



# Seven Garden Gaffes to Avoid This Year

By Sarah Browning,  
 Extension Educator in  
 Lancaster County

What's the difference between a new gardener and an experienced one? The experienced gardener has killed way more plants — or so the saying goes!

Even armed with a substantial amount of knowledge, gardening is still a highly trial-and-error venture. Sometimes that's on purpose, as gardeners try new plants in their gardens. Sometimes it's an accident, when a plant that should grow in a particular site just won't, no matter what you do.

But it's always good, when possible, to learn from generations-of-gardeners-past and not have to make every single mistake yourself. Here are seven gardening lessons to help you avoid a few common gardening missteps.

**1. Underestimating How Big a Plant Will Get.** It's so hard to visualize how big — tall and wide — the small plant you put in the ground will eventually become. We've all seen houses completely covered up by evergreens planted way too close to the foundation with little understanding of how big the trees would eventually grow. No matter if it's a shade tree, evergreen, shrub or perennial, this mistake is all too common.

Do some research before putting a plant in the ground and have a



Spruce trees planted too close to front of house are now blocking the entrance and views.

Photo by Sarah Browning, Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County.

good understanding of how tall and wide it will get. Pay attention to suggested spacing and follow these recommendations as a minimum. Don't worry about your neighbors teasing you for planting a tiny "stick" 20-30 feet



Forsythia is an early spring blooming shrub, which is often pruned at the wrong time, removing many of its flower buds.

from your house; they probably have to tunnel through junipers to get to their front door.

**2. Pruning Off Flower Buds.** This is often the answer to the question, "Why didn't my forsythia/lilac/hydrangea/etc. bloom?" Spring and early summer blooming trees and shrubs form flower buds the previous fall. Winter or early spring pruning removes many of these flower buds, so wait until after these plants have bloomed to prune.

**3. Killing Plants by Not Watering Enough.** All newly installed plants, even drought-tolerant

species, need supplemental watering until they are well-established. Perennials can develop enough roots to be considered established in 2 years, but woody shrubs and trees often take 3-4 years. Pay attention to how much (or little) precipitation your garden plants receive and check soil moisture with your index finger if plants are wilting. If the soil is dry, provide deep, infrequent irrigation.

#### 4. Killing Plants by Watering Too Much.

This is a common problem in landscapes with in-ground irrigation systems which are run too often, but also commonly affects plants in poorly drained locations, such as low spots where water collects and areas near the base of downspouts. Houseplants or plants in containers without drainage holes are also common victims to overwatering.

Improving soil

drainage through aeration or building raised beds will alleviate the problems of poorly drained soil and low spots. Another strategy is to use plants in these locations which prefer high levels of soil moisture or are tolerant of wet roots.

Turf irrigation should not begin until the soil feels dry and the first signs of wilting symptoms are seen — a slight change in grass color to blue gray and leaves that do not spring back after foot traffic.

Cool season grasses, including Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue, do not need irrigation in eastern Nebraska until dry conditions begin, usually in late June. Turning on a turf irrigation system in May and running it 2 or 3 times a week all summer is a recipe for trouble, including an unhealthy lawn and tree death.

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# Youth Advance Health Equity with Community-Based Research

*By Emily Gratopp, MS, ACSM-CPT, Extension Educator in Lancaster County*

Two teams of youth, Extension personnel and community partners are advancing health equity in Lancaster County through community-based action research. The teams are a part of the Nebraska Youth Health Equity Project (YHEP), which is a partnership between Nebraska Extension, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Nebraska Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). The purpose of the project is to foster youth leadership development and community engagement while addressing a health equity need in Nebraska.

The Nebraska YHEP utilizes a team of youth ages 12–19 in collaboration with an adult coach and community collaborators. The mission of each team is to: 1) engage in learning about health equity; 2) determine local health equity needs; 3) seek to address a local health equity need and 4) communicate results of the youth-driven project in a Spring Showcase in April of 2024. The youth-led projects explore health issues and social determinants of health in their community. The teams collaborate with public health officials and stakeholders about key health issues and present their findings. There are currently 27 teams participating in the project, with representation across the state including FCCLA, Extension and community groups.

## Lancaster County Teams

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County is partnering with youth and community members on two teams. The teams are building on efforts started by Nebraska Extension's Lincoln Health Equity Coalition (LHEC), which has partnered with youth, Master Health Volunteers and community members from its inception in 2021 to focus action on community-driven, community-voiced health equity needs.

Prior focus groups completed by the LHEC with community members who self-identified as having experienced a health inequity, highlighted two health equity needs: 1) improved methods for sharing education and resources to health services, 2) determining the best method for community members impacted by health inequities to be collaborators and have their voices heard in the community change process. The youth-led teams entitled “Resource Sharing” and “Videovoice” are researching these community needs for their Nebraska YHEP, respectively.

## Resource Sharing

The “Resource Sharing” team has completed interviews and surveys with community members at Center for People and the People's City Mission to better understand the current methods people use to find resources such as food, housing, jobs, clothing and child-care. The next step of this team is to test different resource-sharing methods such as newly designed, topic-based fliers that one youth, Kearrah, has developed along with kiosk-like tablets at community agencies that provide access to MyLink and the website version of 211 Resource Hotline.

## Videovoice

The “Videovoice” team is exploring unique methods of gathering community input and voice in the community change process. The youth have tested developing and filming videos that give voices to various health equity needs, especially among youth and emerging adults. In addition to videos, the youth are testing podcasting and developing personas of community members to better articulate the story of various health equity needs that are afflicting individuals and families in Lancaster County. It is best practice for community development to seek and include community input in community change efforts, however, often voices are missing or underrepresented from those experiencing the greatest need.

Thus, finding creative ways of including underrepresented voices in community development is essential to making high-impact changes.

## Spring Showcase

The collective efforts of the Lancaster County YHEP, along with the efforts across the state, will culminate in a showcase sponsored by the Nebraska Office of Health Disparities and Health Equity, Nebraska Extension and Nebraska FCCLA. This event will take place on Saturday, April 8 from 2-4 p.m. at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln East Campus Union. The showcase will provide an opportunity to interact with

the Nebraska YHEP teams and their investigation into health issues in their communities along with greetings from UNL admission and other university representatives.



## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

*By Emily Gratopp, MS, ACSM-CPT, Extension Educator in Lancaster County*

March is National Nutrition Month. This recipe calls for a unique combination of a lesser-known vegetable – kohlrabi – along with apples and dried cranberries. I recommend pairing with grilled chicken sliders!

## CRUNCHY KOHLRABI SALAD

*(Yield: 6 servings)*

- 2-3 kohlrabi (2 cups), scrubbed with clean vegetable brush under running water, peeled and cut into matchsticks**
- 1 apple, gently rubbed under running water, cored and cut into matchsticks**
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries or raisins**
- 1/4 cup sunflower seeds**
- 1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar**
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil**
- 1 Tablespoon maple syrup**
- 1 teaspoon mustard (Dijon or other)**
- Salt and pepper to taste (optional)**



Photo by Marusa Jones, Nutrition Education Program

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Wash and prepare kohlrabi and apple.
3. In a large bowl, combine kohlrabi, apple, dried cranberries and sunflower seeds.
4. To make the dressing, combine vinegar, vegetable oil, maple syrup, mustard, salt and pepper (if desired) in a small bowl until well combined.
5. Add dressing to salad and toss.
6. Store leftovers in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to four days.

*Nutrition Information: Serving Size (1/2 cup): Calories 110; Total Fat 5g; Saturated Fat 0.5g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 60mg; Total Carbohydrates 15g; Fiber 3g; Total Sugars 11g, includes 5g Added Sugars; Protein 2g; Vitamin D 0%; Calcium 2%; Iron 0%; Potassium 6%.*



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## 5. Accidentally Killing Plants With Pesticide Applications.

Using pesticides is tricky and even when using the correct product, plant damage can occur if the product is mixed too strong, plants are drought-stressed or the temperatures are too high when the application is made. But unfortunately, a simpler explanation is all too common for plant damage — the wrong product is used, often a result of not reading the label thoroughly or understanding the product being used.

One common example of “wrong product” is the use a non-selective herbicide in a lawn to kill weeds, then finding that product killed all the plants it was applied to. Always read product labels carefully to make sure you are using them correctly.

Another common occurrence is damage from residual product in a sprayer not cleaned thoroughly after use. The best practice to avoid this type of damage is to have several sprayers, each designated for a specific product or purpose. For example, have one sprayer for non-selective herbicides like glyphosate (RoundUp), another for broadleaf weed killers and a third sprayer for insecticides. Thoroughly cleaning the sprayer after each use is still recommended!

**6. Volcano Mulching.** This refers to a cone-shaped mulch mound piled around the base of trees and laying against the tree's bark. Excessively



Volcano mulching is very bad for trees.

Photo by John Fech, Nebraska Extension in Douglas, Sarpy Counties.

deep volcano mulch provides an excellently protected habitat for voles, which commonly damage the bark of young trees in winter. Volcano mulching also holds moisture against the tree's bark, promoting infection by bark rots, which may eventually lead to death of the tree.

Mulch should be applied at a depth of 2-4 inches; 2-inches for perennials and 3 to 4-inches for woody plants. With fine organic mulches, such as compost or shredded leaves, maintain a 3-inch layer. For coarse materials, like wood chips, maintain a 4-inch layer. Mulch should be applied in a flat, wide layer — like a pancake — and kept back a few inches from the plant's trunk, so it is not laying against the bark.

**7. Planting Too Early.** Spring fever is hard for gardeners to resist, but remember soil is still cold and the chance of normal spring frosts between now and late April

is guaranteed. Make sure the soil is warm enough for vigorous plant growth before putting anything in the ground. You can check soil temperatures at <https://go.unl.edu/soiltemp> or buy a soil thermometer and measure your own soil temps at a 4-inch depth.

If you are a beginning vegetable gardener or want to double-check the recommended times for planting vegetables, check out “The First Steps of Vegetable Gardening,” at <https://go.unl.edu/veggies101>. Don't plant frost tender plants before the last average frost date unless you're willing to protect them! For the Lincoln area, there is only a 10% chance of a spring freeze after April 29-May 12. Find the average last frost dates for your location at “Dates and Probabilities for the Last Spring Freeze,” at <https://go.unl.edu/springfrost>.

*This column was inspired by 10 Gardening Gaffes to Avoid in the New Year, from the National Garden Bureau, author George Weigel.*

## GARDEN GUIDE

### THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, Extension Associate in Lancaster County

Do not till your garden when the soil is wet. It will form clods which are difficult to break up and interfere with cultivation and planting during the growing season.

Consider planting native perennials beneficial to native pollinators like solitary bees, bumblebees and butterflies. Native plants include coreopsis, coneflower, aster, liatris, goldenrod, pasque flower, butterfly milkweed, pitcher sage, bee balm and purple poppy mallow.

Cut flower stalks back to the ground on daffodils, hyacinths and other spring flowering bulbs as the flowers fade. Do not cut the foliage until it dies naturally. The leaves are necessary to produce strong bulbs capable of reflowering next year.

Buy a notebook and use it to keep all your gardening information. List what you plant in the garden. Include the name of seed companies, plant name, variety, planting date and harvest date. During the growing season, keep notes on how well the plant does. If the variety is susceptible to disease, record what was used to treat any problems. All this information will be helpful in planning future gardens.

Turn the compost pile.

How are your houseplants doing? Check all five growing factors if your house plants are not growing well. Light, temperature, nutrients, moisture and humidity must be favorable to provide good growth.

Do not add organic matter to the soil when planting trees. It does not help the plant become established and it may create conditions that encourage the roots to stay inside the planting hole instead of spreading to surrounding soil. Do dig a large planting hole, but fill it with the original soil removed from it.

Remove sticks, rocks and other debris from your lawn to prevent damaging your lawnmower or injuring yourself when mowing. Check your lawnmower and other lawn-care equipment in preparation for the coming season.

Scatter annual poppy seeds in flower borders. The fine seeds need not be covered. The plants grow rapidly and provide colorful flowers in early summer.

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## GROBigRed Virtual Learning Series

Wednesdays  
12 p.m. CST

Join the experts from Nebraska Extension to learn and ask questions about:

**3/13** — Maximizing Garden Potential • David Lott & Ian Peterson

**4/10** — Rain — Use It, Don't Lose It! • Kelly Feehan

**5/8** — Simple Landscape Design • Elizabeth Exstrom

**6/12** — Summer Lawn Care • John Fech

**7/10** — Vegetable Garden Disease • Sarah Browning

**8/14** — Fall Garden Maximization • David Lott & Ian Peterson

**9/11** — Pollinator Habitats • Scott Evans & Mary Jane Frogge

Register at <https://hles.unl.edu/grobired>

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EXTENSION



# 2024 LINCOLN EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE

## SATURDAY, MARCH

### 23

8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.  
(5 hours of in-service will be given  
for this conference)

NEBRASKA EXTENSION IN LANCASTER  
COUNTY CONFERENCE ROOMS  
444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln

**No Cost**

Includes light breakfast, lunch and a copy of the book  
*Illuminating Care*

**For more information or questions, contact  
Cara Small at [cara.small@esu6.org](mailto:cara.small@esu6.org)  
or 402-761-3341**

Register online at [www.esu6.org](http://www.esu6.org)  
by March 16, 2024.



### Carol Garboden Murray, M.ED. Care is Education Workshop

The Seven Lamps of Care:

- You will pioneer a practice of care as education, right, bodily, an art, a science and as what makes us human.

Reclaiming Love in Early Education and Care:

- Join Carol Garboden Murray for a discussion that seeks to define love, question love and analyze love as we legitimize love in early education and care.



This conference is approved through the Nebraska Department of Education and sponsored by the Southeast Early Learning Connection.

## 2024 Chemigation Training

Chemigation is the practice of applying agrichemicals to cropland using an irrigation system to distribute both the water and chemical. Chemigation certification lasts 4 years, so please check your certification license or verify expiration online at <http://go.unl.edu/chemigation-search>.

Nebraska Extension is gearing up to train new and recertifying chemigators in 2024. Chemigators have two options, online self-study or in-person training. Both certification options are free and have the same time commitment and exam requirement.

### Online Self-Study Chemigation Training

All information about the online training is at <https://water.unl.edu/article/agricultural-irrigation/chemigation> including:

- Access to digital versions of the chemigation training

manual, calibration workbook and calculator.

- Watch the two short, online training videos.
- Link to the online chemigation training.

Contact the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Pesticide Safety Education office at 402-472-1632 or [pested@unl.edu](mailto:pested@unl.edu) with issues about the online training.

### In-Person Chemigation Training

The in-person training requires registration due to room capacity limitations and to notify attendees of inclement weather cancellations. Please register for in-person trainings at <https://go.unl.edu/chemigation2024> or call your local Extension office for help registering online.

Training dates/locations in southeast Nebraska:

- Tuesday, Feb. 13, 1–4 p.m. at Gage County Extension

Office, 1115 W. Scott, Beatrice in cooperation with the Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District (NRD).

- Thursday, Feb. 15, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. at Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln in cooperation with the Lower Platte South NRD.
- Thursday, March 7, 1–4 p.m. at Nemaha NRD Meeting Room, 62161 Hwy. 136, Tecumseh in cooperation with the Nemaha NRD.

If you have questions related to these in-person chemigation trainings, please contact John Nelson, Extension Educator for Lancaster, Cass and Otoe counties, at 402-441-7180 or [jnelson158@unl.edu](mailto:jnelson158@unl.edu).

For a list of other in-person trainings throughout Nebraska, go to <https://go.unl.edu/2024-chemigation-training-dates>.

## Corn Yield Challenge for 4-H and FFA Members

Nebraska Extension and the Nebraska Corn Board are delighted to announce the Corn Yield Challenge, a prestigious contest open to 4-H members (aged 8 and older as of January 1st) and FFA members (in-school members). This competition is designed to guide participants through a comprehensive exploration of all facets of corn production, including aspects related to agricultural careers associated with corn production.

### Key Features

- Team Participation:** Teams comprising of two or more youth participants will collaboratively embark on the challenge.
- Innovative Practices:**

Youth will be tasked with implementing a production practice differing from the norm, with the goal of assessing its impact on increasing corn yield.

- Data Collection:** The Corn Yield Challenge management summary will systematically gather crucial information, including yields, cropping history and production details.
- Recognition and Rewards:** Outstanding achievements will be duly rewarded with cash prizes and plaques for the top three teams: **First Place:** \$1,000; **Second Place:** \$500; **Third Place:** \$250; **Special Awards:** In addition to the top rankings, commendable

efforts will be acknowledged through the “Extra Mile” and “Ag Literacy” Awards, each carrying a value of \$200.

This competition not only fosters a spirit of innovation in corn production, but also serves as a platform for recognizing dedication and excellence within the 4-H and FFA communities. We encourage all eligible participants to embrace this opportunity to showcase their skills and contribute to the advancement of agricultural practices.

For detailed guidelines and participation information, please refer to <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/youth/cornchallenge> or contact Brandy VanDeWalle at [brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu](mailto:brandy.vandewalle@unl.edu).



## Lancaster County Ag VIP Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the following awards, which will be recognized at the Lancaster County Ag Society Annual Blue Jean Gala Banquet to be held in November 2024 at the Sandhills Global Event Center. All forms can be found at <https://superfair.org/get-involved/vip-awards> and are due April 15.

### Ag Society Hall of Fame

The Lancaster County Agricultural Society's "Hall of Fame" is located in the Meeting Center at the Sandhills Global Event Center. This award formally recognizes those individuals who have

dedicated time and effort to the Ag Society beyond the normal volunteer hours and have made significant contributions to the establishment, development, advancement or improvement of the Lancaster County Super Fair.

### Pioneer & Heritage Farm Family Awards

The Aksarben Pioneer and Heritage Farm Family Awards honor families who have held the same family ownership of land for 100 years (Pioneer Award) and 150 years (Heritage Award). Recipients are presented a plaque and gatepost marker.

## 4-H Horse/Livestock Judging Teams at Nationals

This January, several Lancaster County 4-H youth represented Nebraska at the 4-H/FFA Western National Roundup in Denver, Colorado in the Horse Classic Contests and Livestock Judging.

### Horse Classic — Hippology

Lancaster County 4-H'er **Shea Frink** was on the Saunders/Lancaster/Washington County Hippology Team, which earned 3rd place in the judging phase, 3rd place team problem phase, reserved champion in the written exam/slides phase, reserve champion in the stations phase and reserve champion overall! **Shea Frink** received 6th individual in the horse judging phase.

### Horse Classic — Horse Judging

Lancaster County Horse Judging team of **Dillon Docter, Faith Oldemeyer, Amelia Proffitt and Max Roberts** (coached by Roger Bell) earned 4th in reasons, 8th in performance, 7th in halter and 7th high team overall. **Faith Oldemeyer** received 12th high individual overall.

### Livestock Judging

Lancaster County Livestock Judging team of **Lilee Chevalier, Noah Jelinek, Clara Johnson and**

**Olivia Vanderford** (coached by **Sarah Dilley**) earned 12th in swine and 8th in sheep. **Clara Johnson** received 3rd individual in sheep.



Shea Frink (second from left) represented Lancaster County



(L-R) Max Roberts, Amelia Proffitt, Faith Oldemeyer and Dillon Docter



(L-R) Lilee Chevalier, Clara Johnson, Olivia Vanderford and Noah Jelinek

## 4-H Teens Work Together to Lead the Lock-In



4-H Teen Council members introduced themselves to kick-off the carnival extravaganza-themed 4th and 5th grade Lock-In.

By Tracy Anderson, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

In January 2024, 18 4-H Teen Council members organized and led the overnight 4-H Lock-In for 26 4th and 5th graders. This year, teens chose the theme, "Carnival Extravaganza," and divided into three committees: games, crafts and snacks. At the Lock-In, attendees rotated through each of the three groups, made friends, slept a little and had lots of fun! Here's what two of the teens said about this year's 4-H Lock-In.

### Fun and Energetic

"This year the 4th and 5th grade Lock-in was a blast for both teens and kids. The Lock-in is an annual event held by members of the teen council who strive to create a fun, energetic environment for kids. We started the night in a big group playing games and getting to know each other. Then, we split into our groups and visited the games, crafts and foods committees, all led by teens. At the end of the night, we all joined back together and the kids watched movies. This is an amazing opportunity for teens to gain experience in leadership. Once



Lock-In participants had fun making carnival masks, a cup & ball game, and a carousel during the crafts session.

again, the 4th and 5th grade Lock-in was a big success!"

—Ava Wharton, Teen Council Member

### Leadership Skills

"The 2024 4-H Lock-in, with the "Carnival Extravaganza" theme, was a vibrant night for both the youth and the Teen Council! Everyone embraced the carnival spirit as the 4th and 5th graders crafted unique carnival masks, enjoyed treats like hot dogs and played fun games as they formed strong friendships. Teen Council spent months planning the event, which facilitated growth in their leadership skills as they bonded together. I enjoyed watching the youth fill the air with laughter, making our hard work worth it!"

—Christina Xu, Teen Council President



Lock-in participants were excited to meet the "XYZ Monster" and had many questions for it!





## HEART OF 4-H VOLUNTEER AWARD

### Sheridan Swotek

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Sheridan Swotek of Kearney as winner of the March "Heart of 4-H Award" in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

Sheridan has volunteered in Lancaster County since 2020 when she first started announcing the Lancaster County Super Fair livestock shows. She has also helped record ribbons for the Swine show and assisted with the Elite Showmanship contest.

Sheridan was a 12-year Lancaster County 4-H'er and loves being involved with her home county's 4-H program. She also served as a Lancaster County 4-H Livestock Intern for two years.

"My favorite experience as a 4-H volunteer has been watching the younger members that were involved in 4-H when I graduated and throughout my internship, and now each year at county fair, grow up in 4-H and become great examples of the leaders for tomorrow!" she says. "Whether it is members in Pick-A-Pig who have now made strides in the swine industry, 4-H showmen who have asked each year to pass out ribbons to their peers in the show ring ... I enjoy witnessing them continue to make their best better!" She adds, "While I no longer live in Lancaster County, coming home for the Lancaster County Fair as a volunteer is something I look forward to every year!"



### 4-H Club Gives Youth With Disabilities Opportunity to Show Lambs

Unified Showing is a 4-H club which empowers youth with disabilities through learning about and showing lambs with the aid of youth buddies. The club will practice once a week throughout the summer and then exhibit lambs in a special class at the 4-H Sheep Show during the Lancaster County Super Fair. Youth with disabilities ages 8–18 and youth without disabilities ages 14–18 are encouraged to apply. Applications will be accepted through April 1. Lambs are provided and kept at a local farm. For more information, contact the Extension office at 402-441-7180.



## HEART OF 4-H VOLUNTEER AWARD

### Kim Bowen

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Kim Bowen of Lincoln as winner of the April "Heart of 4-H Award" in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

Kim has volunteered with 4-H for more than 25 years. Previously, she served as Project Leader for the Flying Hoofs 4-H Club (she was a member of this club when she was a child) and as a parent leader for the Lucky Lopers 4-H Club. She is currently the Project Leader for the Silver Spurs 4-H Club.

Over the years, she has volunteered at, helped plan and/or host many different 4-H horse clinics. She also has supported Lancaster County 4-H events such as the county fair, award celebrations, judging competitions, etc.

Kim likes being a 4-H volunteer because she believes it is important to help children be brave, explore their abilities, see the possibilities in their talents and to grow confidence in themselves to be successful.

"I enjoy working with children and watching them explore their horsemanship skills," she says. "My favorite experiences are when someone who believes they are meant to do one thing, finds that they are able to do something completely different — successfully! It's the first realization that their world is full of options, and they can be successful in anything they do. 4-H is really about helping kids grow and guiding their mindset through exploration as they develop into adults."



### 4-H Rabbit Show, March 16

The 4-H Spring Rabbit Show will be held on Saturday, March 16, 9 a.m. at the Sandhills Global Event Center – South Hall. Open to all youth ages 8–18, with a Clover Kids class for youth ages 5–7. This is a great opportunity for youth to talk to other 4-H'ers about where to purchase a good rabbit for a 4-H project, and to learn and practice showmanship. Rabbit Quiz and Breed Identification contests are free for youth to enter! The knowledge contests are open to adults for a minimal fee. Show flyer is at <https://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/companionanimal>. For questions, contact Kate Pulec at [kpulec3@unl.edu](mailto:kpulec3@unl.edu) or 402-441-7180.

### Dressage Schooling Show, April 20

The annual Spring Fling Dressage Schooling Show, presented by the Lancaster County Horse VIPs committee, will be held on Saturday, April 20, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. at the Sandhills Global Event Center. Open to all ages to benefit the 4-H horse program. Show flyer and registration form will be at <https://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/horse>.

### UNL Chick Days, March 16

University of Nebraska–Lincoln's Chick Days for small and back-yard poultry producers and youth will be held on Saturday, March 16, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Department of Animal Science, 3940 Fair St., Lincoln on UNL East Campus. More information and registration is at <https://animalscience.unl.edu/chick-days>. Register by Monday, March 11.



4-H is a community of youth learning in partnership with caring adults!



## 4-H Announcements

### FOR 4-H'ERS AND VOLUNTEERS

The 4-H Youth Development Program is open to all youth ages 5–18 and free to join in Lancaster County. If interested in joining or volunteering, call 402-441-7180.

**SPEECH & PSA CONTESTS** — The 4-H Prepared Speech and Radio Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contests are open to all 4-H'ers ages 5–18 — need not be enrolled in a specific project. For rules, helpful resources and examples, go to <https://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/speech>. The Prepared Speech Contest will be held on Sunday, March 3, starting at 1:30 p.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. Register by Tuesday, Feb. 27 at [https://go.unl.edu/lancasterspeech\\_psacontest2024](https://go.unl.edu/lancasterspeech_psacontest2024). In the Radio Public Service Announcement Contest, 4-H'ers submit a 60-second promotional audio recording that could be played on the radio to promote the work of Nebraska 4-H. Submit a PSA as a .wav, .mp3 or .m4a file electronically to [kpulec3@unl.edu](mailto:kpulec3@unl.edu) or on a CD to the Extension office by Tuesday, Feb. 27.

**HORSE STAMPEDE ENTRIES DUE MARCH 4** — The statewide 4-H Horse Stampede is planned for Saturday, March 23 on UNL East Campus. This event offers a variety of 4-H horse contests that don't require live horses, including public speaking, demonstration, quiz bowl, art and photography. All entries will be done online and are due by Monday, March 4. Receipt of entries can be submitted to the Extension office, as Lancaster County 4-H Council will pay entry fees for Lancaster County 4-H youth. More information and entry forms can be found at <https://4h.unl.edu/horse/stampede>.

**MARKET BEEF WEIGH-IN, MARCH 4** — 4-H and FFA exhibitors showing market steers or heifers at the Lancaster County Super Fair who want to participate in the Rate of Gain contest must weigh-in their projects at the 4-H/FFA Market Beef Weigh-In on Tuesday, March 4, 6–7 p.m. at the Sandhills Global Event Center – Equine Market Pavilion. Exhibitors planning to exhibit market beef, breeding beef and feeder calves at State Fair must have DNA sampled. It is strongly encouraged to have DNA hair samples collected and EID tagged at the time of weigh-in. For more information or to RSVP, contact Madelaine Polk at 402-441-7180 or [mpolk2@unl.edu](mailto:mpolk2@unl.edu).

**4-H MEMBERS AND LEADERS — RE-ENROLL BY APRIL 1!** — All 4-H members and volunteers must re-enroll for the 2023–24 4-H year. The website to enroll or re-enroll is <https://v2.4honline.com>. New members and fair projects may be updated through June 15. For returning families, please do not create a new account — use your previous log-in credentials. Step-by-step instructions for new and returning members, as well as new and returning club leaders, are at <https://4h.unl.edu/enroll>. NOTE: The only required health information is regarding allergies. **You are strongly encouraged to re-enroll by April 1 or you may miss out on communications such as NEBLINE, email reminders, etc.!** If you have questions, call 402-441-7180.

**4-H HORSEMANSHIP LEVEL TESTING DATES** — This year's 4-H horsemanship advancement level group testings will be held at the Lancaster Event Center Fairgrounds on the following Tuesday evenings: April 4, April 25, May 9, May 30, June 6 and June 27. Register at least one week in advance of the test date by contacting Kate Pulec at 402-441-7180 or [kpulec3@unl.edu](mailto:kpulec3@unl.edu). All other horsemanship level requirements and paperwork must be completed and handed in to Kate at the Extension office before the riding portion can be done. 4-H'ers must notify Kate ([kpulec3@unl.edu](mailto:kpulec3@unl.edu) or 402-441-7180) at least 24 hours in advance if they are unable to attend their test time, or a \$20 fee will be assessed. The fee will need to be paid before the 4-H'er will be allowed to test on another date.

**KIWANIS KARNIVAL IS A FUN COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY FOR 4-H CLUBS** — Families of 4-H members and Elliott Elementary School students are invited to attend the annual Kiwanis Karnival, a FREE family event sponsored by the Lincoln Center Kiwanis. 4-H clubs are needed to provide carnival-type booths. This is a great community service and leadership activity! The Karnival will be Friday, April 12, 5:30–7:30 p.m. at Elliott Elementary School, 225 S. 25th St., Lincoln. The event features carnival-type games for youth, bingo for adults, prizes, snacks, fun and fellowship. For more information, call Lorene Bartos at 402-423-7541 or 402-310-3481, or email [lbartos1@unl.edu](mailto:lbartos1@unl.edu).

### HOME DECOR & FURNITURE PAINTING WORKSHOP, APRIL 6

— 4-H youth ages 8 and up are invited to participate in a Furniture Painting workshop on Saturday, April 6, 9 a.m. until about noon at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. No cost to attend. Adults are welcome to attend to help youth. Must register by Monday, March 25 by calling 402-441-7180 or emailing Kristin at [kristin.geisert@unl.edu](mailto:kristin.geisert@unl.edu). Bring a small piece of unpainted home decor or furniture, such as a frame, shelf, stool or chair. These wood items can be found around your house, at craft stores, garage sales and thrift stores. Learn how to prepare new and used wood items by sanding, sealing, painting and finishing. All paints, brushes and finishes are provided. Wear old clothes appropriate for painting.

### PRESENTATIONS CONTEST, APRIL 27

— This year's Lancaster County 4-H Illustrated Presentations Contest will be Saturday, April 27, starting at 8:30 a.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. Open to all 4-H'ers ages 8–18 — need not be enrolled in a specific project. Register by Monday, April 22 by calling 402-441-7180 and providing youth name(s), age(s) by Jan. 1 of current year, presentation title(s) and email address. Specify if it is a team presentation. Time slots will be assigned in advance; however, 4-H staff will do their best to accommodate a time preference requested by a 4-H'er. A schedule of presentation times will be emailed to participants ahead of the contest date. During the contest, arrive and check-in at least 10 minutes prior to your scheduled time. A "how-to" handout will be available at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/fair> and the Extension office. All participants are strongly encouraged to read the handout.

### SPRING LEADER/VOLUNTEER UPDATE TRAINING, APRIL 18

— New leaders, experienced leaders, volunteers and parents are invited to attend a 4-H Spring Leader/Volunteer Update Training on Thursday, April 18, 9 a.m. via Zoom or in-person at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln and will focus on your value for 4-H'ers, static exhibits, opportunities for 4-H members and more. Learn about fair entry, contests and important Super Fair information. Don't miss out on meeting ideas, club tips and more! It is a great opportunity to connect with other parents and leaders. MUST register by Monday, April 8 by calling 402-441-7180 or emailing [kristin.geisert@unl.edu](mailto:kristin.geisert@unl.edu). Please indicate if you will be attending in-person or via Zoom.

### 4-H SPECIAL GARDEN AND AGRONOMY SEEDS

— 4-H families have the opportunity to participate in the special garden and/or special agronomy projects this year. The Special Garden Project is Princess of India Nasturtium. This Victorian-era heirloom flower can be grown in a garden or containers. Nasturtiums are annual flowers and will add a splash of color to any landscape. The Special Agronomy Project is sugar beets. Sugar beets are a major contributor to the U.S. sweetener industry and occur in a vast range of different food products. Seed packets are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Call the Extension office at 402-441-7180 to sign up for these special projects. The seed packages are sponsored by Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County and one seed packet per project, per family. Seeds will be mailed after April 30.

### DOG VIRTUAL TRIVIA CONTEST, MAY 8–15

— The Lancaster County 4-H Dog Virtual Trivia Contest will be available Wednesday, May 8, Noon–Wednesday, May 15, 11:59 p.m. Contest is open to 4-H'ers ages 8–18. This year's contest will focus on Sporting, Foundation Stock Service and Miscellaneous Class dog breeds. A study guide is now online at <https://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/fair/virtualanimals>. Contest links for each division will be posted at this same website on May 8 at Noon.

### 4-H'ERS! WANT TO LEARN HOW TO PLAY GOLF OR PLAY BETTER?

— We have exciting news! This spring, Lancaster County 4-H is, once again, partnering with the PGA Jr. League in Lincoln to provide a series of five golf sessions for ages 8–17 (as of April 2). Lessons are free of charge! Participating youth players will receive PGA Jr. jerseys, a hat, backpack, bag tag in addition to the professional coaching. Clubs and balls are also provided during the lessons, or you may provide your own. You can have some experience or no experience to participate. Lessons have been scheduled for: Tuesday afternoons, 4–5:15 p.m. starting on April 2–April 30, Pine Lake Golf & Tennis, 6601 S. 84th Street in Lincoln. Contact Kristin at the Extension office at 402-441-7180 or [kristin.geisert@unl.edu](mailto:kristin.geisert@unl.edu) by Monday, March 11. If Tuesdays do not work for you, there may be another scheduling option.



4-H Dates: Thurs. Aug. 1 –  
Sunday, Aug. 4, 2024



**Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County**  
**444 Cherrycreek Road, Ste. A, Lincoln, NE 68528**  
**402-441-7180 • lancaster.unl.edu**

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

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## NEBLINE

Subscriptions via mail are free to Lancaster County residents. There is an annual \$5 mailing and handling fee to addresses in zip codes other than 683—, 684—, 685—, 68003, 68017 and 68065.

### Would You Prefer Digital?

E-newsletter and PDF versions are at [lancaster.unl.edu/neblines](http://lancaster.unl.edu/neblines)

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# EXTENSION CALENDAR

All events held at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, unless otherwise noted.

## March

- 2 4-H Pillow Party Sewing Workshop. . . . . 9 a.m.–12p.m.
- 3 4-H Prepared Speech Contest . . . . . 1:30 p.m.
- 4 4-H/FFA Market Beef Weigh-In, Sandhills Global Event Center – Equine Market Pavilion . . . . . 6–7 p.m.
- 4 Deadline for Nebraska 4-H Horse Stampede Entries
- 5 4-H Council Meeting . . . . . 6 p.m.
- 4–5 4-H EGG Cam Chicks Hatching, [go.unl.edu/eggcam](http://go.unl.edu/eggcam)
- 7 Horse VIPS Meeting, Virtual . . . . .
- 8 Extension Board Meeting. . . . . 8 a.m.
- 10 4-H Teen Council Meeting . . . . . 3 p.m.
- 11 Deadline for 4-H Golf Lessons
- 12 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Initial Training. . . . . 8:30 a.m.
- 14 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training. . . . . 8:30 a.m.
- 16 UNL Chick Days, UNL East Campus – Dept. of Animal Science 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
- 16 4-H Spring Rabbit Show, Sandhills Global Event Center – South Hall . . . 9 a.m.
- 21 Private Pesticide Applicator Training. . . . . 6–9 p.m.
- 21 4-H Dog Workshop, Greater Lincoln Obedience Club, 5740 Johanna Road, Bay 4 . . . . . 6–8 p.m.
- 23 Lincoln Early Childhood Conference . . . . . 8:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
- 23 Nebraska 4-H Horse Stampede, UNL East Campus – Animal Science Complex
- 28 Pesticide Applicator NDA “Walk-In” Testing Session. . . . . 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

## April

- 1 Deadline for Nebraska 4-H Foundation’s Governor’s Agricultural Excellence Awards
- 1 4-H Virtual Companion Animal Challenge Entries Due
- 2 4-H Golf Lessons, Pine Lake Golf & Tennis . . . . . 4–5:15 p.m.
- 2 4-H Council Meeting . . . . . 6 p.m.
- 6 4-H Home Decor & Furniture Painting Workshop . . . . . 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
- 9 4-H Golf Lessons, Pine Lake Golf & Tennis . . . . . 4–5:15 p.m.
- 9 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Initial Training. . . . . 8:30 a.m.
- 11 Pesticide Applicator NDA “Walk-In” Testing Session. . . . . 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
- 11 4-H Dog Workshop, Greater Lincoln Obedience Club, 5740 Johanna Road, Bay 4 . . . . . 6–8 p.m.
- 12 Extension Board Meeting. . . . . 8 a.m.
- 12 Kiwanis Karnival, Elliott School, 225 S. 25 Street. . . . . 5:30–7:30 p.m.
- 14 4-H Teen Council Meeting . . . . . 3 p.m.
- 15–16 4-H EGG Cam Chicks Hatching, [go.unl.edu/eggcam](http://go.unl.edu/eggcam)
- 16 4-H Horsemanship Advancement Level Testing, Sandhills Global Event Center . . . . .
- 16 4-H Golf Lessons, Pine Lake Golf & Tennis . . . . . 4–5:15 p.m.
- 18 4-H Spring Leader/Volunteer Update Training . . . . . 9 a.m.
- 20 Spring Fling Horse Dressage Schooling Show, Sandhills Global Event Center . . . . . 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
- 23 4-H Golf Lessons, Pine Lake Golf & Tennis . . . . . 4–5:15 p.m.
- 25 Pesticide Applicator NDA “Walk-In” Testing Session. . . . . 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
- 27 4-H Illustrated Presentations Contest . . . . . 8:30 a.m.–12 p.m.
- 30 4-H Horsemanship Advancement Level Testing, Sandhills Global Event Center . . . . .
- 30 4-H Golf Lessons, Pine Lake Golf & Tennis . . . . . 4–5:15 p.m.

## EXTENSION NEWS

### 2024 Extension Board



Front row (L–R): Gerald Clausen, Regina Sullivan, Meghan Sittler and Nicole Miller;

Back row (L–R): Phil Wharton, Jim Ballard, Philippe Bruce, Bob Huttes, Teresa Erdkamp and Zainab Rida.

The Lancaster County Extension Board serves as an advocate for Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County. Members of the board are appointed by the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners. The Extension Board provides guidance to Extension staff in establishing and accomplishing Extension education program goals and objectives. The board typically meets monthly (usually the second Friday at 8 a.m.).

Philippe Bruce and Regina Sullivan were recently appointed for their first terms.

Extension Board members for 2024 are: Meghan Sittler (President), Nicole Miller (Vice President), Teresa Erdkamp (Secretary/Treasurer), Jim Ballard, Philippe Bruce, Gerald Clausen, Bob Huttes, Zainab Rida, Regina Sullivan and Phil Wharton (4-H Council ex-officio member).