

August 2024

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Research and Extension



Director's Note

Denise Dias

Wyandotte County Director

Celebrating new and different! This month we celebrate an agent's retirement and a new staff member; Wyandotte County 4-H award winners; and community events for back to school. As a staff, we look forward to meeting new volunteers at our fall training and sharing our programs and activities with you! But of all these new and different things, we are humbled to be one of the first groups to be recognized by the Unified Government for our work and dedication to our community!

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THE COUNTY FAIR HAS COME AND GONE!

The county fair is a tradition that is woven into the fabric of nearly every American community. County fairs present opportunities for 4-H youth to foster life skills such as goal setting, work ethic, responsibility, leadership, showmanship, and sportsmanship. This event brings together families, businesses, leaders, and community partners. All of these groups come together to celebrate our community, youth, and agriculture.

This past month, Wyandotte County 4-H members participated in the county fair showcasing their projects to the judges, their families, and the fairgoers. This year, some 4-H members participated in the county fair for the first time at only 5 years old! Other 4-H'ers participated in the fair for the last time after spending up to 12 years before graduating from the program. I wish our new 4-H members and our graduated 4-H members the best of luck in this next chapter of their life.

If you are interested in joining the 4-H program so your family can be a part of the 4-H events at the county fair, please reach out to the Extension Office. The new 4-H year starts on October 1!



HOW TO HELP YOUR STUDENTS DEVELOP POSITIVE HABITS

Creating positive habits in children, adults can consciously practice the following strategies. Demonstrating desirable habits for children may include having quiet time for reading or writing before dinner, putting dishes into the dishwasher right after dinner, or stretching before bed.

Most students likely connect the term “habits” to their study habits. In fact, for many students, the term “study habits” probably gives the notion of habits a negative vibe. There is another type of habit that is important for the well-being and positive growth of students: habits that build their character strengths, such as patience, gratitude, and service to others. For example, the habit cue helps students practice patience before spontaneously sending that angry tweet or a daily habit of writing down what they are grateful for. I call these “positive habits.”

1. You are your habits

The research is clear: 40-50% of all our actions are done out of habit. Each of us has our morning habits, as well as our eating and bedtime habits. Simply put, our lives run on habits.

2. How we form habits

Most students learn about Newton’s three laws of motion in eighth grade. However, I can’t seem to find any curriculum in the United States where eighth graders learn about the science of habit formation. But they should.

3. Stable cues are the key to forming a positive habit

Here’s the one indispensable “habit principle” I’d want my students to learn and practice: Create cue X, for action Y. For example, imagine a student has decided they want to learn how to play the guitar (the action) right after they finish their homework (the cue). The key to creating this new habit or routine is for the student to repeat this activity every day—as soon as they finish studying.

4. Four “habit hacks” that work

S. J. Scott recently wrote a book titled Habit Stacking. The idea is that we should link together a harder habit to an easier habit. For example, encouraging students to do their chores (a harder habit) while listening to music (an easier habit).

A second hack is leveraging the power of commitment. The reality is that all of us, at one time or another, have broken a promise we’ve made to ourselves.

A third hack is discovering our habit tendencies. Developed by author Gretchen Rubin, the core idea is that each of us needs to understand more acutely how well we respond to internal and external expectations. Finally, when it comes to habit formation, every student should learn about the power of positive affirmations.

5. Setting goals and sheer willpower aren’t enough

Emerging research is shattering our long-held myths that setting goals and exercising self-control are the twin peaks of habit formation. Intentions alone don’t change behaviors. Moreover, willpower is a muscle that depletes over time. No one can lead a life full of self-denial.

These are just a few ideas to inspire and equip young people to intrinsically form their own habits of mind, heart, and action.

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_help_your_students_develop_positive_habits

VEGETARIAN EATING STYLE

Vegetarian eating styles continue to increase in popularity for a variety of reasons, including health benefits, as this style may reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers.

Vegetarian styles vary in what foods they include or exclude.

- Lacto-vegetarian: Dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt, butter) are included. Exclude meat, fish, poultry, and eggs.
- Ovo-vegetarian: Include eggs. Exclude meat, poultry, seafood, and dairy products.
- Lacto-ovo vegetarian: Allow dairy products and eggs. Exclude meat, fish, and poultry.
- Pescatarian: Include fish. Exclude meat, poultry, dairy, and eggs.
- Vegan: Exclude meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and dairy products, as well as foods that contain these products.
- Flexitarian: Mostly plant-based but occasionally includes meat, dairy, eggs, poultry, and fish.

As you plan to follow one of these eating patterns, keep in mind that the more foods you cut out, the harder it could be to get all of the nutrients you need. Plan around a variety of healthy plant-based foods, including whole fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts and legumes (lentils, beans, and peanuts). Cut back on less healthy choices, like sugar-sweetened beverages, fruit juices, and refined grains.

Nutrients to pay close attention to as you plan with a vegetarian eating style, are calcium and vitamin D, vitamin B-12, protein, Omega-3 fatty acids, iron, zinc, and iodine. It is worth the effort to work with a registered dietitian who can help you create a vegetarian plan that is right for you.

If you choose to transition to a vegetarian eating style, start slowly by reducing the amount of meat in your diet while increasing fruits and vegetables. Prepare your favorite recipes and try them without meat. Substitute black beans for ground beef in chili, make fajitas using extra-firm tofu instead of chicken. You might be surprised that many dishes you enjoy now can be adapted with simple changes.

For more information check out the following [USDA site](https://www.walkkansas.org/)
(Source: Walk Kansas Newsletter, 2023, Week 4;
<https://www.walkkansas.org/>)



GRAB AND GO LUNCHES

How do you think of lunch? Even just thinking of this midday meal can cause palate fatigue when the only thing that comes to mind are wraps, sandwiches, or salads. Remember, not all lunch foods have to be classic lunch foods, and you can shake up old classics to make them fresh and interesting! Inspiration:

- Breakfast for lunch: Greek yogurt + berries + nuts/seeds of choice + whole grain toaster waffles on the side
- Deconstructed breakfast burrito: scrambled eggs + black beans + salsa + avocado + shredded cheese + tortilla chips on the side
- Loaded hummus bowls: hummus base + roasted bell pepper and zucchini + diced grilled chicken strips + feta cheese + pita on the side

Tips for Making Grab-and-Go Lunches

Making grab-and-go lunches is a practice, and like any new habit, it is going to take time, trial, and error before it feels comfortable. Lunch preparation does not need to be perfect, nor does it need to look the same every week. However, there are foundational tips to help streamline this process!

Tip: Practice the 3 P's for make-ahead meals:

- Plan: Take inventory of what you have on hand, what recipes you would like to make for the week, and what you will need to obtain from the grocery store.
- Purchase: Remember your list! Take a picture of it, use an app, or put it in your phone notes so that you have it with you at the store. This is critical, as often times meal plans fall apart when one or more key ingredients are missing.
- Prepare: Know that you do not have to make all of your lunches ahead of time to be successful for the week. Choose to prepare ahead the most critical and time-consuming steps of lunches to make the week easier. This could look like: pre-chopping all fruits and vegetables, pre-portioning components, and cooking meats and grains to have them ready to use for quick meals.

Remember, the best lunch plan is the one that is enjoyable, attainable, and relevant for you and your family. Let this blog be a guideline to help you navigate lunches when life gets hectic. With a little creativity and planning, lunches can transform from drab and rushed, to the pick me up of the day!



BATTLING BLIGHT ON TOMATOES

It has been extremely hot and humid the past few days which is prime conditions for disease development in tomatoes. Keep a look out for two of the most common foliar diseases of tomatoes, early blight and Septoria leaf spot. These diseases may occur anytime during the growing season, but they generally become more severe after blossom-set. Both diseases result in leaf spots which typically develop on the older leaves nearest the ground.

Early blight produces brown spots (up to ½ inch in diameter) on infected leaves. Dark, concentric rings form within the lesion, giving the spots a target-like appearance. Several lesions may coalesce, causing the leaf to turn yellow, dry up, and fall off the plant.

Septoria leaf spot first appears as small, water-soaked spots on the lower leaves. The leaf spots are smaller and more numerous than those resulting from early blight. Eventually, the center portion of the lesion turns light tan or gray while the margin remains dark. Small black fruiting structures (pycnidia) of the fungus form in the center portion of the lesion. Septoria leaf spot is generally more common in Kansas gardens than early blight.

Both fungi overwinter on plant debris and the spores of these fungi may be splashed or blown to tomato leaves. Disease development is favored by relatively warm temperatures, abundant rainfall and high relative humidity.

Both diseases can be controlled effectively with fungicides. Chlorothalonil is effective and has a 0-day waiting period from application to harvest. Products that contain chlorothalonil include but are not limited to Fertilome Broad Spectrum Fungicide, Ortho Garden Disease Control, GardenTech Garden Disease Control, and PBI Gordon Multipurpose Fungicide. For best results, applications should begin as soon as the symptoms first become apparent, generally, around the time of blossom set. Severely infested plants may not be able to be rescued with fungicides.

At the end of the gardening season, remove and destroy all infected tomato plants. Clean up and dispose of as much tomato plant debris as possible. Avoid planting tomatoes in the same area of the garden year after year.



Community Development

WYANDOTTE COUNTY RECEIVES DOTTE PROUD RECOGNITION

On July 11, Mayor Tyrone Garner of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County awarded K-State Research and Extension one of the inaugural “Dotte Proud” recognition awards.

This award is given to organizations that, according to the mayor’s office, “have worked quietly behind the scenes on behalf of the community without any expectation of recognition.”

According to Denise Dias, Wyandotte County Extension Director, the award recognizes a host of activities that the unit’s staff has been engaged in, including working with a local community college to start a Kitchen Restore program, development of county walking trails with associated grants, community garden development and the development of networking partners that will help the county with other change and growth initiatives.

“K-State is the community connector to resources, information and opportunity. Our county is experiencing a great amount of change, and as you know change is not easy,” said Denise Dias. “We are trying to help others see Extension as a connector and a positive influence in our county.”



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Upcoming Events



August 1: Should I Overseed or Renovate My Lawn This Fall?

August 20: ServSafe

August 29: Grant Writing Workshop

September 2: Office Closed

September 10: Stay Strong Stay Healthy Level 1 & 2

September 11: Med instead of Meds

K-State Research and Extension is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Program information may be available in languages other than English. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, including alternative means for communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audio tape, and American Sign Language) may be requested by contacting the event contact Jo McLeland two weeks prior to the start of the event (insert deadline date) at (913-299-9300 or jo1@ksu.edu). Requests received after this date will be honored when it is feasible to do so. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

Connect with us!



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