

The NEBLINE[®]

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County
"Helping Nebraskans enhance their lives through research-based education."

September 2004
Vol. XVII, No. 9

441-7180 • Web site: lancaster.unl.edu

In This Issue

Horticulture	2
Environmental Focus	3
Food & Fitness	4
Home & Family Living	5
Farm Views	6
Urban Agriculture	7
4-H & Youth	8-9
Community Focus	10
Miscellaneous	11
Lancaster County Fair	12

2004 LANCASTER COUNTY FAIR



View county fair photos on page 12 of this issue. More photos and complete 4-H results are online at lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Fair

What if You Could Access Extension's Educational Resources at the Push of a Button?

Soni Cochran
Extension Associate

Since its beginning, Cooperative Extension has delivered research-based knowledge to communities through direct teaching and publications. We still do. But over the years, new technologies have provided Cooperative Extension additional methods of helping people put knowledge to work.

The Information Highway

Of all the technologies, the Internet has had the greatest impact on how people access information. Cooperative Extension uses the Web to maximize the accessibility of its educational materials. You can access Cooperative Extension's online resources 24-hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year! In addition, search engines make finding what you are looking for as easy and as fast as typing in a keyword!

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County began putting educational resources online in 1997. Now, we have more than 4,000 Web pages of information! Not only do Lancaster County residents, Nebraskans and



Americans utilize our site, but we have Web users from more than 100 countries monthly.

Keeping It Easy to Use

In order to keep Cooperative Extension's extensive online information manageable, we work hard so you don't have to. Educational resources are organized by subject matter, and often cross referenced, for easy navigation.

Users can search the entire site, or search all of UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Web servers. Our educational materials are often among the first shown in Google or other search engine searches.

Our site is updated daily, and the home page features timely topics. A calendar shows upcoming extension programs at a glance.

Weaving the Web Into "Teachable Moments"

Learning is a continual process and online materials can

be accessed whenever there is "teachable moment." Many times this occurs in formal (and usually planned) settings such as classrooms, programs and workshops. Often it is more informal (and immediate) such as one-on-one contact, phone conversations and e-mail.

Community professionals, educators, parents, grandparents, youth and individuals are recognizing Cooperative Extension as a source for unbiased, research-based information and education on the Internet. Here are some resources being readily used in "teachable moments."

- Teachers, students and parents utilize the 4-H Embryology Web site to view movie clips of eggs being candled, baby chicks hatching and EGG Cam to supplement classroom materials, research and home projects.
- Educators, nutritionists and dieticians are downloading print-ready educational resources and power-point

presentations to share with clientele and classrooms.

- Garden professionals and home gardeners alike access weekly articles, pest updates, order horticulture videos and find links to University of Nebraska resources and programs such as *Backyard Farmer*.
- Our gardening site also has many youth gardening resources suitable for classroom or home use.
- A wide variety of individuals use Cooperative Extension's resources to identify insects, pests and wildlife. For pests, least toxic control options are encouraged if control is necessary.
- Farmers and acreage owners access the latest information on agriculture and topics related to rural living.

Soni Cochran is the Webmaster for the UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County Web site, coordinating information from all staff members and state and national Extension Web sites. If you have any comments or suggestions about the Web site, e-mail her at scochran2@unl.edu.

Sorting Through Internet Clutter

The Internet can be overwhelming. Information on the Internet can come from anyone. Just because you find it on the Internet doesn't make it true. You have to judge the source of the information carefully before deciding to trust it. It is also a good idea to double check the information by visiting other trusted sources.

How do you recognize an "information Web page" — whose purpose is to present factual information? The URL address typically ends in .edu or .gov, and many of these pages are sponsored by educational institutions or government agencies. For example the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County URL is <http://lancaster.unl.edu>

Here are some questions you should ask yourself about an information Web page. The more you answer "yes," the more likely you can determine whether the sources provides high information quality.

1. Is it clear who is responsible for the contents of the Web site? The site's sponsor should be reputable and unbiased. Does the site include information about the author or the sponsoring agency. Is there contact information on the site?
2. Is the purpose of the site to educate?
3. Is the site objective? Is the information provided as a public service? Is it free of advertising? If there is very limited advertising, is it clearly separated from the informational content?
4. Does the site indicate dates when the material has been added or updated? Are there other indications the site is kept current?
5. Is the information easy to read and understand? Is it accurate? Are photos, graphs and charts used?
6. Is there a print equivalent to the Web page?

Source: Checklist for an Information Web Page (Widner University)

What Users Are Saying

"This site [4-H Embryology] is awesome!!! I am learning about embryology and it is awesome and I get to come to the computer lab everyday to come on to this site..and it's worth it!" —Shannon (age 12)

"School has just started and we are already sending lots of children home with head lice. I went on the Internet and found your handout to be one of the best." —A. Kasselmann RN-BSN

"In my work, forecasting electricity usage for irrigation pumping, I have used it [irrigation cost Excel spreadsheet] extensively for scenario analysis. I have also used it, and recommended it, as a teaching tool for other electric cooperative staff in Colorado and Nebraska."

"First hit for a Google search, and gave me exactly the answer I wanted!"

"Great site! I haven't explored all of it but it is a wonderful reference and very well done. Thank you for working so hard on it!"

"I use these [resources] to educate my patients in the hospital and at health fairs, for co-workers. Thank you so much, they are all so great!"

"I really enjoy your monthly e-mail newsletters — they are always full of useful ideas that one can actually use in everyday life (such as this article). Shows you are in touch with our lives and understand your readers. Thank you."

Most Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 537
Lincoln, Nebraska

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Lancaster County 4-H Council
Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County
444 Cherry Creek Road • Suite A
Lincoln, Nebraska 68528-1507