As we move further into the pandemic situation, I wanted everyone to know Hodgeman County Extension is here to help. We are available by appointment at the Courthouse (9 am –noon, 1 pm – 5 pm, M-F). Please call (620) 357-8321 – office, during office hours, (620) 357-5315 - DeWayne’s cell, or email - hg@listserv.ksu.edu us for information.

We will be putting pertinent information up on our website www.hodgeman.k-state.edu. This will include some online resources, dates and times for our Extension Executive Board meetings and the zoom id number to connect.

K-State Research and Extension has compiled numerous publications and more information to help people take care of themselves and others during times of crisis. See the complete list of resources online.

One document, Strategies to help you cope, provides common-sense steps that anyone can take to remain healthy. Among the recommendations:

Physical
- Eat healthy meals.
- Exercise at least 20 minutes daily.
- Take a relaxing bath or shower.
- Limit alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

Mental
- Write your thoughts in a journal or notebook.
- Listen to relaxing music.
- Read a book you enjoy.
- Reach out to someone for support or help.

Emotional/Spiritual
- Tell a loved one what you appreciate about him/her.
- Pray or meditate.
- Do random acts of kindness.
- Write down three things you are grateful for daily.

The online publication also includes coping strategies for farmers and ranchers, who are dealing with tight profit margins.

Take advantage of family time with your children, if they are at home. Play some board games, cards, or other group activities.

Just remember we are in this together. If you need help let us know.

Garden Time

Spring is in the air. Garden time is upon us. There is help for Vegetable Gardeners Hodgeman County residents that are new to vegetable gardening often don’t know how much of each crop to plant. K-State Research and Extension has a publication that can help. The “Vegetable Garden Planting Guide” gives information on the size of planting needed per person and the average crop expected per 10 feet. Also included is a garden calendar highlighting suggested planting dates and expected harvest dates. Crop specific information is detailed including days to germinate, plants or seeds needed per 10 feet of row, depth of planting, spacing within the row and spacing between rows. You can find the publication at the Hodgeman County extension office or online at: http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/mf315.pdf.
Another, more in-depth publication titled the “Kansas Garden Guide” is also available. This 77-page booklet has sections on planning a garden, composting, improving soil, seeding and planting, garden care, watering, planting gardens for fall production, insect and disease control, container gardening, season extension and harvesting and storing. This is followed by an extensive section on how to grow specific vegetables and herbs. You may order the print publication at [http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/Item.aspx?catId=534&pubId=8219](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/Item.aspx?catId=534&pubId=8219) for $6.10. This web page also provides a link to a free PDF copy of the same publication. According to Ward Upham these publications can also be useful for experienced gardeners.

**Transplanting Tomatoes Early**

If you would like to have your tomato plants produce earlier in the year, there are certain things to keep in mind. Most people who try to get a jump on the season set their tomatoes out early and hope they do well. However, that is often not a good plan as tomatoes have to have certain requirements before they will grow well. Those requirements are an acceptable soil temperature for root growth and an acceptable air temperature for both plant growth and fruit set.

**Root Growth:** Tomatoes need a soil temperature of at least 55 degrees to do well. Plastic mulch is most commonly used to warm the soil. Several days may be needed to raise the soil temperature. Check the soil temperature 2.5 inches deep in the soil at about 11:00 a.m. If that is not possible, check the temperature before leaving for work and again when you return and use the average of the two. It is best to lay a drip irrigation line before installing the plastic to make watering more convenient. See accompanying article on laying plastic mulch.

**Air Temperature:** Plants must be protected from frost. Hot caps or water teepees are placed over the young plants to provide protection as well as provide a higher average temperature to encourage growth. Eventually the plants will outgrow the cover and start to develop flowers. But if the temperature goes below 55 degrees at night, tomato flowers may not set. The plant is not hurt, but the blossom will not set fruit, or, if it does set fruit, the fruit is often misshapen.

How early can you transplant? Start with a date about 2 weeks earlier than normal.

**Controlling Grassy Sandbur**

Grassy sandbur is the “sticker” plant that looks like a grass. It will often invade thin lawns, especially in dry years. Therefore, the best control for this weed is a thick, healthy lawn. However, if your lawn is thin this spring and grassy sandbur was a problem last year, use a preemergence herbicide before the sandbur comes up. However, not all preemergence herbicides are effective. The three products that can help minimize grassy sandbur are oryzalin, pendimethalin and prodiamine.

**Oryzalin** is sold under the trade names of Surflan and Weed Impede. It can be used on all warm-season grasses as well as tall fescue. It should not be used on cool-season grasses other than tall fescue such as Kentucky bluegrass. Oryzalin is also sold as a combination product with benefin as Green Light Amaze. As with oryzalin alone, it can be used on all warm-season grasses as well as tall fescue. It should not be used on cool-season grasses other than tall fescue such as Kentucky bluegrass. Apply Amaze or an oryzalin product about April 15 when redbud trees approach full bloom.

**Pendimethalin** is sold commercially as Pendulum as well as several other names. On the homeowner side, it is sold as Scotts Halts. Pendimethalin is best applied as a split application with the first half applied about April 15 and the second about June 1. Alternatively, make the first application when redbud trees approach full bloom and the second six weeks later.

**Prodiamine** is sold under the commercial name of Barricade. It is also sold as a homeowner product Howard Johnson Crabgrass Control Plus with 0.37 Prodiamine 00-00-07. It can be used on
all of our common lawn grasses. Apply as is done for oryzalin, about April 15 or when redbud trees approach full bloom. Only one application is needed per year.

None of the “weed preventers” will give complete control but each should help. Quinclorac (Drive) can provide some postemergence control especially if the sandbur is in the seedling stage. Quinclorac is also found in a number of combination products that control both broadleaf weeds and crabgrass such as one of the following.

Ortho Weed-B-Gon Max + Crabgrass Control
BioAdvanced All-in-One Lawn Weed and Crabgrass Killer.
Monterey Crab-E-Rad Plus
Fertilome Weed Out with Crabgrass Killer
Trimec Crabgrass Plus Lawn Weed Killer
Bonide Weed Beater Plus Crabgrass & Broadleaf Weed Killer
Spectracide Weed Stop for Lawns Plus Crabgrass Killer

Again, the best control for grassy sandbur is a healthy, thick lawn. (Ward Upham)

Henbit and Chickweed in Lawns

I know some of us like the color purple, but the plant with the little purple flowers that have been showing up in home lawns is called henbit. If you are not sure this is what you have, check the stems. If they are square rather than round, you have henbit. A plant that also is low growing but has round stems and tiny white flowers is chickweed.

Both these plants are winter annuals and start to grow in the fall. They spend the winter as small plants and so most people do not pay much attention to them until they start to flower in the spring. Trying to kill either one at this late stage with a herbicide usually is a waste of time and money. Though plants may be burned back, they will rarely be killed. So what should you do? Remember, these are winter annuals that will die as soon as the weather turns hot. Keep the lawn mowed until nature takes its course.

However, you can do something next fall that will help next spring. Henbit and chickweed usually germinate about mid-October. Spraying with 2,4-D, Weed-B-Gon, Weed Free Zone, Weed Out, or Trimec in late October to early November can go a long way toward eliminating these plants as they are small and relatively easy to control. Choose a day that is at least 50 degrees F. These herbicides will work at temperatures below 50 degrees but the weeds are killed at a slower rate. You may also use a preemergent herbicide for lawns in late September as long as have not recently put down grass seed. Spraying with the postemergence herbicides mentioned earlier will also catch dandelions which the preemergent herbicides will miss.

Spot treating will probably be needed in the spring (March) whichever method of control you use but is more likely with the use of preemergent herbicides. Use Weed Free Zone, Speed Zone, Weed Out, Weed-B-Gon, Trimec, or one of the special henbit herbicides early in the spring before they have put on much growth. (Ward Upham)