

November 2026

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Extension



Director's Note

Denise Dias
Wyandotte County Director

Welcome to this month's Wyandotte County Extension Newsletter. I'm grateful for the volunteers, partners, and community members who make our work possible. This issue highlights the meaningful impact of Extension programs across WyCo and the people who help strengthen our community every day. Thank you for staying connected and supporting our shared mission.

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PIZZA PARTY

Meet the 4-H Agent

COME AND GO FOR PIZZA AND GAMES TO MEET OUR NEW 4-H AGENT, WILL MORRIS!



JANUARY 5, 2027
5:00 PM-7:00 PM
1200 N 79TH ST. KCK 66112

PLEASE CONFIRM ATTENDANCE:

https://bit.ly/4irjAT8

913-299-9300

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension Wyandotte County

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service. K-State Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Family and Consumer Sciences

DECLUTTER YOUR SPACE AND CELEBRATE THE FALL HOLIDAY SEASON WITH EASE

Thanksgiving is a special time for family, friends, and good food. But if your home is messy and cluttered, it can make the holiday stressful. By taking time to declutter your space before Thanksgiving, you can create a warm and welcoming environment that allows you to enjoy the holiday.

Clearing out the clutter not only makes your home look nicer but also helps you feel more relaxed and readier to celebrate with loved ones. Here's how to declutter your home office and celebrate Thanksgiving with ease.

1. Start Early: Start Early: To avoid last-minute stress, start decluttering at least two to three weeks before your holiday gathering. This gives you plenty of time to go through your things and decide what to keep or get rid of.

Make a Plan: Before you start, make a plan to help you stay organized. Here are some tips:

- Focus on Key Areas: Think about which rooms will be most important for the holiday. Usually, this includes the living room, dining area, and kitchen.
- Set Goals: Decide what you want to achieve in each room. For example, aim to clear off the dining room table or tidy up the kitchen counters.
- Schedule Time: Pick specific days and times to declutter. Treat these times like important appointments so, you stick to your plan.

2. Use the Four-Box Method: When you start decluttering, use the "Four-Box Method" to sort your items:

Keep: Items you use often and love.

Donate: Items that are in good shape but you no longer need.

Trash: Broken or useless items that should be thrown away.

Store: Seasonal items or things you want to keep but don't need right now.

Be honest with yourself about what you really need. This will help clear your home and make it easier to find what you need when preparing.

3. Tackle One Area at a Time: To avoid feeling overwhelmed, focus on one room or area at a time. Start small, like a closet or a single drawer, and work your way up to larger spaces. Seeing progress in one area can motivate you to continue.

4. Embrace Minimalism: The fall holidays, are about being thankful and enjoying time with loved ones, not about holding onto too many things. Consider adopting a simpler lifestyle. Ask yourself if each item you own is valuable to you. This helps keep your space organized throughout the year.

5. Prepare for Guests: Once your home is decluttered, it's time to create a warm atmosphere for your Gathering.

Here are some ideas:

Cozy Seating: Arrange your furniture so guests can easily talk and connect. Add throw pillows and blankets for comfort.

Welcoming Entryway: Make sure your entryway is tidy. Have a spot for guests to hang coats and put down bags to make everyone feel at home.

Beautiful Table Setting: Your dining table will be the centerpiece of your fall celebration. Use a nice tablecloth, pretty dishes, and maybe some flowers or candles to create a welcoming atmosphere.



6. Keep Your Space Tidy: After your holiday celebrations, continue to keep your home organized. Regularly check your belongings and get rid of anything you don't need. This will help your space stay clutter-free and make everyday life easier.

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Nutrition and Food Safety

PREDIABETES AND DIABETES AWARENESS

November is American Diabetes Month! With the holiday season approaching, it's a great time to learn more about blood sugar management and how healthy habits can help reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

What are prediabetes and type 2 diabetes?

Prediabetes occurs when blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes develops when the body has difficulty using insulin effectively, making it harder to keep blood sugar levels within a healthy range.
Both conditions can increase the risk of other health problems, including heart disease and kidney disease. Prediabetes is also a warning sign that you may be at greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes. The good news? Making healthy lifestyle changes can help lower your risk and improve blood sugar management.

How can nutrition help?

Several factors, including age, family history, and physical activity, can affect your risk of developing prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. While some risk factors cannot be changed, healthy eating habits can help lower your risk of developing these conditions.

Here are a few simple ways to get started:

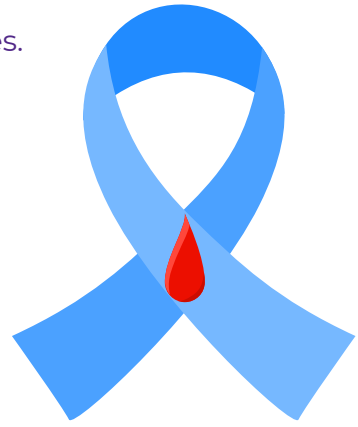
- Fill your plate with fruits and vegetables. These foods provide fiber, vitamins, and minerals that support overall health.
- Choose more whole grains. Try oatmeal, brown rice, or whole-wheat bread instead of refined grains when possible.
- Include lean protein. Foods like chicken, fish, beans, and lentils can help make meals satisfying and balanced.
- Be mindful of added sugars. Choose foods and drinks with less added sugar more often.
- Find a balance that works for you. You don't have to give up your favorite foods to build healthier habits. Small, consistent changes can make a big difference!

Need help building healthier habits?

Making changes to your eating habits can feel overwhelming, especially when managing a chronic condition. You don't have to figure it out alone!

K-State Extension Wyandotte County offers the Dining with Diabetes program, which provides practical nutrition education and helpful strategies for managing prediabetes and type 2 diabetes through everyday food choices.

Interested in learning more? Check out the flyer below for information about our Dining with Diabetes program and how to register!



Sources and/or Additional Reading:
American Diabetes Month
Prediabetes - Your Chance to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes
Prediabetes
Diabetes - You Are In Control – A K-State Extension Publication!

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Horticulture

NOVEMBER IS TIME TO REMEMBER

With the 2026 growing season officially in books it's time to shift our focus to maintenance and preparation for next spring. Here are a few tips to remember this month in order to set your garden projects on track to hit the ground running when spring breaks once again.

Flowers/Ornamental:

Most annual flowers at this point have succumbed to low night temperatures and early frosts, these can be pruned back to reduce plant debris that make potential habitats for pests. Tillage and compost amendments during this time can also be made before the ground freezes off for the winter. Perennial plants can be pruned back during this month as well as many will be dormant after several freezes have occurred. In particular, cut back roses to 4-5 good canes (removing any dead or damaged all together) next, make a mound of mulch or compost around the main stem of the shrub to protect against upcoming freezing temperatures.

Lawns & Turf:

While it is recommended to remove leaves to avoid suffocation of the grass during the winter snow falls, leaves can be beneficial to the ecosystem, so save some piles in areas where there is no turf if possible to maintain a habitat for pollinators over the winter! Cool season grasses such as bluegrass and tall fescue can be fertilized now with a quick release, high nitrogen solution to promote root development so they can get a jump on early spring greening.

Disease and Pest Control:

The risk of active insect infestation and disease outbreaks typically decrease significantly when the days get shorter and the temperatures drop, but rest assured the risk is not gone by any means. Many diseases and insects are preparing their overwintering environments so that they can resume activities in the spring, but taking proper care steps now can significantly reduce infection risk during the growing season. Some examples being raking up leaf and fruit litter on the ground to prevent fungal bodies from surviving the winter and re-infecting. Insects also are preparing by laying their eggs in places that are not necessarily obvious such as between the bark layers and in branch collars. Spray a dormancy oil on ornamental and fruit trees before freezing temperatures arrive to suffocate mites, scales, aphids and insect eggs.



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Community Development

THANKFUL FOR EXTENSION VOLUNTEERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITY

As we reflect on another season of learning, service, and connection, we are reminded that Extension's strength comes from the people who give their time, talent, and heart to our mission. Volunteers and partners are the foundation of our work in Wyandotte County, helping us reach more families, support youth, strengthen neighborhoods, and make research-based education accessible to all. This year, we are proud to recognize two outstanding individuals with our Extension Appreciation Awards, in honor of their exceptional commitment to community vitality.

Jean Tinberg has been a steadfast leader and champion of the Cooper-Foreman Heirloom Garden (CFHG). Her dedication, creativity, and countless hours of hands-on stewardship have helped transform the garden into a welcoming, educational space that celebrates heritage, horticulture, and community connection. Jean's work ensures that the garden continues to thrive as a place where people can learn, gather, and grow together.

Gabe Muñoz, our community partner at The Toolbox KC, has made a remarkable impact by supporting local entrepreneurs and makers. Through his partnership with Extension, Gabe helps equip residents with the tools, skills, and confidence they need to bring their ideas to life. His commitment to accessible innovation and community empowerment reflects the very best of Wyandotte County's entrepreneurial spirit.

We are deeply grateful for Jean, Gabe, and all our volunteers and partners who make Extension's mission possible. Their efforts strengthen our community in ways that are both visible and lasting, and we celebrate the difference they make every day.





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Upcoming Events



November 4: K-State Garden Hour
November 5: Changing Our Mental & Emotional Trajectory Community Event
November 9: Annual Meeting
November 12: Grant Writing Workshop
November 13: Mental Health First Aid
November 19: Science of Sourdough
November 26 & 27: Thanksgiving Holiday- Office Closed

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.edul). 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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