

# TWIN CREEKS SPOTLIGHT

**K-STATE**  
Research and Extension

Twin Creeks  
District

**NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2022**



**Thank You!**

*We wish you and your family a happy and safe holiday season. Thank you for all you have done to make 2022 a successful extension year!*



K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION  
TWIN CREEKS DISTRICT



<https://www.twincreeks.k-state.edu/>



## Edible Gifts: Mail Early, But Wisely

Submitted by: Karen Shepard  
Family and Consumer Science Agent



Holiday gifts of food can be pleasant surprises, but if food safety and quality have been compromised during shipping, the gifts may need to be discarded, rather than enjoyed, said Karen Blakeslee, Kansas State University Research and Extension rapid response coordinator.

Blakeslee, who spends her working hours answering questions about food and food safety, offered these tips to help ensure that gifts of food will be delivered safely:

- Consider mailing and shipping options when choosing recipes and food items that will be included in the gift box. If a package is to be shipped halfway across the country or around the world - choose non-perishable foods. Hard candy, packaged snack or trail mixes, dried fruit, jerky, dehydrated soup or beverage mixes can be safe choices.
- For gifts that will not need to be world travelers, choose less fragile recipes.

Brownies, bar or other "hard" cookies, such as gingersnaps, generally travel better than more fragile shaped or decorated cookies, she said. Not all brownies are the same, though. Brownies or other cookies made with cream cheese may mold if delayed in transit, she said.

- Wrap gift foods carefully. Use cookie tins, durable plastic food storage containers or a sturdy box that can be lined with food wrap. Layer cookies and separate layers with food wrap or waxed paper. Wrapping larger or decorated cookies individually in food wrap and adding a ribbon or sticker can simulate commercially available gourmet cookie assortments and also protect them.

Placing a cookie container within a box and surrounding it with crumpled newspaper or bubble wrap can cushion the container in transit, she said.

- Include recipes or a list of ingredients as a courtesy to recipients. Food allergies can be a problem, particularly during the holidays. In candies and cookies, nuts that may cause a severe allergic reaction are not always obvious. If considering a gift of food for a relative or friend who may have dietary restrictions, check the restrictions to make sure your gift will be appropriate.
- Include a copy of the recipient's name and address inside the package in case the shipping label is lost.
- Give the recipient a call or send them an e-mail before mailing or shipping to let them know your gift is on the way.

"A box of candy or cookies might be fine if set aside for a family gathering later in the week. A box of steaks needs to be opened immediately and transferred to the refrigerator or freezer," she said.

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- If choosing a commercial food provider, do your homework. Check to see if food quality and safety are guaranteed and ask about delivery options and costs. A commercial provider can be better equipped to safely ship highly perishable items, including meats, fruits and flowers. Spending a few extra dollars to guarantee overnight delivery is a good idea if gifts are highly perishable.



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## Fixing Peanut Brittle Problems

Fresh crunchy peanut brittle is a favorite homemade candy treat. As with all candy, there are some "tricks of the trade" to make a perfect peanut brittle.

Brittles are classified as noncrystalline candies. The goal is to prevent crystals from forming. Two methods can accomplish this. The first is to make a very concentrated sugar solution by evaporating water out of the syrup. The second is to add large amounts of interfering agents to block crystal formation. Examples of interfering agents include corn syrup and cream of tartar.

A key step in making brittle is heating the syrup to the proper temperature. Typically, this is the hard-crack stage or 300 degrees to 310 degrees F. This caramelizes the sugar to an amber color. It also removes the water so that the sucrose molecules won't attract other sucrose molecules. This prevents crystallization. The moisture factor is another reason not to bake brittle on rainy or humid days.

Baking soda is sometimes added to brittle. Soda foams when added and neutralizes the acidity of the brittle. It helps make the brittle more porous and airy.

Other tips for making brittles include:

- Grease the sides of the cooking pan to prevent boiling over and prevent sugar from sticking to the sides.
- Re-using a candy thermometer or spoon without washing it can cause crystallization.
- Do not stir or agitate the syrup when boiling.
- Warm or roast the nuts before adding to the syrup. Cold nuts can cool the syrup too fast and the syrup will not spread thin enough.

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## Fantastic Fudge

Fudge is classified as a crystalline candy. The goal is to produce very fine sugar crystals by controlling the form and content of sugar, using the correct temperature, and stirring correctly. Fudge should be soft but firm with a smooth texture.

The sugar syrup mixture for fudge should be heated to the soft ball stage, 234 degrees to 240 degrees F. After heating, the mixture is cooled to about 120 degrees F. The fudge should not be stirred while cooling. It is important not to cool it too much because it will not form smooth, crystalline fudge. The fudge has a shiny appearance at this point. After cooling, stir the fudge vigorously. This creates a dull finish and a creamy smooth texture with very fine sugar crystals. The fudge should hold its shape when dropped from a spoon. If over beaten, the fudge will become too hard. This can be corrected by reheating.

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## Fantastic Fudge, Cont.



Typical fudge contains a dairy ingredient such as milk or half-and-half. Curdling can occur because the acid in the chocolate curdles milk proteins. To prevent curdling, stir the fudge mixture steadily during the heating step.

Marshmallow fudge uses regular marshmallows or marshmallow cream. Marshmallows are made from sugar, egg whites and gelatin. The addition of egg whites and gelatin will coat the sugar crystals and keep them small. This results in creamy fudge.



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**JOIN OUR TEAM**

## Office Professional - Hoxie Office

Applications are now open for a full-time Office Professional in our Sheridan County office! Hours are Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm. Starting pay will depend on experience. KPERs retirement and stipend are available. General secretarial experience is preferred, however we are willing to train the right person. Position open until filled.



For a complete job description and application, stop by any Twin Creeks District Office or call us at 785-475-8121.





## Mentors in 4-H

Written By: Jenilee Godsey  
Youth Agriculture Agent



Here is an article I would like to share with you written by fellow K-State Research and Extension Agent, Michelle Beran, from the Midway Extension District. As we kick-off a new 4-H year, we as Extension Agents, get excited about the opportunity to work with existing and new volunteers in our 4-H programs. Volunteers play a crucial part in the success of the program in regards to knowledge gained and skills advanced for our youth in their specific project areas. Take a look at Michelle's message about mentoring in 4-H!

One of the important aspects of 4-H is providing practical learning opportunities for youth by working with caring adults who set examples and model behaviors. These adults provide invaluable opportunities as mentors for youth.

What is a mentor? A mentor is someone who listens, helps in goal setting, sets examples, and provides a framework for youth to learn problem solving, improve communication, and expand life skills.

Mentors have long-term impacts on the lives of youth and can exist in many different roles. We often think of mentors in one-on-one relationships, but they can certainly exist as part of a group environment. They can include teachers, counselors, pastors, neighbors, family members and club/project leaders.

Good mentors will go to great lengths to assist, but also understand that the success of any young person depends on that youth's choices and behaviors.

Even when a young person doesn't show instant change and doesn't seem to be benefitting from the relationship, the simple act of the mentor being there can be life changing. Developmental or youth-centered mentoring relationships in which mentors help young people set and reach their own goals results in higher youth satisfaction compared to relationships in which the mentor just directs activities.

While it may sound like a mentor needs to be perfect or a super-hero to succeed, mentors are human and make mistakes. Mentors may take the wrong approach to a problem or say the wrong thing from time to time, but mentees are generally resilient as long as they understand that their mentors have the youth's best interests at heart. Mistakes can give young people the chance to see an adult model good problem-solving skills and can be used as teachable moments.



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Here are some great **Do's** and **Don'ts**:

**DO** be consistent - Many young people believe that adults aren't dependable, and mentors need to 'walk the walk' and make sure that our actions are consistent with our words.

**DO** practice healthy communications skills - Establish eye contact, listen, ask questions for clarifications, don't interrupt and be open-minded.

**DO** address inappropriate behavior - Do this directly but with care. Explain that there are standards in the outside world with which individuals are expected to comply. Behaviors learned in the home or among peers may be appropriate in those settings but not in others.

**DON'T** trivialize your mentee's feelings - Young people tend to lack the perspective that comes with age so your mentee may react more strongly in a given situation than an adult would. You may not understand why something is so important to your mentee but accept that it is and keep listening.

**DON'T** jump to conclusions - Remember there are usually at least two sides to every story. It's okay to give your mentee the benefit of the doubt but don't choose sides or believe everything you hear. If you know the facts, then you'll be in a better position to help your mentee find solutions and make wise choices.

If you are interested in being a mentor or volunteer in our 4-H program, we welcome you to contact any of our county offices!

This is an article written by Michelle Beran with Kansas State University Research and Extension in the Midway District.



## New Northwest Region SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator

Hello, I'm Aftan Tso, the new Northwest Region SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator covering Twin Creeks and Golden Prairie districts! I'm super excited to step into this new role and into all the different communities I serve. Kansas SNAP-Ed is a wonderful program that focuses on preventing nutrition and activity-related chronic disease by empowering low-resource Kansans to achieve healthy lives, improve food security, and reduce health disparities. I graduated with a BA in Health and Physical Education from Tabor College then taught physical education in South Korea and Kenya before coming back to be

Wellness Director at Smith Center Memorial Hospital and Recreation Director in Stockton, KS. I live in Hoxie with Steven, my husband, and 5 kids: Kansas, Dash, Whittaker, Roman, and Trixie. You can contact Aftan by email at: [aftant@ksu.edu](mailto:aftant@ksu.edu) or by telephone at her office 785-421-3411 or by cell at 785-200-7853.



## Volunteers in 4-H

Written By: Patsy Maddy  
4-H Youth Development Agent

The Kansas 4-H Youth Development Program depends on adult and youth volunteers to help youth gain the five Kansas 4-H Life Skills of a positive self-concept, an inquiring mind, a concern for the community, healthy interpersonal relationships and sound decision making.

The main roles for local volunteers are Community Club Leaders, Project Leaders or Activity Leaders.

A **Community Club Leader** ensures that the 4-H club has the necessary leadership to provide positive learning experiences for youth. They are responsible for keeping the club and 4-H members organized and act as the liaison between the club and the Extension office. They encourage other volunteers to get involved and delegate tasks to them.

The 4-H **Project Leader** provides leadership/teaching in a specific subject area to a small group of 4-H'ers and assists 4-H'ers to develop life skills. They also assist the community club leaders in guiding 4-H members with project record books.

An **Activity Leader** would be an episodic leader who assists in organizing and facilitating specific events and project activities.

There are many more roles for volunteers, so check with your local club and/or Extension Office for more information.

Volunteers are fundamental to the 4-H program as they serve as advisors, guides, coaches, helpers and mentors. They come in all shapes and forms with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Some volunteers are long-term, and others are short-term, yet all are unique.



**Master 4-H Volunteers** are special volunteers who want to grow and give back more in their role as 4-H Volunteers. This program provides this opportunity for volunteers who want to contribute in a broader way. The Master 4-H Volunteer program strengthens and enhances the individual and the local program.

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In order to become a Master 4-H Volunteer, the individual must be a registered and screened volunteer, attend specialized Master 4-H Volunteer training and "give back" 40 volunteer hours to the 4-H program within one year of the training. The individual must also be a past or present Organizational Leader, Project Leader or County Leader/Advisor.

Anyone interested in becoming a Master Volunteer can contact their local Extension Office for more details regarding the upcoming training sessions, registration forms and ways in which you could serve as a Master 4-H Volunteer.

In a world that seems to operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, life can become hectic. Today's youth need a caring adult willing to teach them life skills. By committing 360 minutes of your time to be a 4-H project leader, you can help youth develop into responsible, self-directed productive citizens of the community. Learning by doing is the basic philosophy of the Kansas 4-H youth development program. 4-H project work occurs over a period of several weeks or months during the year. A minimum of six hours of adult guided instruction is recommended by Kansas 4-H to complete a project. Learning is a natural lifelong process for all of us.

Kansas 4-H recommends allowing at least 60 minutes for each project learning session. Give 360 and connect with kids in your community and teach them skills for life. Twin Creeks Extension District 4-H program in Decatur, Graham, Norton and Sheridan counties is looking for individuals interested in sharing their time and talents with our youth. Your specialty may be in knitting, crochet, woodworking, baking, sewing, livestock, horticulture, etc. Our youth need your expertise and the benefit of forming positive relationships with caring adults in our communities. Please consider spending time with our future generations and passing along those valuable tips.

Share your skills and become a 4-H project leader: give 60 minutes to a 4-Her 6 times a year. Make the difference of a lifetime!!!

The strength of the local Extension programs is the direct outcome of the partnership between Extension agents, and members of the local Program Development Committees.

Kansas Extension County and district laws require four program development committees with six or more members serving on each committee. Committees focus on four core areas: Agriculture & Natural Resources, Community Development, Family & Consumer Science, and 4-H Youth Development.

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If you have the desire to assist agents in planning needed programs for your area, please contact your Extension office to sign up for a PDC (Program Development Committee).

4-H grows confident, capable, and caring kids with the life skills to thrive in today's world and succeed in their boldest dreams for tomorrow. Working in partnership with 11- universities, 4-H programs are research-backed and offer life-changing experiences to youth around the world.

Please contact your local Twin Creeks Extension District office in Decatur, Graham, Norton or Sheridan County to ask about volunteering your time and talents to impact our youth of tomorrow.



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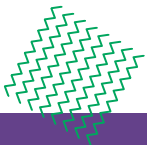


Kansas State University is an equal opportunity employer.

**JOIN OUR TEAM**

## **4-H Program Assistant**

Applications are now open for a 4-H Program Assistant serving the Twin Creeks District with primary responsibilities in Sheridan and Graham Counties. If you enjoy working with youth in a team-based environment, stop by our Sheridan or Graham County offices for full details on this opportunity!



For full details, see <https://bit.ly/TCDHelpWanted>.

# Simply Produce

in Oberlin, Kansas

**Buy**  **Pounds of Produce**  
for only **Dollars!**  
*(That's about half the retail price!)*



## NOTICE:

The Simply Produce  Program will be put on  
"PAUSE"

For the months of November and December  
We will resume the program starting in January 2023

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!**

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## The FUNdamentals of Thanksgiving

Gobble gobble! Thanksgiving is almost here! To help make the meal less traumatic, here are some tips from the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline.

- Buy enough turkey. Figure one pound per person for a whole turkey.
- Plan thawing time. The rule of thumb is 24 hours per 4-5 pounds of turkey in the refrigerator.
- A safely roasted turkey is done when cooked to 165 degrees F.







# Twin Creeks District Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent



Lead dynamic agricultural and natural resources Extension programs in Twin Creeks District, KS.

Apply online using our [application site](https://ksre.ksu.edu/jobs). For more information visit [ksre.ksu.edu/jobs](https://ksre.ksu.edu/jobs).

## POSITION DESCRIPTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Extension agents are professional educators who serve as a link between Kansas State University and communities across Kansas. Agents are administratively responsible to the Director of K-State Research and Extension (represented by a designated administrator) and the local extension board.

**TITLE:**

Extension Agent

**PRIMARY AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY:**

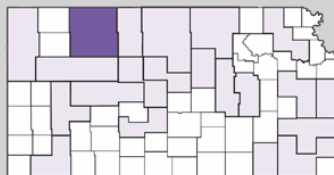
Agriculture and Natural Resources programming

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:**

Monday, November 21, 2022  
Interviews held on December 07, 2022

**LOCATION:**

Offices in Hill City, Hoxie, Norton, and Oberlin KS. Primary office is negotiable between Hoxie and Oberlin.



The Twin Creeks Extension District is comprised of Decatur, Graham, Norton, and Sheridan Counties in northwest Kansas. The district currently employs six agents, four office professionals, and two 4-H program assistants. The district has a combined population of approximately 13,000 across 22 rural communities.

- Lead the development, implementation, and evaluation of research-based educational programming related to agriculture and natural resources. Programming will include but is not limited to: agronomic and livestock production; agricultural economics, management, and public policy; horticultural production and management; and natural resources conservation and environmental stewardship.
- Provide primary supervision for one office professional.
- Share responsibility for 4-H youth development programming related to agriculture and natural resources.
- Successful extension programs require agents to:
  - Identify local needs and emerging issues related to K-State Research and Extension’s five Grand Challenges (water and natural resources; community vitality; health; developing tomorrow’s leaders; and global food systems) by engaging with program development committees and other community organizations and professionals.
  - Design appropriate educational strategies to engage clientele. Strategies might include educational programming in a community-based setting; events and activities that provide experiential learning opportunities; use of innovative technologies; individual educational consultations; and group facilitation.
  - Develop and implement strategies to serve diverse audiences and to ensure K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider of educational programming.
  - Collect and communicate evidence of educational program impact.
  - Cultivate expertise in a subject matter competency area by engaging as a member of a Program Focus Team.
- Pursue internal and external funding to support educational programming.
- Serve as a member of the Twin Creeks District team cooperating in the planning and delivery of district-wide programming and related events.

## MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Bachelor's degree.

Academic coursework, professional development, or prior employment related to the position responsibilities.

- Evidence of strong academic and/or professional performance as documented by college transcripts or documented success in increasingly responsible professional positions.
- Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with individuals, groups and through mass media.
- Familiarity with various ethnic and socio-economic audiences; an interest in working with people from diverse backgrounds; and a commitment to supporting and enhancing K-State Research and Extension's initiative for diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Ability to work a flexible schedule which will include some nights, weekends, and overnight travel.

## PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

• Master's Degree.

Commitment to personal and professional development.

- Competence using electronic communication and computer applications to fulfill programming responsibilities.
- Self-motivation and ability to work with minimal supervision while balancing multiple projects.
- Understanding of educational program design, promotion, implementation, and evaluation.
- Experience with volunteer recruitment, support, and management.
- Skills in group facilitation.
- Knowledge of adult and youth teaching/learning processes.
- Experience seeking and administering external grant funding.
- Ability to communicate effectively with both English and Spanish-speaking learners.

## OTHER QUALIFICATIONS

- **Applicants must be currently authorized to work in the United States at the time of employment.**
- Access to a personal vehicle and the ability to obtain/maintain a valid driver's license.

### SALARY, BENEFITS, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Salary commensurate with professional experience and available funding as negotiated by the regional extension director, the local extension board, and the applicant. The base starting salary is \$43,000 for a bachelor's degree with no professional experience and \$47,000 for a master's degree with no professional experience.
- Extension agents are Kansas State University educators and have the Board of Regents retirement plan, eligibility for health and life insurance, and earn vacation and sick leave. See a [complete list of benefits](#).
- Reimbursement for travel related to achieving program objectives.
- New agents will be provided with comprehensive Early Career Professional Development training throughout their onboarding period. This series will include virtual and in-person training and networking opportunities.
- Tuition assistance is available to full-time employees and their spouse/dependents.

### LEARN MORE ABOUT WORKING WITH K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION:

- Visit the [K-State Research and Extension](#) website.
- Contact Jennifer Wilson, Leader of Extension Operations via [email \(jrwilson@ksu.edu\)](mailto:jrwilson@ksu.edu) or [phone \(785-532-5790\)](tel:785-532-5790) with questions about this position.

### EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY:

Kansas State University is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, national origin, disability, or status as a protected veteran.

### BACKGROUND SCREENING STATEMENT:

In connection with your application for employment, Kansas State University will procure a Background Screen on you as part of the process of considering your candidacy as an employee.

# Twin Creeks District Extension Director

Provide leadership for dynamic extension programs in Twin Creeks Extension District.

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## POSITION DESCRIPTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Extension agents are professional educators who serve as a link between Kansas State University and communities across Kansas. Agents are jointly responsible to the director of K-State Research and Extension (represented by a designated administrator) and the local extension board.

- Serve as the administrative leader of Twin Creek District’s budget and fiscal operations; personnel management of local staff; and overall program development and delivery. This position will also have programming responsibilities for community development and will provide support for local 4-H youth development programming.
- Lead the development, implementation, and evaluation of research-based educational programming to help our communities become a better place for Kansans to live, work, and play. This will be accomplished by engaging extension specialists, volunteers, and community partners in a comprehensive process to strengthen the social, civic, economic, and technological capacity of our communities.
- Programming may include: First Impressions; Kansas PRIDE; community health promotion; leadership development; entrepreneurship; grant writing and management; and local food systems.
- Successful extension programs require agents to:
  - Identify local needs and emerging issues related to K-State Research and Extension’s five Grand Challenges (water and natural resources; community vitality; health; developing tomorrow’s leaders; and global food systems) by engaging with program development committees and other community organizations and professionals.
  - Design appropriate educational strategies to engage clientele. Strategies might include educational programming in a community-based setting; events and activities that provide experiential learning opportunities; use of innovative technologies; individual educational consultations; and group facilitation.
  - Develop and implement strategies to serve diverse audiences and to ensure K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider of educational programming.
  - Collect and communicate evidence of educational program impact.
  - Cultivate expertise in a subject matter competency area by engaging as a member of the Community Vitality Program Focus Team.
- Pursue internal and external funding to support educational programming.
- Serve as a member of the Twin Creeks District team, cooperating in the planning and delivery of district-wide programming and related events.

**TITLE:**

Extension Local Unit Director

**PRIMARY AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY:**

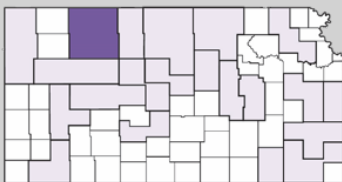
Extension District Director,  
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- Demonstrated experience leading a team of professionals toward individual and group goals.
  - Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with individuals, groups, and through mass media.
- Experience managing fiscal responsibilities, including budget development, financial oversight, and securing of extramural funds.
- Familiarity with various ethnic and socio-economic audiences; an interest in working with people from diverse backgrounds; and a commitment to supporting and enhancing K-State Research and Extension's initiative for diversity, equity, and inclusion.
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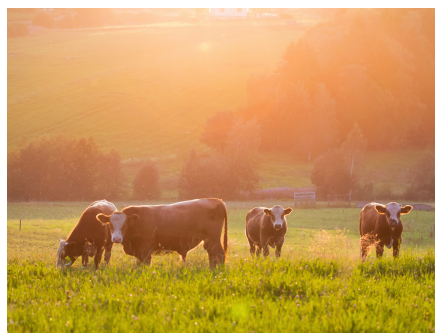
## Musk Thistle

Written By: Keith VanSike  
Agricultural and Natural Resources Agent



Musk thistle is one of 12 noxious weeds in Kansas infesting nearly 500,000 acres. Musk thistle has been reported in nearly every county in Kansas and is found primarily in pastures, rangeland, hay meadows, alfalfa, fallow, roadsides, and waste areas. Control efforts should be aimed at reducing or eliminating new populations and established stands should be managed with any accepted control method.

Accepted control methods include mechanical, chemical, and biological approaches. Mechanical control involves removing the entire plant or just the reproductive parts to prevent the plants from producing flowers/seeds. Mowing, digging, and hoeing are common mechanical methods of controlling musk thistle. Musk thistle is primarily a biennial or winter annual species. Biennials take two growing seasons to complete their life cycle. Thistles that germinate in the spring will spend the entire summer as a rosette, live through the winter, and bolt the next year in May and June. Winter annual plants will germinate with moisture and warm temperatures in the fall, live through the winter, and bolt the following year. Fall is an excellent time to spray musk thistle as all are in the rosette stage of growth. Another advantage for treatment in the fall is reduced risk of off-target drift. Waiting until most deciduous trees have lost their leaves and most crops are harvested will greatly reduce the likelihood of damage from herbicide drift. A wider window of opportunity for treating musk thistle also exists in the fall. The spraying window in the fall probably extends until the ground is frozen and the musk thistle plants have shut down activity until warmer temperatures in the spring. Freezing temperatures will start to damage musk thistle plants, with some yellowing and curling of leaves. However, the plants are susceptible to herbicides as long as green tissue exists. Applications of 2, 4-D, dicamba, picloram or products with aminopyralid and metsulfuron are effective. Consult your herbicide dealers or go to bulletin at [ksre.ksu.edu](http://ksre.ksu.edu) and search for "2022 Chemical Weed Control" publication 1169.



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## Prussic Acid Poisoning

Freezing temperatures change plant metabolism and composition, and different forage species respond differently to cold stress as the fall progresses. Depending on plant species, these changes in metabolism resulting from freezing temperatures can create possible feeding-related animal disorders and therefore there may be a need to alter grazing management.

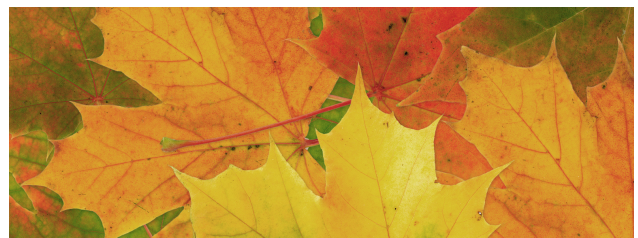
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Plants that contain cyanogenic glucosides, such as warm-season annual grasses in the sorghum family, produce larger amounts of cyanide (prussic acid) when damaged by frost. The consumption of large amounts of prussic acid interferes with oxygen utilization, potentially causing animals to die from asphyxiation (respiratory paralysis). Avoiding grazing at night when frost occurs is a good management option, as most toxins are produced within hours from the freeze event. If there is a killing frost, such as the ones observed in most of Kansas this last week, it is advised to avoid livestock grazing these pastures for up to three to seven days after the frost – as the toxin usually dissipates within 72 hours or until plant tissue is dried out. Fresh forage is riskier as cyanide levels will be higher as compared to dry tissue, silage, or hay. After non-killing frosts, we advise to wait 10-14 days with no additional frost action before grazing. Prussic acid content decreases significantly when the forage is cut for hay/used for silage, as large amounts are lost as gas during fermentation. Still, it is recommended to delay feeding silage for six to eight weeks following ensiling. Drought-stressed annual and perennial forages can accumulate toxic nitrate levels. This can be worsened after a frost, as freezing damage slows down metabolism and can result in nitrate accumulation in parts of the plants that are still growing. Examples of forages that may have high nitrate levels include alfalfa, corn, oat and other small grains, sudangrass, and sorghum sudangrass, Johnsongrass, etc. Before feeding or grazing drought-stressed forage, send in a forage sample to a commercial lab to be tested for nitrates. If cutting alfalfa for hay, the final cutting should occur right after the first killing freeze, before too many of the leaves have dropped, to reduce losses in nutritive value. Producers should be prepared to enter the fields as soon as soil moisture conditions allow. If grazing alfalfa fields, the best practice is to wait a few days after the freeze before releasing livestock to the field as frost-damaged alfalfa, while not toxic in terms of prussic acid, does have an increased potential for bloat for a few days. Other forage legumes such as clovers also have the potential to cause bloating after a freeze. Bloat chances decrease once wilting starts or the plant starts growing again. Another option is to swath legume pastures ahead of grazing so that animals graze dry hay instead.

## Brilliant Leaf Pigments

Shorter photoperiods, however, cause plants to start preparing for winter. The photoperiod is the amount of time each that a plant (or other living creature) receives sunlight. In the spring and summer, the photoperiod is getting longer; the sun is out for more hours of the day and tells plants to grow. The summer solstice is the longest day of the year. In the northern hemisphere, it usually falls some time around June 21. In the southern hemisphere, it happens within a day or so of December 21st. The days start to get shorter after the summer solstice. Chlorophyll starts to break down as the daylight starts to get short in the autumn. These other pigments now emerge turning leaves yellow or orange. Some leaves start to produce anthocyanins when the chlorophyll breaks down. Anthocyanin is another pigment and turns leaves red or purple. Other factors can affect how quickly a tree drops its leaves. Early freezes and storms can cause trees to lose their leaves before they have a chance to change color. The best years for seeing beautiful autumn leaves are those in which the summer ends hot and dry, followed by sunny fall days with cool nights, and some what later freeze to give a longer period for colors to show. This year has given us some brilliant yellows and golds due to poplars, cottonwoods, elms, and ash trees. Usually, reds are for Oaks and Maples.





## INFORMATION ON UPCOMING PROGRAMS



### STATEWIDE EVENTS & DEADLINES

#### November

- Nov. 5 Shutterbugs at Old Jefferson Town - Oskaloosa - 8:30 am  
 Nov. 19-20 KYLF (Kansas Youth Leadership Forum) - Rock Springs

### COUNTY/DISTRICT EVENTS & DEADLINES

#### November

- Nov. 1 4-H Online Enrollment Due - 4-H Family Orientation - 7:00 pm - [Zoom](#)  
 Nov. 3 4-H Leader Orientation - 7:00 pm - [Zoom](#)  
 Nov. 6 Norton County Achievement Celebration - 1:30 pm  
 Sheridan County Achievement Celebration - 5:00 pm  
 Nov. 11 Veteran's Day - Some Twin Creeks Extension offices closed  
 Nov. 13 Decatur County Achievement Celebration - 5:00 pm  
 Nov. 24-25 Thanksgiving Holiday - Twin Creeks Extension offices closed

#### December

- Dec. 4 Decatur Countywide Christmas Party - 3:00 pm  
 Dec. 11 Graham County Achievement Celebration - Hill City - 4:00 pm  
 Dec. 26 All Twin Creeks District Offices Closed for Christmas

*Note: Youth events are open to ALL youth (with Extension agent approval for youth not currently enrolled in the 4-H program). If you have a youth that is interested in an event please contact Patsy Maddy, Twin Creeks Extension District 4-H Youth Development Agent [pmaddy@ksu.edu](mailto:pmaddy@ksu.edu).*

Go to the Twin Creeks District website at <https://tinyurl.com/qukdd97> for a complete listing of all activities and events at the local, district, area and state levels.



# Look what we've been up to!



**Food Preservation Program  
"Pressure Canning"**  
September 28, 2022 - Hoxie, KS  
*Karen Shepard - FCS Agent*



**Kids Ag Day - September 14, 2022**  
Neff Farms - Selden, KS  
*Jenilee Godsey - Youth Ag Agent*



**Beef Across Kansas Series**  
Program Presented at National 4-H Conference  
October 12, 2022 - Madison, WI  
*Jenilee Godsey & Patsy Maddy*

## Simply Produce in Oberlin, Kansas

**Karen Shepard - FCS Agent**



**All Twin Creeks Extension District Agents**

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