

DROUGHT

continued from page 1

and break like dead, dry twigs it could mean the tree has died. On the other hand, if the twigs bend and don't break with a snap, the tree may still be alive. Second, use your fingernail to scrape bark from a small twig or branch. If the tissue under the bark is green and moist, the tree may still be alive. To be absolutely sure the tree is not dead, wait until the next spring to see if it sprouts a new crop of leaves.

Watering During Drought

During times of drought, the best thing for trees and plants is water. Homeowners should consider watering valuable shade trees (pine or hardwood) and other landscape plants to lessen the stress from drought and heat. Thoroughly water the ground area beneath the branches in the evening or early morning. About one to four inches of water should be applied; a light sprinkling has no value. To measure the amount of water applied, place a rain gauge or a tall straight sided can in the sprinkler pattern. When there is one to four inches of water in the gauge or can, the tree should be adequately watered. Without rainfall, watering should be done about every 14 days. (DJ)



NEST BOXES

continued from page 3

- of the box, which will assist the baby birds in reaching the exit hole when they are ready to leave the nest.
- Don't use insecticides in your yard—birds rely on insects to feed their young (and the chemicals are harmful to the birds themselves).
- Keep your cat indoors—domestic cats kill millions of birds every year.
- Try to identify invasive exotic birds like European starlings and English sparrows which out-compete and kill native birds and remove their nests from your nesting box if you discover them.
- Each species of bird has different nesting habitats and requires a slightly different nesting box and mounting location. See resources.
- Purchase professionally manufactured nest boxes.

Source: Reprinted with permission from National Wildlife Federation (www.nwf.org)

Resources: The following publications are available at the Lancaster County Extension office or online at <http://lancaster.unl.edu>.
 • *Build a Nest Box to Attract Birds* (free and available at lancaster.unl.edu)
 • *Shelves, Houses and Feeders for Birds and Mammals* (RP338 - \$4)

ALL-AMERICAN

continued from page 2

Consistently blooming throughout the season, 'Forever White' is a new eustoma, or lisianthus, that will perform well throughout the growing season. Good for hot, dry conditions, plant is better in sunny locations. If you forget to water it, it will tolerate drought. Reaching a height of 12 inches, this is also a fine plant for container gardening as well as the flower border, with its neat branching habit.

Melon 'Angel'



'Angel' is a new melon which has a crisp and refreshing texture and good sweet flavor. The interior of this melon is white, with netted exterior that turns to a light, cream-yellow and weighs in at about 2 to 3 pounds when mature. Resistant to Fusarium wilt, strains 0 and 2, the vines reach out about 6 feet and fruits mature in 60 days from started plants.

Summer Squash 'Papaya Pear'



Quick to grow to harvest from seed, 'Papaya Pear' will reach maturity in about 40 days from seed, a great plus for cooler growing areas. Pear shaped and golden, this squash is best when harvested at 3 inches in length and to continue productivity. Smaller in size and more compact than other squashes, the vines are good for small garden areas and a good candidate for container gardening. (MJF)

EGG SAFETY

continued from page 6

hunt, consider hiding places carefully. Avoid areas where the eggs might come into contact with pets, wild animals, birds, reptiles, insects or lawn chemicals. Refrigerate eggs after the hunt; as long as the eggs are NOT out of refrigeration over TWO hours (including the time spent dying them), they'll be safe to eat. Plan to eat your Easter eggs within one week. Make sure you find all the eggs you've hidden to eliminate the chances of animals eating spoiled eggs.

- Consider making one batch of eggs for hunting and one batch for eating to remove some of the safety concerns.

The Perfect Hard-Cooked Egg

Whether hard- or soft-cooked, this method is incorrectly called boiled eggs. Although the cooking water must come to a boil, eggs should not be boiled because high temperatures make them tough and rubbery. Place eggs in a single layer in a saucepan. Add enough water to come at least one-inch above the eggs. Cover and quickly bring just to a boil. Remove pan from heat and let eggs stand 15 minutes. Immediately run cold water over the eggs until cool. It will help eliminate a green ring that can occur if eggs are left in the hot water too long.

For more information, contact Mary Torell at 472-0752 or e-mail mtorell2@unl.edu.



NEWCOMERS

continued from page 6

Through NEP they learn to shop weekly using a grocery list and how to properly store and prepare their purchases. "They also learn to refrigerate eggs, thaw food in the refrigerator rather than the counter, and the meaning of expiration dates," she said.

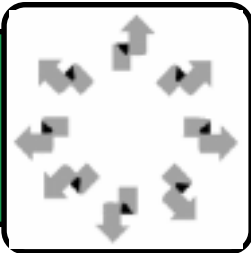
"Many newcomers who learned to cook by following family traditions now learn to follow recipes, while others have discovered low-fat alternatives to frying foods," said Burson, who also collaborates with the English Language Learner (ELL) program in Lincoln Public Schools. ELL teaches children healthy habits such as washing their hands before eating and understanding how much sugar some popular cold cereals contain, Burson said.

"NEP has been very beneficial to the ELL population at Park Middle School because students see nutrition in action," said Jolene Schlemmer, a family and consumer science teacher working with ELL students at Park.

NEP participants, most of whom are women, receive a certificate and cookbook with nutrient information when they complete the program.

In Lancaster, Douglas and Sarpy counties in 2000-2001, there were 3,109 NEP participants who care for 11,468 family members.

Miscellaneous



West Nile Virus Update

"West Nile encephalitis, a mosquito-transmitted disease, was first documented in North America during the summer of 1999, when an outbreak occurred in New York City. Since that time, cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) infection have been confirmed in northeastern, north central, southern and western regions of the United States and the virus is expected to spread throughout North America. As of December 2002, there were 3,949 confirmed human cases of WNV, including 254 fatalities." (Information from *USDA Regional Pest Management Centers, National Pest Alert, "West Nile Virus in North America."*)

With the return of spring comes the threat of West Nile Virus. For information about WNV, mosquito control recommendations and state resources visit www.ncpmc.org/newsalerts/westnilevirus.html or call our office at 441-7180 and request publication "West Nile Virus — Getting Prepared (G1464).

Did You Know?

- Each American farmer feeds 130 or more people
- Agriculture is America's #1 export
- New technology means farmers are more environmentally friendly than ever before.

Fact is, we should all take pride in American agriculture! The industry is providing every American—as well as millions more around the world—with the essentials of life, food, fiber, even clothing.



Celebrate National Ag Day March 21, 2003

Learn more at www.agday.org

grow.unl.edu

Who knows more about growing than we do?
The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

UNIVERSITY OF Nebraska Lincoln

A GROWING DEMAND

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, world population will increase from 6.2 billion to an estimated 7.5 billion people by 2020 — more than 20 percent growth. Increased demand for food and fiber will require well educated men and women.

At Nebraska, you can prepare for a career that extends well beyond traditional agricultural production. Choose from agribusiness management, economics, commodity handling, marketing, food science, processing, distribution, retailing, banking, veterinary and biomedical science, and environmental and wildlife studies — and more.

Call us toll-free at **1-800-742-8800 ext. 2541** or visit our campus

College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) Week
 April 6-12, East Campus — check out the fun!
 April 11, 9 a.m.-11 p.m. • Junior/Sophomore Visit Day

"Cook It Quick" Web Site Named "Site of the Day"

UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County's "Cook It Quick" Web pages have recently been named "Web Site of the Day" by two different Web sites: foodsitedoftheday.com and refdesk.com! Refdesk bases its selections on authority of the source, accuracy, objectivity, timeliness and ease of use.

Cook It Quick helps you prepare healthy foods in a hurry by offering tips, solutions, fast facts and food safety information. People can also sign up for e-mail updates.

Visit Cook It Quick at lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq.htm