

Summertime's Natural Light Show **FIREFLIES**

By Kait Chapman, Extension
Educator in Lancaster County

Summertime evenings and nights are a great time to enjoy nature's light show: fireflies. Also sometimes called "lightning bugs," fireflies are neither flies nor true bugs — they are beetles that have a magnificent way of communicating with one another using bioluminescence. The glow from a firefly's abdomen comes from a chemical reaction involving luciferin and the enzyme luciferase. Those combined with oxygen allow fireflies to send signals, primarily to attract their mates. In fact, different species of fireflies have different flashing patterns, allowing the insects to be able to find another of their kind.

Fireflies spend most of their lives in the larval stage as voracious predators, feeding on soft-bodied invertebrates like snails, slugs and worms. And, depending on the species, the adults can be short-lived, and some may not eat at all.

Unfortunately, fireflies are in decline in many parts of the world, including the United States. Habitat loss, pesticide use and light pollution are key factors in this decline. Fireflies rely on dark habitats to see each other's flashes, and artificial lights from homes, buildings and streetlamps can interfere with this communication.

You can support fireflies in your yard by:

- Reducing light pollution by turning off your porch or deck lights.
- Reducing the use of insecticides in your lawn or landscape.
- Creating habitat for firefly larvae by



Adult firefly (above, magnified) and firefly larvae (left, magnified).



- leaving leaf litter that offers them shelter in the fall and winter.
- Planting native plants that support a wider range of insects.

Fireflies are more than just a pretty light show — they're indicators of healthy ecosystems and treasured symbols of summertime. And not only that, but they're also a great tool for families to go outdoors, enjoy nature's light show and learn about insects.

Photos by UNL Dept. of Entomology



Left photo by Takashi Ota. Above photo by soupstock. stock.adobe.com

Insect Science with Kids Bug Collecting as a Tool to Learn

Collecting insects with children is a simple and joyful way to introduce them to science and the wonders of the natural world. Whether it's a glowing firefly, a fuzzy caterpillar or a jumping grasshopper, insects are everywhere and offer countless teachable moments.

A simple bug net, a clear container with air holes and a magnifying glass are enough to get started. And finding the bugs is half the fun. Insects can live in many different places, so be sure to sweep nets through tall grass, look for pollinators at flowers, turn over logs and even look for aquatic bugs in a pond. You can place insects in containers for a closer look, but be sure to release them back into nature after you've enjoyed their

unique beauty. Be wary of stinging and biting insects (and maybe just skip collecting those ones in a net).

- Be sure to talk about what you see and inspire curiosity:
- How many legs does it have?



Photo by Jody Green, Nebraska Extension in Douglas/Sorry

- Does it fly, crawl or jump?
- What colors and shapes can you spot?
- Does it look like a predator, or does it feed on plants?

You can also use a notebook or phone to take pictures or write down observations. Books on insects are a great tool for identifying the bugs you find and learning more about them. There are also phone apps, like iNaturalist, where you can upload photos to be identified by a professional. You never know what you'll find! Maybe you'll discover a rare beetle or butterfly, or something new to your area.

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The Perfect Partnership: EFNEP and SNAP-Ed Join Forces for Lifelong Nutrition and Health

Editor's Note: At the time of publication, Congress has voted to eliminate federal funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed). As a result, some of the services described in this article may no longer be available to Lancaster County residents in the near future. This decision marks a significant shift in the landscape of community-based nutrition education and public health support. The impact of these changes on our local communities will continue to unfold.

By Emily Gratopp, MS, PCC, ACTC, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

In Lancaster County, a team of nutrition educators is laying the foundation for lifelong health — one meal, one lesson and one trusted relationship at a time. At the core of this work is a dynamic partnership between two federally funded programs: the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed). Together, they address both sides of the equation — education and access. This dual approach ensures that limited-resource families are not only taught how to make healthier choices, but are also supported in accessing the resources to do so.

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

EFNEP, established in 1969, is the oldest federal nutrition education program. Its community-based, peer-education model focuses on parents and caregivers of young children. In Lancaster County, EFNEP reaches 200–250 adult caregivers each year with

a series of 6–20 relationship-centered education sessions in multiple languages. Through trusted relationships, participants gain skills in meal planning, food budgeting, label reading and physical activity.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed)

SNAP-Ed, launched around 30 years ago, serves individuals eligible for SNAP/EBT. It combines direct education with efforts to change policies and systems that shape the environments where people live, learn, work and play. In 2024, Nebraska SNAP-Ed reached over 20,000 individuals and supported 51 policy and system changes to expand access to healthy foods.

EFNEP/SNAP-Ed Partnership

The EFNEP and SNAP-Ed partnership allows for serving individuals across the lifespan. While EFNEP centers on caregivers of young children, SNAP-Ed reaches people of all ages. Together, they ensure nutrition education is accessible across life stages and settings.

One participant shared, “Before, I

didn't know what a food label was. Now, when I buy any product, the first thing I do is check the label.” Another said, “I look forward to Fridays to learn new information and try new recipes for my children.” A parent whose child was engaged in a nutrition education series said, “Our kid now makes sure there is water and milk at meals. We take daily

walks and eat family meals together now.”

SNAP-Ed Initiatives

SNAP-Ed supports national, statewide and local level initiatives like Double Up Food Bucks (DUFEB), which offers a dollar-for-dollar match for SNAP

continued on next page



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

By Emily Gratopp, MS, PCC, ACTC, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

Looking for a refreshing, healthy dessert this summer? Fruit Salsa and Cinnamon Chips will be a favorite for children and adults alike. It's a perfect dish to share at summer gatherings.

FRUIT SALSA & CINNAMON CHIPS

(Yield: 15 Servings)

- 3 kiwi, gently rubbed under cold running water, peeled and diced**
- 2 apples, gently rubbed under cold running water, peeled, cored and diced**
- 6 ounces raspberries, washed gently under cool running water**
- 1 pound strawberries, washed gently under cool running water, sliced**
- 2 Tablespoons sugar**
- 1 Tablespoon brown sugar**
- 3 Tablespoons strawberry fruit preserves**
- 1/4 cup sugar**
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon**
- 10 whole wheat flour tortillas**



Photo by Marissa Jones, Nutrition Education Program

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. In a large bowl, combine kiwis, apples, raspberries, strawberries, 2 Tablespoons sugar, brown sugar and fruit preserves. Mix gently.
3. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for at least 15 minutes.
4. In a small bowl, mix 1/4 cup sugar with cinnamon.
5. Preheat oven to 350°F.
6. Cut tortillas into wedges and arrange in a single layer on a large baking sheet. Coat one side of each wedge with cooking spray. Sprinkle wedges with cinnamon and sugar mixture. Spray again with cooking spray.
7. Bake 8–10 minutes. Repeat with any remaining tortilla wedges. Serve with chilled fruit salsa.
8. Store leftover salsa in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

Nutrition Information: Serving Size (1/15 of recipe): Calories 160; Total Fat 3g; Saturated Fat 1.5g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 190mg; Total Carbohydrates 31g; Fiber 2g, includes 6g Added Sugars; Protein 3g; Calcium 6%; Iron 0%; Potassium 4%.



EFNEP nutrition education includes Sudanese cooking classes at The Salvation Army taught by Extension Assistant Zahraa Rida (center).

Bug Collecting

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Respecting insects as you collect them is important. Teach children to handle insects gently and to return them to where they were found. Caterpillars, for example, rely on their host plant and should be returned to that specific plant so it can feed and grow. Emphasize that insects play vital roles in the environment: pollinating plants, breaking down dead material, and feeding birds and other animals.

Collecting insects is more than just play, it fosters observation skills, patience and an appreciation for biodiversity. So grab a jar, head outside and see what's buzzing.

EFNEP/SNAP-Ed

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users for fresh produce and Growing Together Nebraska, which supports community gardens that yield nearly 2,000 pounds of produce annually for Lincoln food pantries. SNAP-Ed educators offer on-site education and food tastings at pantry distributions and youth garden programs, helping families try and adopt new healthy foods.

SNAP-Ed also implements Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (Go NAPSACC), which helps child care providers create policies that promote lifelong wellness. SNAP-Ed works with 8–10 centers a year in Lincoln to increase fruits and vegetables, reduce screen time and enhance physical activity and outdoor play.



SNAP-Ed nutrition education includes healthy habit lessons for afterschool youth at the Malone Community Center taught by Extension Assistant Alaya Greene (second from left).

A long-standing collaboration between Nebraska Extension and Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) ensures schools integrate nutrition into their core health curriculum.

SNAP-Ed provides Nutrition School Enrichment Kits and guest presentations focused on food choices, handwashing and movement to all 18 Title I schools (schools with higher rates of children with limited resources) in the LPS system.

Collaborations With Other Organizations

The strength of EFNEP and SNAP-Ed in Lincoln lies not only in their strengths-based partnership, but in their collaboration with other organizations as well. Together known as the

Nutrition Education Program (NEP), EFNEP and SNAP-Ed are woven into the fabric of the community. Their reach is amplified through partnerships with food pantries, schools, shelters, early childhood programs and senior centers. These collaborations create wraparound support and help reduce barriers to participation.

Ultimately, these programs don't just teach about food — they build health, trust and self-efficacy. They help shape the local food system and public health infrastructure while focusing on equity and access. Nutrition security doesn't happen in isolation — it takes partnership, collaboration and community. Together, EFNEP and SNAP-Ed are helping Lincoln thrive, one relationship at a time.

Southeast Nebraska Pasture & Acreage Expo

Thursday, Sept. 4 • 8:30 a.m.–4 p.m.
Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County
Conference Rooms
444 Cherrycreek Rd., Suite A, Lincoln

Registration due by Monday, Sept. 1 by going to <https://go.unl.edu/2025pastureacreageexpo> or by contacting Karen Wedding at kwedding2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180. For more information, contact John Nelson at jnelson158@unl.edu. **Cost of registration covered by sponsors.**

Topics:

- Pasture grass recommendations and nutrient management
- Weed management
- Cedar control
- Horse supplements
- Hands-on demonstration on spray drone and sprayer setup
- Exhibitors and exciting door prizes

Lunch included!

Southeast Nebraska Alfalfa & Wheat Expo

Friday, Sept. 19 • 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
Saline County Fair Office
1600 Tuxedo Park Rd., Crete

Lunch included!

Registration due by Monday, Sept. 15 by going to <https://go.unl.edu/2025alfalfawheatexpo> or by contacting Melanie Kunc at melanie.kunc@unl.edu or 402-821-2151. For more information, contact Matheus Ribeiro at mribeiro2@unl.edu. **Cost of registration covered by sponsors.**

LANDLORD/TENANT CASH RENT WORKSHOP

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln's Center for Agricultural Profitability and Nebraska Extension will present a workshop for farm and ranch landowners, landlords, and tenants who want to learn more about current trends in farm or ranch real estate and best practices for leasing and managing land. "Flexing and Sharing to Farm and Ranch Profitability" will be held on Thursday, Aug. 28, 10:30 a.m.–2 p.m., at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. Lunch will be provided. No cost to attend. Registration is required by Tuesday, Aug. 26, by calling Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County at 402-441-7180.

Vegetable Gardening in the Fall

By Mary Jane Frogge,
Extension Associate in
Lancaster County

By planning and planting a fall vegetable garden, it is possible to have fresh vegetables up to, and even past, the first frosts. Many varieties of vegetables can be planted in mid- to late-summer for fall harvests. Succession plantings of warm-season crops, such as corn and beans, can be harvested until the first killing frost. Cool-season crops, such as beets, cabbage, kohlrabi, leaf lettuce, radishes, spinach, turnips, kale and collards grow well during the cool, fall days and withstand light frosts. Timely planting is the key to a successful fall garden.



To determine the time to plant a particular vegetable for the latest harvest, you need to

know the average date of the first hard freeze. For Lancaster County, it is approximately Oct. 10.

You also must know the number of days to maturity for the variety of vegetable you plan to grow. Count the days back from the frost date to figure your planting date.

An organic mulch will help keep the soil cool. Mulching between rows can decrease soil drying. Irrigate when necessary so plants have sufficient moisture during the warm days. Some of the best, quality vegetables are produced during the warm days and cool nights of the fall season.

A fall garden will offer a prolonged harvest of fresh vegetables, savings in food costs and the knowledge that you are making full use of your gardening space and season.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Nebraska Extension NebGuide, "Fall Vegetable Gardening" (G06-1343), is available online at https://go.unl.edu/g1343_fall_vegetable_gardening

2025 Perennial Plant of the Year



Photo by Chicago Botanic Garden.

The Perennial Plant Association has named blunt mountain mint, (*Pycnanthemum muticum*), as Perennial Plant of the Year for 2025. A native to the eastern United States, this plant is a herbaceous perennial wildflower in the mint family. The flowers attract butterflies and other pollinators.

Blunt mountain mint grows in full sun to partial shade and in moist soil with good drainage. It grows

2–3 feet tall. Although blunt mountain mint is not considered invasive, it is a vigorous grower, with spreading rhizomes, in optimum conditions.

It is commonly found in woodland areas and thickets. The best landscape uses include butterfly, native, pollinator and rain gardens. There are no serious insect or disease problems. Hardy in USDA Zones 4–8.

Composting Demonstration

Do you want to know how to turn your yard and garden waste into beneficial compost? Or do you want a refresher?

Nebraska Extension will present a composting demonstration on Saturday, Sept. 27, starting at 10 a.m. at Pioneers Park Nature Center's backyard composting demonstration area across the street from the Nature Center (look for the Extension banner). Extension Master Gardeners will teach how to construct a compost pile and show you several types of structures that can be built or purchased for composting. You'll learn how to achieve a proper carbon to nitrogen ratio, or "green" vs. "brown" materials, as well as basic troubleshooting. One random participant will win either a composting thermometer or a composting bin. The cost of this program is covered by Nebraska Extension. No preregistration needed.



GARDEN GUIDE

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, Extension
Associate in Lancaster County

September is a good time to root cuttings from annual bedding plants such as begonias, coleus, geraniums and impatiens. These plants can be overwintered in a sunny window and provide plants for next year's garden.

Many herbs self-sow if the flowers are not removed. Dill produce seeds that fall around the parent plant and come up as volunteers the following spring.

Every weed that produces seed means more weeds next year. Control weeds before they go to seed.

Look for and hand-pick bagworms from your evergreen and deciduous trees.

If volunteer tree seedlings, such as elm, mulberry, hackberry or maple are found growing in your yard, remove them as soon as possible. If left too long, they will take over gardens and other landscape plantings.

Remove old vegetable plants which have stopped producing to eliminate a shelter for insects and disease organisms.

Hot peppers will keep best if stored after they are dry. Thread the peppers on a string to dry. Hang in a cool, dry place.

Save seeds from favorite flowers such as marigolds by allowing the flower heads to mature. Lay seeds on newspaper and turn them often to dry. Store the dry seeds in glass jars or envelopes in a cool, dry, dark place.

Do not add weeds with mature seed heads to the compost pile. Many weed seeds can remain viable and germinate next year when the compost is used.

Pears should be picked at the hard ripe stage and allowed to finish ripening off the tree. The base color of yellow pears should change from green to yellow as the fruit approaches maturity.

Be sure to keep strawberry beds weed free. Every weed you pull now will help make weeding much easier next spring.

Tree wound paints used after pruning are no longer recommended as they can slow healing and may promote decay.

GRO Big Red Virtual Learning Series

Join the experts from Nebraska Extension to learn and ask questions!

8/13 — Fall Turf Activities
• John Fech

10/8 — Unusual Small Fruits
• Ian Peterson

9/10 — Growing Herbs
• Mary Jane Frogge

Via Zoom on Wednesdays 12–1 p.m.

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

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LANCASTER COUNTY Super Fair

JULY 31 - AUGUST 9, 2025

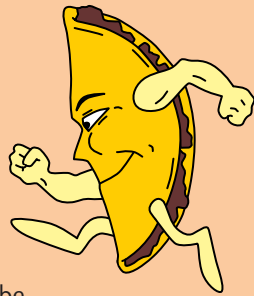
4-H & FFA Exhibits & Events July 31–Aug. 3

4-H Horse Shows July 30–Aug. 3

Sandhills Global Event Center
84th & Havelock, Lincoln

SUPPORT 4-H BY EATING AT THE 4-H FOOD STAND

4-H Council's food stand at the Super Fair features a variety of snacks and beverages, including the popular "Walking Taco," snow cones and cotton candy! The Clover Cafe (in the Ag Society Hall) and the Horseshoe Cafe (in the FR8Star Pavilion) will be open July 31–Aug. 3, 10 a.m.–9 p.m. (Sunday closes at 8 p.m.). The food stand is 4-H Council's primary fundraiser. Proceeds support 4-H youth programs, activities and scholarships.



4-H Will Livestream From the Fair



Lancaster County 4-H will livestream several animal shows and the Fashion Show via YouTube at <https://youtube.com/4HLancasterNE>. Videos will be available to watch later. Schedule and direct links will be posted at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/live-events>.

CHICKEN DINNER & SILENT AUCTION

Lancaster County 4-H Council is hosting a Chicken Dinner on Friday, Aug. 1, 5:30–7:30 p.m. at the South Hall - Lancaster County Farm Bureau Room (enter Gate 3 off Havelock, park near South Hall). Dinner features Slim Chickens chicken tenders, side dishes and dessert! To-go boxes will be available. Tickets at the door are \$10. Advance tickets are \$9 at the Extension office before the fair or at the 4-H food stand during the fair. A silent auction will be held during the Chicken Dinner, 5–7 p.m. Top bidders may pay for and pick up items after 7:30 p.m. If you wish to donate items or gift certificates for the silent auction, contact Sheri Ramirez at 402-805-2696 or skr0701@windstream.net no later than July 24. Both events are fundraisers for 4-H Council.

4-H Premiere Communication Event Top Results

The 2025 statewide Nebraska 4-H Premiere Communication Event was held on June 19–20 at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln East Campus. Two hundred and fifteen 4-H'ers from 53 counties across the state competed in five communication events. Complete results can be found at <https://4h.unl.edu/premier-communication-event-contests>. Here are the Lancaster County purple ribbon winners:

ILLUSTRATED PRESENTATION

- **Intermediate division:** Alexa Smith (1st place), Payzleigh Belew and Grace Tetzlaff (team) (5th place), Evelyn May



(L–R) Payzleigh Belew, Grace Tetzlaff and Alexa Smith with their Illustrated Presentation awards.

PREPARED SPEECH CONTEST

- **Senior division:** Emma Thomson
- **Intermediate division:** Alexa Smith (4th place), Brooklynn Nelsen, Braxton Thompson
- **Junior division:** Cora Pracheil

RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT CONTEST

- **Senior division:** Callia Thompson, Emma Thomson
- **Intermediate division:** Alexa Smith (1st place), Amorita Payne, Braxton Thompson

- **Junior division:** Gracie Mittan-DeBuhr (Top 5)

4-H Announcements

FOR ENROLLED 4-H'ERS OR 4-H VOLUNTEERS

The 4-H e-newsletter at <https://go.unl.edu/lan4hnews> has up-to-date information about upcoming 4-H opportunities.



For 4-H & FFA Super Fair-related announcements, see the Fair Book or 4-H e-newsletter.

4-H AT NEBRASKA STATE FAIR

The 2025 Nebraska State Fair will be Friday, Aug. 22–Monday, Sept. 1 at Fanner Park in Grand Island. 4-H events will be featured the first weekend. 4-H members ages 8–18 (by Jan. 1 of the current year) are eligible to participate. Some exhibits, such as static exhibits and Fashion Show, must be selected by judges at a county fair. For a schedule of 4-H activities at the State Fair and more, go to <http://4h.unl.edu/state-fair>.

- **STATIC EXHIBITS ARE SELECTED AT SUPER FAIR** — 4-H static exhibits must be selected by judges at county fairs to advance to the State Fair. Note: In most cases, level 1 projects are not eligible. At the Lancaster County Super Fair, a purple State Fair sticker will be placed on all exhibits selected for State Fair along with a general information sheet. After Super Fair, exhibitors will be mailed a detailed instruction sheet, including a listing of qualified exhibits and when to bring their qualifying exhibits to Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms. Lancaster County 4-H staff will transport all Lancaster County 4-H static exhibits for State Fair to and from Grand Island.
- **ANIMAL ENTRIES DUE ONLINE BY AUG. 10** — Livestock, rabbit and dog exhibitors are eligible to participate at the Nebraska State Fair regardless of county fair placing. To be eligible, livestock nominations and payment must have been completed by June 15. 4-H/FFA youth or their families must submit their animal entries online by Sunday, Aug. 10, 8 p.m. Select whether showing in 4-H or FFA. Information and link to ShoWorks is at <https://4h.unl.edu/state-fair-livestock-exhibitor>.
- **CONTEST ENTRIES DUE ONLINE BY AUG. 10** — Most of the 4-H contests at the Nebraska State Fair do not require youth to participate or qualify at a county-level contest, including Weed & Grass Identification, Horticulture Judging, Tree Identification, Insect Identification, Dog Skillathon, Culinary Challenge and Dairy Judging. Be sure to review the eligibility requirements for each contest before entering. 4-H/FFA youth or their families must submit their contest entries online via ShoWorks by Sunday, Aug. 10, 8 p.m. Information and link to ShoWorks is at <https://4h.unl.edu/state-fair-contest-participant>. Note an exception: Fashion Show entries must qualify at a county-level contest, and Extension staff submits the entries.

HORSE AWARDS NIGHT, OCT. 23

Save the date! The annual Lancaster County 4-H Horse Awards Night will be Thursday, Oct. 23, 6:30 p.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. Awards presentation includes Incentive Awards, Horsemanship Levels, All-Around Awards, Herdsmanship, Top Judging buckles and ribbons, as well as a few surprise awards!

4-H Clover College: 59 Hands-on Workshops



Photos: Vicki Jedlicka, Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County

In "Magic Experiments" taught by 4-H volunteer Jolene Egelhoff, one activity included using food coloring and paper towels to observe capillary action.

4-H Clover College is a four-day series of hands-on workshops for youth presented by Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County. The emphasis is on science, agricultural literacy, healthy living, career development and citizenship/leadership. Many of the projects made during the sessions are eligible to be exhibited at the Lancaster County Super Fair.

This year's Clover College was held June 10–13 and featured 59 workshops with a total of 1,047 session registrations. New workshops this year included: "The Great Chocolate Adventure," "Bird Bonanza," "Go Fly a Kite," "Magic Experiments," "Soup Bowl Cozies," "Riveting Raptors," "Outdoor Planters & Pavers," "Latch Hook Art," "Texture Magic," "Under the Shade Tree," "Brain Games," "Succulents & Stencil Studio," "Tessellations Art," "Be Food Smart" and "Japanese Water Marbling."



In "Riveting Raptors," presenters from the Raptor Conservation Alliance brought a peregrine falcon (shown) and a red tail hawk.

Feedback from youth participants included:

- "My favorite part is that I make so many projects I get to keep."
- "My favorite part was getting to make new things and I really liked making tie blankets for Matt Talbot."
- "I learned teamwork and creative skills."
- "My favorite part was spending time with friends."

Feedback from teen helpers included:

- "My favorite part of helping was seeing the kids get excited about learning."
- "My favorite part was watching the kids learn new things through experimenting and make friendships."

A special thank you to the 75 instructors and assistants! This is the 28th year of Clover College. More photos are at <https://flickr.com/photos/unextlanco/albums>.



Youth built and tested bridges made of straws and tape in "Design It. Build It." presented by Lancaster County Engineers.



Youth learned how to "Be Food Smart" while enjoying a trail mix snack in a new workshop led by 4-H Food Loss & Waste Teen Ambassadors and Extension Educator Tracy Anderson (not pictured).

Two Lancaster 4-H Clubs Receive Statewide Service Grants

Congratulations to the two Lancaster County 4-H Clubs who received Nebraska 4-H Foundation's "Hands for Larger Service" awards:

Fusion 4-H'ers and **4-H Teen Council**.

Each club will receive a \$500 grant to be used for a service project as described in the award application form completed by the club. This year, the awards replace Nebraska 4-H Foundation's former Governor's Agricultural Excellence Awards. The awards are sponsored by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) and provide funding for 4-H clubs to complete projects that will have a lasting impact on their communities.

4-H Companion Animal Challenge Top Results

The 2025 statewide 4-H Companion Animal Challenge was held during the Premier Animal Science Event (PASE) at University of Nebraska–Lincoln East Campus on June 17–18. Youth had the opportunity to display their companion animal knowledge through six contests. Complete results are at <https://4h.unl.edu/pase-contests>. Here are the Lancaster County purple ribbon winners:

- **Junior Photography:** Eliana Schmoll (Reserve Champion)(2 purples), Brigham Moore
- **Intermediate Photography:** Elizabeth Hilkemann (Champion) (3 purples), Noah Schmoll (Reserve Champion)(2 purples), Alandra Huntley, Josiah Schmoll (2 purples)
- **Senior Photography:** Jocelyn Schmoll (Reserve Champion)(2 purples)
- **Intermediate Art:** Amorita Payne (Champion)(2 purples), Alandra Huntley (Reserve Champion)
- **Intermediate Essay:** Amorita Payne (Champion), Elizabeth Hilkemann (Reserve Champion)



Elizabeth Hilkemann with her Champion Intermediate Photograph of her kitten.

4-H Teen Council Invites New Members

Are you a 7th–12th grader looking for a fun way to build leadership skills, make new friends and give back to your community? Join the Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council! Teen Council members plan and participate in a variety of hands-on activities, community service projects and leadership opportunities throughout the year. Past projects have included assembling hygiene kits for people in need and organizing an overnight Lock-In for 4th and 5th graders. Guest speakers and interactive sessions make each meeting both fun and meaningful! Meetings are held monthly on the second Sunday, 3–5 p.m., from September through April at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County office (444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln). Upcoming meeting dates: Sept. 14, Oct. 12 and Nov. 9. Want to learn more or sign up? Contact Tracy Anderson at tracy.anderson@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

Join 4-H to Become Beyond Ready



Ready to lead. Ready to serve. Ready to build. Ready for life.

WHY 4-H?

- Lancaster County 4-H is open to all youth ages 5–18
- Choose from over 50 projects to “learn by doing”
- Explore interests and career “sparks”
- Participate in leadership and community service activities
- Have fun while making new friends!
- Many 4-H’ers showcase their projects at the Lancaster County Super Fair!



GET INVOLVED!

- Help start a new 4-H club
- Join an Existing 4-H club
- Be an independent member



Nebraska
University of
Lincoln



SPECIAL EVENT

LAUNCH YOUR 4-H JOURNEY

Sunday, Oct. 5 • 5pm

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County,
444 Cherrycreek Rd., Suite A, Lincoln



This is a great opportunity to explore your child(ren)’s 4-H journey! 4-H staff will present an overview of 4-H and its many opportunities. Several 4-H members will share their projects (including STEM, art, rabbits and more). Adults can learn ways they can help youth grow.
Free hot dogs and refreshments! Fun door prizes!



HEART OF 4-H VOLUNTEER AWARD

Recognizing Outstanding Volunteer Service

Hope Bauman

is receiving Lancaster County 4-H’s August “Heart of 4-H Award.” She has helped in a variety of ways for 6 years, including as leader of the Southern Lancaster Kids 4-H club and a parent volunteer with the Rabbits R Us club. She helps both clubs do community service projects such as connecting with nursing home residents, helping at Kiwanis Carnival and staffing shifts at 4-H Council’s food stand during the Lancaster County Super Fair. At Super Fair, Hope is co-superintendent of the static exhibits General Areas.

Hope says, “I grew up in 4-H and feel like so many of the skills I learned as a member have translated into skills and talents I have as an adult in my daily life now. I am so glad that I can share that with not only my own children, but also other children, and that I can help them find, explore and grow their passions and challenge themselves to explore new things that may someday become a new passion.”



Kent Kennedy

is receiving Lancaster County 4-H’s September “Heart of 4-H Award.” Since 2020, he has helped with the 4-H Shooting Sports program as a project leader and a certified pistol instructor for the Lincoln Shooting Stars 4-H club. He also assists with BB gun and air rifle. Kent volunteers at the annual 4-H Shooting Sports National Championships, which has been held in Grand Island for the past 4 years. From 1977 to 2000, he helped with the 4-H and FFA State Tractor Operators Contest held during the State Fair.

Kent says, “I like being a 4-H volunteer because I know the youth are trained to handle firearms safely. I also like seeing them enjoy shooting sports, improving their ability to shoot safely and accurately, while improving their ability to concentrate.”



Call 402-441-7180 or go to
lancaster.unl.edu/join4h

NO FEES TO JOIN
Lancaster County 4-H

Lancaster County 4-H is supported by Nebraska Extension and the Lancaster County government

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County
444 Cherrycreek Road, Ste. A, Lincoln, NE 68528
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EXTENSION NEWS

Elizabeth Thiltges Promoted



Congratulations to **Elizabeth Thiltges** who was promoted to Extension Associate effective July 1! She joined Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County as an Extension Assistant in January 2022. She delivers positive youth development opportunities through 4-H program areas such as STEM education (both in afterschool and summer settings), 4-H cat, household pets, dog, embryology and homeschool programs. Previously, Elizabeth worked with Nemaha County 4-H as an Extension Assistant from June 2018–December 2021 and was a 4-H intern in Cheyenne County in the summer of 2017.

Summer 4-H Interns

EXTENSION INTERNS

Three full-time college interns are helping with ongoing summer programming, including contests, Clover College, Lancaster County Super Fair and other activities.

- **Cameryn Brandt** assists Extension Associate Kristin Geisert with Clover College, Super Fair static exhibits and contests. This is her second summer as a 4-H intern. Cameryn was a Saline County 4-H member for 9 years. She is an upcoming senior at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, majoring in Family and Consumer Science Secondary Education.
- **Hope Koller** assists Extension Assistant Madelaine Vanderbeek with the livestock projects. This is her first summer as a 4-H intern. Hope was a 4-H member in Furnas County



EXTENSION CALENDAR

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

July

- 24 Pesticide Applicator Neb. Dept. of Ag “Walk-In” Testing Session 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
- 25 4-H Horse Incentive Program Forms Due to Extension
- 29 4-H & FFA Static Exhibit Entry for Lancaster County Super Fair, Sandhills Global Event Center - Ag Society Hall 4–8 p.m.
- Jul. 31–Aug. 9 Lancaster County Super Fair (4-H & FFA Exhibits & Events July 30–Aug. 4; 4-H Horse Shows July 30–Aug. 3), Sandhills Global Event Center

August

- Jul. 31–Aug. 9 Lancaster County Super Fair (4-H & FFA Exhibits & Events July 30–Aug. 4; 4-H Horse Shows July 30–Aug. 3), Sandhills Global Event Center
- 10 Deadline for State Fair Animal Entries — Must Enter at <http://nebr.fairwire.com>
- 13 GRO Big Red Virtual Learning: Fall Turf Activities, <http://hles.unl.edu/grobigrd> . . 12 p.m.
- 14 Part 107 Remote Pilot Exam Preparation Course 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
- 28 Landlord/Tenant Cash Rent Lease Workshop 10:30–2 p.m.
- 14 Pesticide Applicator Neb. Dept. of Ag “Walk-In” Testing Session 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
- Aug. 22–Sept. 1 Nebraska State Fair, Fanner Park, Grand Island

September

- 2 4-H Council Meeting 6 p.m.
- 4 Southeast Nebraska Pasture & Acreage Expo 8:30 a.m.–4 p.m.
- 10 GRO Big Red Virtual Learning: Growing Herbs, <http://hles.unl.edu/grobigrd> . . 12 p.m.
- 11 4-H Horse VIPs Committee Meeting 6 p.m.
- 12 Extension Board Meeting 8 a.m.
- 14 4-H Teen Council Meeting 3 p.m.
- 18 Pesticide Applicator Neb. Dept. of Ag “Walk-In” Testing Session 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
- 19 Southeast Nebraska Alfalfa & Wheat Expo, Saline County Fair Office, 1600 Tuxedo Park Rd, Crete 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
- 27 Composting Demonstration, Pioneers Park’s backyard composting demonstration area across the street from the Nature Center 10 a.m.
- 30 4-H Council’s Alumni Scholarship Deadline



Extension interns (L–R): Cameryn Brandt, Jacie Pelikan and Hope Koller

for 10 years. She is an upcoming senior at UNL, majoring in Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Communication with a minor in Agribusiness.

- **Jacie Pelikan** assists Extension Associates Kate Pulec and Elizabeth Thiltges with the horse, rabbit, dog, cat and household pet projects. This is her fourth summer as a 4-H intern. Jacie is an upcoming senior at UNL, double majoring in Applied Climate Science and Animal Science, with a minor in business.



Imagine Science interns (L–R): Hannah Dean and Ava Wharton

IMAGINE SCIENCE INTERNS

Hannah Dean and **Ava Wharton** are two full-time interns working with Extension Educator Tracy Anderson this summer with the Imagine Science program, a national organization focused on STEM education. Hannah was a Lancaster County 4-H'er for 10 years. She will be a sophomore at Concordia University, majoring in Agricultural Education. Ava was a Lancaster County 4-H'er for 9 years. She will be a sophomore at Laramie County Community College, majoring in Ag and Equine.