

Extension news

Surry County Center

April 2021

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Why Join 4-H?

4-H is all about learning by doing, and research shows 4-H'ers are 2x more likely to make healthier choices, 4x more likely to give back to their community, and 2x more likely to participate in STEM activities (<https://4-h.org/about/research/#!youth-development>). Youth ages 5-19 are able to participate, and it is free to join! If this is something you are interested in, please enroll/re-enroll in 4-H for this program year. Check out the information on how to do that here: <https://surry.ces.ncsu.edu/2021/02/4-h-enrollment-re-enrollment-for-2021/>



4-H Presentations

4-H presentations can help youth gain confidence in their public speaking skills while they explore an area of their choice. With over 30 presentation categories, there are endless topic possibilities! This helps youth to extend their knowledge of a subject area as they put together and deliver a

presentation. Public speaking is not only a valuable skill for school, it is something youth can take with them into a future career as well. Besides learning public speaking, other life skills like planning, organizing, self-esteem, and goal setting can be developed through this opportunity. 4-H presentations this year will be done virtually, which could help youth who are apprehensive about speaking in front of an audience, gain practice without the added nerves. Presentations will be submitted at the county level virtually (deadline is to be determined) and have a chance to move on to the district or even state level competitions. All 4-H'ers ages 5-18 are eligible to participate; youth ages 5-7 will be able to submit presentations but will not be entered in "head-to-head" competitions. For more information, contact Bailey McGill (bailey_mcgill@ncsu.edu) or see <https://nc4h.ces.ncsu.edu/youth-3/4-h-awards-incentives-programs-2/presentations/>.



Discover 4-H

If you are interested in learning about a variety of topics, this series is perfect for you! This series meets virtually via Zoom on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 4:00 pm, and each session focuses on a different topic. Learning is extended at home with an activity youth can do at their own pace. This is best suited for youth in elementary school, but all youth ages 5-19 are welcome to attend as well! This month's meetings will be held on April 14th and 28th with topics being on pollinators and soil solutions! If you are interested in joining this program live or would like to view the recording later, please contact Bailey McGill or check out our website!

**NC COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION**



BEWARE OF GRASS TETANY

Grass tetany, sometimes called grass staggers or hypomagnesemia, can be a serious problem in our area. This is especially true on pastures that have had poultry litter used as a fertilizer. The problem is usually confined to lactating cows, especially cows in early lactation, with calves under 4 months old. It is always associated with an imbalance in the mineral components of blood serum, especially reduced magnesium levels. Grass tetany is more severe when cattle are grazing young forage, particularly the first flush of growth during the spring; like we are experiencing now. It is also associated more with cows in early lactation with calves less than 4 months old. Once the forage becomes more mature, the likelihood of problems is reduced. The symptoms of hypomagnesemia closely resemble those of milk fever or ketosis. These include nervousness, lack of coordination, muscular spasms, staggering and death. When the disease is suspected, a veterinarian should be called immediately to diagnose and to initiate treatment. However, in beef herds, the herdsman does not always have the opportunity to observe the signs of the disease and affected cattle may be found dead in the pasture. Factors which have been associated with this disease include low levels of magnesium (Mg) and high protein and potassium levels in the forage. Excess nitrogen in conjunction with high levels of potassium fertilization tends to reduce the magnesium level in most forage plants.

Preventing Grass Tetany

1. Feed high magnesium minerals in mineral feeders placed at convenient locations around the pasture. Move mineral feeders closer to watering and resting areas if mineral consumption is low.
2. Check the calcium (C) to phosphorus (P) ratio (2:1 is

optimum), and energy intake (maintenance or above is desired) of the animal. Grass tetany may be less likely to occur when these factors are near optimum.

3. Remove animals from pasture or limit grazing during periods of rapid growth. Allow access to hay or dry pasture.



Free Soil Testing

Beginning April 1, soil sample testing will be free until December 1. Taking soil samples is a useful tool for determining the fertilizer and lime requirements for your lawn, vegetable garden, or flower bed. The information can help save time and money on applications.

Soil test kits are available at NC Cooperative Extension, Surry Center. Kits include soil test boxes, sample information forms and instructions. They are available outside the Extension window at 915 E Atkins Street in Dobson.

When taking a soil sample, remember to use a clean, stainless steel or chrome-plated trowel. For lawns, dig about 6 inches deep in multiple spots in the testing area. The number of samples depends on the size of the area to be tested. For all other sites, dig 8 inches deep in multiple spots in the testing area. These individual samples should be placed in a clean plastic bucket or bowl and mixed well. It is best not to take a soil test when the soil is wet. Wait until the soil is fairly dry. In our clay soils, if you wait until the soil is completely dry, a sample may be too difficult to take. Place the mixed soil sample into a soil test box and fill it to the fill line and label the box.

Complete an information form for each soil sample. Supply as much information as possible. If lime applications have been made in the

last 12 months, give the month and amount of application. This will help determine the appropriate lime recommendations for the sampled area. Complete the planting code which can be located on the back page. If you have an email address, you will want to put it on the form as well.

Soil test boxes can then be placed in a cardboard box with the information form on top of the soil test boxes and mailed to the address listed on the form. Keep a list of where your samples were taken and the code you gave each sample. Little information can be obtained from samples with an unknown location.

After the lab has tested the soil samples, you will receive a test report with recommendations for fertilizer and pH amendment. An extension agent can help you interpret the results if needed.



Disclaimer

Recommendations for the use of agricultural chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use agricultural chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact your county Cooperative Extension agent.

Extension Master Gardeners

Plant Sale

To help fund educational programming for Master Gardeners, the Surry County Extension Master Gardeners is holding a plant sale on May 7, 2021 from 9 am until 3 pm or until sold out. The plant sale will be held at the Extension Center. There will be numerous plants: annual vegetables, annual flowers, perennials, fruit trees, ornamental trees, and special gift ideas for mom.

A raffle is also being held for a "Pollinator Quilt". This beautiful 63 X 72 quilt was handmade by Extension Master Gardener, Debbie Evers. The quilting was donated by Yadkin Valley Quilts. The quilt is valued at \$350.

Raffle tickets are \$5.00 per ticket or 5 tickets for \$20. Anyone who would like to purchase a raffle ticket may contact a Master Gardener or call the NC Cooperative Extension, Surry Center at 336.401.8025 Monday - Friday 8:15 am - 5:00 pm. Tickets will also be available during the plant sale. The drawing will take place at the end of the plant sale on May 7.

All ticket proceeds go to Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Programs that benefits all communities in Surry County. You do not need to be present to win.



NC STATE EXTENSION

Master Gardener | Surry County

New Year, New Way with ECA Learning Series

Join us for our next two virtual leader lesson trainings:

Pillows, Pillows, Pillows May 6, 11:00 am

Want a quick, fun and inexpensive update for your home? Try decorative pillows. Learn what to look for and think about when purchasing pillows and how to make some DIY no-sew or easy-sew options to give your space a brand-new look. To register go to – <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-new-year-new-way-with-eca-pillows-pillows-tickets-136702279197?aff=erelexpmlt>.

Meals in a Mug June 3, 11:00 am

Do you enjoy cooking, but usually only need to cook for 1 to 2 people or have a very busy lifestyle? Learn about meals in a mug, which is the perfect solution if you are in one of these situations. They are quick and easy options for busy people and are also budget-friendly. To register go to - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2021-new-year-new-way-with-eca-meals-in-a-mug-tickets-136702600157>.

Extension Community Association (ECA) is a volunteer group with the purpose to empower individuals and families to improve their quality of living through continuing education, leadership development and community service. Come connect with us from the safety of your home to hear a little bit about ECA and to learn a fun new skill. These zoom learning sessions will be on the first Thursday of each month at 11 a.m. Registration is required to attend these Zoom sessions, or you may watch the video which will be sent to you by email when the session is over. For a video and handouts of the February class on *Easy Exercises to do at home*, March - *Understanding Your Air Fryer* or April- *Biscuits Now and Then* please send me an email at Carmen.Long@ncsu.edu and I will send you the link.



Attend Spring District Day without having to travel. Join us for a virtual event on Wednesday, May 12!

This year's Spring District Day will be held via Zoom on Monday, May 12th from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm.

More details will be announced soon!

National Volunteer Week April 18 - 24, 2021

Want to be healthier, happier, and live longer while making our community a better place? Volunteer!

We have many volunteers who contribute their time and energy to various parts of N.C. Cooperative Extension. From 4-H, Extension and Community Association (ECA), Extension Master Gardener Volunteers, Surry County Beekeepers Association, Extension Advisory Council and Program Committees to our Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP), we would never be able to accomplish all that we do without our wonderful volunteers. Their efforts are significant.

Although we appreciate all our volunteers do throughout the year, National Volunteer Week is the perfect time to celebrate their many accomplishments. Thank you!

Sometimes I hear, "the little bit I could do wouldn't make a difference." Everyone doing a little can equal a lot. You will make a difference not just in someone else's life, but in yours too. For more information about volunteer opportunities associated with Cooperative Extension, contact our office at 336-401-8025.



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Accommodation Statement:

For accommodations for persons with disabilities, contact the Surry County Center at (336) 401-8025, no later than five business days before the event.

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