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Horticulture Club Calendar 2015

February 17  Rain Barrels 7 pm @ Dillon Nature Center
March 14  Gathering for Gardeners All Day at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
March 17  Introduction to Bonsai 7 pm @ Dillon Nature Center
April 18  Plant Sale 7:30 am—11:30 am @ Dillon Nature Center
April 21  Designing a Container Garden 7 pm @ Dillon Nature Center
May 19  Care of Roses 7 pm
June 16  Annual Picnic @ 6:30 pm
July 21  Harvesting for Healthy Cooking 7 pm
August 18  Container Garden Creations 7pm
Sept. 22  Tomato Project Reports 7 pm @ Dillon Nature Center
October 13  Coleus—Kinds & Cultures 7 pm @ Dillon Nature Center
Nov. 17  Tree Trimming 7 pm @ Dillon Nature Center
December 8  Holiday Dinner 6:30 @ Dillon Nature Center

“K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer”

“K-State Research and Extension is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision or hearing disability, or a dietary restriction please contact Jan Steen by phone at (620) 662-2371 or by email at jmsteen@ksu.edu.”
AG NEWS

With

Ag Agent
Darren Busick

2015 SORGHUM SCHOOL
HUTCHINSON COMM. COLLEGE
SHEARS TECHNOLOGY BLDG.
1300 N PLUM
FEBRUARY 12

PROGRAM:

8:30  Registration (coffee and donuts)
8:50  Welcome “2015 K-State Sorghum Production Schools”
   Ignacio Ciampitti (K-State)
9:00  Ignacio Ciampitti—Crop Production Practices
9:50  Doug Shoup—Weed Control Strategies
10:40 Coffee Break
11:00 Jeff Whitworth—Insect Management
11:50 Lunch Sponsored by Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission
12:50 Dorivar Ruiz Diaz—Nutrient Management
1:40  Bill Golden—2015 Sorghum Markets and Profitability Prospects
2:30  Panel Discussion State Specialists/Agents/Farmers/KGSC Reps
3:00  Conclusion and Adjourn

CONCURRENT SESSIONS:

11:00–11:50 News in Apps: Sorghum App—Ignacio Ciampitti
12:50–1:40 Web News from IWheat—Wendy Johnson/McCornack
Take Steps to Better Health: Walk Kansas Starts March 15

The program that promotes activity and fitness typically has about 16,500 participants annually.

MANHATTAN, Kan. – It’s as simple as putting one step in front of another. That’s the idea behind Walk Kansas, an eight-week K-State Research and Extension program that starts March 15, designed to promote activity and better health.

“The days are getting longer, and many of us are eager to get outside and be more physically active,” said Sharolyn Jackson, Walk Kansas coordinator with K-State Research and Extension. “Even Kansans who do not routinely walk or have other fitness routines find Walk Kansas to be an easy way to get moving.”

Groups of six people, one serving as a captain, work toward a common goal – typically to walk at least 150 minutes per person per week, which collectively is enough to walk 423 miles over the eight-week period. Though the team does not actually walk across Kansas, 423 miles is the equivalent of the distance across the state. Registration is through K-State Research and Extension county or district offices. Most registration materials are also on the website www.walkkansas.org.

Teams that want a greater challenge can set a goal to walk the equivalent of across the state and back, 846 miles or around the perimeter of Kansas, 1,200 miles.

“The walking can be done individually or in groups, on a treadmill at home, in your neighborhood, or at a gym – whatever works for the individual,” Jackson said. “While walking is easy for most people, any activity can count as long as you do it at the intensity where you just barely carry on a conversation with someone, and you do it for at least 10 consecutive minutes. Log your minutes of activity each day, and report that number to the team captain each week. The website converts the time walked into miles.”

“Walking reduces stress, combats depression, improves heart health and helps fight off unwanted pounds – and you feel better almost immediately after getting some physical activity,” she said. This year’s theme is “Walk Tall, Walk Strong, Walk Kansas,” she added, noting an emphasis on posture, strength training (which can count toward Walk Kansas minutes), and walking or any activity that promotes cardiovascular health.

Don’t have a team? Jackson recommends contacting your local K-State Research and Extension office and asking to be placed on a team.

This year marks the 14th year for Walk Kansas. With a cumulative total of 203,250 participants over the first 13 years, it is considered one of the most successful K-State Research and Extension programs in the state’s extension history.

“We have a lot of conveniences in our lives today,” Jackson said. Taking care of ourselves is a privilege. Investing in your personal health now pays off down the road, and being physically active is one of the most important steps we can take to improve our health.”

K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the well-being of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county Extension offices, experiment fields, area Extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus in Manhattan.
METH PRODUCTION IS TOXIC TO COMMUNITIES

Do you know where your children are? Do you know what your neighbors are doing or what is going on in your community? These might seem like easy to answer questions or not a problem. Are you aware there may be a "hidden danger" -- methamphetamine -- in your community?

Meth is an extremely addictive, illegal drug commonly referred to as meth, crank, crystal, speed, chalk, glass, ice or zip. Most methamphetamine is produced in clandestine or hidden laboratories. Labs can be located in homes, apartments, hotel and motel rooms, garages, vehicles, storage sheds, barns, vacant buildings, outdoors and in ditches. Remote locations are often chosen to conceal the smell of chemicals.

Meth Ingredients:
Meth can be easily produced or cooked using ordinary -- though toxic -- household chemicals in combination with ephedrine or pseudoephedrine found in common asthma and cold remedies sold over the counter. These ingredients and the needed equipment can be easily purchased from drug stores, supermarkets, hardware stores, feed stores and farm supply outlets. Most meth ingredients are toxic and volatile:

- drain cleaner/rubbing alcohol
- lithium batteries
- anhydrous ammonia
- red phosphorous
- starter fluid or de-icer
- muriatic or hydrochloric acid
- lye
- iodine

People who work in retail stores should be alert to large purchases of these items. Many farmer cooperatives have taken precautions to secure anhydrous ammonia tanks. Storage areas can have added lighting, fencing and gates are which are locked in the evening. Locks can be put on valves. Propane tanks (often used in meth production) are also regularly secured in locked storage areas.

Dangers of Meth Production:
Production of meth in a home "laboratory" poses dangers to the producers and the community. Breathing the toxic fumes can cause irreparable harm to nasal passages, lungs and the brain. The ingredients can ignite, corrode or react. Producers of homemade meth are typically users themselves and not skilled in chemistry. Cooks may be producing meth while their mental capacities are impaired by the drug. All these factors make meth labs a catastrophe waiting to happen, resulting in fires and explosions from cooking meth. Five to seven pounds of toxic waste are produced per pound of meth. These hazardous chemicals may be dumped on the ground or in nearby streams and lakes, buried or simply left behind. Toxic wastes can contaminate drinking water. Buildings used to make meth can be a health risk to the next unsuspecting tenants. Toxic vapors may have absorbed into the furniture, flooring, air vents and walls. Harsh liquids dumped or spilled can remain for a long time as residue in bathtubs, toilets, sinks or floors.

High Cost of Cleanup:
Meth lab cleanup is very expensive. The average cost to clean up one lab can exceed $4,000.

Warning Signs of Meth Activity:
Signs of a meth lab are:
- Chemicals
- Basic chemistry paraphernalia such as laboratory glassware, rubber tubing, clear glass jugs
- Heat plates, camp stoves or other heat sources
- Cookware containing powdery substances
- Strong odor of urine or unusual chemical odors such as ether, ammonia or acetone

Signs of meth lab waste:
- Cold/allergy medicine packaging
- Empty containers from: Heet, antifreeze, ether, starting fluids, freon, lye, drain cleaners, paint thinner or acetone
• Coffee filters with white pasty, powdery or red substance
• Coolers or thermos bottles
• Propane tanks

Signs of a drug house:
• Little or no traffic during the day, but lots of traffic at late hours
• Extra efforts to cover windows or reinforce doors
• Never putting out trash
• Unfriendly, paranoid or secretive behavior
• Renters who pay landlords in cash
• Unemployed persons who seem to have plenty of cash

What to Do:
What can you do to help in the fight against meth production? Be informed, be aware and be alert. If you suspect a meth lab:
• Call your local law enforcement
• Do not attempt to stop the chemical reaction
• Do not shut off water supply to the house or the chemical reaction
• Do not turn any electrical devices/lights on or off

If you find any potential meth lab litter:
• Move away from the area
• Call 911 on your cell phone or your nearest law enforcement office
• Do not touch or smell any potential meth litter items!

If you suspect a drug house:
Hold a neighborhood meeting to talk about the problem. Do not invite suspects. Do invite law enforcement. Record and report suspicious behavior.

Source: Adapted from University of Nebraska Extension, Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

ARE YOU READY FOR WINDOWS 10?
Microsoft will be releasing a new version of Windows in 2015 – if everything goes as planned. Windows 10 (not 9 as you’d think) combines the look and feel of Windows 7 and Windows 8, most notably in the return of the “Start” menu. Early adopters, software developers, and the curious, can find technical preview releases of Windows 10 available on Microsoft’s website. Previews are often not considered absolutely stable, so do keep that in mind if you intend to take it for a test drive. You can read more about the preview here: http://goo.gl/Q3Lkw (URL is case sensitive). For those who wish to wait for the final release, it’s good practice to delay installing upgrades until at least a few weeks after release. This allows for any bugs or other issues to be addressed.

Useful Links:

Emergency Preparedness:
Code Red – Hutchinson and Reno County have a free service you can sign up for to receive alerts about a variety of emergencies, including floods, fires, severe weather, chemical spills, and evacuation notices. To learn more, or sign up, visit the Code Red page: http://www.renogov.org/186/CodeRED

Extension Disaster Education Network – A collection of resources covering emergencies and disasters in health, weather, agriculture, communities, and more. Find the resources here: http://eden.lsu.edu/Pages/default.aspx

Storm Prediction Center – NOAA and the National Weather Service have a portion of their web presence dedicated to watches, warnings, and potential severe weather activity across the country. Fire weather outlooks are also available: http://www.spc.noaa.gov/

Computer Safety:
US-Computer Emergency Readiness Team – How to deal with viruses, stay safe on social networks, and protecting your privacy. A good source of general information as well. Access these resources here: https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips

Extension Publications and Information:
K-State Research & Extension Bookstore – You can search through our current and historic publications, as well as view them in PDF format. The bookstore page’s search function is located at the top of the page: http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/
eXtension.org – Ask an expert, view online topics broken down into resource areas. There are also announcements and links to webinars (upcoming and archived). Visit http://www.extension.org for access.
GET THE FACTS FROM JENNIFER SCHROEDER, 
Family & Consumer Science Agent

Energy Drinks and Kids
Energy drinks are popular, but can be dangerous. The National Poison Control Center reports that 40 percent of reports to their center are related to these drinks and children under age six.

The major problems cited include cardiovascular problems and seizures. Some energy drinks have up to 400 mg of caffeine per serving compared to 100-150 mg in one cup of coffee. Poisoning can occur in children under 12 at a rate of 2.5 mg per every 2.2 pounds of body weight.


Are You Prepared for Winter?
It is the season for ice and snow! These weather events can lead to power outages for long periods of time. To help you prepare, a recorded webinar is available.

Go to https://learn.extension.org/events/1711#.VIcwTnufXT8 and click on “Watch recording.”

For more tips and information related to power outages and other disasters, see www.ksre.ksu.edu/foodsafety/p.aspx?tabid=20.

The Power of Onions
Onions add big flavor to many recipes. But they also add many health benefits.

Onions contain the flavonoid quercetin in amounts twice that of tea and three times the amount found in apples. Quercetin can have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits.

While sulfur compounds produce pungency in onions, the sulfur can improve blood thinning and prevent platelet aggregation. Sulfur also lowers colorectal, laryngeal and ovarian cancer.

Onions can improve gut health to reduce ulcer formation and possibly protect your bones.

Store unpeeled onions in a cool, dry, dark location with air circulation. Peel onions carefully to not remove too many outer layers where healthy compounds are found. Store peeled onions in a closed container in the refrigerator up to one week.

January is Oat Month
Oats are purchased more often in January than any other time of year. It is the number one breakfast food and number three on the satiety index measuring fullness and satisfaction.

Oats are deemed a whole grain as the bran and germ are never removed during processing. Oats are steamed and flattened to make rolled oats. The more they are steamed and flattened, the faster they cook (e.g. quick oats.)

Steel-cut oats are chewier and nuttier. The whole oat is sliced once or twice into smaller pieces. When cooked, they are called porridge.

Oats helps lower LDL cholesterol and can help lower blood pressure. The soluble fiber helps control blood sugar to reduce type 2 diabetes. Learn more about oats at http://wholegrainscouncil.org/wholegrains-101/oats-january-grain-of-the-month.
Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK) is a free program offering older Kansans an opportunity to talk with trained, community volunteers and get answers to questions about Medicare and other insurance issues. SHICK provides you with many resources that will help you with your struggle through the Medicare maze.

Our volunteers at SHICK know their stuff! The role of the volunteer counselor is to help people stay informed on changing conditions in health care insurance and to cut through the confusion. Our volunteer counselors receive training on Medicare, Medicare Supplement Insurance, Long-Term Care and other health insurance subjects that concern older Kansans.

Our volunteer counselors do not work for any insurance company. The goal is to educate and assist the public to make informed decisions on what's best for them.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service K-State, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating.

All educational programs and materials available without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability.

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When: Second Wednesday of the Month beginning January 14th
February 11th, March 11th, April 8th & May 13th
Where: Hutchinson Public Library Basement Computer Lab
Time: 10:00 am to 11:00 am
Please RSVP with the Reno County Extension Office at (620) 662-2371.
Limited number of computers are available. Please bring Medicare Card.
(Please bring your Medicare Card.)
Tips for Planning Next Year’s Vegetable Garden

From University of Illinois Horticulture Newsletter (http://web.extension.illinois.edu/abhs/hortnews/)

It’s always a good idea to have a plan before you start digging up your yard, said a University of Illinois horticulture educator.

"Sometimes a location seems like the perfect site for a garden until you start digging and find the soil is like concrete," said Chris Enroth. "Or you start growing and realize the water supply is way out of reach. Now you’re hauling buckets of water!"

Enroth suggested four basic items that will help in having a more successful garden next season.

Soil - A very common item that is overlooked by many beginner and experienced gardeners alike is soil health and fertility, he said. Most homeowners rely solely on store-bought fertilizers for their plants’ nutrition with little worry about soil health or the actual nutrient composition of their soil.

So how do we give our soil a checkup?

"If you are serious about growing good vegetables, you need to know the nutrient composition and basic properties of your soil," Enroth explained. "A soil test is a way to find that out. Collect samples of soil from your proposed gardening sites, mix them together and bag them and bring them to your local extension office. If you would like to compare two different garden locations, in the same manner take samples from each location, but do not mix one with the other. Therefore, you can compare the results when you get them back from the lab."

Sun - Most of the summer vegetables we know and love to eat require at least six hours of sunlight per day. That means the garden needs a full-sun location. "Plants feed themselves through photosynthesis, and each plant leaf is a food factory," Enroth said. "By restricting the amount of light, you lessen the amount of sugars the plant can make for itself, and it will be unable to perform to its optimum capabilities."

"Provided you meet the full-sun minimum of six hours, afternoon shade can be beneficial. Shade late in the day offers a good spot to work during hot summer afternoons, and some of your veggies do like a bit of respite from the sun during the hottest part of the day, especially for gardeners in southern Illinois," he added.

Water Supply - Hauling water in 90 plus degree weather is hard work. Therefore, you should site your garden so that you don't have to. Don't make the mistakes many other gardeners have made. Many vegetable gardeners think that they can supplement with buckets of water, but unless you have a bucket brigade, Enroth said most plants are only watered enough to barely keep them alive.

"Ideally you want some form of permanent irrigation system. I highly recommend some type of drip or soaker hose system. Drip irrigation works great to minimize water lost to evaporation and applies water very slowly so runoff does not occur. Plus, drip irrigation takes a lot of the guesswork out of watering," Enroth said.

"If possible, investigate harvested water options. By using water harvested in an above- or below-ground cistern, you can save yourself some backache and lower your own potable water usage. Rain barrels are a great notion, but you would need a lot of water storage for a large vegetable garden," he said.

Tools - Gardening can be a lot like cooking; they both require tools, and companies are out there to sell all kinds of gadgets. "Don't
get suckered by gimmicks," Enroth warned.

Tools that are popular in the garden include:

A sharp shovel – A sharp blade on the end of your shovel is critical to easy digging. Once you have your blade sharpened, you will keep up the habit every year.

· A pair of pruners – "When I'm outside gardening, my pruners are always in a sheath attached to my belt, notably because I always seem to tear my plants apart when picking their fruit or leaves. Pruners account for a clean cut," Enroth said.

· A collinear hoe – This is used for cultivating weeds or slicing them off at the soil line. A collinear hoe is not a digging hoe; it is a hoe that can be used while standing upright and using a sweeping motion to cultivate small weeds. Have a file on hand to keep this blade sharp after use.

· A soil knife (trowel) – "If you are planting a lot of smaller transplants and your soil is relatively friable, I prefer to use a soil knife" Enroth explained. "It is a pointed blade with a handle. Simply stab the soil, pull it back, drop in the transplant, and remove the knife and firm up the soil around the new plant."

· A bucket – Good for storing and moving tools, gathering up plant material, harvesting the fruits of your labor and sitting. Make sure to label which bucket is for harvested vegetables and which one is for carrying manure to the compost pile.

· A good wheelbarrow – "You never know when you will need to move something heavy to the other side of the yard. And a sturdy wheelbarrow can come in mighty handy. There are also several different types of garden carts on the market that may make maneuvering around the garden a little easier," Enroth said.

How to Attract Beneficial Insects to the Garden

Sandra Mason, University of Illinois Extension Educator, Horticulture

It's a common case of mistaken identity. Just because you happen to look like some sort of bee you must endure a swat or a frantic scream. Hover flies are a common insect. Just as their name implies, hover flies often hover around flowers or around people. They are 3/8 to 3/4 of an inch long with black and yellow stripes. Some people call hover flies sweat bees since the flies enjoy a little tasty drink of sweat periodically. However, hover flies don’t sting and actually can’t sting even if they had the urge. Hover flies are actually good guys in the garden. Hover fly young are ravenous predators of garden pests such as aphids, thrips and small caterpillars. The adult hover flies do not eat other insects, but feed on nectar and pollen.

There are many other unsung and often misidentified heroes of the garden world. Some of the best beneficial insects are the parasitic wasps. The adult wasps seek out the eggs or larvae of specific insects (many times crop eating caterpillar pests). The wasps then lay their eggs in the pest. The wasp larvae develop inside the pest. Eventually the pest dies and the adult wasps emerge.

The good news is hover flies and many other good guys can be attracted into the garden with some simple techniques.

First, learn how to recognize common beneficial and pest insects.

Minimize or eliminate insecticide applications. Many insecticides will kill beneficial as well as pest insects. Even natural botanical insecticides such as rotenone will kill beneficial insects.

If insecticides are chosen as a control method, use selective insecticides. Selective insecticides are toxic to specific pests and will not directly harm beneficial insects. The microbial insecticide Bt sold as Dipel and Caterpillar Attack are toxic only to caterpillars that feed on the sprayed plants. Insecticidal soaps can also be effective on pest insects without harming beneficial ones.

Build it and they will come. Include a diversity of plants in the landscape. Include annual and per-
ennial flowers, native grasses and plants, ground covers, shrubs and trees.

Plant a variety of flowers. Many predators and parasites feed on pollen and nectar or use flowers to supplement their food supply if they run low on pests. Plants in the carrot family and mustard family are especially attractive to beneficials. Use plenty of plants with small flowers such as sweet alyssum, dill, fennel, garlic chives, lovage, coriander (cilantro) and white lace flower (cultivated version of Queen Anne’s Lace). Other popular plants for beneficials include: blanket flower, coneflower, coreopsis, cosmos, tansy, yarrow, goldenrod, sunflowers, yellow alyssum, sweet clover, buckwheat or hairy vetch. Let a few of the broccoli plants flower.

Plan a season of bloom. Gardeners enjoy having flowers all season as much as the beneficial insects.

Provide water areas with shallow dishes or pebble areas. The larger good guys, toads, will appreciate these areas too.

Include some permanent hardscapes such as stone paths and decorative rock.

All-America Selection Winners for 2015

All-America Selections tests and introduces new flowers and vegetables each year that have done well in trials across North America. This year there were ten vegetable winners, two bedding plant winners and two flower winners that were either national winners or “Heartland” regional winners.

Descriptions below are taken directly from All-America Selection materials. For more detailed information including images, how to grow, and seed sources see http://www.allamericaselections.org/winners/index.cfm

Vegetables

Lettuce Sandy
The first AAS winning lettuce since 1985, Sandy is an attractive oakleaf type lettuce with a multitude of sweet tasting frilly dark green leaves. Not just pretty and tasty, Sandy has exceptional disease resistance, especially to powdery mildew and is slow to bolt. Use Sandy as cut and come again baby leaf, or grow to full maturity for loose salad heads. The uniformly mounded loose heads are well adapted to both raised beds and containers. When planted with cool season flowers, Sandy will add an abundance of interesting texture to patio containers. Sandy is the second AAS Winner that is available as organic seed.

Can be planted in patio containers with cool season edible flowers to enjoy. Typically not bitter when heat-stressed. Sandy has exceptional bolt resistance and is especially resistant to Powdery Mildew disease. Can be used for baby leaf cut and come again or grown to full maturity for loose salad heads.

Radish Roxanne F1
Roxanne is a hybrid radish with uniform bright red color and a beautiful creamy white interior. Roxanne is a great tasting radish with no pithiness or bleeding even at a larger size. This radish stays firm and solid even when oversized, and holds well in the garden. Roxanne grows well in a wide range of climates, as verified by our judges who have trial grounds all over North America. In mild climates Roxanne can be sown at intervals in fall and winter for harvest during these seasons. This radish can easily be grown in a pot at least 4 inches deep. A very pretty and tasty radish! Nice bright red color with beautiful creamy white interior. Nice shape, size and uniformity.

Pepper Sweet Sunset F1
Sweet Sunset is a compact banana pepper that is vigorous and sets a large amount of concentrated fruit. This high yielding X3R variety produces attractive colorful tasty peppers that are great fresh or canned. The compact upright plants do not require staking and can be grown in a container. This high-yielding plant produces early, often and late into the season. Judges commented on the good eating quality and Sweet Sunset
won the taste test in one trial site open house!

**Basil Dolce Fresca**
If there was an AAS category for an edible plant with ornamental value, this AAS Winner would fit that classification. Dolce Fresca produces sweet tender leaves that outshine the comparison varieties while maintaining an attractive, compact shape that’s both versatile and beautiful. Use the leaves as you would any Genovese basil and we hear it makes an excellent pesto. After harvest, the plant was quick to recover and kept the desired ornamental shape that’s perfect for containers, borders or as a focal point. Great for gardeners looking for drought tolerant, hearty plants, foodies interested in a new and better basil and anyone who wants that great Mediterranean taste added to their cuisine.

**Pepper Emerald Fire F1**
A grill master’s delight! At 2,500 Scoville units, this is the hottest pepper in this year’s pepper winners but it boasts extra large and very tasty jalapeno fruits that are perfect for stuffing, grilling or using in salsa. Emerald Fire produces gorgeous, glossy green peppers with thick walls that have very little cracking, even after maturing to red. Gardeners will appreciate the prolific fruit set on compact plants that resist disease better than other similar varieties on the market. Emerald Fire is a strong and vigorous hybrid jalapeno plant that sets a large amount of concentrated fruit. This high yielding X3R variety produces tasty extra large, hot jalapenos that are great for fresh and canning uses.

**Pepper Flaming Flare F1**
Most Fresno peppers are considered rather finicky plants that typically grow better in warm and dry climates. The fact that Flaming Flare is an AAS National Winner means it performed well in all AAS trial sites. The fruit is ideal for making chili sauces and the heat of that sauce will increase depending on how late in the season the peppers are harvested. Flaming Flare is an exceptional pepper that was sweeter tasting than similar Fresno types and consistently produced larger fruits and more peppers per plant. Yet another AAS Winner that culinary gardeners should consider for their kitchen gardens.

**Pepper Hot Sunset F1**
For banana or wax pepper lovers who desire a prolific and earlier harvest of delicious and spicy (650 Scoville units) fruits, Hot Sunset is for you. Large, healthy, vigorous plants are disease-free and produce tasty and attractive fruits all season long. The AAS Trial judges noted what a great taste this thick-walled pepper has, not like other hot peppers where all you get is heat. We think this tasty morsel should be featured on a TV cooking show where chefs compete to bring out the best in this goodie, whether it’s prepared fresh, grilled, roasted or pickled, it’s sure to win over even the most particular foodie!

**Pepper Pretty N Sweet F1**
Look…in the garden! Is it an ornamental pepper? Is it edible? Yes to both! Now we can tell consumers that an ornamental pepper CAN be eaten and it tastes fantastic! It’s time for new terminology to describe this multi-purpose plant…how about an “Ornamedible?” Pretty N Sweet is just that: a sweet, multi-colored pepper on a compact 18” plant that is attractive to use in ornamental gardens and containers. Against the comparisons, Pretty N Sweet was earlier, more prolific (you can harvest weekly in peak season) and has a much sweeter taste with more substantial pepper walls to enjoy fresh or in your favorite pepper dish.

**Squash Bossa Nova F1**
The beautiful dark and light green mottled exterior of this zucchini is more pronounced than other varieties on the market, which sets it apart and makes the fruits easier to see during a long and prolific harvest. Compact plants produce fruits earlier in the season and continue producing for three weeks longer than comparison varieties. During taste tests, the AAS Judges deemed the smooth flesh texture and sweet, mild taste much improved over other summer squash.

**Squash Butterscotch F1**
This adorable small-fruited butternut squash has
an exceptionally sweet taste perfect for just one or two servings. Compact vines are space-saving for smaller gardens or those who just want to fit more plants into the space they have. This is another AAS Winners that is perfect for container gardens and will resist powdery mildew later in the season. Culinary tip: pierce the skin then microwave whole squash for about 12 minutes, cut in half, spoon out the seeds, and enjoy!

Flowers

Impatiens Bounce™ Pink Flame PPAF 'Balboufink'
Bounce impatiens provides gardeners with shade garden confidence. Bounce looks like an Impatiens walleriana in habit, flower form and count, but is completely downy mildew resistant, which means this impatiens will last from spring all the way through fall. Bounce Pink Flame boasts of a massive amount of stunning, bright pink bicolor blooms with tons of color to brighten your garden, be it in shade or sun. And caring for impatiens has never been easier: just add water and they’ll “bounce” right back! Available in plant form only.

Impatiens SunPatiens® Spreading Shell Pink
The truly unique genetic background of SunPatiens® Spreading Shell Pink delivers unsurpassed garden performance with season long, soft pink flowers that never slow down. Strong roots take hold quickly after transplanting and these impatiens thrive under high heat, rain and humidity. The AAS Judges loved these vigorous spreading plants that keep their shape all summer, plus, they do just as well in full sun as in shade. These low-maintenance plants are perfect for gardeners looking for impatiens that are resistant to downy mildew. Available in plant form only.

Petunia Trilogy Red F1
The Trilogy petunia series has a new color with this stunningly rich, vibrant red version! Trilogy petunias are known for their compact dome-shaped habit sporting large non-fading blooms throughout the season. The plants cover and recover themselves in upright blooms providing a constant mass of color in flower beds, baskets, and containers. Gardeners in high heat areas will appreciate the heat-tolerance of this variety and all gardeners will like how quickly Trilogy bounces back after a rain.

Salvia Summer Jewel White
A third color in the popular Summer Jewel series, white brings a much-needed color to compact salvias. This dwarf sized, compact plant has a prolific bloom count throughout the summer. As a bonus, the blooms appear almost two weeks earlier than other white salvias used as comparisons. Judges noted how the bees, butterflies and hummingbirds loved the larger flowers, making it perfect for a pollinator garden. Because of the compactness and number of flowers, Summer Jewel White is great for large landscaped areas, as well as containers and small beds.

Mark Your Calendars for These Upcoming Gardening Events

February 7  South Central KS Vegetable Growers Conference, Wichita
http://2015ckmvgw.eventbrite.com/

March 14  Hutchinson Horticulture Club Gathering for Gardeners

March 19  12:15 Lunchtime learning Soil Testing 101
1:30 Soil Art

April 14  Lawn Mower Clinic

April 18  Hutchinson Horticulture Club Plant Sale

May 12  6 pm Iris Walk

May 16  Opening Day for Reno County Farmers Market

June 13  Master Gardener's Summer Garden Tour
Grocery Store Owner/Operator Focus Group-South Hutchinson

The Reno County-South Hutchinson Food Policy Council will be hosting a Grocery Store Owner/Operator Focus Group on January 29th:

Please attend our Grocery Store Owner/Operator Focus Group!

On Thursday January 29th at 6pm, at the South Hutchinson United Methodist Church, we will be conducting a focus group with 4 grocery store owner/operators from across the state. This group will give us the opportunity to hear about their business models and ask questions about what type of store might be right for our community. Please come with any questions about a possible business venture or to support this cause. Email us with any questions at sarah.key@renogov.org.

WEATHER RESOURCES

Reno County Automated Weather Station (Mesonet)

Mary Knapp, Kansas State Climatologist, offers weekly audio programs on weather phenomena and recent meteorological events in Kansas. You can listen to these clips online here (address is case sensitive): http://bit.ly/1zDyAnD

State Rain, Hail, and Snowfall Totals

The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail, and Snow Network provides data from volunteers who report daily precipitation totals. Results appear on a map, which one can zoom in on county and station details, or zoom out to see other states’ reports. Volunteers are welcome to apply to become a reporting station. Find out more and see the maps here (address is case sensitive): http://bit.ly/1CKlgv1

Storm Spotter Training Sessions

Spring will be here before we know it, and that means the potential for severe weather. Learn more about what to look for by attending a local spotter training session. Upcoming dates and locations can be found at the National Weather Service website: http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ict/?n=spottertalks

A special thanks goes out to the National Turkey Federation for sponsoring Reno County Extension programming. To learn more about the National Turkey Federation, you can visit: http://www.eatturkey.com

Did you know you can view live weather data online from Reno County, as well as other counties? Go to the following URL for current conditions http://mesonet.k-state.edu/. Weekly soil temperatures for Reno County can also be found here: http://mesonet.k-state.edu/weather/soil/.
We would like to thank these sponsors for their help and support to our 4-H and Extension programs.