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Photo & Caption

Contact: Teresa Wiemerslage, ISU Extension program coordinator, wiemer@iastate.edu, 563-794-0599

**Bending Willows into Towers**

WAUKON -- Twenty people learned how to make bean towers using ditch willows at a workshop hosted by the Allamakee County Master Gardeners and the ISU Extension Consumer Horticulture program. The towers were constructed of willow poles tied at the top with thinner “whips” woven through the poles. In addition to making towers to take home, participants also learned a bit about other uses for willows and had the opportunity to take some rooted cuttings of ‘Coral Embers’ willow to plant at home. At the end of the day, everyone agreed, “Let’s do this again next year!” For more information about gardening workshops, contact your local ISU Extension office. Submitted photo.

News Release

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**High Tunnel Production Workshop Returns to Decorah**

DECORAH – Due to popular demand, another high tunnel workshop has been scheduled in Decorah for July 19. Current commercial fruit or vegetable growers, gardeners interested in expanding into commercial production and traditional farmers interested in diversifying may benefit from this workshop sponsored by Iowa State University Extension, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Northeast Iowa Food and Farm Coalition (NIFF) and Four Seasons Tools.

The workshop was filled and a waiting list started when offered on April 29.

“Like all farmers, fruit and vegetable growers attempt to get the greatest yields of high-quality crops from their land,” said Linda Naeve, Iowa State University Extension value added agriculture program coordinator. “This requires careful planning and using the right tools and strategies. Producing high-value crops in high tunnels is one way growers can increase their production in a limited space.”

High tunnels are inexpensive, simple, passive-solar greenhouses in which crops are grown directly in the soil, said Naeve. They allow growers to extend the season and produce high yields of quality produce earlier than field-grown crops, thus commanding a higher price at market.

Topics to be covered at the workshop include site and high tunnel selection, construction, soil management, irrigation, pest management, bed design and cropping systems and business plan development.

The workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on July 19, in the Decorah area. The workshop will begin in Decorah and then travel to River Root Farm where owners Mike Bollinger and Katie Prochaska will show their moveable high tunnel.
Pre-registration is required by calling Linda Naeve at (515) 294-8946 or e-mailing her at lnaeve@iastate.edu. Fees for the workshop are $30 per person or $50 per couple. The fee includes a training manual, lunch and refreshments. Registration deadline is July 12. Space is limited.

The NIFF coalition is offering a $10 scholarship to any producer from Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard or Winneshiek counties who attends the program. The scholarships are made possible by funding from the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative, a W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food and Community program.

Funds for this project are part of a two-year Leopold Center competitive grant. Earlier research, also funded by the Leopold Center, showed that certain high-value horticulture crops grown in high tunnels are profitable for growers.

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**News Release**

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**Youth Are Leading Healthy Change in Region 4**

DECORAH -- Youth are leading the charge for healthy change in northeast Iowa, according to Brenda Ranum, director for Iowa State University Extension’s Region 4, covering Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek counties.

“We have food and fitness clubs that started at the high school level, and we now have over 190 youth enrolled,” Ranum said. “They are working with food service staff, parents and concession stand volunteers to get healthier food options in the schools.”

That isn’t the only way the youth clubs are leading dramatic changes to improve northeast Iowans’ health, Ranum continued. A farm to school program involves the youth, their schools and communities in planning and implementing activities for school children. The high school students teach second graders about where their food comes from, using lessons developed by ISU Extension youth development specialist Vanette Grover.

“This has all led to producers in the region getting excited about the opportunities of bringing food into the cafeterias,” Ranum said. The farm to school group is working with producers, connecting them with food service staff and helping food services procure local food. The group also is working with the Department of Education and ISU Extension to share information about the rules and regulations that producers and food service workers need to know to order food and ensure it is safe.

Ranum is one of 20 regional extension education directors. The positions were created a year ago as part of ISU Extension’s restructuring plan to facilitate an issue-based approach to delivering ISU Extension programming and resources. Ranum works directly with county extension council members to meet their legal obligations as an elected body. Together they are identifying new ways to work across county borders, provide educational programming that addresses significant issues and evaluate the results of multi-county and regional efforts.

Ranum said the farm to school effort also is partnering with the medical community in Region 4 to get healthy food and fitness messages to young people.

“We’re really targeting zero to 8-year-olds. We just received a community wellness grant that’s going to help bring all these partners together over the next 18 months,” Ranum said. “It’s exciting that change is starting to happen already, toward making the healthy choice the easy choice in northeast Iowa.”
News Release

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Northeast ISU Research Farm Field Day Set for June 30

NASHUA -- The annual field day featuring the latest ISU research will be June 30 at the Northeast ISU Research Farm.  Topics include: weed management, foliar fungicide for corn and soybeans, nitrogen fertilizer, biofilters and aphid resistant soybean varieties.  In case of rain, the event will be held in the Borlaug Learning Center.

The event starts at 1:00 pm at the Farm Headquarters.  The Riverton Lucky Clovers 4-H Club will serve refreshments.  The program is free and open to the public.  CCA credits are available.

The Northeast ISU Research Farm is located one mile west of the Highway 218 and B60 intersection in Nashua, one mile south and a quarter mile east.

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Iowa State University Extension news releases are available on the World Wide Web at http://www.extension.iastate.edu/news/.

This information has been sent to you by Teresa Wiemerslage, Regional Communications Coordinator for Region 4 ISU Extension,  wiemer@iastate.edu, 563-794-0599.

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