CO. Several things can be done to help prevent these needless deaths and long-term disabilities.

- Install CO alarms near all bedrooms.
- Have all fuel-burning appliances inspected before the heating season. (Gas or oil furnace or boiler, gas water heater and gas stove.)
- Locate an inspector to do a combustion check with a digital CO meter and a "worst-case back drafting test."
- Install and use an exhaust hood vented to outdoors above a gas kitchen stove.

- Never use the kitchen stove to heat the house! It is not safe even for emergency heating.
- Never use an unvented gas or charcoal grill indoors.
- Never operate small gasoline engines indoors.
- Don't warm up vehicles in the garage. Even with the garage door open CO builds up in the garage and can then enter the home.
- Consult a heating contractor before and after tightening up your house to ensure that there is adequate combustion air for appliances. Without sufficient air, higher amounts of CO are produced and chimneys are more likely to back draft.
- Consider installation of new high-efficiency appliances that save energy and are designed correctly for even a super-tight house.

Don't wait for Christmas to buy CO alarms for yourself and those you care about. Give the gift of a CO-safe home today.



How to Face Holiday Parties While Trying to Lose Weight

Content provided by Paulelda Gilbert, ISU Extension Nutrition & Health Specialist

One common mistake is for those wanting to lose weight are to vow to eat nothing at the event. This is a real set-up, because you either feel guilty when you eat or feel deprived when you don't. You can enjoy yourself and still keep your dieting virtue. Here are five methods for having fun and keeping the reins on uncontrolled eating.

- 1. Plan Ahead.** Think about the event before you go. Try to anticipate both the food you will face and the actions of other people. Think about your own desires to eat and the external pressures from others. Have a general idea of what you will eat. You can call ahead and ask what will be served. You can make a tentative list of what you will eat and add up the calories.
- 2. Eat Something Before You Go.** Don't go starved to a special event. Everything will look good and you will forget that you only want to sample special foods. Have a salad, carrot sticks,

cauliflower, or other low-calorie food before you go.

- 3. Eat Only Special Foods.** Stay away from the potato chips, crackers, dip, nuts, bread and other foods that you can have any time. Use the chance to try new foods or foods you rarely have. Remember to make the best use of your calories.
- 4. Be the Slowest Eater.** Be the last to start and the last to finish. You will enjoy the food more and will feel satisfied with less.
- 5. Keep a Proper Perspective.** If you do eat more than you intend, keep a positive attitude. In the scheme of a month or year's worth of eating, what can one day mean? One day's indiscretion should not ruin any diet. As stated before, your reaction to the eating is more important than the eating itself. Your attitudes are central to your ability to control your eating both during and after the event.



Check Out These Web Sites!

Content provided by Mary Ann deVries, Polk Co. Horticulturist

A cold night outside and a warm computer inside. What a perfect combination for doing some traveling without leaving home. For your browsing pleasure, here is a list of garden-related Web sites collected from some well-known lowans.

Richard Jauron, Horticulture specialist and host of ISU's call-in garden *Hortline*, admits that he relies on the **Ohio State University Plantfacts** to locate up-to-date fact sheets and bulletins available from other universities. <http://plantfacts.ohio-state.edu>

Cindy Haynes, Extension Horticulturist refers us to the very special **National Gardening Association** Web site which overflows with garden wisdom. <http://www.garden.org>.

Susan Hurst, garden writer and lecturer from Des Moines, has a great Web site called **Iowa Gardener**. This is the place to visit if you're looking for news on local gardening events and organizations all around Iowa. <http://www.iowagardener.com>

Teva Dawson, director of the Des Moines Community Gardens program, likes **National Gardening Association's Kids' Gardening** Web site. <http://www.kidsgardening.com>

Eldon Everhart, ISU Extension Horticulture Specialist reminds us that learning can be lots of fun with the **MadSci Network**. This site puts together "the collective cranium of scientists to answer science questions." I bet you can't stump them! <http://www.madsci.org>

Eldon also relies on **BioTech's** life science dictionary. <http://biotech.icmb.utexas.edu/search/dict-search.html>

Kelly Ulrick, park ranger at Saylorville Lake, shares the **Iowa Reptiles and Amphibians** site with us. If you like close-up pictures of snakes, turtles and such, you'll love this place! <http://www.herp.net>

Patty Judge, Iowa's Secretary of Agriculture selected **USDA for Kids** as one of her personal favorites. Here you'll find a wide range of topics from nutrition to Ag facts, all presented in kid-appropriate formats. If you have children or grandchildren, you'll want to check out this site. <http://www.usda.gov/news/usdakids/index.html>

Of course, Secretary Judge couldn't leave unmentioned the **United States Dept. of Agriculture Home Page**. <http://www.usda.gov>

Dr. Eileen Robb, native plant authority and radio host, had trouble picking only one Web site. However, the **Brooklyn Botanic Garden** Web site is one she uses often. Eileen like the fact the BBG offers information for beginning and experienced gardeners alike. <http://www.bbg.org/gar2/index.html>

Paul Wray, ISU Department of Forestry is pleased to direct fellow tree lovers to the **ISU Forestry Department** Web site. It offers lots of tree topics plus a useful key to Iowa trees. <http://www.nrem.iastate.edu/>

Jeff Iles, chairman of the ISU Horticulture Department, describes the ISU campus as "one of the most beautiful in the country." The **Trees and Shrubs of the Campus of Iowa State University** site provides a photo tour of campus plus a list of 100 beautiful trees and shrubs that grow there. http://project.bio.iastate.edu/trees/campustrees/isu_trees.html

Donald Lewis, ISU Extension Entomologist knows lots about creepy things. He feels a good Web site for buggy topics is the **Entomology Index of Internet Resources**. <http://www.ent.iastate.edu/List>

Mohamad Khan, retired ISU horticulture field specialist and radio personality, wants to share the ISU **Horticulture and Home Pest News** Web site. This site offer a search engine where you can type in most any garden topic and it will return concise advice. It's almost as good as talking to Mohamad himself! <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews>

Elwynn Taylor, ISU Extension weather expert, like the **National Weather Service** Web site, where you can view current weather conditions around Iowa or click on radar to see what's coming. <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/dmx>

The worldwide web is a nearly endless source of information. However, be sure to protect yourself from misinformation that turns up too often. Stick to sights that are sponsored by reliable organizations, educational institutions, or other government agencies.



For information pertaining to Webster County, visit the Webster Co. Extension Web site at <http://www.exnet.iastate.edu/Pages/webster>



**PRIVATE PESTICIDE CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES
2003-2004, JOHN HOLMES'S AREA**

DATE	TIME	COUNTY	LOCATION
DECEMBER			
December 9	9:30 a.m.	Webster	Community Bldg., Clare
December 9	1:30 p.m.	Wright	Clarion Heartland Museum
December 11	1:30 p.m.	Hardin	St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Eldora
December 12	9:30 a.m.	Greene	Jefferson
December 17	1:30 p.m.	Hamilton	Hamilton Co. Fairgrounds, Webster City
JANUARY			
January 7	9:30 a.m.	Boone	Boone Co. Fairgrounds, Boone
January 12	9:00 a.m.	Hardin	Iowa Falls High School (Part of Crop Clinic – runs 9 am – 3 pm)
January 13	7:00 p.m.	Marshall	Marshalltown Community College
January 15	9:30 a.m.	Humboldt	Faith United Meth. Church, Humboldt
January 22	All day	Webster	Starlite Village Restaurant, Fort Dodge (Part of CROP ADVANTAGE meeting)
January 23	9:30 a.m.	Tama	Memorial & Legion Bldg., Gladbrook
January 27	1:30 p.m.	Story	ISU Extension Office, Nevada
January 27	7:00 p.m.	Story	ISU Extension Office, Nevada
FEBRUARY			
February 10	1:30 p.m.	Hamilton	Trinity Lutheran Church, Ellsworth
February 11	1:30 p.m.	Tama	Civic Center, Tama
February 12	7:00 p.m.	Webster	Webster County Fairgrounds
February 12	9:30 a.m.	Humboldt	Community Bldg., Bode
February 13	1:30 p.m.	Wright	Belmond-Klemme High School
MARCH			
March 4	7:00 p.m.	Hardin	Hamilton Auditorium, Ellsworth Comm. College, Iowa Falls
March 30	7:00 p.m.	Story	ISU Extension Office, Nevada
March 18	7:00 p.m.	Boone	City State Bank, Ogden
March 23	7:00 p.m.	Marshall	Marshalltown Community College
March 29	7:00 p.m.	Wright	Memorial Hall, Eagle Grove
March 31	9:30 a.m.	Greene	Jefferson
APRIL			
April 1	7:00 p.m.	Tama	Memorial Building, Traer
April 13	1:30 p.m.	Webster	Webster Co. Fairgrounds, Fort Dodge



Know Custom Rates before Hiring Others to Work on Your Acreage

Content provided by Joy Rouse, Warren CEED

There are times when you need work done on your acreage, but buying the necessary equipment does not make sense economically. It's helpful to know approximately what custom work would cost before you make a contact. ISU Extension has two custom rate resources available, the ***Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey*** and the ***Natural Resources Custom Rate Survey***.

The ***Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey*** (FM 1698) provides expected rates for custom work, including fuel and labor. The main areas covered in this survey are tillage and application, grain and forage harvesting, machine rental (operator, tractor, and fuel not included), and miscellaneous services. This survey is updated each April.

Available for the first time this year, the ***Natural Resources Custom Rate Survey*** (FM 1873) summarizes

the survey results of contractors who provide services related to natural resource conservation. Operations include tillage and planting of native grasses, trees, and wildlife plots; weed control; tree and brush cutting; and dirt removal.

When hiring a custom operator, make sure to discuss details of the specific job before entering into an agreement. Conditions such as job size, terrain, and location vary, which accounts for some of the range in the rates charged. Some contractors set a minimum charge per job to cover transportation and setup costs.

Both surveys are available from the Webster County Extension office, or you can download them at www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/Masterlist.html#fm. Look for the noted publication numbers.



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