New Horticulturist hired for Jefferson County

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach for Jefferson County would like to welcome Horticulturist Barb Grijalva to our staff!

Barb possesses more than 20 years of progressive experience in the horticultural field. Her professional history includes Detassling Crew Leader for Pioneer Hybrid of Mt. Pleasant and Middlecoop Seed Corn, Inc. She is also owner and operator of Back to the Basics Farm and a certified Morel Mushroom inspector!

Barb graduated from Pekin High School and has a passion for landscaping, grounds keeping and gardening.

As the owner of the 10 acre Back to the Basics Farm and Gardens, her responsibilities include starting plants inside in winter, and then transplanting outside, as well as the maintenance and harvesting. Her crops include delicious and healthy potatoes, a variety of squash, green beans, cucumbers and Iowa sweet corn! Barb also grows her own popcorn! You might have heard Barb on KRUIU (‘the voice of Fairfield and beyond’) or have seen her at the Farmers Market. She has a ‘baking room’ in her home where she makes delectable cinnamon rolls and other delicious baked goods!

Please join us for a Welcome to Extension Open House for Barb on Friday, December 5th, from Noon ~ 4:30! (we’ll be enjoying some of Barb’s home-grown popcorn!) Come visit with Barb and let her know what kind of programming and workshops you would like to attend!

Yard and Garden: Protecting Trees and Shrubs Against Rabbits in Winter

BY RICHARD JAURON, GREG WALLACE

AMES, Iowa -- Trees and shrubs are not as active in winter, but that doesn’t mean they should be ignored through the cold season. Winter brings food scarcity, which makes the home landscape a target for rabbits. Rabbits can severely damage trees and shrubs unless homeowners are proactive, which makes protecting them before winter arrives a major priority.

Horticulturists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach tell how to protect trees and shrubs against rabbits this winter. To have additional questions answered, contact the ISU Hortline at 515-294-3108 or hortline@iastate.edu.

How do I prevent rabbit damage to trees and shrubs in winter?
The most effective way to prevent rabbit damage to trees and shrubs in the home landscape is to place chicken wire fencing or hardware cloth around vulnerable plants. To adequately protect plants, the fencing material needs to be high enough that rabbits won’t be able to climb or reach over the fence after a heavy snow. In most cases, a fence that stands 24 to 36 inches tall should be sufficient. To prevent rabbits from crawling underneath the fencing, bury the bottom two to three inches below the ground or pin the fencing to the soil with U-shaped anchor pins. Small trees can also be protected by placing white spiral tree guards around their trunks. After a heavy snow, check protected plants to make sure rabbits aren’t able to reach or climb over the fencing or tree guards. If necessary, remove some of the snow to keep rabbits from reaching the trees or shrubs.

Damage may also be reduced by removing brush, junk piles and other places where rabbits live and hide. Trapping and repellents are other management options.

Which plants are most likely to be damaged by browsing rabbits in winter?
Trees and shrubs that are often damaged by rabbits in winter include crabapple, apple, pear, redbud, honey locust, serviceberry, burning bush or winged euonymus, flowering quince, barberry, roses and raspberries. Small evergreens (especially pines) are also vulnerable. However, nearly all small trees and shrubs are susceptible to damage when food sources are scarce and rabbit populations are high.

Can anything be done to save trees and shrubs damaged by rabbits over winter?
Prevention is the key to safeguarding the health of trees and shrubs in the landscape. Little can be done once the damage has occurred.

Deciduous trees that have been girdled (the bark has been removed completely around the trunk) have essentially been destroyed. Wrapping the trunk or applying pruning paint to the damaged area will not save the tree. Most affected trees will sucker from the base. However, most fruit and ornamental trees are propagated by grafting. Suckers which originate from the rootstock will not produce a desirable tree. Trees that have been girdled should be removed and replaced with additional trees.

Many deciduous shrubs have the ability to produce new shoots or suckers at their base. Because of this ability, many severely damaged deciduous shrubs will likely recover in a few years. Girdled stems should be cut off just below the feeding injury.
Science of Parenting: Help Kids Understand Health Threats
Help Kids Cope with Fears of Ebola, Flu, Other Illnesses
BY LORI HAYUNGS, JANET SMITH, LAURA STERNWEIS
AMES, Iowa – Daily news reports about Ebola infections, quarantines and death may have children worried that they may be stricken by this disease or other illnesses. Human sciences specialists offer suggestions for helping children cope with their fears in the Science of Parenting blog from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

“Research shows that too much unsupervised media viewing can cause children unneeded and unintentional stress and fear,” said Janet Smith, a human sciences specialist in family life.

“Watch the news with your children and observe how they react to stories about Ebola and the flu, and other threats to human health,” Smith said.

“Talk to your children about what they’re seeing and hearing in the news. Find out what they know and what questions they would like answered,” added Lori Hayungs, also a human sciences specialist in family life.

“Start with the facts and what they really need to know, and keep in mind what they are developmentally able to understand. This will give you an opportunity to reassure them, clear up any misconceptions and point out the many health and medical professionals and scientists who are helping solve this problem,” Hayungs said.

In November Smith and Hayungs will blog about ways that parents can reduce children’s anxiousness related to the Ebola outbreak. They also will look at how parents can use the situation to teach children important skills about illness prevention and world health issues.

Learn more from tips on the blog throughout the month and in a four-minute podcast. Through the Science of Parenting, www.scienceofparenting.org, ISU Extension and Outreach specialists share and discuss research-based information and resources to help parents rear their children. Parents can join in the conversation and share thoughts and experiences, as well as how they handle parenting responsibilities.

NEST Parenting Classes: Attendance = FREE Supplies

Two ‘Nest’ Parenting Classes are held each Tuesday of the month in order to accommodate your schedule:
2:00 ~ 3:00 pm; 5:30 ~ 6:30 pm
FREE DIAPERS! FREE BABY/TODDLER ITEMS!
Call Lynne Johnson at 641-472-4166 for more information or to sign up!

Topics covered in Nest classes include: Disciplining you toddler; Fighting: How to ‘fight nice!’; Parenting in Stepfamilies; Nurturing your child’s IQ; How to handle stress; Pregnancy Concerns and helpful tips, and more; and a cooking class is offered once a month! Recipes for the cooking classes are from the Healthy & Homemade Nutritional Calendar featured on Page 6! Nest Parenting Classes are FREE to residents of Jefferson County who are either pregnant, or have a child under the age of 5. Attend one class per week and receive points that can be used immediately for diapers, wipes, toddler eating utensils, etc!
Prebiotics–Probiotics—What Is the Difference?

Prebiotics and probiotics are considered “nutrition boosters” that are naturally present in everyday foods. Although there are prebiotic and probiotic supplements available, those found naturally in food are more readily digested and absorbed.

Prebiotics are natural, nondigestible food components linked to promoting the growth of “good” bacteria in your gut. Prebiotics help good bacteria grow in your gut and might also help your body better absorb calcium.

Probiotics are actual live cultures of “good” bacteria that are naturally found in your gut. These help balance or grow the bacteria you need in your gut. Probiotics may help enhance immunity and overall health, especially intestinal health. Probiotics have been used to treat irritable bowel syndrome, to lower lactose intolerance symptoms, and to prevent some allergy symptoms; however, the benefits vary person-to-person.

Try to include both prebiotics and probiotics in meals and snacks since they work together to restore and improve gut health. For example, enjoy a cup of yogurt with a banana at breakfast or top sautéed asparagus with melted aged cheese for dinner.

For a more extensive review of prebiotics and probiotics, register to view the 2010 Current Issues in Nutrition webinar, “The Good Gut Bugs: Prebiotics and Probiotics.”
Words on Wellness

Making Sense of the Dates

Are you confused by the dates that appear on food labels? If so you are not alone! Product dating is not required by federal regulations with the exception of infant formula. Most companies do put a date or a code on the package, but unfortunately there is no universally accepted method used so it can get confusing.

Here are some terms that will help you determine if the food item is still safe.

• “Sell by” means the store should sell the product by the date printed, but it can still safely be eaten after that date. Egg cartons have a “sell by” date.

• “Best if used by” means the consumer should use the product by the date listed for best quality and flavor (not for safety reasons). Most canned goods have a “best if used by” date.

• “Use by” or “Expires” means the product should be used by or frozen by the date listed. There will likely be a marked deterioration in product quality and safety after this date. Meats are an example of a food with a “use by” date.

• “Packing code” is required on all cans. This enables the company to track when and where the food was manufactured. This code is not a “use by” date. Canned foods are safe indefinitely as long as they are not exposed to extreme temperatures (freezing or temperatures above 90°F). Any cans that are dented, rusted, or swollen should be discarded. You will find that high-acid foods (tomatoes, fruits) will keep their best quality for 12 to 18 months and low-acid canned foods (meats, vegetables) for 2 to 5 years.

Activity Trackers — Are They for You?

Exercising can be hard, but tracking your progress doesn’t have to be. A fitness tracker counts your steps and provides motivation to exercise more throughout your day without drastic lifestyle changes or fad diets. By simplifying the process of monitoring with a fitness device, you will increase the likelihood of reaching a healthier weight and improving your overall health.

Fitness trackers are lightweight and wearable, and they can track steps, distance, heart rate, and calories used. Some even monitor sleep. The best activity trackers monitor your activity and display information about your daily routine on your smartphone or on the screen of the device itself.

Look for ones that will calculate your total minutes of activity, steps taken, heart rate, and goals for you. Some may even remind you to get up and move when you have been sitting for too long. Choose one that works with your lifestyle and habits. PC magazine has a good review of features and costs for some of the more popular wearable activity trackers.

PM 2099YY December 2014

...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, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs,年报, or because all or part of an individual’s income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s Target Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call 1-800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

One of the questions we are asked a lot before Thanksgiving is “Do I need to refrigerate my pumpkin pie or not?” Probably the main reason for the confusion is seeing all the pumpkin pies at the grocery store just sitting on the shelves—stored at room temperature. The main difference between the grocery store bakery pies and the ones that you make at home is the ingredients. Those bakery pies are made with shelf-stable ingredients which can include preservatives and anti-microbials that won’t allow the growth of bacteria. If you read the label on the pie you may see a notation of RT; indicating the pie can be stored at room temperature. Leftover pieces of these pies should be stored in the refrigerator. Remember to use the pie within 2-3 days. If you need to store it for a longer time, consider freezing the pie.

When you make your own pie from scratch, you should refrigerate it as soon as it has had a chance to cool. Homemade pies have ingredients like milk and eggs which provide a great medium for bacterial growth. If you prefer a warm piece of pie, you can always warm the pie just prior to serving.

Call the AnswerLine at 800-262-3804 with any questions!

Make or can your own cranberry sauce

Thanksgiving without cranberry sauce is hard to imagine for some people. If you are feeling adventurous this year you may want to try something new. The cranberry is a very versatile fruit and in season now.

When you are shopping for cranberries, choose full, firm berries that are dark red or red and yellow in color. Cranberries that are soft, shriveled, and have dark spots should be avoided. Store them in the refrigerator when you bring them home from the store. The crisper drawer will help you keep them fresh for 3-4 weeks. You can also freeze the berries until you are ready to use them. Wash the berries just prior to cooking. Discard any shriveled or damaged berries.

Cranberries can be eaten raw or cooked. You can also add them to breads and muffins. Plan to stock up now while they are available.

Remember, you can change up a waldorf salad or any other fruit salad with the addition of cranberries. If you want to make your own fresh cranberry sauce this year, follow this recipe from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service.

For sweet cranberry sauce, use two cups cranberries to one cup sugar and one-half cup water. After the cranberries have been sorted and washed, put all ingredients in a saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring frequently to dissolve sugar crystals completely. Boil gently for about 10 minutes, or until skins crack. Remove from heat and skim foam. Sauce may either be served hot or allowed to cool before serving.

You also have the option to preserve cranberry sauce to enjoy throughout the year. The National Center for Home Food Preservation has a recipe for cranberry sauce. Cranberry Jam is another fun and easy project.
The temperatures have recently gotten much colder outside, making us think about water pipes freezing in our homes. There are certain precautions to take to prevent this and it is also good to know how to thaw frozen pipes safely just in case this happens to you.

Pipes that run along an outside wall of a house may be at additional risk, as are water lines in outbuildings that do not have a heat source.

Adding extra insulation to prevent the pipes from freezing is always a good idea, but is not always feasible. Sometimes all it takes is opening the cabinet doors below the sinks, allowing heat to get near the pipes. A shielded light bulb placed near water pipes can also be effective, but make sure it does not come in contact with combustibles.

If, by chance, your pipes do freeze it is important to thaw them in the correct way. The first step is to turn the faucet on, which in turn will relieve the pressure in the line. Next, apply heat to the frozen section of the pipe. This can be done by using a space heater, heat lamp, heat tape, hairdryer or towels soaked in hot water wrapped around the pipe. Always be cautious when using electrical appliances in wet locations and remember to thaw the pipe slowly! Take extra precaution if your pipes are made out of plastic instead of copper. Plastic pipes will become brittle and rigid at low temperatures and also have a lower melting point than copper pipes.
Farmers Offered Guidance on Upcoming Farm Bill Decisions

ISU Extension and Outreach meetings explain process for enrolling in a crop commodity coverage program

AMES, Iowa -- Upcoming Iowa State University Extension and Outreach meetings will provide guidance for Iowa farmland owners and operators reviewing options under the Agricultural Act of 2014, commonly known as the Farm Bill. Farmland owners and operators must make decisions on base acre and yield updates along with choosing an Agriculture Risk Coverage or Price Loss Coverage commodity program.

“Our goal is to assist as many farmers as possible,” said Ann Johanns, extension program coordinator. “Our farm management specialists have scheduled more than 100 informational meetings across the state.”

Each meeting will discuss important considerations for owners and operators reviewing their options. A complete list of Farm Bill meetings can be found on the ISU Extension and Outreach statewide calendar.

Steve Johnson, a farm management specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach, outlined the process involved with selecting options in a recent Ag Decision Maker newsletter.

“There are important decisions coming up this fall and winter for both landowners as well as current producers on the farm,” Johnson noted.

Johnson said that landowners and producers received a letter from the USDA Farm Service Agency a few months ago. This offered a summary of their current base acres, yields and planting history from 2008 to 2012. Farmers who misplaced their letters or did not receive one can contact their local FSA office. This letter will help in a three-step decision-making process.

Information in the FSA letter allows farmers to make a one-time decision of either maintaining the farm’s 2013 base acres of covered commodities through 2018, or reallocating base acres among those covered commodities planted on the farm during the 2009 to 2012 crop years. The landowner must make a final decision on base acres and yields by Feb. 27, 2015.

The farm producer then must determine whether to select ARC (County or Individual), which is a revenue-based program, or opt for the price based PLC. The program election must take place from Nov. 17, 2014 to March 31, 2015. The third step, which is completed between mid-April to summer 2015, is for producers to enroll the land in their elected coverage program.

An overview of these steps and program regulations are included in the ISU Extension and Outreach Farm Bill meetings. The decision points for landowners and producers will be explained as well as more details on the timeline for base acreage/yield updates, commodity program election and program payments for the five-year Farm Bill.

ISU Extension and Outreach farm management specialists will provide information on additional online resources to help farm owners and operators continue in the decision-making process. Local FSA staff members who administer the programs also will be present to discuss options.

Visit the Ag Decision Maker Farm Bill website or any county Extension office for a list of meeting times and locations.

FREE Farm Bill Meeting
Thursday, December 4th
1:00 ~ 3:30 pm  OR  6:00 ~ 9:00 PM
at Extension Office
Crop Advantage Series Provides Latest Crop Production Information across Iowa

AMES, Iowa – Iowa State University Extension and Outreach will offer the Crop Advantage Series to producers at 13 locations across Iowa during January. Crop Advantage Series provides the latest information to promote profitable decision-making for upcoming growing seasons.

Each location features a full agenda of workshops that attendees can choose from to develop a personalized agenda. ISU Extension and Outreach field agronomists will present program topics focusing on local needs and production issues.

“Each location has a variety of topics, including crops, pests, soil fertility and farm management,” said Joel DeJong, extension field agronomist in northwest Iowa. “Each year, attendees tell me they wish there were more breakout sessions during the day. They are interested in so many of the topics and can’t be at every workshop. The topics are in demand. It’s a great problem to have.”

“The Crop Advantage Series provides a statewide message on important issues yet retains local input on topics for that specific area,” said Brent Pringnitz, program coordinator with ISU Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension and Outreach. “Crop and pest management issues are different for each area of the state and these meetings are tailored to fit the needs of producers in that area.”

Each year more than 2,000 producers participate in a regional Crop Advantage meeting. “We’ve seen tremendous growth in attendance for the series,” DeJong said. “Response from producers has been very positive. In addition to receiving the latest research information from the university, the meetings have been a valuable way for producers to provide input back to ISU researchers and specialists on what their needs are. It works both ways.”

Each meeting is approved for Certified Crop Adviser continuing education credits. Each location offers the opportunity for private pesticide applicators to receive continuing education credits.

“Producers have appreciated the opportunity to get their pesticide applicator recertification done at the same time as the Crop Advantage meeting. It makes an efficient learning experience,” said DeJong.

Early registration for each location is $50; late registration made fewer than seven days prior to the meeting or on-site is $60. Registration includes lunch, printed proceedings and private applicator recertification. Online registration and additional information is available at www.cropadvantage.org or from any ISU Extension and Outreach county office.

For locations, times and program content, contact the hosts or visit www.cropadvantage.org. Dates include:

- Jan. 6 – Sheldon
- Jan. 9 – Burlington
- Jan. 15 – Honey Creek
- Jan. 22 – Waterloo
- Jan. 29 – Carroll
- Jan. 7 – Okoboji
- Jan. 13 – Ames
- Jan. 20 – Atlantic
- Jan. 27 – LeMars
- Jan. 8 – Mason City
- Jan. 14 – Storm Lake
- Jan. 21 – Fort Dodge
- Jan. 28 – Iowa City

Crop Advantage Series is presented by ISU Extension and Outreach with support from the Iowa Soybean Association and from the North Central SARE Program—Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education. For more information, contact ANR Program Services at 515-294-6429, anr@iastate.edu, or contact a local ISU Extension and Outreach field agronomist.
Con-Ed CIC:
Pest Control: December 3: 9:00 AM—11:30 AM

SAVE THE DATE:
2015 Cow/Calf Conference
January 31, 2015
Bridgeview Center in Ottumwa

PPAT
(Private Pesticide Applicator Training)
Thursday, December 18, 2014  7:00 PM
Wednesday, March 4, 2015
1:30—4:00 PM

*Commercial Manure Applicators
January 6, 2015 9AM ~ Noon
*Confinement Manure Applicators
February 12, 2015

**Reshow Schedule Changes**
2nd Friday/month
*Commercial Manure 9am-12  *Confinement Manure 1pm-3pm
***********************
3rd Friday/month
Commercial Ag Weed 9am-12    Ornamental Turf 1pm-3pm
All other reshows on 4th Friday/month
All reshows will be billed at Late Registration amount
There will be NO reshows in June or December.
You must register before a reshow will be held.
Road Trips in the Region:

November 21—January 4: Holiday Exhibition at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Gardens 515-323-6290 or info@dmbotanicalgarden.com

December 5—21 Home Grown Holiday at the Iowa Arboretum 515-795-3216 or iowaarboretum.org

November 28—January 4: Holiday Poinsettia Show at Lauritzen Gardens in Omaha, NE call 402-346-4002 or lauritzengardens.org

December 16: Floral Design Series, Reiman Gardens in Ames 515-294-2710 or reimangardens@iastate.edu

There’s always something happening at Reiman Gardens, from Paper Lantern Workshops to the Orchid Fest in February. Go online to plan your adventure at Reiman Gardens!
Help Farmers Cope with Stress

(Reprinted from November newsletter)

AMES, Iowa — Farm life with its country setting often is idealized, but as the complications and pace of agriculture have increased, so have the physical and mental demands on farmers. Safety and stress during harvest season cannot be ignored, says Margaret Van Ginkel, an Iowa State University Extension and Outreach human sciences program specialist and Iowa Concern Hotline coordinator.

“Farmers deal with everyday tasks of money management, decision-making and equipment maintenance,” Van Ginkel said. “Worry over large debt loads, government regulations, pest outbreaks, animal disease, negative publicity, rapid change within the industry and lack of control over the weather add stress and safety risks.”

Van Ginkel noted that farmers work long hours in isolation near their home environment, leaving them no place to escape the stressors, which makes it easy to see why farming ranks as one of the most stressful occupations in the United States.

“The physical and mental stress of farming can take a toll on a person’s health,” Van Ginkel said. “Ignoring those signs of stress can lead to fatigue and depression, increasing the risk for accidental injuries, poor decision-making, physical illness and more.”

The long days and late nights of harvest can lead farmers to push their limits to get crops out of fields, but research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms that breaks can help increase concentration and alertness while reducing the risk for farm accidents.

“Get out of the tractor, get out of the combine,” said Van Ginkel. “Take fifteen minutes to eat a sandwich on the tailgate of the pickup with your family. It will recharge your energy and help you think clearly again.”

Van Ginkel says there are physical signs of stress to look for in yourself or a co-worker. She references the Ag Decision Maker publication Managing Farm Business and Family Stress when she points out physical signs of stress include an increase in headaches, lingering fatigue, disrupted sleep patterns and more frequent illness; emotional signs include frequent anger and irritability.

Recognize signs of stress

Although adults involved in the agriculture industry may not come out and verbally share they are under financial or emotional stress, there are signs they may be in need of help, Van Ginkel said.

These signs can be observed by friends, neighbors, veterinarians, physicians, clergy, teachers and other community members.

Suzanne Pish, a social-emotional health extension educator with Michigan State University Extension, encourages those living in rural communities to look for the following signs of chronic, prolonged stress in farm families:

Change in routines. The farmer or family no longer participates in activities they once enjoyed such as church, 4-H or visiting at the local diner.

Care of livestock declines. Animals might show signs of neglect or abuse.

Increase in illness. Stress puts people at higher risk for upper respiratory illnesses (colds, flu) or other chronic conditions (aches, pains, persistent cough).

Increase in farm accidents. Fatigue and the inability to concentrate can lead to greater risk of accidents.

Decline in farmstead appearance. The farm family no longer may take pride in the way farm buildings and grounds appear, or no longer have time to do the maintenance work.

Children show signs of stress. Children from families under stress may act out, show a decline in academic performance or be increasingly absent from school. They also may show signs of physical abuse or neglect.

“Many farmers who are used to working things out for themselves might be resistant to sharing their problems with others. Although asking for help might go against the nature of a strong, self-reliant farmer, obtaining support for stress-related problems usually provides the most effective and durable solutions,” Van Ginkel said. “It’s important to encourage and refer individuals and families under farm-related stress to needed resources.”

Call the Iowa Concern Hotline

Iowans can call the ISU Extension and Outreach Iowa Concern Hotline, 800-447-1985, for help and referrals for dealing with stress. The Iowa Concern website at www.extension.iastate.edu/iowaconcern/ has a live chat feature as an additional way to talk with stress counselors. Agencies and professionals serving individuals and families can contact local ISU Extension and Outreach offices about Iowa Concern hotline number business cards available for distribution.
Greater Jefferson County Fair  June 24 ~ 29, 2015

If you would like the monthly newsletter delivered electronically, send your email address to kistler@iastate.edu

Goodbye 2014!
Welcome 2015!