



October 2026

THE EXTENSION CONNECTION

Wyandotte County K-State Extension



Director's Note

Denise Dias

Wyandotte County Director

As we move into October, I'm struck by how much strength comes from community partnerships. Whether it's youth development, horticulture, nutrition education, or civic engagement, our teams are working hard to deliver resources that help residents thrive. This month's newsletter highlights opportunities to learn, connect, and contribute. Thank you for your ongoing support and for helping Extension remain a trusted source of knowledge and community vitality.

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4-H Youth Development

HIRING A NEW 4-H AGENT!



WE'RE HIRING!

Wyandotte County
4-H Youth Development
Extension Agent

www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/careers

APPLICATION DEADLINE
October 13, 2026

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Kansas State University is an equal opportunity employer.

We are hiring a new 4-H agent. If you or someone you know would be a good fit for our team and 4-Hers, please distribute to them. If you would like to read or apply go [visit careers,k-state.edu/jobs](http://careers.k-state.edu/jobs)



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FALL CLEANING AND DECLUTTERING

The brightness of summer is slowly fading, and the cozy season of fall is here! This is the perfect time to give our homes a little refresh—not just to change the décor, but also to adjust our daily routine and organizing style to the mood of the season.

If you're looking for some Cozy Fall Home Ideas, Kim's Organizing Solutions has smart hacks to help you transition your home from summer to fall effortlessly—stress-free and with complete comfort.

1. Declutter Before You Decorate

Be sure to do a little decluttering before adding fall decorations. Pack up summer beach towels, picnic baskets, and lightweight clothes and store them in labeled bins. This will free up space and make your home instantly feel fresh. Ensure a small declutter session at the end of each season—to ensure the next season starts smoothly.

2. Swap out fabrics and textures

Fall means cozy feels—so now is the time to replace light cottons. Switch cushion covers, throws, and curtains to warmer tones like burnt orange, mustard, beige, and deep brown. These small changes will instantly make your space cozy and welcoming.

Pro hack: Use fabric storage bags for summer textiles, neatly folded and labeled.

3. Add Warm Lighting & Autumn Scents

As the days get shorter, lighting becomes even more important. Create a warm glow with soft yellow lamps, fairy lights, and candles. Fall scents like cinnamon, vanilla, or pumpkin spice candles will give your home a relaxing autumn vibe.

Pro tip: "Lighting is the mood-setter—a subtle glow makes a home feel cozy."

4. Organize the Entryway for Fall Essentials

Rain boots, jackets, scarves—fall must-haves! Create a small organizing station in the entryway with hooks, baskets, and trays. This will keep everything easily accessible and your hallway clutter-free. Plus, add a small doormat—to protect against mud and leaves.

5. Kitchen & Pantry Refresh

Fall means warm soups, baked goodies, and hot drinks! So now is the time to organize the kitchen according to the season.

Remove summer snacks, Keep spices and baking items on the front shelf, And create a cozy “fall beverage corner” for coffee or tea lovers!

Pro Tip: “Pantry organization isn't just about looks, it saves time and money too!”

6. Closet Transition Time

Store summer dresses and shorts folded and move sweaters, scarves, and jackets to the front section.

Keep a color-coded closet setup—dark to light tones. You can get more space by using storage bins or vacuum bags.

7. Add Little Fall Touches

Small décor touches like pumpkins, dried leaves, cozy blankets, and seasonal wreaths make the home festive.



Nutrition and Food Safety

FAMILY MEALTIME MATTERS

October is Eat Better, Eat Together Month, which helps inform us that one of the most significant factors influencing our dietary lifestyles is not the food we place on our plates, rather it's with whom we share our food with!

Mealtime for families, especially families with children, can be an overwhelming and oftentimes rare occasion. This is the consequence of how busy our lifestyles can become with school, work, sports, extracurricular activities, chores, etc. However, it is because family mealtime has become so difficult to schedule that now makes it more important than ever to sit down, turn off the TV, silence the cell phones, and share nutritious food while swapping stories with one another.

The following are a few tips straight from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) to help make family mealtimes happen:

Keep it Simple: Nothing makes family mealtime more difficult than a recipe with 20+ ingredients and a 4-hour preparation/cook time! Compile several simple, go-to recipes that can be made in 30 minutes or less to help prevent meal prep burnout. Additional time-saving tips and go-to recipes can be found in this K-State Extension publication, [Healthy Connections: Family Meals in a Snap](#).

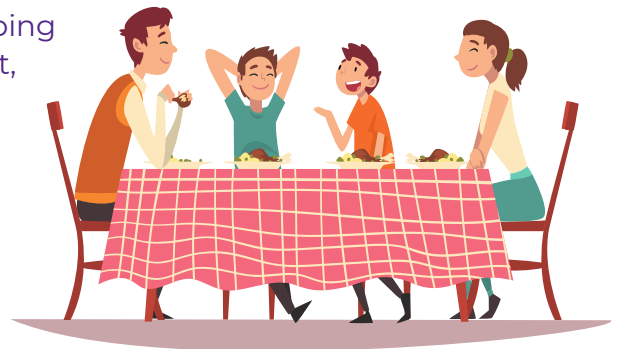
Double Down on Preparing Ingredients: Cooking proteins, like beef and chicken, usually takes up the most time when preparing a meal. Therefore, cook a double batch of the protein! You could use one batch of lean ground beef in a homemade lasagna one night, and the other batch in tacos prepared later in the week.

Mark Your Calendars: Set family mealtime for a specific time and/or a specific date, write it down, and make sure all family members are aware of it! As this habit builds, anticipation for family mealtime will build, and settling down to eat together will become second nature.

Also, who's to say that family mealtime has to be dinnertime? Maybe scheduling breakfast, lunch, or an afternoon snack for family mealtime will work better for your family's schedule.

Collaborate with the Kids: Involving children, especially young children, not only supplies extra hands to help in the kitchen, but also helps grow more adventurous eaters. When a child is involved in the cooking process, or even the grocery shopping process, and gets to pick and choose the vegetable, or fruit, or protein source they want to try, they have an increased likelihood of eating it.

Sources and/or Additional Reading:
[Eat Better, Eat Together Month](#)



Horticulture

ALL IN FOR OCTOBER!

Fall is officially here but the garden season still has a little meat left on its bones. Take steps now to ensure a clean close out of garden beds and landscapes, so you can hit the ground running next season.

Fruits and Vegetables

Now is the perfect time to pick any straggler vegetables that may be leftover (or risk losing them to critters) this means tomatoes, peppers, peanuts, winter squash, and pumpkins. One exception are sweet potatoes which should be allowed to sit until after the first frost to be picked and stored in a warm location. On the opposite side of the spectrum garlic can be planted now and covered for an early summer harvest. Fruit trees like apples and pears should continue to be picked to avoid spoilage and cleaning up fallen fruit can help reduce the risk of diseases come spring.

Lawn care

Mowing can continue but keeping the length higher (~2in) will ease the transition into dormancy. Take the time now before ground freeze to preform maintenance like aeration, dethatching, sharpening mower blades, and applying weed and feed. Now is the perfect time to take control measures against dandelions, chickweed, and henbit to prevent them from depositing seeds for next season.

Flowers

If you have not yet, cut back peonies and irises taking care to dispose of the foliage to avoid spreading disease, this applies to deceased annuals as well. Now is also a fine time to plant spring bulbs such as daffodils, tulips, and crocus. Once the first frost has come and gone, cannas, dahlias, and gladiolas bulbs can be dug up and stored for overwintering.

Pest of the Month

This garden pest is known for migrating from your green spaces to you living spaces! Im talking of course about the brown marmorated stink bug. Take steps now to seal door ways and windows by caulking gaps, fixing screens, and applying insect spray barriers. These little guys can be relentless!



THE POWER OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN TODAY'S COMMUNITIES

In every corner of our communities, people are asking for leadership that feels authentic, grounded, and human. The challenges we face today — social disconnectedness, organizational fatigue, rapid change, and the need for deeper collaboration — require more than traditional top-down leadership. They call for servant leadership, a model rooted in humility, listening, and the belief that leadership begins with service.

Servant leadership isn't new, but its relevance has never been greater. At its core, it shifts the focus from authority to responsibility, from directing to empowering, and from being at the front to lifting others. When leaders prioritize the growth, well-being, and success of their teams and communities, trust increases, engagement rises, and people feel seen and valued.

Across Extension, we see this every day. Servant leadership shows up when volunteers are supported, when staff feel encouraged to bring forward new ideas, and when community partners know they have a voice at the table. It shows up in the quiet moments — listening deeply, asking thoughtful questions, and creating space for others to shine. It shows up in the big moments too — guiding change, building coalitions, and helping communities navigate complex issues with clarity and compassion.

The need for servant leadership is especially clear in times of transition. Whether we are reorganizing programs, strengthening partnerships, or addressing emerging community needs, people look to leaders who model steadiness, empathy, and integrity. Servant leaders help others feel confident in the path forward because they demonstrate that leadership is not about being in charge — it's about taking care of those in your charge.

As we continue our work across Wyandotte County and the state, embracing servant leadership allows us to build stronger teams, healthier communities, and a culture where everyone feels they belong. It reminds us that leadership is not a title; it is a daily practice of service, courage, and commitment.

This is the kind of leadership our communities deserve. And it's the kind of leadership that moves us all forward.



Upcoming Events



October 1: 4-H New year

October 6 : Tuesday Tea

October 7: K-State Garden Hour

October 7: ServSafe

October 15: Hypertension Information Session

October 29: Understanding Diabetes: The Basics

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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