



# GROWING TOGETHER

## Cultivating Nutrition Security

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

Across Nebraska, gardening has long been more than a seasonal hobby — it is a practical, powerful way to nourish families and strengthen communities. At Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County, gardening has become a cornerstone of nutrition security efforts, helping individuals not only access healthy food, but also learn how to grow, prepare and share it.

For years, Nebraska Extension's Nutrition Education Program (now called Health & Wellbeing) has focused on helping families **find, afford, choose** and **use** healthy foods. More recently, a fifth word has taken root: **grow**. This evolution reflects a deeper understanding of nutrition security — not just having enough food, but having consistent access to affordable, nutritious and culturally

relevant foods that support wellbeing. Statewide programs like Growing Together Nebraska bring this vision to life. Since 2019, Extension staff, Extension Master Gardener Volunteers and community partners have worked



Produce harvested from the Growing Together Nebraska garden at Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County office in August 2025. This produce was donated to the Connection Point Open Shelf food pantry along with nutrition education and recipes in four different languages.

side by side to establish and maintain four gardens in Lancaster County specifically designed to support local food pantries. These gardens are small in size but mighty in impact: they have collectively grown nearly 11,000 pounds of fresh produce over 6 years, providing free, fresh produce to over 6,000 families.

### Nutrition Education for Seasonal Produce

The impact goes beyond the harvest. The distribution of harvested produce is paired with nutrition education, recipe kits and cooking demonstrations — ensuring that families not only receive fresh vegetables, but also gain the skills and confidence to prepare them at home.

In 2024, thanks to funding from Farm Credit Services of America, over 600 meal kits were provided to families in Lincoln. The kits included

a recipe featuring locally harvested produce (like tomatoes, Swiss chard and zucchini) and included all the ingredients so families could go home and immediately enjoy a healthy meal. To boost confidence in cooking, each family that received a recipe kit also participated in a recipe demonstration, so they could see how the dish was prepared and even how it would taste.

*continued on next page*



Kaitlyn Sullivan, Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln

Coalition and community members gathered March 30 at the 2026 Mayor's Proclamation of the Growing and Sharing Season.

## WILDFIRES AT OUR DOORSTEP

What Lancaster  
County Residents  
Need to Know



Photo by DW McReynolds

SEE PAGE 3

Lancaster County 4-H  
Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County  
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## Nutrition Security

from previous page

Families appreciated having a low-risk way of trying new vegetables and new recipes — without having to go to the store for specialty ingredients.

Nebraska Extension also offers a wealth of free, research-based resources through <https://food.unl.edu/seasonal-produce>, making it easier than ever to turn fresh, local ingredients into delicious, healthy meals. From seasonal produce guides to simple, budget-friendly recipes, these tools are designed for real life. Whether you're shopping at a farmers market, participating in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) or harvesting from your own garden, these resources help you confidently prepare Nebraska-grown foods.

## Growing and Sharing Campaign

This gardening, sharing and nutrition education work is part of a broader, coordinated effort. A coalition of more than 20 community partners has been working together since last March to strengthen Lincoln's local food system, increase access to healthy foods and build long-term resilience. These efforts align closely with the Mayor's Community Committee on Local Food and the goals of the Lincoln Local Food Plan, which prioritizes expanding local food production, improving food access and reducing waste.

Momentum for this work has been building. In 2025, the City of Lincoln launched the "Growing and Sharing Campaign" through a mayoral proclamation encouraging residents to grow food locally and share it with neighbors. Building on that success, on March 30 the Mayor again proclaimed the start of the 2026

Growing and Sharing Season and encouraged all residents to grow a garden for better health and share their garden produce to fight hunger and build a stronger, healthier Lincoln. The Plant for Hunger campaign has officially begun and all Lincoln families are encouraged to start a garden, plant a few seeds in a planter, or grow a few extra rows and share the harvest.

The need for local food remains significant. In Lincoln, approximately 1 in 8 individuals experiences food insecurity, with even higher rates among children. At the same time, many residents — especially those in apartments or rental housing — may not have access to gardening space. Growing food for others becomes a tangible way to bridge that gap. All growers are encouraged to donate extra harvest to pantries using <https://ampleharvest.org> to find a nearby pantry accepting garden donations, along with donation drop-off times. Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County's office at 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, will also accept fresh, clean fruit and vegetable donations on Tuesdays before 1:30 p.m. and all donations will be transported to a local participating food pantry. Look for the wagon in the lobby to drop off fresh food donations.

For beginning gardeners, Nebraska Extension's Backyard Farmer resources (<https://byf.unl.edu/start-gardening>) provide trusted, practical guidance on everything from soil preparation to pest management. Locally, Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln's Plant-Grow-Share-Build webpage (<https://www.healthylincoln.org/what-we-do/healthy-neighborhoods/plant-grow-share-build.html>) offers a one-stop shop for local food resilience efforts to help residents garden and share produce, including garden tool sharing. These resources make

it easier for anyone — regardless of experience level — to get started and contribute.

If simply donating extra produce is not feasible, updates to Lincoln's Urban Garden Policy now allow residents to grow and sell unprocessed produce directly from their homes or community garden spaces. Visit City of Lincoln's information at <https://lincoln.ne.gov/UrbanGarden> to learn more about the policy and regulations. This shift not only supports gardeners, but also

strengthens the local economy and food system.

Gardening also offers benefits far beyond nutrition. It supports mental wellbeing, builds connections across neighborhoods, and fosters a sense of purpose and belonging. When communities grow and share food, they cultivate resilience, generosity and stronger relationships.

This growing season, Nebraska Extension and all coalition partners (see [www.diyhomegarden.org](http://www.diyhomegarden.org) for the

list of partners) invite everyone in Lancaster County to be part of the movement. Start small. Learn using Backyard Farmer resources. Explore recipes and seasonal guides at <https://food.unl.edu>. Connect with local partners. And when you can — share what you grow.

Together, we can build a community where fresh, local food is not a privilege, but a shared experience — and where something as simple as a garden helps nourish us all.



## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

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

One of the first plants we can grow at the start of the growing season in Nebraska are leafy greens. They can be planted as early as April and can also be grown and harvested all season long! You can start them from seeds or starter plants (SNAP/EBT benefits can be used on seeds and starter plants). The darker the color of leafy greens, the more nutrients they provide the body, including vitamins that prevent cancer and protect heart health. Check out Nebraska Extension's Food website's Seasonal Produce page on Leafy Greens for more information and a tasty recipe <https://food.unl.edu/article/leafy-greens>. A unique salad to try with leafy greens is this Refreshing Watermelon Salad.

### REFRESHING WATERMELON SALAD

(Yield: 4 Servings)

- 1 cup fresh spring greens, gently rubbed under cold running water (if not pre-washed)**
- 1 cup fresh cilantro, gently rubbed under cold running water, chopped**
- 1 cup fresh watermelon, scrubbed with clean vegetable brush under running water, cubed**
- 1/2 cup red grapes, gently rubbed under cold running water, halved**
- 1/4 cup walnuts, chopped**
- 1/4 cup feta cheese**

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Rinse produce with cool running water.
3. Mix all ingredients together and serve immediately.
4. Store leftovers in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

Nutrition Information: Serving Size (1 cup): Calories 100; Total Fat 7g; Saturated Fat 1.5g; Cholesterol 10mg; Sodium 115mg; Total Carbohydrates 8g; Fiber 1g; includes 0g Added Sugars; Protein 3g; Calcium 4%; Iron 6%; Potassium 4%

Nutrition Software Used: ESHA Food Processor



Photo by Marusa Jones

# WILDFIRES AT OUR DOORSTEP

## What Lancaster County Residents Need to Know

By *Soni Cochran, Nebraska Extension Disaster Education Coordinator and Owen Eickhoff, A1712 Grant Program Coordinator*

Wildfires have been on many Nebraskans' minds over the past several weeks. Warm, dry conditions paired with strong winds caused fires to spread very quickly. On March 12, several large wildfires broke out across the state, affecting communities both rural and urban.

The most damaging fires have occurred in western and north central Nebraska. The largest of these was the Morrill Fire near Ogallala. This wildfire is the largest in Nebraska history and the ninth largest

in the United States. It burned more than 600,000 acres, and its fire perimeter stretched over 1,000 miles, roughly the length of the state of Nebraska.

### Lancaster County Fires

While large fires burned to the west, eastern Nebraska also experienced wildfires. This region typically has a lower wildfire risk, but several fires started near populated areas. Wildfires were reported in Fillmore, Saline, Seward, Jefferson, Lancaster, Gage and Nemaha counties.

In southwestern Lancaster County, law enforcement reported four separate fires on March 12. The fires spread quickly, driven by strong winds.

Volunteer fire departments were able to contain the fire, but road closures and evacuations were still necessary. Homes and farms were temporarily evacuated, and fires in Lancaster, Gage and Saline counties led to closures on Nebraska Highways 33 and 77. Fortunately, there were no reported injuries or deaths, and only a few structures were damaged.

This is the second time in recent years, when residents in the area were evacuated. In October 2022, fast moving fires near the town of Hallam and Olive Creek State Recreation Area forced people to leave their homes along with cattle and horses. Those fires burned more than 9,000 acres and injured two firefighters.

## A Rural Lancaster County Resident's Account of a March 12 Wildfire Evacuation

"We've always prepared for things like blizzards and tornadoes. Wildfire just wasn't something we ever thought we'd have to plan for.

Back in October 2022, we were evacuated when a fire ran through farmland near us. I never imagined that here in Lancaster County we'd need to be ready to leave our home because of fire. Now it's happened twice.

On March 12, things changed fast. We went from smelling smoke to a sheriff's deputy at the door telling us to evacuate. The smoke made it hard to breathe, and our only focus was getting our family and pets out safely. Our farm animals had to stay behind, but I was close enough to open the pens if I needed to. I'm thankful first responders were able to get the fire under control. We also learned a hard lesson through all of this. You really do have to be ready for anything now, even things you never thought would happen here. Thanks to what we learned the first time and the guidance from Nebraska Extension; we were better prepared this time."

—Stephanie McReynolds



Smoke filling the sky at a Lancaster County rural residence.



Sheriff's deputy at a door telling residents to evacuate.

## Wildfire Preparedness Tips

Although eastern Nebraska usually has a lower wildfire risk, these recent fires are a reminder that wildfires can happen anywhere in the state and during any season. Everyone is encouraged to take steps now to prepare their families, homes, acreages and farms.

### Make a Plan, Build a Kit, Practice Your Plan

Taking a few basic steps can make a big difference during an emergency:

- Make sure your cell phone can receive emergency alerts.
- Follow trusted local news and social media sources.
- Create a family communication plan in case you are not together.
- Make an evacuation plan with more than one route and know where you will go.
- Practice your plan and include everyone in the household.

### Build a "Go Bag" for Your Family

A "Go Bag" is an easily accessible, easy-to-carry kit pre-packed with 72 hours' worth of emergency supplies. Consider using a sturdy backpack or duffle bag. Each family's emergency kit will look different, but common items include:

- Food and water
- Prescription medications
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- A first aid kit
- A whistle
- Important documents and contact lists
- Extra clothing
- Pet supplies
- Optional items such as masks, goggles and gloves

If an emergency occurs, always follow instructions given by first responders and local officials. If you are told to evacuate immediately, do not wait.

### Create Defensible Space Around Your Home

Creating defensible space around homes and outbuildings can help reduce wildfire damage. These steps are most effective when done before a fire occurs. The objective of

managing a fire smart landscape is to reduce the amount of fuel. Dead or dried plants, branches and leaves need to be removed. To learn more about fire smart landscaping, visit <https://go.unl.edu/fire-smart-landscaping>.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

See Nebraska Extension's Disaster Education information and resources to help you prepare for, and recover from, disasters at <https://disaster.unl.edu>

## 2026 All-America Selections Winners

By Mary Jane Frogge, Extension Associate in Lancaster County

Each year, professional, volunteer judges for All-America Selections choose top garden performers that become AAS Winners. All-America Selections is an independent, non-profit organization that tests new, never-before-sold varieties for the home gardener. After a full season of anonymous trialing by volunteer horticulture professionals, only the top garden performers are given the AAS Winner award designation for their superior performance.

**Majesty, Pole Bean** — This early maturing purple pole bean has high yield, superior quality and delicious flavor. Plants have dense, dark green foliage with resistance to insect damage and excellent recovery from summer heat stress.

**Treviso, Basil** — This delicious basil is a fantastic choice for any herb garden. It has a



compact and branching habit that does well in large containers. The AAS judges love this basil's vigor and heat tolerance.

### Sun Globe, Coreopsis

— This coreopsis will bring season-long color to your full landscape.

Judges praised it for its great habit and impressive bloom quantity. It produces golden yellow, semi-double flowers on sturdy stems.



### Profusion Double White Improved, Zinnia

— This Gold Medal award-winning zinnia features large, double flowers that create a lush, full look. Bred for superior performance, this variety is exceptionally sturdy, disease-resistant and thrives in summer heat.



Sponsored by Nebraska Extension

## 2026 GROBigRed

Wednesdays  
12 p.m.

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

5/13 — Lawn & Landscape Weeds • Scott Evans

8/12 — Composting for Small-Scale Growers • Katja Koehler-Cole

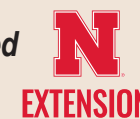
6/10 — Beyond Pollinators: Predatory & Beneficial Bugs • Ian Peterson

9/9 — Fall Garden Preparation • Nicole Stoner

7/8 — Recognizing Tree Hazards and Non-Hazards • John Fech

10/14 — Spring Flowering Bulbs • Scott Evans & Mary Jane Frogge

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



## EXTENSION Master Gardener Volunteer Spotlight

**EVE HOFFMAN** has been an Extension Master Gardener Volunteer (EMGV) for 21 years and has volunteered over 900 hours. Eve mentors new volunteers, teaches youth how to garden and serves as a judge at the Lancaster County Super Fair.

**Why did you become an EMGV?** I enjoy plants and gardens.

When walking through the sunken garden, I saw people working and stopped to talk to them. I learned, except for the employees, they were volunteers and they encouraged me to consider becoming a Master Gardener.

**What is your favorite volunteer opportunity?** I enjoy being around animals, so found that helping at the zoo was a perfect fit for me. I could easily spend a few hours weeding the flower beds, planting annuals, deadheading the spent flowers, while enjoying the actions of the primates and other animals.

**What has been the biggest surprise about volunteering?** I tend to be quiet and reserved, so the most surprising part of being part of the program was how easy it is to make friends and meet people who bring joy and friendship into my life.



## GARDEN GUIDE THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, Extension Associate in Lancaster County

Consider planting native perennials that are beneficial to native pollinators like solitary bees, bumblebees and butterflies. Native plants include coreopsis, coneflower, aster, goldenrod, butterfly milkweed, ironweed, blazing star, beardtongue, 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.

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. It is important to dig a large planting hole, but fill it with the original soil removed from it.

Buy a notebook and use it to keep all your gardening information and records. 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.

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 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.

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

Consider planting flowers which may be dried for winter arrangements. Some of the best are strawflower, statice, celosia and globe amaranth.

# Cash Rent Survey

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln's Department of Agricultural Economics annually surveys land industry professionals across Nebraska, including appraisers, farm and ranch managers, agricultural bankers and related industry professionals. Results from the survey are divided by land class and summarized by the eight Agricultural Statistic Districts of Nebraska.

The market value of agricultural land in Nebraska declined by 1% over the prior year to an average of \$3,905 per acre as of Feb. 1, according to the 2026 Nebraska Farm Real Estate Market Survey. This marks the second consecutive year that the market value of agricultural land in Nebraska has declined since reaching the

record high non-inflation-adjusted statewide land value in 2024.

Land industry professionals responding to the survey cited lower crop prices, elevated farm input costs, and prevailing interest rates as the primary factors influencing agricultural land values.

Source: *Cornhusker Economics*, March 18, 2026.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Read the *Cornhusker Economics* full article at <https://cap.unl.edu/realestate>. For questions regarding this survey, contact Agricultural Systems Economist Extension Educator Jim Jansen at 402-261-7572 or [jjansen4@unl.edu](mailto:jjansen4@unl.edu).

Reported **cash rental rates for various types of Nebraska farmland and pasture**: 2026 averages, percent change from 2025 and quality ranges by Agricultural Statistics District <sup>a</sup>

TYPE OF LAND		AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS DISTRICT	
		EAST	SOUTHEAST
Dryland Cropland	Average	\$220/acre -6% change	\$185/acre -3% change
	High Third Quality	\$270/acre	\$225/acre
	Low Third Quality	\$185/acre	\$145/acre
Gravity Irrigated Cropland	Average	\$305/acre -2% change	\$270/acre -4% change
	High Third Quality	\$350/acre	\$320/acre
	Low Third Quality	\$255/acre	\$235/acre
Center Pivot Irrigated Cropland <sup>b</sup>	Average	\$335/acre -3% change	\$325/acre -3% change
	High Third Quality	\$390/acre	\$375/acre
	Low Third Quality	\$280/acre	\$265/acre
Pasture	Average	\$68/acre 4% change	\$64/acre 2% change
	High Third Quality	\$84/acre	\$77/acre
	Low Third Quality	\$51/acre	\$49/acre
Cow-Calf Pair Rates <sup>c</sup>	Average	\$69.20/pair 3% change	\$66.75/pair 2% change
	High Third Quality	\$80.65/pair	\$78.10/pair
	Low Third Quality	\$58.45/pair	\$53.35/pair

<sup>a</sup> Source: Reporters' estimated cash rental rates (both averages and ranges) from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Nebraska Farm Real Estate Market Developments Survey, 2025 and 2026.

<sup>b</sup> Cash rents on center pivot land assumes landowners own total irrigation system.

<sup>c</sup> A cow-calf pair is typically considered to be 1.25 to 1.30 animal units (animal unit being 1,000 lb. animal) for a five-month grazing season. However, this can vary depending on weight of cow and age of calf.

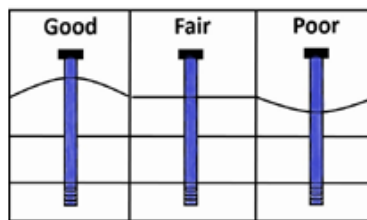
# Well & Septic Owner's Checklist

By *Becky Schuerman*, Domestic Water/Wastewater Extension Associate in Nebraska

It is hard to believe that it is already spring! This means it is time for a spring inspection of your well, water treatment and onsite septic systems and performing necessary maintenance, when necessary. It is also time to order a test kit to collect your annual water samples for nitrate, total coliform and any other contaminants of concern in your area. Taking the time to follow the Well & Septic Owner's Checklist helps protect the health of your family and our groundwater resources.

## 1. Inspect your wellhead and area around it this spring. Perform maintenance as necessary:

- Make sure secure cap, vent and electrical conduit are undamaged and secured.
- Keep sources of contamination away from it.
- Make sure your wellhead is a minimum of 12-inches above grade and the ground around it is sloped away with no depressions where water can sit stagnant.
- Keep tree plantings away from your well and water line locations.
- Check all hydrants, faucets and water pipes to



When it comes to the ground around one's wellhead, this graphic shows comparisons of good, fair and poor.

make sure none are leaking or busted from freezing up over the winter. Properly fix/replace anything damaged.

## 2. At the same time, inspect your onsite septic system. Whether a Lateral System or Mound System, the same rules apply:

- Vehicles and other heavy objects kept away from drainfield and septic tank.
  - Animal confinement areas not located over drainfield and septic tank.
  - No sidewalks, drives, patios located over drainfield and septic tank.
  - No buildings located over drainfield and septic tank.
  - Perennial grass cover maintained; no trees or bushes planted over or near a drainfield and septic tank.
  - Have septic tank pumped every 2–3 years, dependent on size of household and tank.
- ## 3. For a lagoon system:
- Keep fence around the lagoon intact and maintained.
  - Maintain a 2 feet minimum operating depth of wastewater at all times.
  - Keep grass on berm mowed and no trees should grow on the berm or in the lagoon.
  - Keep aquatic vegetation in lagoon managed to allow good airflow and sunlight to reach the water surface.

## 4. Inspect water treatment systems making sure they are not leaking and operating properly.

## 5. Review recommended maintenance procedures and filter/media replacement for water equipment according to the manufac-



Nitrate & bacteria test kit.

turer's specifications. This includes water softeners, filtration systems and water heaters. Water heaters should be drained/flushed annually.

- ## 6. Test for Nitrate & Coliform bacteria annually — best done in spring.
- ## 7. Be aware of other possible contaminants of concern in your area.
- Your local NRD, health department or nearby community water supply can be great sources for this information.
- ## 8. If in doubt about issues,
- contact your licensed water well contractor or certified onsite wastewater professional to make the necessary repairs.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For Certified Water Testing Laboratories in Nebraska, minerals and Contaminants in Drinking Water and other water well topics, go to <https://water.unl.edu/article/drinking-water/nebguides>. For Onsite Wastewater/Septic Systems go to <https://water.unl.edu/sewage/educational>.

# Supporting Development Through Loose Parts Play

By Jaci Foged, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

Simon Nicholson, a British architect, coined the term “loose parts” in the early 1970s which describes an approach to teaching and the use of materials in space. Loose parts are materials that can be moved, carried, redesigned, lined up, taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. Nicholson believed that we are all creative and by incorporating loose parts in an environment empowers our creativity.

These types of materials are different than toys, games or even supplies used for a craft with directions or are intended for a specific purpose. Loose parts do not have a set of instructions and they can be used alone or in combination

with other materials, allowing children to explore and create freely.

## Types of Loose Parts

One of the exciting and inspiring aspects of loose parts play is the almost limitless possibilities to explore. Almost anything can be used for loose parts play! Some ideas to get you started include fabric, cardboard, sand, buttons, tubes, rocks, shells, beads, pipe cleaners, pinecones, dried flowers, milk cartons and old keys. What loose parts will you add to your educational space?

## Benefits of Loose Parts Play

Loose parts play supports young children’s development in a variety of ways.

### Fine and Gross Motor Skill Development

— Fine motor development strengthens the muscles of the hands, fingers and wrists, supporting hand-eye coordination, grasping and stabilization skills. Gross motor development supports large muscle groups essential for physical health, coordination, strength and balance. Gross motor skills include activities such as climbing, throwing, jumping and catching. An example would be children carrying lumber outside to build a structure.

### Language and Literacy Development

— Joining children in play is a powerful way to support language and literacy skills. Adults can label children’s actions, introduce new vocabulary and encourage

literacy by inviting children to create signs for their structures or draw, write or dictate stories about what they have made.

### Social-Emotional Learning

— Loose parts play allows children to practice managing big feelings such as frustration, excitement and patience. It also provides opportunities to collaborate with peers, problem-solve together and co-create shared projects.

## Important Considerations

**Time** — Research has found that it can take some children up to 20 minutes to become engaged in meaningful play. A vivid memory from my own childhood is setting up and organizing all of my doll furniture and clothes. Everything had to be just right

before I could truly “begin” playing. As you might imagine, sometimes I ran out of time just setting up. This often ended in tears and frustration — for both myself and my caregivers.

### Storage space

— Loose parts can be small, such as buttons, rocks, pompoms and keys. They can also include larger items like big sticks, large boxes or long tubing. Creating adequate space and organizational systems to store and access these materials is an important consideration.

### Procurement

— Loose parts do not have to be expensive. Many materials can be found in nature, purchased at low cost from thrift stores or garage sales, donated by families or community members or even sourced from recycling bins.

# ITCHY MITES & CHIGGER BITES

By Kait Chapman, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

With warmer weather comes spending more time outdoors, and more time outdoors, inevitably, leads to more exposure to things that can make us itch — plants, mosquitos and chiggers to name a few. But what exactly is a chigger? Chances are, you’ve never actually seen one. Instead, you’ve probably discovered hours after spending some time outdoors, you’re now covered in some uncomfortable and unbearably itchy bites.

## What Exactly is a Chigger?

Chiggers are immature or larval red harvest mites and are the only life stage of

the mite that bites people and animals alike. Larvae have six legs and can measure up to 1/100 of an inch in diameter, making them incredibly difficult to see with the naked eye. Adults are more recognizable due to their larger size and bright red color and feed on small insects and insect eggs. Females lay eggs on vegetation



Chigger nymph Red velvet mite  
(Both highly magnified)

throughout the summer and overwinter as adults.

## Bites

People can become exposed to chiggers nearly anywhere outdoors, whether it be strolling through tall grass in a park, gardening or simply enjoying some time in their yards. Chiggers locate their hosts by detecting carbon dioxide and climbing to higher places to attach themselves to the clothing or fur of their victims. They particularly prefer tight or constricted areas like waistlines, ankles, armpits and other areas of snug-fitted clothing.

Chiggers do not burrow into the skin. Instead, they crawl into the hair follicle and inject a salivary fluid to

dissolve nearby cells — this is what makes their bites so itchy. Within a few hours, small, red welts begin to appear where the chigger bit. Itching tends to peak after 1–2 days of the initial bite, and sometimes persists for up to a week. Chiggers can remain on their hosts for 3–5 days unless removed.

If you are bitten by chiggers, over-the-counter treatments such as calamine lotion, hydrocortisone ointment or other non-prescription local anesthetics can reduce the itch.

## Prevention and Management

To protect yourself from chiggers and their bites, you should:

- Wear loose-fitting and protective clothing when possible.
- Avoid sitting or reclining on

the ground while outdoors.

- Apply a repellent, such as DEET or a permethrin clothing spray. Many plant-based or natural repellents have not been tested for effectiveness against chiggers.
- After returning from a chigger-infested area, shower or bathe with hot water as soon as possible. Scrubbing your skin thoroughly dislodges any mites and prevents future bites.
- Remove and launder your clothing before re-wearing.
- Keep landscapes and lawns well-maintained.

Areas that are infested with chiggers can be treated with insecticides containing bifenthrin. Before applying any insecticide, you should always read and follow the label instructions and precautions.

# Teens Discover Their Spark at Ignite by 4-H National Conference

Extension Educator Tracy Anderson recently helped chaperone a group of Nebraska 4-H'ers attending the Ignite by 4-H conference in Washington, D.C. Four Lancaster County 4-H'ers were part of the group: Abby Bauer, Adam Gabel, Morgan Gabel and Aiden Powers.

The four-day event offered an exciting opportunity for teens to:

- Engage in high-impact programming, including immersive workshops, hands-on experiences, and sessions with renowned speakers and industry leaders.
- Explore career pathways and develop essential work readiness skills.
- Experience the rich history and culture of Washington, D.C. through special activities and tours.

Participants discovered their spark in one of five programming tracks: Healthy Living, STEM, AgriScience, Animal Science and Community Accelerators.

Aiden said, "Going to Ignite was an exceptional experience. It was the first time I got to meet other people from different states that had the same interest."

I got to learn about all different types of things and saw amazing sights. If you get the chance to go, you should."

Abby said, "Ignite was such an amazing experience. I learned so many new things and am very grateful for the opportunity. All of the workshops and speakers were engaging, interesting and showed me new things I never would have thought about."



Lancaster County 4-H youth (L-R): Aiden Powers, Abby Bauer, Adam Gabel and Morgan Gabel.



Lancaster County 4-H'ers shared their Healthy Habits Food Loss and Waste grant accomplishments with national conference attendees.



Nebraska 4-H'ers who attended Ignite by 4-H, with the Washington Monument in the background.

## Two 4-H Service-Project Funding Opportunities

### Lancaster County 4-H's Hands to Larger Service

Lancaster County 4-H Council's Hands to Larger Service Award, sponsored by Lancaster County 4-H Council, provides financial support for 4-H clubs and members to complete projects that benefit their clubs or communities. Each year, four \$300 awards and three \$100 awards are available. 4-H members should be actively involved in "learning by doing" through service.

- Applications will be accepted from March 1 through Oct. 1.
- Applicants will be notified within 30 days of submission.

- Projects must be completed by Nov. 1.
- Submit a written final report upon project completion and schedule a 5-10 minute presentation to 4-H Council.

The application is online as a web form at <https://go.unl.edu/larger-service>. If you'd like a print-friendly version, pick one up at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County office or email [lancaster4h@unl.edu](mailto:lancaster4h@unl.edu). If you have questions, contact Tracy Anderson at [tracy.anderson@unl.edu](mailto:tracy.anderson@unl.edu) or 402-441-7180.

### Nebraska 4-H's Hands for Larger Service Award

Nebraska 4-H Foundation's Hands for Larger Service Awards (formerly known as the Governor's Agricultural Excellence Awards), sponsored by Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, provide funding for 4-H clubs to complete projects that will have a lasting impact on their communities. Recognition is given in the form of a \$500 grant to be used as described in the award application form completed by the club. Projects should fit within at least one of four 4-H program areas: college & career readiness, health &

wellness, STEM, and ag & food systems. Examples of fundable programs include mentorship programs, intergenerational programs, attending educational experiences, hosting workshops/educational events and service-learning opportunities. Applications must be submitted by Friday, May 15 and award funds will be issued in early June. More information and application instructions are at <https://ne4hfoundation.org/handsforlargerserviceaward>. If you have questions, contact Lindsay Shearer at [lshearer2@unl.edu](mailto:lshearer2@unl.edu) or 402-472-9019.



## HEART OF 4-H VOLUNTEER AWARD

Recognizing Outstanding Volunteer Service

### Brad Philson

is receiving Lancaster County 4-H's May "Heart of 4-H Award."

A 4-H volunteer for over 10 years, he is one of two head coaches for the Southwest Lincoln 4-H Trap Club and is a certified shotgun instructor. The club participates in Eastern Cornhusker Trapshooting Conference shoots, various 4-H competitions and has participated at the 4-H Shooting Sports National Championships held in Grand Island. At meets, club members compete in squads of five. The club focuses on trap shooting, but some members also participate in skeet and sporting clays. Some club alumni have gone on to compete at collegiate and national levels — most of them on scholarships!

Brad says, "I love working with the youth, many of whom we are able to work with all the way through middle school and high school (7 years) and I truly enjoy watching them grow, mature and develop their character and personality. I also love all of the challenges involved with running a team like this."



## Popular Babysitting Training Fills Up Fast

Extension Educator Ingrid Lindal will present a Babysitting Training open to youth ages 10–16 on Friday, June 19, 9 a.m.–2:30 p.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. Cost is \$40 per participant.

Participants will:

- Learn about child development.
- Learn how to identify

common hazards in the home.

- Learn basic CPR and first aid.
- Make a babysitting kit.
- Make and enjoy a healthy snack.
- Create a business card for their babysitting business.
- Receive a babysitters workbook.

Register by June 12 at <https://go.unl.edu/babysitting-clinic>. Space is limited, so register early! Payment due

day of the training by check (payable to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln) or cash. Please bring a sack lunch.

For more information, contact Ingrid Lindal at [ilindalchavarria2@unl.edu](mailto:ilindalchavarria2@unl.edu) or 402-821-2151.

*Accommodation requests for registration or attendance may be directed to Ingrid at least two weeks prior to the program. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet access needs.*

## Support 4-H During Culver's Scoops of Thanks Day

Craving something sweet? Support 4-H on Thursday, May 7 by eating out at any Culver's restaurant in Lincoln during their annual Scoops of Thanks Day. All day long, you'll receive a scoop of Fresh Frozen Custard in exchange for a \$1 donation to Lancaster County 4-H Council. Stick to your favorite flavor or try Culver's flavor of the day, Blue Barn Brownie! This new flavor of the day is a vanilla fresh frozen custard swirled with fudge and caramel, and topped with gooey brownie pieces. 4-H Council helps support 4-H programs, activities and scholarships.



## 4-H Events Open to All Youth

### ONLINE PLANT SCIENCE CONTESTS

All youth, as well as adults, may test their knowledge of plants through two upcoming online plant science contests. Study materials are online at <https://lancaster.unl.edu/hort-fair>.

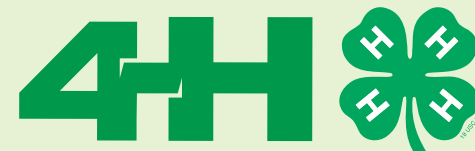
- **Lancaster County 4-H Online Tree ID and Grass & Weed ID Contests** will be open from Tuesday, June 9, 9 a.m. through Tuesday, June 23, 9 a.m. For more information and links, go to <https://lancaster.unl.edu/hort-fair>.
- **Nebraska 4-H Online Horticulture Judging Contest** will be available from Tuesday, June 9, 8 a.m. through Tuesday, June 23, 8 a.m. For more information and link, go to <https://4h.unl.edu/online-horticulture-judging-contest>.

## Support 4-H During Give to Lincoln Day

Lancaster County 4-H Council is one of the nonprofits the community can donate to during Give to Lincoln Day hosted by Lincoln Community Foundation. Your donation is increased by a proportional share of a \$650,000 challenge match fund!

For more information or to make a tax-deductible donation, go to <https://go.unl.edu/giveto4hcouncil>

give  
TO LINCOLN DAY  
Thursday, May 28





## 4-H Announcements FOR 4-H'ERS AND VOLUNTEERS



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

### ZIP IT UP! SEWING WORKSHOP

— 4-H youth ages 9 and up are invited to participate in the Zip It Up! sewing workshop on Saturday, May 2, 9–11 a.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. 4-H'ers will learn the basic centered zipper installation technique. Youth must have at least one year of sewing experience. No cost to attend and the supplies, including fabric and zippers, will be provided by Lancaster County 4-H. Must register by Monday, April 27 by calling 402-441-7180 or emailing [kristin.geisert@unl.edu](mailto:kristin.geisert@unl.edu). Bring your sewing machine in good working condition along with your sewing tools/supplies.

### PREMIER ANIMAL SCIENCE EVENT

— Nebraska 4-H's Premier Animal Science Event (PASE) will be held May 27–29 at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln East Campus. Open to all 4-H'ers ages 8–18 (by Jan. 1 of 2026), these statewide contests include Livestock Judging, Poultry Judging, Livestock Skill-a-thon, Livestock Quiz Bowl, Companion Animal Challenge, Meats Judging and Animal Welfare Judging contests. For more information, visit <https://4h.unl.edu/pase>. If you are interested in participating in PASE, contact the Extension office at 402-441-7180 or [lan4h@unl.edu](mailto:lan4h@unl.edu), by Monday, April 27. Lunch options to be announced. Lancaster County 4-H Council will pay for any contest entry fees for Lancaster County 4-H'ers, but not lunch or T-shirts.

### GRADUATION PACKS FOR 4-H SENIORS

— Nebraska 4-H Foundation is providing a complimentary 4-H Graduation Pack for each 4-H senior statewide! Each pack includes a yard sign and graduation cord. Lancaster County 4-H seniors may pick up their pack at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County office, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. Office hours are Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. To set up an after-hours pick up in the outdoor drop box by the front door of the Extension office, email [lan4h@unl.edu](mailto:lan4h@unl.edu) or call 402-441-7180. If you haven't already picked up your free 4-H Alumni T-shirt courtesy of Lancaster County 4-H Council, be sure to pick it up with your Graduation Pack.

### 4-H COUNCIL 4-H CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

— A limited number of Lancaster County 4-H youth will receive \$200 scholarships to attend one or more of the following camps:

- Nebraska 4-H Summer Camp
  - Nebraska 4-H Big Red Summer Academic Camps
  - University of Nebraska–Lincoln Winners Unlimited Livestock Judging Camp
- Preference given to applications submitted by May 1. Application is available at <https://go.unl.edu/campsch>.

### SHEEP & MEAT GOAT WEIGH-IN, MAY 4

— 4-H & FFA market sheep or market meat goat exhibitors planning to participate in the performance class based on rate of gain at the Lancaster County Super Fair must have their lambs and goats weighed on Monday, May 4, 6–7 p.m. at the Sandhills Global Event Center – Currency Pavilion. For more information or to RSVP, contact Madelaine Vanderbeek at 402-441-7180 or [mpolk2@unl.edu](mailto:mpolk2@unl.edu) by Monday, April 27.

### DOG VIRTUAL TRIVIA CONTEST, MAY 6–13

— The Lancaster County 4-H Dog Virtual Trivia Contest will be available Wednesday, May 6, noon–Wednesday, May 13, 11:59 p.m. Contest is open to 4-H'ers ages 8–18. This year's contest will focus on Working dog breeds. A study guide is now online at <https://lan4h.unl.edu/4h/fair/contests/dog-trivia>. Contest links for each division will be posted at this same website on May 6 at noon.

### HORSEMANSHIP LEVEL TESTINGS, MAY 12, 26 & JUNE 2, 16, 23

— To compete in 4-H horse shows, 4-H'ers must complete Nebraska 4-H Horsemanship Advancement Level requirements. A 4-H horsemanship level group testing will be held on Tuesday, May 12 at the Sandhills Global Event Center. All of the written horsemanship level requirements must be completed and submitted to Kate Pulec before the riding portion of the levels can be conducted. Additional level testings will be held on Tuesday, May 26, Tuesday, June 2, Tuesday, June 16 and Tuesday, June 23 at the Sandhills Global Event Center. Anyone wishing to test must sign up by May 5 for May 12, by May 19 for May 26, by May 26 for June 2, by June 9 for June 16 and by June 16 for June 23 by emailing Kate at [kpulec3@unl.edu](mailto:kpulec3@unl.edu). Held in the evening, time slots will be emailed. Level requirements are due by June 1 for the State 4-H Horse Show, and July 1 for the Lancaster County Super Fair 4-H horse shows.

### PREMIER COMMUNICATION EVENT

— Nebraska 4-H's Premier Communication Event consists of several state-level contests: Prepared Speech, Radio Public Service Announcements, Illustrated Presentation, Impromptu Speech and Video Communication. The event will be held on Tuesday, June 16 and Wednesday, June 17 on University of Nebraska–Lincoln East Campus. Most contests require qualifying at a county contest, except any 4-H youth ages 8–18 may participate in the Impromptu Speech and Video Communication contests. More information is at <https://4h.unl.edu/premier-communication-event>. If you are interested in participating in Impromptu Speech or Video Communication, contact the Extension office at 402-441-7180 or [lan4h@unl.edu](mailto:lan4h@unl.edu) by Friday, May 22. Lancaster County 4-H Council will submit entries and pay contest entry fees for Lancaster County 4-H'ers.

### HORSE JUDGING CONTEST, MAY 30

— The Lancaster County 4-H Horse Judging Contest will be held on Saturday, May 30, 2 p.m. at the Sandhills Global Event Center – LivestockMarket Pavilion. Open to all 4-H'ers — need not be enrolled in a horse project. You may register in advance by emailing name(s) and age(s) of youth to Kate Pulec at [kpulec3@unl.edu](mailto:kpulec3@unl.edu) or at the event 1:30–2 p.m. This is a Lancaster County Super Fair contest held before the fair and is a premium event. Ribbon placings will be awarded. The top 10 contestants in all three age groups will be recognized at Horse Awards Night. All division participants must complete one set of oral reasons to be eligible to win the championship buckle.

### HORSE IDENTIFICATION FORMS DUE JUNE 1

— Each horse being shown in 4-H at the Lancaster County Super Fair or State Horse Expo must be identified on form "4-H Horse Identification Certificate" and submitted to the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County office by June 1. Forms are available at the Extension office and at <http://go.unl.edu/horseID>. Sketch markings showing both sides and face on the form are preferred instead of photos.

### STATE HORSE EXPO ENTRIES DUE JUNE 1

— The Fonger Park State Horse Expo will be held July 11–15 in Grand Island. Exhibitors must be ages 8–18 (by Jan. 1 of the current year) and have passed Horsemanship Advancement Levels I and II. State 4-H Horse Show entries, horse ID's and level requirements are due June 1. The entry process must be completed online by the exhibitor or their family. For more information and entry link, go to <https://4h.unl.edu/horse-expo>. Horse identification certificates, 2- & 3-year old western pleasure affidavits

and completed horsemanship levels must be submitted to the Extension office or [kpulec3@unl.edu](mailto:kpulec3@unl.edu) or [lan4h@unl.edu](mailto:lan4h@unl.edu). If you have questions, contact Kate Pulec at [kpulec3@unl.edu](mailto:kpulec3@unl.edu).

### YOUTH FOR THE QUALITY CARE OF ANIMALS DUE JUNE 15

— 4-H & FFA members participating in any of the following animal projects need to complete Youth for the Quality Care of Animals (YQCA) training: beef, dairy cattle, goat, poultry, rabbit, sheep and swine. The deadline to complete YQCA and submit certificates of completion is Monday, June 15. In Lancaster County, youth may choose one of two options to complete their YQCA requirements:

- Complete online training at <https://yqcaprogram.org>. Cost is \$12. For directions and more information, visit <https://4h.unl.edu/yqca>.
- Attend an in-person training held Thursday, May 21 or Thursday, June 4, 6–7 p.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. To sign up for in-person trainings, you must go to <https://yqcaprogram.org> before the training. The training will cost \$3 payable by credit or debit card on the website. We cannot take payments in person; all families must register and pay online. You will need to take a 5-question pre-test at <https://yqcaprogram.org> before attending.

### LIVESTOCK CHECKLIST FOR SUPER FAIR & STATE FAIR

— The 2026 Lancaster County 4-H & FFA Livestock Checklist and Requirements for the Super Fair and State Fair is available at <https://go.unl.edu/lan4h-livestock-checklist> and at the Extension office. This handout lists deadlines, events and identification requirements for showing at the Lancaster County Super Fair and State Fair. Tags and ID forms are available at the Extension office and <https://lan4h.unl.edu/4h/fair/animals>. Livestock IDs are due to the Extension office or emailed to [lan4h@unl.edu](mailto:lan4h@unl.edu) by June 15. For State Fair, breeding and market livestock nominations must be entered and paid at <https://showstockmgr.com>, and DNA envelopes due to Extension office by June 15. **DNA envelopes from previous years are NO LONGER VALID.** New envelopes may be picked up at the Extension office. **NEW in 2026: Exhibitors planning to show the same animal at both the Nebraska State Fair and the Aksarben Stock Show must submit two separate DNA envelopes and online nominations.** DNA envelopes are not needed for Super Fair. If you have any questions about the livestock projects, contact Madelaine at 402-441-7180 or [mpolk2@unl.edu](mailto:mpolk2@unl.edu).

# Clover College

## June 9–12, 2026



Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln

Lancaster County 4-H Clover College is four days of in-person, hands-on workshops full of fun and a sense of belonging. Learning topics include STEAM concepts of science, technology, engineering, art and math, which can spark career interests. Youth must be at least 8 years old (as of June 9) to attend most workshops — some workshops have older age requirements. The Clover Kids Day Camp is open to ages 6 & 7 (as of June 9 — must have completed kindergarten). Youth may attend as many workshops as they wish.

All supplies will be provided unless otherwise noted.

Youth attending workshops that overlap the lunch period should bring a sack lunch. Food will not be available (unless otherwise stated in the workshop description). If you have questions, call the Extension office at 402-441-7180 or email lancaster4h@unl.edu.

	TUE, JUNE 9	WED, JUNE 10	THU, JUNE 11	FRI, JUNE 12
8:00–10:00	1 CLOVER KIDS 2 BLAST OFF BUILDERS 3 DERBY CARS 6 HORSE COURSE – A	1 CLOVER KIDS 2 BLAST OFF BUILDERS 5 GONE FISHING 17 TREASURE MAP 18 BUG SCIENCE	1 CLOVER KIDS 2 BLAST OFF BUILDERS 31 ON THE BIKE PATH 32 WOVEN HANGINGS 33 FLUID PAINTING	1 CLOVER KIDS 2 BLAST OFF BUILDERS 3 DERBY CARS 44 WHAT'S POPPIN'? 45 LATCH HOOK ART
10:15–12:15	1 CLOVER KIDS 4 DOODLE ART 7 HORSE COURSE – B 8 CREATIVE RE-MAKE	1 CLOVER KIDS 4 DOODLE ART 5 GONE FISHING 19 MONSTER MACHINES 20 IMPRESSIVE LEAVES 21 WINGIN' IT	1 CLOVER KIDS 34 KNOT WORKSHOP 35 DEEP DIVE INTO WATER 36 COZY BLANKETS	1 CLOVER KIDS 46 AMERICAN SPEED TOUR 47 KUMIHIMO 48 GREEN THUMB SCIENCE 49 RABBITS, RABBITS
12:45–2:45	9 RICE BAG SEWING 10 BEADED POTTED PLANTS 11 KITCHEN CONCOCTIONS 12 PETALS & PULP	22 DESIGN IT. BUILD IT. 23 WATER MARBLING 24 MANDALA PAINTING 25 SNACK ATTACK 26 CREAMERY LAB	37 UNL EXPERIENCE 38 TERRIFIC TABLE SETTING 39 BATTER MATTERS 40 BABYSITTING KIT	50 DISCOVER ANIMATION 51 IMAGINE SCIENCE 52 BLUEBIRD HOUSES 53 ANIMAL WIND CHIMES 54 ROBOT CHALLENGE
3:00–5:00	13 CRITTER COLLAGE BOOK 14 CONTROL THE FLOW 15 PIZZA PALOOZA 16 WATERCOLOR WONDERS	27 PLAY WITH CROCHET 28 EGG-ENGINEERING 29 CAKE DECORATING 30 GORGEOUS GLASS	41 CREATURE FEATURE 42 READY, SET, DOUGH! 43 FOOD FUN	NO CLASSES

## WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS



Indicates youth will create a project which may be entered as a 4-H static exhibit at the Lancaster County Super Fair.

### 4-Day Workshops

#### 1 Clover Kids Day Camp

Clover Kids will participate in hands-on activities while learning about animals, science and art. Mid-morning refreshments provided each day.

TUE–FRI, JUNE 9–12;  
8AM–12:15PM  
AGES 6 & 7 (must have completed kindergarten)

• FEE \$55  
Instructors: Various Extension Staff and 4-H Volunteers

#### 2 Blast Off Builders

Build your own rocket and launch it. Receive a rocket kit and one engine. **Only for youth who have not previously taken this class.**

TUE–FRI, JUNE 9–12; 8–10AM  
AGES 8–12 • FEE \$25  
Instructor: Ron Suing, 4-H Volunteer

### 2-Day Workshops

#### 3 Derby Cars

Design, paint and race your own derby car. **Wear clothes appropriate for painting.**

TUE, JUNE 9; 8–10AM  
FRI, JUNE 12; 8–10AM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$15  
Instructor: Karen Wedding and Extension Staff

#### 4 Doodle Art

Create monster designs using the doodle art technique and transfer it to a provided T-shirt.

TUE, JUNE 9; 10:15AM–12:15PM  
WED, JUNE 10; 10:15AM–12:15PM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$15  
Instructors: Kath Conroy and Mary Hillen, 4-H Volunteers

### 1-Day (4-Hour) Workshop

#### 5 Gone Fishing!

**Bring your fishing pole, line, hook and bobber** for fishing fun at a nearby lake. Extra tackle is optional. Bait provided. **Wear closed-toe shoes and sun protection. Only for youth who have not previously taken this class.**

WED, JUN 10; 8AM–12:15PM  
AGES 9 & up • FEE \$5  
Instructor: David Smith, 4-H Volunteer

### 1-Day (2-Hour) Workshops

#### 6 Horse Course – A

An introduction to grooming, tacking and safety around a horse. Learn with a real horse! **Must wear closed-toe shoes.** Same as Horse Course – B.

TUE, JUNE 9; 8–10AM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructor: Kate Pulec, 4-H Extension Associate

#### 7 Horse Course – B

An introduction to grooming, tacking and safety around a horse. Learn with a real horse! **Must wear closed-toe shoes.** Same as Horse Course – A.

TUE, JUNE 9; 10:15AM–12:15PM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructor: Kate Pulec, 4-H Extension Associate

#### 8 Creative Re-Make

Design a new treasure using discarded items.

TUE, JUNE 9; 10:15AM–12:15PM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Tammy Sheldon, 4-H Volunteer

#### 9 Rice Bag Sewing

Sew a rice bag to use as a heating pad. MUST have some sewing experience. **Bring your sewing machine and kit of supplies.** Fabric provided. Some office machines available upon request.

TUE, JUNE 9; 12:45–2:45PM  
AGES 9 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: 4-H Extension Intern

#### 10 Beaded Potted Plants

Create a flower pot using wire and beads to make flowers that never wilt.

TUE, JUNE 9; 12:45–2:45PM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Natalie Ray, 4-H Volunteer

#### 11 Kitchen Concoctions

Mix, test and taste your way through science experiments using everyday kitchen ingredients.

TUE, JUNE 9; 12:45–2:45PM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Elizabeth Thiltges, 4-H Extension Associate

#### 12 Petals & Pulp

Turn dried blooms into unique handmade botanical paper.

TUE, JUNE 9; 12:45–2:45PM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$6  
Instructor: Ann Vandevelder, 4-H Volunteer

#### 13 Critter Collage Book

Create a pet photo book and more. **Bring 4"x 6" (max size) photos of your favorite pet(s).**

TUE, JUNE 9; 3–5PM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Sheri Ramirez, 4-H Volunteer

#### 14 Control the Flow

Explore the "Magic of Electricity" by creating a light switch!

TUE, JUNE 9; 3–5PM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Jim Wies, Extension Technologist

#### 15 Pizza Palooza

Create your own unique pizza and make homemade ice cream!

TUE, JUNE 9; 3–5PM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: 4-H Extension Intern

#### 16 Watercolor Wonders

Design beautiful 'doorway' art using watercolor techniques and architectural styles.

TUE, JUNE 9; 3–5PM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Caitlyn Heiden, Art Educator, Blessed Sacrament School

#### 17 Treasure Map

Become an explorer and help others do the same using GPS and GIS technology.

WED, JUNE 10; 8–10AM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$6  
Instructors: Lancaster County Engineers

#### 18 Bug Science

Learn about amazing insect talents through hands-on science and outdoor exploration. **Bring water bottle, sunscreen and/or hat.**

WED, JUNE 10; 8–10AM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructor: Kait Chapman, Extension Educator of Urban Entomology

#### 19 Monster Machines

Get a "behind the scenes" look at BIG equipment, build a simple hydraulic machine, and more. **Must wear closed-toe shoes (no sandals, flip flops or Birkenstocks).**

WED, JUNE 10; 10:15AM–12:15PM  
AGES 8 & up • FEE \$6  
Instructors: Lancaster County Engineers

#### 20 Impressive Leaves

Turn unique leaf shapes into an artistic project.

WED, JUNE 10; 10:15AM–12:15PM  
AGES 12 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructors: Rachel Anderson, Extension Educator and Extension Master Gardener Volunteer

#### 21 Wingin' It

Flutter into the fascinating world of the Monarch butterfly with fun activities.

WED, JUNE 10; 10:15AM–12:15PM  
AGES 12 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Mallory Jaymes, Fish & Wildlife Biologist

## 22 Design It. Build It.

Build fantastic bridges and discover the future of cars. WED, JUNE 10; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$6  
Instructors: Lancaster County Engineers

## 23 Japanese Water Marbling

Make waves with ink and water to create incredible designs. *Wear clothes appropriate for painting.* WED, JUNE 10; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 9 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Caroline White, 4-H Volunteer

## 24 Mandala Dot Painting

Learn Mandala painting by using dots to make a pattern. *Wear clothes appropriate for painting.* WED, JUNE 10; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructor: 4-H Extension Intern

## 25 Snack Attack

Make and taste easy snacks that make up a healthy eating pattern. *Please list any food allergies.* WED, JUNE 10; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructors: Alyssa Havlovic, Extension Educator and Hannah Schielke, Extension Assistant

## 26 Creamery Lab

Taste various cheeses, make butter and learn about dairy production. Not for dairy-sensitive youth. WED, JUNE 10; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: 4-H Extension Intern

## 27 Play With Crochet

Learn basic techniques to make a new item or bring an unfinished project to complete. WED, JUNE 10; 3–5PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Denise Keierleber, 4-H Volunteer

## 28 Egg-Streme Engineering

Build a helmet to protect a fresh egg from collision. WED, JUNE 10; 3–5PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Elizabeth Thiltges, 4-H Extension Associate

## 29 Cake Decorating

Learn decorating techniques and create your own designs. WED, JUNE 10; 3–5PM AGES 10 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Olivia Lentfer, 4-H Extension Staff

## 30 Gorgeous Glass

Beautifully reused ceramics using a variety of techniques and embellishments. WED, JUNE 10; 3–5PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructor: Nicole Miller, 4-H Volunteer

## 31 On the Bike Path

Ride an obstacle course, get tips and more! *Bring your bike and helmet. Wear closed-toe shoes — no flip flops.* THU, JUNE 11; 8–10AM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$5  
Instructors: Ann Ringlein and the Great Plains Trail Network Volunteers

## 32 Woven Wall Hangings

Learn about board weaving while creating a unique, colorful wall hanging. THU, JUNE 11; 8–10AM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructors: Rhonda Griess and the Lincoln Hand Weavers Guild

## 33 Fluid Painting

Pour paint onto a canvas & manipulate for unique designs. *Wear clothes appropriate for painting.* THU, JUNE 11; 8–10AM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Karen Wedding, Extension Staff

## 34 Knot Your Regular Workshop

Learn to tie basic, useful knots in this fun, hands-on workshop. Create your own knot-tying learning board to keep practicing the new skills. THU, JUNE 11; 10:15AM–12:15PM AGES 10 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Julia Plugge, Outdoor Specialist, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

## 35 Deep Dive into Water

Build and eat an edible “aquifer” sundae, explore precision irrigation and see how water is essential. THU, JUNE 11; 10:15AM–12:15PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructor: Crystal Powers, Water & Cropping Systems Extension Educator

## 36 Cozy Blankets

Make colorful tie blankets to be donated to those in need. Fabric provided. THU, JUNE 11; 10:15AM–12:15PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructor: Tammy Sheldon, 4-H Volunteer

## 37 UNL Animal Science Experience

Learn about nutrition, animal biology and all the cool things in animal science during this tour of the UNL Animal Science Building. Enjoy a tasty stop at the UNL Dairy Store. THU, JUNE 11; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructors: Kate Pulec, 4-H Extension Associate and 4-H Extension Interns

## 38 Terrific Table Setting

Create an awesome centerpiece and learn how to participate in the 4-H Table Setting Contest at the Super Fair. THU, JUNE 11; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructor: 4-H Extension Intern

## 39 Batter Matters: Mini Cupcake Lab

Become a cupcake scientist and discover how ingredients shape the final bake. THU, JUNE 11; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructors: UNL Food Science & Technology Department Staff

## 40 Babysitting Kit

Create a babysitting kit to promote a preschooler’s development. THU, JUNE 11; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Jaci Foged, Early Childhood Extension Educator

## 41 Creature Feature

Learn about several different animals native to Nebraska and cast wild animal tracks. THU, JUNE 11; 3–5PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Elizabeth Thiltges, 4-H Extension Associate

## 42 Ready, Set, Dough!

It’s easier than it looks to mix and shape bread and rolls. Learn techniques and take samples home. THU, JUNE 11; 3–5PM AGES 10 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator Emeritus

## 43 Food Fun

Make delicious snacks in new ways! THU, JUNE 11; 3–5PM AGES 10 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructors: Tracy Anderson, Extension Educator and 4-H Teen Ambassadors

## 44 What’s Poppin’?

Nebraska loves its popcorn. Cook and taste many varieties. FRI, JUNE 12; 8–10AM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructor: 4-H Extension Intern

## 45 Latch Hook Art

Learn the latch hook technique using yarn. FRI, JUNE 12; 8–10AM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructor: 4-H Extension Intern

## 46 American Speed Tour

Walk to see hot rods and race cars, a BMX display and even “Tow Mater” and “Lightning McQueen” from the Disney movie, “Cars.” FRI, JUNE 12; 10:15AM–12:15PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructors: Museum of American Speed Staff

## 47 Create Kumihimo

Interlace colorful thread strands to learn Japanese cord braiding. FRI, JUNE 12; 10:15AM–12:15PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$6  
Instructor: Cathy Babcock, 4-H Volunteer

## 48 Green Thumb Science

Conduct science experiments using the amazing world of plants; how they grow, hunt and move in response to touch. FRI, JUNE 12; 10:15AM–12:15PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$6  
Instructor: Dr. Christian Stephenson, UNL Assistant Professor, Agronomy & Horticulture

## 49 Rabbits, Rabbits

Learn about rabbit care and showmanship with live rabbits. FRI, JUNE 12; 10:15AM–12:15PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$5  
Instructors: 4-H Extension Intern and Rabbits R Us Club Members

## 50 Discover Animation

Learn about the science and history behind animation. Bring your drawings to life by using historical optical toys. FRI, JUNE 12; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Erica Larsen-Dockray, UNL Lecturer & Professional Animator

## 51 Imagine Science

Join us for hands-on science action! FRI, JUNE 12; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$8  
Instructor: 4-H Extension Intern

## 52 Bluebird Houses

Build and replace homes for our feathered friends displaced by the wildfires. FRI, JUNE 12; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Becky Schuerman, Extension Associate

## 53 Animal Wind Chimes

Transform terracotta pots into musical outdoor art with animal faces. FRI, JUNE 12; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$10  
Instructor: Rachel Wells, 4-H Volunteer

## 54 Robot Challenge

See what robots can do and how to make them move. FRI, JUNE 12; 12:45–2:45PM AGES 8 & up • FEE \$5  
Instructors: Cathy Babcock, 4-H Volunteer and N-Bots 4-H Club Members

## Clover College ONLINE Registration

Registration is **ONLY** be available online!  
Link will be at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/cc>



Registration opens **Wednesday, May 6**  
at noon for currently enrolled 4-H’ers.

Prior to May 6, currently enrolled 4-H families will be sent a registration access code via email. This code will activate on May 6 at noon.

Registration opens **Wednesday, May 13**  
at noon for non-4-H youth.

### REGISTRATION TIPS:

- An email address and a debit or credit card will be required to complete registration. There are no additional online or credit card processing fees, only the cost of the chosen workshop(s).
- **Take note of each workshop’s age requirements!** Age is calculated as of the first day of Clover College. Please adhere to the age restrictions when registering.
- To speed up the process during registration, determine your workshop choices ahead of time and have alternative choices in case your first-choice workshops are full.
- Please note any food allergies and check photo and evaluation permissions on each child’s registration.
- To receive reimbursement for yellow 4-H Activity Certificates or green Clover Cash vouchers after registering, bring certificates and your Clover College confirmation to the Extension office.
- There are no refunds.

**Classes fill up quickly!**

Accommodation requests for registration or attendance may be directed to Kristin Geisert at least two weeks prior to the program at [kristin.geisert@unl.edu](mailto:kristin.geisert@unl.edu) or 402-441-7180. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet access needs.

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

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Accommodation requests for registration or attendance may be directed to Karen Wobig at least two weeks prior to the program at [lancaster@unl.edu](mailto:lancaster@unl.edu) or 402-441-7180. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet access needs.

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## EXTENSION NEWS

### New Health & Wellbeing Staff Member

#### Sophia Wehrbein

recently joined Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County as a part-time staff member through August to support the Health & Wellbeing team. She will help with the Nutrition School Enrichment Kit Program in Lincoln Public Schools, represent Nebraska Extension at various health fairs, assist with East Campus Discovery Days, support the Growing Together Nebraska team with community education, and help revise materials on [food.unl.edu](http://food.unl.edu) to improve digital accessibility.

Sophia graduated this past December from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln with a bachelor's degree in Nutrition and Health Sciences. She will begin UNL's Professional Studies in Dietetics graduate program this coming fall semester.



Sophia Wehrbein

## Composting Demonstrations

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 composting demonstrations on Saturday, May 16 and Saturday, Sept. 26, 10–11 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 Gardener Volunteers 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. At each program, 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.



## Big Red Summer Academic Camps

Big Red Summer Academic Camps are residential, career exploration camps held at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln open to all students going into grades 9–12 during the 2026–27 school year. Camps are hosted by Nebraska Extension 4-H Youth Development and university faculty members in various academic areas across campus.

This year's dates are June 7–12. Sessions include:

- Digital Media
- Engineering
- Food Systems
- Robots & Drones
- STEM Odyssey
- Unicameral Youth Legislature Camp

Visit <https://4h.unl.edu/big-red-camps> for details.



# EXTENSION CALENDAR

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

## April

- 25 4-H Home Decor & Furniture Painting Workshop .....9 a.m.–12 p.m.
- 25–26 Nebraska 4-H Horse Stampede, UNL East Campus – Animal Science Complex
- 29 4-H Leader & Volunteer Collaboration .....9 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

## May

- 1 Preference Given to Lancaster County 4-H Council Camp Scholarship Applications Submitted by May 1
- 2 4-H Zip It Up! Sewing Workshop .....9–11 a.m.
- 4 4-H & FFA Sheep & Goat Weigh-In Day, Sandhills Global Event Center – Currency Pavilion .....6–7 p.m.
- 5 4-H Council Meeting .....6 p.m.
- 6–13 4-H Dog Virtual Trivia Contest, <https://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/dog-trivia>
- 7 Pesticide Applicator NDA "Walk-In" Testing Session .....9 a.m.–2 p.m.
- 7 4-H Horse VIPs Committee Meeting .....6 p.m.
- 12 4-H Horsemanship Advancement Level Testing, Sandhills Global Event Center
- 13 GRO Big Red Virtual Learning Series: Lawn and Landscape Weeds, <http://hles.unl.edu/grobigred> .....12 p.m.
- 14 4-H Dog Workshop Series, Sandhills Global Event Center – South Hall .....6–7 p.m.
- 15 Extension Board Meeting .....8 a.m.
- 16 Composting Demonstration, Pioneers Park Nature Center's backyard composting demonstration area .....10–11 a.m.
- 21 Youth for the Quality Care of Animals In-Person Training for 4-H & FFA Livestock Animal Exhibitors .....6–7 p.m.
- 25 Extension Office Closed for Memorial Day Holiday
- 26 4-H Horsemanship Advancement Level Testing, Sandhills Global Event Center
- 27–29 Nebraska 4-H Premier Animal Science Event (Includes Companion Animal Challenge), UNL East Campus – Animal Science Complex
- 30 4-H Horse Judging Contest, Sandhills Global Event Center – LivestockMarket Pavilion .....2 p.m. (Register 1:30–2 p.m.)