

A close-up photograph of several ripe, red strawberries with green leaves, arranged on a white ceramic plate. The plate is set against a blue textured background.

June 2024

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Research and Extension

Director's Note

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Wyandotte County Director

It's time to celebrate and relax during these early days of summer. Pool parties and vacations come to mind along with seasonal treats such as melon, grilling burgers outside, and ice cream. We are gearing up our Extension Educational programs for summer too! Check out some of these new things for you to try this month.

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4-H PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

When most people here “4-H” they tend to think only of youth showing livestock. While livestock projects are a part of 4-H, there are so many more learning experiences, projects, and contests available to youth that are not related to livestock at all. 4-H youth are encouraged to participate in learning experiences and educational contests that challenge them to grow mentally, emotionally, as well as artistically.

One of the many educational projects offered by Kansas 4-H is the photography project. 4-H youth learn about film and/or digital cameras and how to plan, compose, light and exhibit their photos. After learning about the basics, 4-H youth advance into wide-angle and telephoto lenses, filters, light meters, and computer enhancement. 4-H photography workshops and contests are offered throughout the year. Be sure to check out the county and state fair to see all of the 4-H youth’s best work!

Wyandotte County 4-H member, Andrew S., was selected as a winner in the Kansas 4-H & Kansas Farm Bureau’s photography contest. His winning photograph is pictured below. The 4-H winners received a cash prize and their photograph was published in the Kansas Living Magazine. Congratulations Andrew!



Family and Consumer Sciences

SUMMER FUN IDEAS

Whether you have summer plans or not, we have some fun summer ideas to share with you and your children. After a busy school year, coming up with activities for your family to engage in over the summer can prove to be difficult. For kids, having a lack of activities during the summer can lead to increased screen-time, which is linked to limiting creativity and causing an irregular sleep schedule.

This is why we are going to share some of our ideas for fun and educational activities. Summer can be a fantastic opportunity to do some exploring and a little learning while you are engaging in fun.

Day at the lake, pond, pool, water park or beach

Plan a day trip of fun water play, safety first, joining a program and learning about water safety is a must.

Insect Collecting

As you have probably noticed, Kansas is home to numerous insects. Collecting and observing these insects may be a great way to get outside this summer. Do you know what insects are native to Kansas, visit your local libraries, parks and recreation center to learn all about the creepy crawlers and flyers.

Butterfly Gardens or Bird Sanctuaries

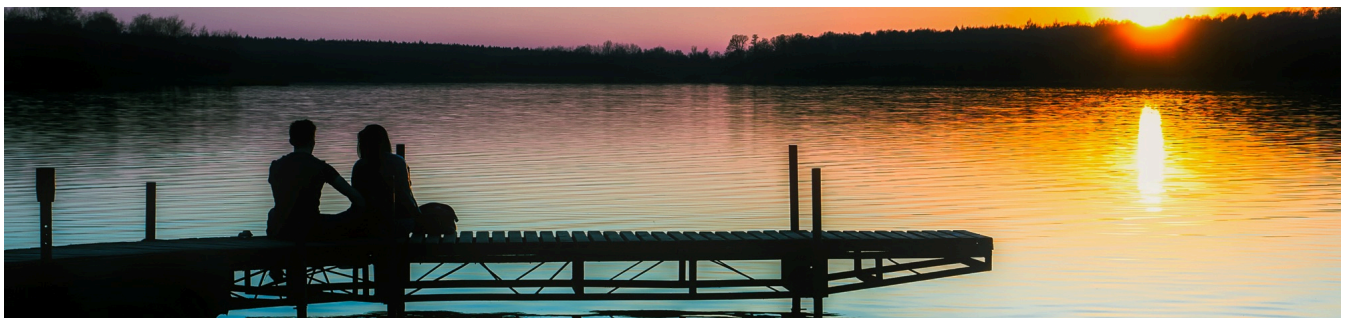
Finding the unique butterfly gardens and Bird sanctuaries in your community can create a peaceful and beautiful opportunity to explore.

Treasure and Scavenger Hunting

Do you want some fun places to visit but don't want to travel too far? What a fun way to explore your neighborhood and community, you may learn something new. All while creating opportunities that may spark future projects for school or generate family fun locations to visit throughout the year.

Fun in the Sun

What a great way to add some vitamin D to you fun, an appropriate amount of outside time is beneficial to your health. Please use sunscreen and limit your time in direct sunlight, and remember stay hydrated by drinking water.



Nutrition and Food Safety

PROCESSED FOODS – THE GOOD AND BAD

Processed foods are everywhere. It applies to food that has been altered from a natural state in any way. These foods can have a place in healthy diets especially when fresh versions are not available or affordable. Examples include low-fat milk, precut fresh vegetables, frozen vegetables and fruit, roasted nuts, and whole-grain or breads.

Diets that are high in ultra-processed foods have been linked with higher risks of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, excess calorie intake, and weight gain. Nearly 60% of calories consumed in the U.S. are in the form of ultra-processed food.

Ultra-processed foods have gone through multiple processing like heating, freezing, milling, dehydrating, and blanching. During these processes, the food's structure is changed and often other ingredients are added. You will find ultra-processed foods in every food category and these are appealing because they are ready to eat, affordable, and tasty. Examples of ultra-processed foods include: packaged snacks, crackers, chips, cookies, pastries, candies, cakes, soda, packaged breads/rolls, sweetened cereals, boxed pasta and rice dishes, deli meats, hot dogs, sausage, instant soup mixes, and frozen ready-to-eat foods like pizza, entrees, side dishes, and desserts.

It is unrealistic to think you can avoid ultra-processed food entirely. Here are some helpful tips:

- Keep track of how much your diet is made up of these foods and then make a few healthier substitutions each week.
- When you go to the grocery store, shop the perimeter. The center isles are likely to contain ultra-processed foods.
- Prepare meals at home more often and use whole, unprocessed foods. Become an informed consumer and know what you are eating.
- Read the ingredient list on food labels and look for added sugar, fat, and salt; substances that are not typically found in a kitchen like hydrogenated oils, colors, emulsifiers, thickeners; and chemical-sounding names you can't pronounce. These are good indicators that the item is probably ultra-processed (Source: Walk Kansas Newsletter, Week 6, 2022)



MAKING YOUR OWN BABY FOOD!

Making your own homemade baby food can provide improved control over your baby's dietary intake, introduce your baby to fresh and seasonal foods and be cost-effective. Introducing solids to a baby usually begins at around six months of age, or when the baby is developmentally ready.

Prior to making homemade baby food, wash your hands for 20 seconds using soap and warm water. Use fresh, quality foods whenever possible. If using frozen food, make sure it contains no added sugar, salt or sauces. If using canned foods, choose those without salt or fruits packed in their own juice. If this is not possible, pour off any syrup or salty water and rinse the food with clean water.

Follow these guidelines to prepare safe homemade baby food:

- Fruits and vegetables: Wash under lukewarm running water and scrub using your hands or a vegetable brush. Peel and remove all seeds or pits from fruits or vegetables. Cook firm or hard fruits and vegetables until tender.
- Meat: Remove all bones, fat and gristle from meat or poultry. Bake, broil, poach, boil or steam meat or poultry until cooked to recommended minimum internal temperatures to ensure safe cooking.
- Puree: At first, food should be completely pureed. As your baby grows and develops, move to mashing and then dicing into small pieces. Blend, food process or grind and strain until the texture is safe for your baby's stage of development. Add water, breastmilk or formula if needed to achieve the desired consistency. If you wish to use the same foods that the family eats, set aside a baby's portion before adding salt, sugar, spices, gravy or sauces.

When serving homemade baby food:

- Allow it to cool before serving to baby.
- Never chew foods before feeding them to your baby – this can add bacteria to the food that could harm your baby.
- Discard any leftover baby food not consumed within two hours. Do not keep unused portions that were spoon fed out of container.

To freeze your homemade baby food in small portions for storage, use one of these methods:

- Ice-cube tray method: Pour cooked and pureed baby food into the sections of a clean ice cube tray. Cover the tray with aluminum foil, plastic wrap or a tight-fitting cover. Place it in the freezer where it can stay flat and upright.
- Cookie sheet method: Put one to two tablespoons of cooked, pureed food in separate areas on a clean cookie sheet. Cover the sheet with plastic wrap or aluminum foil. Place it in a level spot in the freezer. After the baby food is frozen solid in the ice cube tray or on the cookie sheet, remove the pieces and place them in a food-grade freezer containers or plastic freezer bags.

Place each type of food in its own container. Label the container with the name of the food and the date it was made. Remove one piece at a time for serving. Thaw each piece in the refrigerator, stove top or microwave; never thaw food at room temperature. Homemade baby food can last for up to two days in the refrigerator and one month in the freezer. Never refreeze baby food.

CHECK TREES & SHRUBS FOR BAGWORMS

Now is the time to start checking for bagworms. Newly hatched caterpillars are very difficult to detect because they typically blend in with plant foliage. Bagworms can be found on numerous trees and shrubs but especially junipers and arbovitae.

Female bagworms still hanging on trees from last year contain from 500 to 1,000 eggs. Newly-hatched caterpillars emerge from the bottom of the bags in late May or when the catalpa trees are in full bloom.

In the spring, caterpillars will climb to the tops of trees and “hang out” on 1 to 3-foot strands of silk. These strands will eventually get caught on wind currents and detach, becoming streamers that allow the caterpillars to float through the air until the silk catches on to an object or plant. It is important to note that caterpillars can balloon from nearby or even distant trees.

Normally we recommend homeowners wait at least two weeks after seeing their first caterpillars in order to allow all the young to leave the bag before treating. However, if the caterpillars are causing damage, it may be necessary to treat immediately. Wait another three weeks and again check for living caterpillars. If the young larvae are present in significant numbers, treat a second time. Let me reiterate; with normal populations of bagworms we only need to treat once.

Small infestations can be picked off by hand once the larvae are large enough to see. However, any insecticide spray will be more effective if used on young larvae that are actively feeding. Thorough coverage is critical for good control.



Community Development

WHAT IS A SWOT?

The letters S.W.O.T. stand for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. A SWOT or similar planning tool is used to ask the important questions of a group or organization. Simply put the strategic planning process is designed to ask and answer these things. Where are we at now? Where do we want to be? And how are we going to get there? This is one way an organization can make a roadmap to grow and improve over time.

Typically, the first step in the planning process is to convene a group to design the planning strategy. For the organization you represent, an important first question to consider is: "Who should be involved in the planning of the process?" This is most important in organizations or situations where a primary goal of the strategic planning process is to build shared investment in the plan and the organization.

There is general agreement that a sense of ownership and investment are positively related to involvement in the decision-making process. This means the strategic planning PROCESS should include opportunities to involve stakeholders. How this happens will be the focus of the team that is planning the strategic planning process.

Typically, a planning team will be formed to identify the audience affected by the planning. The planning team will need to consider approaches and tradeoffs: When to get broad input and the degree to which decisions will be shared in the planning process. Possible methods can range from broad involvement in the majority of the planning to targeted involvement at strategic points in the planning process.

Common examples of broad engagement in the planning process include participation in initial problem identification, participation in the situation assessment, participation in goal articulation, and shared goal prioritization. Methods for involving stakeholders include surveys, forums, interactive websites, representative teams, and/or voting boards.

Often strategic planning processes begin by looking at the history of the organization to better understand original purposes or causes that were influential to the beginning of the organization. Some strategic models begin with asking, "Where have we been?" Why does this organization exist? What has it accomplished?

This reflection exercise can allow a group to celebrate its history and give a common background perspective. An honest look back can help you to determine what shaping factors have led you to your current status. Next month we will explore next steps in doing a SWOT Analysis of your group.



Upcoming Events



June 5: Sew Much Fun!

June 6: Colors in the Garden

June 12: ServSafe

June 13: Heart- Smart Eating Out
and About

Connect with us!



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.

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