A Brief Introduction to Soil Health

The concept of soil health is built upon the understanding that soil is a functioning ecosystem. By paying attention to the relationships in that system we can support soil that is healthy and which will repay us through productive gardens and a better environment. This talk will briefly cover the idea of soil health and talk about practical steps to encourage healthy soils in yards and gardens.

Tom Buller is the horticulture extension agent for K-State Research and Extension- Douglas County, Kansas and a farmer who has been growing vegetables organically in the Kansas River Valley since 2006. He co-authored “Growing Under Cover: A Kansas Grower’s Guide” and “Growing Over Cover: A Kansas Specialty Crop Grower’s Guide to Cover Crops” with partners at the Kansas Rural Center and K-State Research and Extension.

The presentation will be held in the Dreher Building and will follow our monthly business meeting. The presentation will be approximately 1 hour in length, providing time for a question and answer session. The public is welcome to attend.

Christine Sundstrom, Vice-President
UPCOMING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

March 14th – Special Presentation – Water Gardening – (6 hours)
April 15th – Grow Your Own Bouquets (1 hour)
May 16th – Sweet Potato Production for The Midwest (1 hour)
June 17th – Preparing Flowers and Vegetables to Exhibit at a County Fair (1 hour)
July 18th – No Till Gardening (1 hour)
August 19th – Rain Gardens (1 hour)
September 19th – Restorative Landscaping (1 hour)
October 14th – Kansas Land Trust

Other Upcoming Events

April 2nd – Thursday, The No-Sow Garden, at Wyandotte Co. Extension Office, 1216 N. 79th St., KCK. The presentation is from 11:30am to 1:00 pm. Lenora Lawson will speak about her many flower beds and how she had discovered selections of plants that eagerly plant themselves! Registration is not required, and the $5 fee is waived for certified EMG’s!

April 7th – Tuesday, Basic Garden Photography, at Johnson Co. Extension Office, 11811 S. Sunset Dr., Olathe. Presented by Carol Fowler, JC Extension Master Gardener, you will learn tips and tricks using your smartphone to take stunning garden photos. The cost is $10 per person, and you can register at: johnson.ksu.edu or call 913.715.7000. Space is limited.

April 20th – Monday, Landscaping For Birds, at Johnson Co. Extension Office, 11811 S. Sunset Dr., Olathe. Presented by Colleen Winter, JC Extension Master Gardener, will provide you with the resources and information you need to turn your landscape into a sanctuary for our feathered friends. The cost is $10 per person. Register at: johnson.ksu.edu or call 913-715-7000.

NEWS FROM SHARON

General reminders

Please, if you are doing anything for the Garden Show, please record your hours as category ‘PUBLIC EVENTS, sub-category ‘GARDEN SHOW’. Do not record these hours under Administration or other. Also, if you do anything for a demonstration garden please record your hours under ‘OUTREACH’ and your particular demonstration garden.

Volunteer requirements are now 30 hours of volunteer service, including business meetings and travel, and 10 hours of advanced education. Travel to and from advanced education events is not to be included in your tally of hours. Class of 2019 need 40 hours of volunteer service but no advanced education is required.

EMG Board meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 9:00 am in the Deal Six Auditorium.

General EMG Board meetings and monthly education programs alternate between the 3rd Saturday and 3rd Wednesday of the month (starting with Saturday meeting on the 18th of Jan.).
General call for help with gardening workshops

Want to help beginning gardeners get started? Tom and I are working with Habitat for Humanity and the Douglas County Health Department on a number of gardening workshops. If you want to help with one or more of these workshops, please contact Sharon.

Here are the Health Dept. workshops, to be held in the garden at 200 Main St.
Thursday, April 2nd at 5:15 pm: watering/irrigation, fertilizing, succession planting
Thursday, May 7th at 5:15 pm: tomato and pepper planting, growing, supporting; harvesting greens
Thursday, July 23rd at 5:15 pm: harvesting, tomato problems, fall prep tips

The Habitat for Humanity workshop is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 18th.

DONATIONS OF EXTRA VEGGIE/FLOWER TRANSPLANTS WOULD BE MOST WELCOME!

Length of workshop: 1.5 hours, plus time for questions
Participants: the homeowner; Habitat families, volunteers, staff.
1) Site preparation:
Topics covered: locating the garden, sizing the garden, garden type (in ground, raised bed, lasagna, etc., fencing, tools
2) Deciding what to plant:
Topics: how does a gardener decide what to plant and how much to plant
3) Planting:
Topics: spacing, planting depth, transplants, seeds, structures, tools
4) Maintenance:
Topics: mulching, composting, weeding, watering, tools

Committee announcements

Helpful Links

1. Recording volunteer and education hours https://ksuemg.org/
2. EMG public Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/douglascountymastergardeners/
3. EMG private Facebook (EMGs only, not for the public): https://www.facebook.com/groups/172866229893874/
4. EMG member calendar: https://teamup.com/ks17155f4f7e952652
5. KSRE Horticulture webpage: https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/lawn-garden/home/ (also links to newsletter)
6. KSRE Douglas County webpage: http://www.douglas.k-state.edu/lawn-garden/index.html

Upcoming Advanced Education opportunities

• Master Gardeners of Greater Kansas City 2020 Spring Gardening Seminar. Saturday, March 14th, 9 am to 3 pm at Rockhurst University. http://www.mggkc.org/public-education/spring-seminar/

• Johnson County Extension Horticulture Classes. Classes require registration ($10) and are held at the Extension office at 11811 Sunset Dr. in Olathe. https://www.johnson.k-state.edu/classes-events/index.html (scroll down to Horticulture)
• Shawnee County Extension Horticulture Classes. Classes are free and held at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library at 7:00 pm. [https://www.shawnee.k-state.edu/lawn-garden/events/](https://www.shawnee.k-state.edu/lawn-garden/events/)

• Clinton Parkway Nursery holds regular classes throughout the year. Classes are free, but register for limited space on their Facebook site. [https://www.facebook.com/Clintonparkwaynursery/](https://www.facebook.com/Clintonparkwaynursery/)

• Online plant ID classes from NC State and Longwood Gardens. EMGs get a discount for these online classes. If you are interested let Sharon A. know and she will give you the discount code. For more information: [https://extensiongardener.ces.ncsu.edu/online-non-credit-courses/](https://extensiongardener.ces.ncsu.edu/online-non-credit-courses/). The estimated time to take each class is 30 hours, so you will easily surpass the 10 hours needed for 2020. You will need to submit a copy of the Certificate of Participation when you finish the course.

GARDEN SHOW UPDATE

Garden Show: Call for Help and Update!

The March 28 date for the Garden Show is fast approaching! We have lots of great things planned, but we need every one of you to make this event a success. Please go to the online signup sheet and sign up to help with setup on Friday, March 27 starting at 9:00, and/or help on the day of the event on Saturday, March 28, from 9:00 to 3:00.

Another way you can help is to spread the word about this event. Please share the posts on our Facebook page at [facebook.com/douglascountymastergardeners](https://facebook.com/douglascountymastergardeners). If you picked up Garden Show flyers at the last meeting, please get those distributed soon.

Here’s an overview of what is planned:

• **Educational Speakers:**
  - 9:30 – 10:20: Vegetable Gardening – Tom Buller
  - 10:30 – 11:20: Gardening for Pollinators – Susan Rendall
  - 11:30 – 12:20: Composting & Mulching – Stan Ring
  - 12:30 – 1:20: Garden Design – Jack Landgrebe
  - 1:30 – 2:20: Bees – Sindey Platz
  - 2:30 – 3:20: Daylilies – Laura Ross

• **Educational booths:** Composting, Edible Gardens, Family Gardening, Good Bugs/Bad Bugs, Pollinators, Tool Time, Trees and Shrubs, and Yoga for Gardeners. We will also have a Welcome table and an EMG Resource table.

• **Local vendors:**
  - Indapot, makers of the new silicone pots, [indapot.com](https://indapot.com)
  - Wildfire Metal, metal garden art, [facebook.com/wildfiremetal/](https://facebook.com/wildfiremetal/)
  - Jungle House, house plants and unusual pots, [www.junglehousegoods.com/about](http://www.junglehousegoods.com/about)
  - Mid-America Begonia Society – all about begonias, including how to start them from cuttings, [www.begonias.org](http://www.begonias.org)

• **Raffle prizes:** Cyd Schnacke and her team have done an amazing job collecting raffle prizes! Here are a few of the highlights: weekly mowing services for a year (who doesn’t want to win that one!), a huge water garden pot, $150 chiropractor gift certificate (might come in handy when you overdo in the garden), free lawn
treatment for the year, and a signed KU basketball. There are also bird feeders, many gift certificates, and a bottle of handcrafted botanical gin (that could come in handy after a long day of gardening).

- **Workshops:** Garden Show attendees will be able to create the following items at our workshop, or purchase a kit to take home: wren houses, oriole feeders, and chickadee houses.
- **Food trucks:** **Torched Goodness** food truck for breakfast, along with their wonderful crème brulees. **JB's Ta-cos** food truck will serve lunch.
- **Garage sale:** We need lots of items for the garage sale. Please bring your no-longer-used treasures to donate on Friday during the setup day. You will have a neater garage, and Master Gardeners will have more in the budget to focus on our mission. Of course, you will also want to check out all the great stuff to see if there are any new-to-you treasures that you need to take home.
- **Clean up:** Setup and cleanup will be much easier this year. We are hiring the County staff to setup and take down the tables and chairs, and to sweep the floors and empty the trash in building 21. The cost is very reasonable, and our planning committee is sure that all the helpers will appreciate not to have to do all the cleanup work after a long day at the Garden Show.

As you can see, we will have lots of great stuff planned that you don’t want to miss. If you aren’t working the day of Garden Show, please attend and bring several friends with you. Thanks to everyone who has helped so far, and to the rest of you who will be helping. We need every one of you to make this event a success!

**Think About Tables**

St. Louis artist Dale Dufer makes his living working with wood. For fun, he builds tables with natural sticks. In 2014, while clearing the Bush Honeysuckle from his city property, he harvested the “three legger” branches and began to play with the structure of this invasive plant. Today his project **Think About Tables** is teaching adults and youth to see this ecological problem as a creative resource, by using basic hand tools to build one-of-a-kind tables. Each table can spark conversations about the issue, from a positive experience.

Jean Ponzi, Dale’s wife and creative partner, is a locally noted environmental educator. She works for the EarthWays Center of Missouri Botanical Garden and hosts the long-running podcast *Earthworms* from KDHX St. Louis Independent Media. She enjoyed hosting Lawrence Master Gardeners for a recent tour of
the Garden’s sustainability features, including ecological landscaping and examples of St. Louis green innovations.

Douglas County Extension Master Gardeners will have the opportunity to participate in a one-day workshop with Dale and Jean on Saturday, April 4. The workshop will be held at the Hidden Valley Girl Scout Camp, 3420 Bob Billings Parkway, Lawrence, KS 66049. Hours for the workshop are 9 am to 4 pm. During the morning Dale and Jean will lead participants to identify and collect bush honeysuckle. After lunch, the group will work in 2-person teams to each create a small table ready for a topper of each person’s choice.

Cost of the workshop is $40, with morning refreshments provided. Included in the price is the “three legger” branch, screws and use of provided tools. Participants should bring a sack lunch and dress suitably for the weather as we will be outside during the morning. The afternoon session will be held inside the camp cabin. We will be using battery-operated and hand tools, as access to electrical outlets is limited. For more information, please refer to the workshop’s website, found at: http://www.woodworms.net/think-about-tables/think-about-tables-info.html

Registration is limited to 20 participants. Sign up will be available at the February and March general meetings. Checks made out to Douglas County Extension Master Gardeners or cash will be accepted at time of registration. This workshop will provide 2.5 hours of volunteer time and 3 hours of advanced education credit!

If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Hornberger at cindyhornberger54@gmail.com

**NEWSLETTER QUIZ FOR MARCH!**

Time for an I.D. Quiz! Do you know what this is?

Send your answer to me, at bekheck@gmail.com, by 6:00 p.m., Thursday, March 19th.

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The Monthly **Update** is your chance to make your committee or activity known. If you are having organizational meetings, activities, or a call for volunteers, let the **Update** help you get the word out. Send the write up to Sharon Ashworth at Sashworth@ksu.edu or Bekki Heckman at bekheck@gmail.com by the 5th of the month to be included in the newsletter. To assure your place on the next regular meeting agenda send a request to Nancy Smelser at nsmels1@yahoo.com 3-5 days before the meeting. You will also get a chance to speak at the meeting, but this will reserve a space on the agenda.

*If you are planning to distribute handouts, papers, or publish advertisements on behalf of EMG’s, these need to be reviewed by Marlin Bates, prior to distribution or publication, to make sure we are on track with Kansas State University requirements.*
“Water Gardening – Mini to Magnificent”

POSTPONED

The Douglas County Master Gardeners Executive Board met this morning to consider if proceeding with Water Garden Symposium this Saturday, March 14 is appropriate. The CDC has indicated that the uncertainty of the coronavirus threat makes gatherings of older or immune-compromised persons ill-advised at this time. Many of our registrants meet that criteria and indicate that they are uncomfortable attending at this time.

The Board decided this morning that we will postpone the Water Garden Symposium until later this year when the threat is diminished. We apologize for any inconvenience this late change creates, but we need to do what is right by members and err on the side of caution.

Kevin Nelson
President, Douglas County Extension Master Gardeners

From Nancy Smelser
Almond Tea Cakes (Gma Ruth)

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, melted
2 eggs
1 cup sugar
1 cup flour
1 to 2 tsps Almond Extract, (I use 1, to taste)
Sliced almonds

Melt butter, whip in eggs. Stir in sugar, flour, and extract.
Spread into well-greased 8” round cake pan, or pie pan. (I use parchment in the bottom of pan)
Sprinkle sliced almonds on top.
Bake 40-42 minutes at 325deg, will be golden brown..
Cool and cut into pie wedges.

Note: This is one of my 'heirloom' recipes, from Grandma. It's the best!
Gma would sometimes sub a tsp of Vanilla in place of the Almond Extract, to make the best Strawberry shortcake you've ever tasted!

Organizational Meeting Minutes for Members