



December 2023

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Research and Extension

Director's Note

Denise Dias

Wyandotte County Director

Where has 2023 gone? It won't be long until the holiday parties and family celebrations begin! No matter how or when you celebrate the season we would like to wish you glory, peace, and happiness for the holiday season. Please take time to celebrate all that is good in this world and as the new year unfolds, commit to being more kind and understanding of each other! Happy Holidays!

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4-H SERVICE PROJECT

In preparation for the November 4-H club meeting, 4-H Adult Leader Susie K. challenged the members of the Piper and Wolcott Wanderers 4-H clubs to embark on a service project collecting food donations to aid those in need this holiday season. Each 4-Her was encouraged to bring at least one non-perishable food item donation to their monthly 4-H club meeting.

Susie later received a note from Vaughn-Trent Community Services, asking for help collecting food items. Vaughn-Trent Community Services aids many families in the Bonner, Edwardsville, Piper, and KCK communities by providing meals and groceries to those in need throughout the week. Vaughn-Trent Community Services shared that lately, a full warehouse of food is depleted within a few weeks' time, and they are grateful for any offers of support.

Upon receiving this note, Susie had the idea to encourage the 4-Her's to take advantage of the lovely weather we've been having and "repeat trick-or-treat". Rather than ask for candy when re-visiting family, neighbors, and friends, they asked for donations of items to help those in need. 4-Hers then brought the collected donations to their November 4-H club meeting.

A total of 412 pounds of food items were collected and donated to the Vaughn-Trent Community Services by the 4-H members! Way to go Piper and Wolcott Wanderer 4-Hers!!! Thank you to Susie for leading this service project and allowing their story to be shared with the community.



Casey Ling,
4-H Youth Development Agent
csling@ksu.edu



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SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is depression that occurs during a certain time of the year, generally in late fall or winter. SAD isn't just a case of the "blues" – it's a cyclical pattern of depression during winter months, with improvement during other times of the year. Most SAD symptoms stem from daily body rhythms that have gone out-of-sync with the sun, a National Institute of Mental Health-funded study has found. Just as the seasonal activities of animals are affected by sunlight, also are the activities of humans.

Symptoms of SAD are much the same as any form of depression. They include:

- Tiredness and loss of energy
- An increased need for sleep
- Craving of carbohydrates
- Weight gain
- Withdrawal – general disinterest in socializing
- An overall sense of hopelessness, unhappiness and/or irritability



There are no biological tests for SAD. Health care professionals generally rule out other causes by performing tests and analyzing blood. SAD is a manageable condition, but it is important to seek the assistance of a trained medical professional and not to self-diagnose the disorder.

Here are some suggestions that people can improve their symptoms:

- Get more sunlight. Ways to do this are enjoying the outdoors during sun hours and, when indoors having a window near where one sits or works during the sunny part of the day.
- Taking medication as prescribed. Medical professionals report success with prescribing melatonin for use during certain times of the day, based on the circadian rhythms (personal "body clock") of the specific person.
- Eat healthy foods.
- Exercise.
- Spend time doing enjoyable activities with positive and upbeat people.

If you think you may be experiencing the symptoms of SAD it is important to seek the opinion of a trained medical professional. In cases of severe depression or if having suicidal thoughts contact a medical professional or the emergency room of a local hospital immediately.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/seasonal-affective-disorder>

IT'S THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The hustle and bustle of the holidays...if you're not careful they can get the best of you. The norm of our routines including self-care can fall by the wayside. But we know that it's even more important to step up your wellness game.

Make Time for Movement

Even a few minutes of movement can lead to health benefits. Staying active helps adults reduce short-term feelings of anxiety and leads to better sleep. Give these ideas a try:

- Go for a group walk with family & friends, or play an active game together outside. Do you remember how to play Kick the Can?
- Take the stairs at every opportunity. Those extra steps add up!
- Don't let the cooler temperatures keep you from getting outside. Bundle up and go for a walk. Maybe even consider walking around the neighborhood to look at holiday lights rather than driving in your car.
- When out shopping, park farther away instead of driving around searching for the closest spot.

Maintain a Healthy Eating Pattern

Healthy eating provides many benefits...a healthy weight, boosts the immune system, reduces risks of chronic diseases and more. Healthy eating during the holidays doesn't mean giving up all your favorite foods and traditions, but finding balance is important.

- Consider making simple swaps in some of your favorite recipes. For ideas, check out K-State's fact sheet, Focus on the 'Stars', Cooking Healthy for the Holidays, <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3087.pdf>
- At home fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables first to ensure your body gets the nutrients it needs.
- Dining out? Follow these tips, <https://www.myplate.gov/tip-sheet/dine-out-take-out>

Consider Building New Traditions

Many holiday activities and gatherings tend to revolve around food so shift the focus away from eating:

- Volunteer in your community...local food bank, soup kitchen, etc.
- Take up winter hiking or try ice skating for a way to stay active throughout the cooler months of the year.
- Organize a craft night with friends. The options are limitless!

Manage Your Stress Level

Stay joyful and energized through the holidays thereby keeping stress to a minimum. Here are some tips:

- Make sure you get enough quality sleep (7 or more hours).
- Prioritize your time. Give yourself permission to say "no" when you need to.
- When feeling stressed, try to focus on gratitude. Ask yourself, "What is one thing I am grateful for today?"
- Finances can also cause stress this time of year. Be realistic about your holiday budget and stick to it. Meaningful gifts don't have to come at a high price point.

(Source: Nebraska Extension, UNL Food)

TRY BREAD IN A BAG

Need something to keep the kids busy during winter break? Or need a way to exercise stiff fingers?

1 cup all-purpose flour
2 cups whole wheat flour
2¼ teaspoons or 1 package instant fast acting yeast
2 tablespoons sugar
3 tablespoons powdered milk
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup warm water
1 tablespoon vegetable oil



1. Wash hands
 2. In a large, zip-top bag, add 1 cup of all-purpose flour, yeast, sugar, powdered milk and salt. Seal the bag and shake to blend ingredients.
 3. Open the bag and add the water and oil. Reseal and continue to squeeze the bag.
 4. Open bag and add enough whole wheat flour to make a stiff dough (may not need all of the 2 cups). Squeeze air from bag and reseal it. Continue squeezing until bag pulls away from dough.
 5. Remove dough from bag and place on lightly floured clean surface. Knead dough for five minutes or until smooth and elastic.
 6. Cover dough with clean towel and let rest for 10 minutes.
 7. Shape dough and place in a greased 8-by-5-inch loaf pan or on a cookie sheet. Cover with a clean towel; let rise in a warm place until double, about one hour.
 8. Preheat oven to 400°F. Bake 30 to 35 minutes or until bread sounds hollow when tapped.
 9. Remove bread from pan and cool on wire rack.
- Tip: Substitute 1 cup of heated low-fat milk for powdered milk and water.

Cut into 12 slices. Each slice has 130 calories, 1.5 grams (g) fat, 5 g protein, 25 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber and 200 milligrams sodium.

Recipe source: Cornell Cooperative Extension

HOLIDAY PLANTS, A WINTER DELIGHT

Nothing brings cheer to our homes than colorful plants at the holidays. Poinsettias, cyclamens, amaryllis and Christmas cacti are the most popular.

The showy colored parts of poinsettias that most people think are the flowers are actually colored bracts (modified leaves). The flowers of the poinsettia are in the center of the colorful bracts. When selecting a poinsettia, a fresh poinsettia is one on which little or no yellow pollen is showing on the flower clusters in the center of the bracts.

It seems that every year about this time the rumor is resurrected that poinsettias are poisonous. This is NOT true. Though there may be an allergic reaction to the milky sap, there has never been a recorded case of poisoning.

Cyclamens are attractive, easy-care plants that can be grown indoors and will bloom continuously throughout the winter months. When selecting cyclamens, choose one with lots of buds that are just starting to open and sturdy, succulent leaves.

Amaryllis bulbs are sold already potted and with complete growing instructions. If you have a large bulb, you may get two or three flowering stalks that bloom over a period of several weeks. Watching the flowering stock emerge from the bulb is a fun experience for kids.

Christmas cactus are typically grown year-round. When purchasing plants, look for healthy green foliage and lots of unopened flowers. Despite their common name, Christmas cacti are succulents, and aren't as drought tolerant as you might think. Keep the soil moist, but not soggy, while they're in bloom. If the stems start to look flabby, you're probably over-watering.

Most of these plants will grow in temperatures that range from 60-70 degrees in bright, indirect light. Most prefer moist, but not soggy soil. Wait until the soil feels dry before you water, and don't leave water standing in the saucer or in the foil wrapped around the pot. If the leaves wilt, and the soil gets dry to the touch, water your plants right away. But remember: wilting or dropping leaves can also be a sign of over watering. If the soil is soggy when the leaves fall, you've probably watered too much.



Community Development

IMPORTANCE OF EQUITY IN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Equity is a fundamental component of community and economic development, as it promotes fairness and justice, and helps to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to thrive and succeed. Below are some reasons why equity is important in community development:

- Promotes social inclusion: Equity ensures that every individual in the community has access to the resources and opportunities necessary to fully participate in society, thus helping to build a more inclusive community in which everyone feels valued and supported.
- Reduces disparities: Equity helps to address the disparities and inequities that exist within communities. By promoting fairness and justice, equity can help reduce disparities in areas such as education, employment, health, and housing.
- Improves community well-being: Equity promotes community well-being by ensuring that everyone has access to the resources and services necessary for a healthy and fulfilling life, such as quality healthcare, education, and affordable housing.
- Increases economic growth: Equity can also contribute to economic growth by creating a more inclusive and diverse workforce, which can lead to increased innovation and productivity, ultimately yielding benefits for the entire community.
- Build trust and social cohesion: Equity can help to build trust and social cohesion within the community. Ensuring fairness and justice for all individuals fosters a sense of trust and inclusivity, ultimately encouraging a collective vision for the future.
- Equity is an essential component in the establishment of a healthy, robust, dynamic, and inclusive community. It promotes the principles of fairness, justice, and social integration, while facilitating the assurance that each individual possesses the chance to realize their maximum potential. By prioritizing equity in both community and economic development, it is possible to construct a society characterized by greater equality and fairness for all members.

Source: Center for Community and Economic Development, Michigan State University, 2023

Community Development LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

What makes up your
local food system?

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learn more



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www.kansaslocalfoods.org

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Join Us!



Quarterly Virtual Town Halls

Join an online gathering to
learn and share



Community Roundtables

Share with us your vision and
resource needs



Local Food Fellows Program

Host a fellow to work on a
local food system project



Local Food Statewide Summit

Gather with others to build Kansas
local food energy

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Denise Dias,
Director
ddias@ksu.edu

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Upcoming Events



December:

Dec 1: Kitchen Restore Drop-Off

Dec 25-Jan 1: Office Closed

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