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It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

Christmas time is magical when you hear about the Secret Santa's giving money away, neighbors buying a car for a woman that walks 6 miles to work a day, the guy cutting in line at Dillon's to pay for random people's groceries. Those things are fantastic!

Sometimes, Christmas can be sad and or depressing for people. I have a family member that is fighting for his life, at 28, a father of two young boys. Not all families have the Norman Rockwell Christmas scenes play out. Others are spending the holidays with one less person at the table. We have a pandemic hanging over our heads, uncertain economic times, and other fears.

If we can just let that all go and become a child again at this time of year. Bask in the glow of Christmas lights, think back to those magical times when your only concern was whether you were good enough for Santa to pay you a visit. That's my wish for you this Christmas!

Here is some good news from Kansas State University, College of Agriculture

Nutritious food grown by Kansas farmers reaches those who need it most with the help of a grant administered through K-State Research and Extension. The [Double Up Food Bucks](#) program provides a dollar-for-dollar match to low-income consumers who purchase fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets or grocery stores. It was implemented in 2020 with financial support from the [Kansas Health Foundation](#), though the program has been available through other groups before that.

While Cultivate KC manages the program in the Kansas City region, the new partnership with K-State Research and Extension had a first-year focus of expanding to 62 farmer's markets and grocery stores in 23 counties.

The program will continue for another four years thanks to a sub-award of \$815,348 from the [Mid-America Regional Council](#) through the [Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program](#).

MARC received a \$4 million grant from USDA's [National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#). Consumers qualify for the match if they are enrolled in the federally funded [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#), known widely as SNAP.

MARC reports that between 2016-2018, nearly 14% of Kansas residents were regularly without reliable access to affordable, nutritious food. Job losses and business closings linked to the global pandemic have likely increased that percentage.

The grant from NIFA requires matching funds from non-federal sources, so the award's total amount is \$8.1 million. A variety of public and private funders combined to provide the matching funds. They include the Kansas Health Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, the Health Forward Foundation, BlueKC, the Hall Family Foundation, the Marion and Henry Bloch Foundation, the Sosland Foundation, and the William T. Kemper Foundation.

Londa Nwadike, an extension associate professor in food safety at Kansas State University and the University of Missouri, encouraged farmer's markets across Kansas to join in offering Double Up Food Bucks to SNAP recipients. In February, K-State Research and Extension is planning to provide training to farmer's market managers interested in program participation.

David G. Hallauer
District Extension Agent
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Plan Now (CHECK)...Order Soon...Plant Later...

Last week in this space, I shared information on planning a windbreak from a publication entitled *Windbreaks for Kansas* (online at <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF2120.pdf> or available upon request from a District Office). If you've looked at the best management practices included in it, you likely noted recommendations for both the number of rows required for greatest effectiveness as well as the in-row spacing. When you start adding up how many trees that might require, it can get a little daunting.

That's where a program like the Conservation Tree Planting Program from the Kansas Forest Service can be of benefit. Through this program, low-cost tree and shrub seedlings are made available for conservation plantings at a very affordable cost. Approved uses include windbreaks, wood lots, wildlife habitat, timber plantations, and riparian plantings (no landscape or plantings done or resale allowed).

All plants are one to two years old, varying in size from eight to 18 inches (species dependent). The program offers both bare root and containerized seedlings. As the names imply, bare-root seedlings come without soil and are typically smaller in size. Containerized offerings are a little larger – and a little more expensive – but provide a higher survival rate and quicker establishment. Various deciduous shrubs, as well as both deciduous and evergreen trees, are offered as bare-root options. Only evergreen tree species are offered in containers.

All items are sold in units of 25 plants with bare-root trees/shrubs priced at \$30 per unit and container-grown offerings at \$65/unit. Each unit is a single species unless purchased in a bundle. Four bundles are available, including a mix of pollinator species for each half of the state and two different game bird bundles.

In addition to the trees offered, the program also offers numerous tree planting accessories, including marking flags, root protective slurry, weed barrier fabric, and protective tubes for both rabbits and larger wildlife species. Tree tubes are a must if deer are an issue and research shows that trees with appropriate weed control efforts establish much faster than those without. Don't forget to include those items in your order as well.

The ordering window is open from now until May 1st. Orders are shipped starting in mid-March. Order soon to ensure the items you want will be available. Orders are accepted from now through May 1st. Order early to ensure receiving the items you want. Order forms are available at your local Extension Office or online at <http://kfs.mybigcommerce.com>.

Cindy Williams
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Food, Nutrition, Health, and Safety

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year...for Scammers!

What a year full of change, uncertainty, and stress.... the 2020 holiday season is here, and time is moving faster than ever. On top shopping, cooking, and party planning, this year, we are also trying to keep our families safe. It's all a bit overwhelming, but it is vital, especially now, to stay observant and protect yourself from scammers.

Here are a few tips to avoid losing your hard-earned money to a sophisticated scammer this season.

*Be careful online shopping---if a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is. Stick to stores you trust and avoid unfamiliar sites offering unrealistic discounts. Even with Black Friday and Cyber Monday behind us this year, thieves have ramped it up to take advantage of so many doing all of their shopping online to avoid crowds.

*When it comes to payment methods---pay attention! Don't fall for sites that demand payment with gift cards. Also, avoid requests for payment via wire transfer services such as Western Union or Money Gram. Scammers are looking for a way to get your money fast, and they make it nearly impossible for you to get it back. Credit cards usually offer some sort of fraud protection and are typically the safest way to pay for purchases online.

*Watch for charity scams. The holiday season offers many opportunities for goodwill. Before you make a monetary gift, make sure it's a legitimate charity and then call the organization directly or donate through their verified website. There are several new true coronavirus charities this year, but if you choose the donate, go to the extra step to make sure to validate and that you are working with the organization directly.

*Be EXTRA alert. Check your bank accounts and credit cards statements routinely, especially after making online purchases. Avoid promotions and giveaways that ask for personal information such as date of birth, social security number or billing address.

This year has been a challenge for many. I hope that you will find a way to safely celebrate this holiday season. We have enough stress already, so please be extra careful with your personal and financial information as to avoid falling for a scam and creating even more difficulty. Be kind to others and enjoy these last few weeks of the infamous year 2020.

Nancy Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

How to Get Rid of Bad Smells in the Home

We may not think of our noses as being extremely sensitive, but they can actually detect a bad odor at three parts per billion. That's the equivalent of three seconds in 32 year. The next time there's a bad odor in your home, tackle it at the source so it doesn't linger. Here are tips from the American Cleaning Institute for getting rid of two of the most disliked smells in the home.

If there's no trash in the trash can and it still stinks, then you'll need to clean the trash can itself. Food spills are often the source of bad odor, so start by scrubbing the trash can – inside and out – with soapy water, rinsing clean, then drying. If the trash can still smell, try washing it with a solution of 1 cup baking soda and 1 gallon of water. Many bad smells are acidic in nature, so a base like baking soda is able to neutralize the acids that cause bad smells.

If your washing machine – or your clothes – smell like mildew, but there's no mildew on your clothes, check your washing machine for residual water leftover from wash cycles. Warm, moist environments are a great place for odor-causing bacteria to breed.

To remove the smell from the washing machine, add bleach to a cleaning cycle (if your washing machine has one) or a wash cycle without clothes. Run this cycle weekly and then decrease the frequency over time, as the mildew smell gradually decreases.

If the inside of the washing machine isn't dried out, it's also possible for mildew to take hold inside the machine and around seals on the door. Check the seal for traces of mildew and wipe the area weekly with a bleach solution (3/4 cup of liquid bleach in a gallon of cool water). To prevent the odor-causing bacteria from breeding again, leave the washing machine door open after each load to help the machine dry out.