



August 2026

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Extension



Director's Note

Denise Dias

Wyandotte County Director

August brings a special kind of energy — gardens at their peak, families gearing up for a new school year, and community programs thriving across Wyandotte County. That same momentum is alive in our Extension office. Our staff and partners are deep into summer outreach, strengthening relationships, and preparing for fall initiatives that will support residents in meaningful ways. Thank you for staying connected with us and for helping Extension remain a trusted source of learning, growth, and community vitality.

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4-H Youth Development

WYANDOTTE COUNTY 4-H MEMBERS SHINE AT THE COUNTY FAIR

The Wyandotte County Fair once again showcased the hard work, dedication, and talents of the Wyandotte 4-H youth program. Throughout the fair, members exhibited projects that reflected months of learning and preparation in areas ranging from livestock and photography to foods, horticulture, and visual arts.

The county fair provides an opportunity for 4-H youth to share their accomplishments with the community, receive constructive feedback from judges, and celebrate their growth over the past year. We congratulate all of our 4-H champions and 4-H participants for their hard work and thank the families, volunteers, sponsors, and community members who help make the Wyandotte County Fair a success.

This year's 4-H champions demonstrated excellence in their project areas and were recognized for their outstanding achievements. Their success highlights the commitment of Wyandotte County 4-H members to developing valuable life skills such as responsibility, leadership, and perseverance.

We are proud of our 4-H members and look forward to seeing what they accomplish in the year ahead.

2026 Wyandotte County Fair 4-H Grand & Reserve Grand Champions

- Elyse Ashley - GC Horticulture 05; GC Sewing & Textile 01; GC Bucket Calf; GC Poultry Single Bird
- Wyatt Ashley - RGC Horticulture 05; RGC Horticulture 10
- Manuel Acosta Munoz- GC Dog Agility 1; GC Dog Rally 1; GC Dog Showmanship
- Noah Balandron - GC Horticulture 04; RGC Rabbit Bucks; RGC Rabbit Fur Classes
- Sofia Balandron- RGC Sr. Swine Showmanship
- Tristan Bunker - RGC Entomology 01; GC Visual Arts 01; GC Visual Arts 04
- Leah Brunner- GC Market Beef; GC Beef Showmanship; GC Halter Horse; RGC Horse Showmanship; GC Trail Horse
- Isabella Brown- GC Int Horse Timed Events; GC Int. English Horse; GC Int. Western Horse; RGC Int. Western Horse
- Madison Bone- RGC Halter Horse; GC Horse Showmanship; RGC Sr. English Horse; GC Sr. Western Horse
- Paul Decker - GC Entomology 06; GC Geology 01; RCG Poultry Showmanship
- Finley Falkner - RGC Foods 01; GC Interior Design 02; GC Shopping in Style 02
- Abigail Foster- RCG Int. Horse Timed Events; RGC Int. English Horse; RGC Int. Western Horse; GC Int. Western Horse; RGC Rabbit Showmanship; GC Rabbit Doe
- Holly Garren - RGC Building Block Engineering 01

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4-H Youth Development

WYANDOTTE COUNTY 4-H MEMBERS SHINE AT THE COUNTY FAIR CONT.

- Anson Geist - GC Electric 02; RGC Fashion Revue 02; RGC Horticulture 03; RGC Educational Display 10; GC Shooting Sports 04; RGC Woodworking 03; GC Rabbit Showmanship
- Ellen Geist - GC Fashion Revue 02; GC Fashion Revue 03; GC Horticulture 10; GC Educational Exhibits 05; GC Photography 02; GC Sewing & Textile 01; RGC Shopping in Style 02; GC Woodworking 03; RGC Horse W/T Timed Events; GC Pen of 3 Meat Birds; GC Rabbits Buck; GC Rabbit Fur Classes
- Eli Hall - GC Building Block Engineering 02; GC Foods 01; RGC Int. Swine Showmanship
- Isaiah Hall - RGC Foods 01; GC Jr. Swine Showmanship; GC Breeding Swine
- Emmett Hall- RGC Jr. Swine Showmanship
- Ava Holstein- G Poultry Showmanship
- Cash Knetter- RGC Market Beef
- Caleb Metzger- RGC Sr. Western Horse
- Paige Metzger- GC Sr. English Horse; GC Sr. Western Horse
- Emma McCracken- RGC Breeding Beef; RGC Beef Showmanship; GC Int. Swine Showmanship; GC Market Swine
- Miles McCracken- GC Breeding Beef; GC Beef Showmanship
- Jaimeson Mortell- RGC Poultry Single Bird; RGC Hen
- Maksimus Mortell- GC Poultry Single Bird; GC Duck; GC Rooster; GC Poultry Single Bird; RGC Breeding Swine
- Leah Nelson - GC Decorated Foods 02
- Lux Nelsen- GC Horse W/T Timed Events; RGC Trail Horse
- Delaney Schempp- RGC Sr Horse Timed Events
- Grae Stout - GC Foods 01; GC Photography 01; GC Self-Determined 02
- Grace Streit - GC Photography 05; GC Visual Arts 03
- Michael Streit - GC Photography 03; GC Photography 06
- Nathan Swarner GC Sr. Swine Showmanship; RGC Market Swine
- Gionni Torres - GC Photography 01
- Maxim Tupy - RGC Geology 04
- Lillian Willmon- RGC Beef Showmanship
- Daniella Winkle - RGC Decorated Foods 03; RGC Shooting Sports 01; GC Visual Arts 05
- Amber Young- RGC Dog Agility 1, GC Dog Agility 2, GC Dog Rally 3; GC Dog Showmanship RGC Dog Showmanship; GC Dog Obedience
- Ruby Young- GC Dog Agility 1; GC Dog Rally 2; RGC Dog Rally 2; GC Dog Obedience; RGC Dog Obedience

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PRACTICAL BACK-TO-SCHOOL TIPS

With the start of a new academic year on the horizon, August brims with excitement and anticipation of fresh beginnings. The start of a new school year often brings a mix of excitement, nerves, and new routines—for both students and parents. Feeling overwhelmed or unsure how to manage the transition? Many families do, but as with any new change, it doesn't have to be scary. Learn some of the most effective practical back-to-school tips to help ease your student's anxiety and boost their confidence for a successful academic year ahead.

How to Prepare for Back to School

Preparing for the new school year goes beyond shopping for supplies or organizing your list of to-dos. So how do you create an effective back-to-school plan to help your student learn and thrive in school? Start by implementing tactics before the school year officially begins to help build healthy routines, manage expectations, and reduce stress.

Tips to Get Kids Ready for Back to School

1. Set up a distraction-free study space-A dedicated, distraction-free study space will help your student focus on their studies, stay organized, and stay motivated.
2. Create a strong daily routine and school schedule-A consistent routine is important for kids, especially while they are in school.
3. Set goals and milestones for the year ahead-It's important for students to have clear goals and expectations.

Tips to Get Parents Ready for Back-to-School

Back-to-school season isn't just an adjustment for students—it presents challenges for parents, too. Here are some tips to help you prioritize your own involvement and specific examples of ways to support your student.

1. Get involved in your student's education Getting involved in your student's education is a great way to stay connected to their academic journey and school calendar.
2. Make a point to connect with your student's teacher before the school year begins Establishing a strong relationship with your child's teacher early on sets the foundation for a successful school year. A quick email, call, or informal meeting can be the start of a strong relationship between you and your child's teacher.

Start the School Year with Confidence

The back-to-school season can feel overwhelming, but with a little planning and the right mindset, both students and parents can step into the year with confidence. By creating strong routines, setting meaningful goals, and staying involved, you're laying the foundation for a successful school year ahead. Make this back-to-school season one of the most wonderful times of the year.

Nutrition and Food Safety

FARMERS MARKET FINDS

Farmers' markets are a great way to shop local and get the freshest produce at a great price. Seasonal produce often tastes better and contains lots of nutrients. It allows you to connect with the people growing your food and build relationships within the community. Shopping at farmers' markets can also encourage you to try new fruits and vegetables that may not be available in certain grocery stores. Supporting local farmers and making healthy, flavorful choices for you and your family is a simple way to nourish both your community and your health. Here are 3 great reasons to take advantage of your local farmers' market.

Bright Colors, Better Health

Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables is a great way to support your overall health. Their bright colors contain antioxidants, which help protect your body's cells from damage. They also contain other plant nutrients that work together to help protect against disease and keep your body healthy.

Support The Local

Shopping at farmers' markets is a great way to support local farmers and your community. Buying directly from local growers helps keep money in the local economy and encourages small farms to continue producing fresh food. It also helps preserve farmland and strengthens local agriculture for the future.

Use Your SNAP or WIC Benefits

Many farmers markets accept SNAP and WIC benefits, making it easier to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. Check with your local farmers market to see which payment options are accepted and whether they participate in the Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

Looking for even more reasons to visit your local farmers market? From discovering new fruits and vegetables to getting cooking tips directly from local growers, there are many benefits to shopping local. Learn more in the Kansas State University Extension publication, [Top 10 Reasons to Shop at a Farmers Market](#)

Sources:

[Top 10 Reasons to Shop at a Farmers Market,](#)

[K-State Research and Extension](#)

[KCK Farmers Market](#)

[Market Shopping Tips, New Mexico Farmers Market](#)



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Horticulture

LATE SEASON GARDENING

While you're out harvesting your current garden bounty, you can also be thinking about "What's next?" Fall gardening can be an excellent way to keep your garden growing and giving well into the late fall. Some crops to consider planting in August include: spinach, long season or slow bolting lettuce, radishes, broccoli, and turnips. Be sure to check out K-State Extension's publication MF315 "Vegetable Planting Guide." Don't forget to take the time to divide irises and daylilies as they begin to enter their dormant season.

Fall Fertilizer

Some plants can benefit from a late summer/early fall fertilizer application to help them cross the finish line before winter, or in cases like the strawberry, have the nutrients required to put out new blooms in the spring. Apply a granular fertilizer to fall flowering plants such as black eyed susans, mums, goldenrod, japanese anemone, and Autumn joy sedums. As mentioned above, the cool season vegetable crop transplants should be fertilized as well.

Plant Disease Corner

With the days shortening and the temperatures breaking (slightly) we are entering ideal conditions for fungal plant diseases. One such disease that is very common with an extremely wide host range is known as powdery mildew. Powdery mildew thrives in moderate temperatures (68°–86°F), high relative humidity (above 90%), and stagnant, shaded air. While the disease does not normally harm fruits and vegetables, the white spores cover the leaf surface hindering the plants ability to photosynthesize, and in serious cases can lead to the death of the leaf, and reduce plant growth. Control methods include opening the plants canopy to allow for more sunlight, proper spacing of plants, watering directly to the soil, and for chemical options copper or neem oil.



Community Development

ILLEGAL DUMPING IN WYANDOTTE COUNTY: A PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN AND HOW RESIDENTS CAN HELP

Illegal dumping continues to be a serious issue in Wyandotte County, affecting neighborhood appearance, property values, and—most importantly—the health and safety of our residents. When trash, construction debris, furniture, and tires are abandoned in alleys, vacant lots, and roadside areas, the impact goes far beyond aesthetics. These sites quickly become environmental hazards that place families at risk.

Health Issues Linked to Illegal Dumping

Illegal dump sites create multiple health threats:

- **Pests and Vermin:** Discarded waste attracts rodents, insects, and stray animals. Rats and mice carry diseases such as leptospirosis and salmonella, while mosquitoes breeding in dumped tires can spread West Nile virus.
- **Water Contamination:** Rainwater flowing through dumped materials can carry chemicals, oils, and bacteria into storm drains and waterways, contaminating soil and water used for recreation or irrigation.
- **Air Quality Concerns:** Construction debris, treated wood, and household chemicals can release harmful particles or fumes as they break down, worsening asthma and other respiratory conditions.
- **Physical Hazards:** Broken furniture, sharp metal, and scattered debris create unsafe conditions for children, pedestrians, and volunteers working in the area.
- **Community Stress:** Persistent dumping contributes to neighborhood blight, increases stress, and reduces outdoor activity—making residents feel less connected and less safe.

Proper Tire Disposal: A Weekly Option

Tires are one of the most commonly dumped items in Wyandotte County. To reduce this problem, residents may place up to two tires curbside with their regular trash each week. Tires must be free of rims and placed next to the household trash cart. This simple step helps prevent the breeding of mosquitoes and keeps alleys and vacant lots cleaner.

Fines and Rewards for Reporting Dumping

The Unified Government has strengthened enforcement to deter illegal dumping:

- Fines can reach up to \$2,500 for individuals caught dumping waste.
- Residents may receive a reward of up to \$250 for reporting illegal dumping that leads to a successful enforcement action.
- Community reporting is one of the most effective tools we have to stop repeat offenders and protect neighborhood health.

How Residents Can Get Involved

Everyone can play a part in keeping Wyandotte County clean:

- **Report Dumping:** Use the UG's 311 system or the myWyco app to report dump sites quickly.
- **Join Neighborhood Cleanups:** Community cleanups reduce blight and discourage future dumping.
- **Share Disposal Information:** Help neighbors understand tire disposal rules, bulky item pickup options, and recycling resources.
- **Adopt a Block or Alley:** Regular monitoring and maintenance make areas less likely to be targeted.
- **Support Local Prevention Efforts:** Extension, the Unified Government, and community partners are working on long-term strategies to reduce dumping. Resident input is essential.

Illegal dumping is more than a nuisance—it's a public health issue that affects the well-being of families across Wyandotte County. By reporting problems, using available disposal services, and staying engaged, residents can help create cleaner, safer, and more connected neighborhoods.

Upcoming Events



August 5: K-State Garden Hour

August 6: Science of Sourdough

August 13: Heart Smart Eating When You are Out and About

August 15: 4-H Cake Decorating Workshop

August 18: Summer Bouquets

Connect with us!



K-State 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.

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