KSU Beef Stocker Field Day to be hosted virtually on October 1 – The 21st KSU Beef Stocker Field Day will be hosted virtually on Thursday, October 1. The day will start at 9:30 a.m. with a welcome and conclude by noon. The tentative schedule is as follows:

- 9:30 am Welcome – Mike Day, ASI Department Head, and Dale Blasi, KSU Extension Beef Specialist
- Moderator – Wes Ishmael, Cattle Current
- 9:45 am Overview of the KSU Beef Stocker Unit
- 10:00 am Beef Cattle Market Outlook - Glynn Tonsor, KSU Agricultural Economist
- 10:30 am Making Alternative Ration Ingredient Changes Work – Justin Waggoner, KSU Extension Beef Specialist
- 11:00 am Nutrition and Management – Limit Feeding – Dale Blasi, KSU Extension Beef Specialist
- 11:30 am Economic Aspects-Limit Feeding – Glynn Tonsor, KSU Agricultural Economist
- 12:00 noon Closing Remarks

Watch for more details on registering for the event and updated information at www.KSUbeef.org. For more information, contact Dale Blasi (dblasi@ksu.edu; 785-532-5427).

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4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Training

4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Training has been scheduled for November 7-8, 2020, at the Gray County Fairgrounds in Cimarron. To help with our planning process, we are gathering interest from potential trainees. If you are interested call the Hodgeman County Extension Office (620) 357-8321 as soon as possible.

Training will begin at 8 am Saturday, November 7, and conclude Sunday, November 8, after lunch.

The general session will be held online and will need to be completed prior to final registration. Instructions and details will be released along with registration information.

The estimated cost will be $225 per registrant, which includes two nights (Friday and Saturday), five meals, and training materials. Two people per room will be required. Options will be available for local individuals to register for a reduced rate without lodging.

Schedules and further information will be released soon. Details may change due to COVID-19 restrictions.

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**K-State adds online training for Extension Master Gardeners**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Kansas State University’s Extension Master Gardener program is planning to offer a statewide online training option this fall for those wanting to join the popular group.

Cheryl Boyer, an associate professor in the Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources and interim coordinator of the state’s Master Gardener program, said weekly online sessions begin Sept. 3 and will run through Dec. 17.

The cost for online training is $45 plus any additional fees set by the county – or about $1 per hour of educational content, she said -- and can be paid at Hodgeman County Extension Office.

For online training, Kansans must sign up through at the Hodgeman County Extension Office, by August 28. More information about the program is available online at [https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/master-gardeners/](https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/master-gardeners/). Training sessions will be held each Thursday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. for 15 weeks.

“This online choice is optional and local units are not required to use this training in place of their own programming plans,” Boyer said. “However, because fall travel is limited for K-State Research and Extension educators, face-to-face training can not be expected or required.”

The K-State Research and Extension Master Gardener program is available to anyone with an interest in horticulture. “If you want to improve your gardening skills and knowledge, and you like to work with people, this program may be for you,” Boyer said.

Once certified as an Extension Master Gardener, participants are asked to donate time in their community to help others learn more about gardening and horticulture. Boyer noted that in 2019, Extension Master Gardeners donated approximately 99,000 hours for a total value of more than $2.6 million.

This fall’s 15-week training schedule will provide up to 50 hours of training on 13 topics delivered by lecture and hands-on activities. Boyer said the topics include plant growth and development, soils, turfgrass, annual and perennial flowers, landscape maintenance, woody ornamentals, vegetable gardening, insects, pesticide safety, plant diseases, fruit, landscape design and wildlife management.

For more information and to sign up contact the Hodgeman County Extension Office, 620-357-8321.

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**K-State to host two virtual fall field days - August 26 & 27**

K-State Research and Extension is hosting two fall field days using a virtual format. The field days are free and open to the public. The first event, conducted by the Hays Research Center, will be on August 26 from noon to 1:30 p.m. The second field day will be hosted by the Southwest Research Center in Garden City, on August 27 from noon to 1:30 p.m. A list of topics and speakers for each day is outlined below. Participants are welcome to register for either or both events.

**Hay Research Center Virtual Fall Field Day – August 26**
• “New Herbicide-Tolerant Crop Traits and Weed Control Strategies in Western Kansas” – Vipan Kumar
• “The Role of Temperature in Insect Population Dynamics” – J.P. Michaud
• “Dual Use of Cover Crops for Soil Health and Forage in Dryland Systems” – Augustine Obour
• “Sorghum Hybrids for Early and Normal Planting” – Ramasamy Perumal

Southwest Research Center Virtual Fall Field Day – August 27
• “Alfalfa and Corn Insect Management Strategies Update” – Sarah Zukoff
• “A Decade of Dryland Cover Crop Research in Western KS” – John Holman
• “Expanding Cotton Recommendations” – Jonathan Aguilar
• “Bee Diversity in Edge Habitat of Active Croplands in Western Kansas” – Anthony Zukoff

Please register online at https://kstate.ag/ksre-field-day

WHAT BEEF PRODUCERS SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT IN SEPTEMBER
by Dale Blasi, Extension Beef Specialist

September is when forages are maturing rapidly, weaning time can be appropriate and weather dictates several key management decisions.

Breeding Season

Out of concern for trichomoniasis, an economically devastating reproductive disease, do not introduce untested bulls to your herd. Remove bulls after 60 days with cows, 45 days with heifers. (Never run bulls for more than a 90-day breeding season.)

Cowherd Nutrition

• Provide ample amounts of clean, fresh drinking water.
• Consider limited-intake creep feeding if:
  o Drought conditions develop and persist.
  o Range conditions limit milk production.
  o Creep feed/grain prices are relatively low.
  o Value of gain allows for economic benefits.
• Tips for successful limited-intake creep feeding:
  o Limit duration to last 30 to 75 days before weaning.
  o Limit intake to less than 2 pounds/head/day.
  o Use an ionophore or other feed additive to maximize efficiency.
  o Protein level should be equal to or greater than 16%.
  o High salt levels may help limit intake, but can be tough on feeders.
• Pre-purchase bulk rate winter supplementation needs prior to seasonal price increases. Herd Health
• If pinkeye is likely to be a problem, consider the following preventive and therapeutic measures.
  o Preventive:
• Make sure the herd is receiving adequate vitamins and trace mineral in their diet.
• Consider using a medicated trace mineral package.
• Consider vaccination for pinkeye and IBR.
• Control face flies.
• Clip pastures with tall, coarse grasses that may irritate eyes.
• Provide ample shade.
  o Therapy:
    ▪ Administer a long-acting antibiotic subcutaneously when symptoms are first noticed.
    ▪ Shut out irritating sunlight by patching eyes, shade, etc.
    ▪ Control flies.
    ▪ Consult your veterinarian.
• Consider re-vaccinating for the respiratory diseases for any animals that will be taken to livestock shows.
• Vaccinate suckling calves for IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV, and possibly pasteurella at least three weeks prior to weaning.
• Re-vaccinate all calves for blackleg.
• Vaccinate replacement heifers for brucellosis (4 to 10 months of age).
• Monitor and treat footrot.

Forage/Pasture Management
• Enhance grazing distribution with mineral mixture placement away from water sources.
• Observe pasture weed problems to aid in planning control methods needed next spring.
• Monitor grazing conditions and rotate pastures if possible and/or practical.
• If pastures will run out in late summer, get ready to provide emergency feeds. Start supplemental feeding before pastures are gone to extend grazing.
• Harvest and store forages properly. Minimize waste by reducing spoilage.
• Sample harvested forages and have them analyzed for nitrate and nutrient composition.
• Plan winter nutritional program through pasture and forage management.
• For stocker cattle and replacement heifers, supplement maturing grasses with an acceptable degradable intake protein/ionophore (feed additive) type supplement.

Reproductive Management
• Remove bulls to consolidate calving season.
• Pregnancy check and age pregnancies 60 days after the end of the breeding season. Consider culling cows that are short-bred. These methods contribute to a more uniform calf crop, make winter nutritional management easier and increase the success rate of next year’s breeding season.

General Management
• Avoid unnecessary heat stress - don’t handle and/or truck cattle during the heat of the day.
• Repair, replace and improve facilities needed for fall processing.
• Order supplies, vaccines, tags and other products needed at weaning time.
• Consider early weaning if:
  o Drought conditions develop and persist.
  o Range conditions limit milk production.
  o Cows are losing body condition.
  o Calf and cull cow prices indicate maximum profit.
  o Facilities and management are available to handle lightweight calves.
• First-calf heifers have the most to gain.
• Resist the temptation to feed the cows without weaning; feeding early-weaned calves is more efficient.
• Look for unsound cows that need to be culled from the herd.
• Prepare to have your calf crop weighed and analyzed through your state, regional or breed performance testing program.
• Plan your marketing program, including private treaty, consignment sales, test stations, production sales, etc.

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Make an informed decision when selecting the best wheat variety!
In recent years, wheat producers are faced with an increasing number of varieties from which to choose. Producers can use different tools and publications to study each variety’s strengths and weaknesses, selecting varieties that best match their needs.

Steps to select a wheat variety
The following information provides a step-by-step guideline, as well as relevant resources, to help producers make a better decision when selecting one or a few varieties to plant in their operation.

1. Select several varieties that are adapted to your region of the state.
Regardless whether you intend to plant one variety or several on your farm, it is important to start out with a list of several good candidate varieties. The final product of interest is grain yield and therefore, it is crucial to select varieties that have shown consistent performance and excellent yield record in the region. Varieties that worked well for you and your neighbors in the past should be considered, but also make sure and check yield results from nearby K-State (and other universities’) variety performance tests and demonstration plots. It is important to take into consideration the conditions experienced during the year in question, and always look for trial results from past years as well, due to the high year-to-year variability in weather conditions in Kansas. Beyond looking at results from more than a single year, checking for variety performance in several nearby locations is also a good practice.
A few great resources to consult are:

  a. K-State variety performance test: Start searching by year, narrow down your search by region and finally by site. Choose the site(s) nearest to you and look for varieties that are consistently toward the top. Repeat the procedure for different years to check the
consistency of the variety performance. Click the link above to access the K-State variety performance test results.

b. **OSU variety performance tests**: If you are in southern Kansas or in Oklahoma, this is also an excellent resource. Click “Variety Testing” in the link above and then “Grain Yield” to have access to similar information to the one offered by K-State, but for variety performance tests from Oklahoma. Follow the steps described above. Click the link above to access the OSU variety performance test results.

c. **Colorado Wheat Variety Database**: This database encompasses replicated trial results from Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and several other public state trials, so producers throughout the Plains can benefit. It is an excellent, easy-to-use resource that allows you to dig into data from single location, multiple locations, multiple years, and also allows for head-to-head variety comparisons. We suggest that users start by looking at “Single Location Trial Data”, selecting the location nearest to you, and repeating this step for several years of data for that location. Check for varieties that tend to be consistently toward the top. Afterwards, look at “Multiple Location Trial Data,” which will allow you to look at yields spanning a wider geographical region instead of a single location for one, two, three, or four years combined. Depending on region and number of years selected, you might be looking at more than 15 replicated trials combined. Thus, if a given variety remains a top yielding variety across all these replicated trials, it is a pretty good argument that you should at least look at that variety’s characteristics and consider it in your farming operation. Finally, after selecting a few potential candidates based on their performance, we suggest that users click on “Head-to-head comparisons”, so they can test whether those candidates performed statistically different over a wide range of environments. Click the link above to access the Colorado database.

2. **Narrow down the number of varieties in your list to a few good candidates.**

After selecting several varieties that have shown good adaptability and stability in your region, the list needs to be narrowed down to the number of varieties you intend to plant. Ideally, at least two or three varieties (or a blend of two or three varieties) should be planted to spread the risk on your acres. Select varieties that are adapted and resistant/tolerant to the major concerns in your region, but that have contrasting characteristics such as different maturities or disease resistance characteristics. This will help buffer the risk of a single event compromising production of the whole operation and can help spreading out harvest dates so not all varieties are ready at the same time. Some factors to consider include:

a. **Production system**: For producers who graze their wheat before taking it for grain (dual-purpose producers), selecting a variety with good forage yield, medium to late first hollow stem, Hessian fly, barley yellow dwarf, and wheat streak mosaic resistance; and good recovery from grazing is very important. Another consideration is whether the crop will be irrigated or dryland. Wheat varieties differ in their straw strength. There are a few varieties that should be restricted to dryland use, due to their below-average straw strength. A history of feral rye in the field would suggest the need for a Clearfield or Co-AXium variety and this plays an important role in variety selection. Double-cropping wheat following soybeans in central Kansas, or following corn in western
Kansas, may require varieties with excellent tillering potential to compensate for the delayed development due to late planting. No-till producers in western Kansas might be looking for tall varieties with good straw production potential to help improve water retention in the soil for the subsequent crop, so this could also play a role in selecting a variety.

b. **Tolerance to abiotic factors:** Depending on the region of the state where your farm is located, it will be subjected to different abiotic stresses. Acid soils are a major concern in south central, central, and north central Kansas, and varieties that have good low soil pH tolerance are warranted. Meanwhile, drought is a dominant factor in western Kansas, and varieties with better drought tolerance should be favored there. Varieties differ in their tolerance to abiotic stresses, and selecting a variety with better tolerance to the major limiting factor in your operation will allow the variety’s potential to be more easily achieved.

c. **Disease resistance:** Variety selection can help reduce the risk to many of the most common and damaging diseases in Kansas. Selecting varieties with good stripe rust and leaf rust resistances can reduce the risk of severe disease problems and the need for foliar fungicide in the spring. However, due to a potential race change for both stripe and leaf rusts in 2019, producers are encouraged to scout their fields even if the selected varieties were rated as resistant in the past. Producers who are willing to spray a foliar fungicide have more variety options to choose from than those who are not. Some varieties have many very good characteristics and yield potential, but lack resistance to some major fungal diseases and thus require a fungicide to maintain their productivity. For example, Everest has many good characteristics, such as intermediate head scab resistance, some of the best barley yellow dwarf resistance available, and acid soil and Hessian fly tolerance; however, it is very susceptible to stripe rust. If a producer is willing to spray a foliar fungicide, Everest is still an acceptable option for central and eastern Kansas. This is also true for varieties such as Avery, Byrd, WB Grainfield, etc.

Diseases such as leaf or stripe rust can be controlled with a foliar fungicide and producers have the option to budget for it in their operation. Meanwhile, other diseases require more of a systems management approach and cannot be controlled after they are established. These include viral diseases such as wheat streak mosaic and barley yellow dwarf, and can also include a fungal disease such as Fusarium head blight, which is not always successfully controlled with fungicide applications due to timing and coverage limitations. If these diseases are common concerns in your region, evaluate each variety’s ratings against these constraints and selecting the ones that provide better levels of resistance.

d. **Maturity:** Selecting several varieties with differing maturities is a great tool to spread risk as well as to optimize harvest timing. You don’t want to have too many acres ready for harvest at once and then have to wait for harvest for lack of combine capacity. Early-maturing varieties will most likely have a yield advantage over later-maturing varieties in years such as 2012 and 2018 when the grain filling period turns hot and dry. Also, from a historical perspective, early-maturing varieties have been more successful in the southern portion of the state, especially south central Kansas, due to the typical
hot weather pattern toward the end of the growing season. On the other hand, medium-
late maturing varieties will benefit from growing seasons with an extended grain-filling
period, such as 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2019. It is important to keep in mind that recent
years favored later-maturing varieties throughout the state. If we only look at the most
recent years it will be tempting to plant later-maturing varieties, even in south central
Kansas. However, nothing guarantees that the next growing season will be similar. At
sowing time, we don’t know how the weather will turn out during grain fill. Therefore,
spreading the risk in your operation by selecting varieties with differing maturities is
always a good idea. In other words, you can plant a medium or medium-late maturing
variety in south central Kansas, but keep it to a fraction of your acres.

Resources
A few great resources to help you walk through each variety’s characteristics as far as
maturity, disease ratings, drought and soil pH tolerance, date of first hollow stem, and other
agronomic characteristics are:

a. *K-State Wheat Variety Disease and Insect Ratings 2020:* This comprehensive guide to
   wheat varieties will allow you to compare different varieties in their agronomic and
disease resistance characteristics in detail. Many varieties are individually described,
others are shown in a table format which allows for easy and fast comparison. It is
available online at the link above or in your county Extension office in Kansas.

b. *Wheat Varieties for Kansas and the Great Plains by Layton Ehmke:* This private-sector
   book is also an excellent, comprehensive source of information regarding different
   varieties and their characteristics. It provides detailed ranking of varieties by traits of
   interest, making it easy to use. It also has a good summary of several variety
   performance tests in the Great Plains. While not available online, producers can
   purchase it in the link above if interested.

c. *K-State Wheat Variety Date of First Hollow Stem, Fall Forage Yield, and Grain Yield
   for 2019-2020:* This new K-State publication compare several varieties in their fall
   forage production, date of first hollow stem, and grain yield under dual-purpose versus
   grain-only management in south central Kansas. It is a good resource for producers who
   graze their wheat before taking it for yield. It is available online at the link above or in
   your county Extension office in Kansas.

d. *OSU Fall forage production and First Hollow Stem Date for Wheat Varieties during
   the 2019-2020 crop year:* similarly to the publication above, this OSU publication
   compares varieties’ forage yield and date of first hollow stem for north central and
central Oklahoma. Available online at the link above or in your county Extension office
   in Oklahoma.

This variety selection information was put together by: Romulo Lollato, Wheat and Forages
Specialist; Erick DeWolf, Plant Pathologist; and Kelsey Andersen Onofre, Extension Wheat
Pathologist.

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Reminder

- Tomatoes can be harvested when they are ½ green and ½ red to prevent sunscald and to allow the development of a deeper red color during hot weather. The fruit will have the same quality as if it were vine ripened if allowed to ripen inside.

Tomato Cracking

Tomatoes often have problems with cracking caused by pressure inside the fruit that is more than the skin can handle. Cracks are usually on the upper part of the fruit and can be concentric (in concentric circles around the stem) or radial (radiating downward from the stem). We don’t know everything about cracking but here is what we do know.

Tomatoes have a root system that is very dense and fibrous and is quite efficient in picking up water. Unfortunately, the root system can become unbalanced with the top of the plant. Early in the season it may be small in relation to the top growth resulting in blossom-end rot when the weather turns hot and dry. Later it may be so efficient that it provides too much water when we get rain or irrigate heavily after a dry spell. This quick influx of water can cause the tomato fruit to crack. Therefore, even, consistent watering can help with cracking. Mulching will also help because it moderates moisture levels in the soil. However, you can do everything right and still have problems with cracking in some years.

We have evaluated varieties for cracking during our tomato trials at K-State. It takes several years worth of data to get a good feel for crack-resistant varieties but we have found some real differences. Some varieties crack under about any condition and others are much more resistant. The difference seems to be pliability of skin rather than thickness — the more pliable the skin the more resistance to cracking.

The old variety Jet Star has been the most crack resistant of any we have tested including the newer types. Unfortunately, Jet Star is an indeterminate variety that puts out rampant growth. Newer varieties with more controlled growth are often more attractive to gardeners. Mountain Spring, Mountain Pride, Mountain Fresh, Floralina and Sun Leaper are smaller-vined types that have shown good resistance to cracking. (Ward Upham)

How to Pick a Ripe Melon

Telling when a melon is ready to be harvested can be a challenge, or it may be quite easy. It all depends on the type of melon. Let’s start with the easy one. Muskmelons are one of those crops that tell you when they are ready to be picked. This can be of help to not only harvest melons at the correct time but also choose good melons when shopping. As a melon ripens, a layer of cells around the stem softens so the melon detaches easily from the vine. This is called “slipping” and will leave a dish-shaped scar at the point of stem attachment. When harvesting melons, put a little pressure where the vine attaches to the fruit. If ripe, it will release or “slip.”

When choosing a melon from those that have already been harvested, look for a clean, dish-shaped scar. Also, ripe melons have a pleasant, musky aroma if the melons are at room temperature (not refrigerated).
Watermelons can be more difficult and growers often use several techniques to tell when to harvest.

1. Look for the tendril that attaches at the same point as the melon to dry and turn brown. On some varieties this will need to be completely dried before the watermelon is ripe. On others it will only need to be in the process of turning brown.

2. The surface of a ripening melon develops a surface roughness (sometimes called “sugar bumps”) near the base of the fruit.

3. Ripe watermelons normally develop a yellow color on the “ground spot” when ripe. This is the area of the melon that contacts the ground.

Honeydew melons are the most difficult to tell when they are ripe because they do not “slip” like muskmelons. Actually, there is one variety that does slip called Earlidew, but it is the exception to the rule. Ripe honeydew melons become soft on the flower end of the fruit. The “flower end” is the end opposite where the stem attaches. Also, honeydews should change to a light or yellowish color when ripe, but this varies with variety. (Ward Upham)

For Fall Grass Seeding Success, Pay Attention to "Other Crop" on the Seed Label.

Fall planting time is close at hand, so it's time to talk about grass seed. Many people have the idea that all grass seed is basically the same. Big mistake! Choosing quality seed is one of the most important steps in successfully planting or overseeding your lawn. If you don't know what to look for, you may be introducing unwanted intruders into that new stand. In particular, we are concerned with seed contaminated with orchardgrass and/or rough bluegrass. These are both perennial grassy weeds that cannot be selectively controlled once they are in a lawn.

Orchardgrass is a problem because it is faster growing and lighter green than our turfgrasses. It is a bunch grass and so doesn’t spread, but infested areas are still unsightly due to small tufts of this species pockmarking the lawn.

Rough bluegrass is fine-textured and forms circular patches in the lawn. It blends in fairly well until summertime heat causes it to turn brown rapidly. If the rough bluegrass would just die in the heat, it would only be a temporary problem. Unfortunately, it usually just goes dormant, turning green again with cooler temperatures and rain.

Buying quality seed starts with knowing how to decipher the seed label. One of the most important things to look for is listed as percent "Other Crop Seed" or “Other Crop.” "Other Crop" refers to any species that is intentionally grown for some purpose. That would include turfgrasses (those species other than the one you are buying) and pasture grasses.

Orchardgrass and rough bluegrass both are listed as “Other Crop” seed. Seed labels are required by law to show the percentage (by weight) of "Other Crop Seed" in the bag, but unless a species constitutes 5% or more, the label doesn't have to list each species by name.

How much "Other Crop" is too much? That’s a difficult question to answer, but the tolerance is very low. It depends on what the "Other Crop" actually is, and the quality expectations of the buyer. In practice, "Other Crop" may refer to something relatively harmless, like a small amount of perennial ryegrass in a bag of tall fescue, or it may refer to
something bad, like rough bluegrass or orchardgrass. The homeowner really has no easy way of knowing what the "Other Crop" is, although there are some hints. If it is something bad, less than ½ of 1% can ruin a bag of seed. Obviously, if your expectations are high for the area you are planting, you would want the "Other Crop" to be as close to zero as possible. Good quality seed will often have 0.01% “Other Crop Seed” or less.

Another line on the seed label is “Weed Seed.” It should also be 0.01% or less. (Ward Upham)

Are Crabapples Safe to Eat?

Crabapples are safe to consume as long as you don’t eat too many of them. Actually, the only difference between crabapples and apples is the size of the fruit. By definition, crabapples have fruit that are 2 inches or less in diameter, and apples are more than 2 inches in diameter. By this definition, most of the apples grown from seed will be crabapples. The fruiting apples are grafted.

So did people ever plant crabapples from seed? Of course they did. Just think of Johnny Appleseed. But those apples were normally used for jelly, applesauce, and cider and not for fresh eating. Even in Johnny Appleseed’s day, dessert apples were grafted.

There is one other caveat with using crabapples from a tree in the landscape. Make sure the tree hasn’t been sprayed as an ornamental with a pesticide that isn't labeled for fruit tree apples. If it has, then the fruit should not be used. (Ward Upham)

Dividing Daylilies

Daylilies need to be divided every three to four years to maintain good flower production. Though they may be divided in early spring before growth starts, it is more common to divide them at this time of year. Many gardeners cut back the tops to about half their original height to make plants easier to handle.

Daylilies have a very tough root system that can make them difficult to divide while in place. Dividing in place is practical if it hasn’t been long since the last division. In such cases, a spading fork can be used to peel fans from the existing clump. If the plants have been in place longer and are well grown together, it is more practical to divide them after the entire clump has been dug.

Use a spade to lift the entire clump out of the ground. Although it is possible to cut the clump apart with a sharp spade, you’ll save more roots by using two spading forks back-to-back to divide the clump into sections. Each section should be about the size of a head of cauliflower. An easier method involves using a stream of water from a garden hose to wash the soil from the clump, and then rolling the clump back and forth until the individual divisions separate.

Space divisions 24 to 30 inches apart, and set each at its original depth. The number of flowers will be reduced the first year after division but will return to normal until the plants need to be
Composting: What to Add

For fastest composting, alternate layers of “greens” and “browns.” Greens are materials with a high amount of nitrogen as compared to carbon. Browns have less nitrogen as compared to carbon. The mixture of the two produces the “just right” amount of carbon and nitrogen to give the microorganisms just what they need to compost quickly.

The most common greens are fresh grass clippings, coffee grounds, small weeds, fruit and veggie scraps, plant trimmings and animal manure. The browns would include shredded leaves, sawdust, wood chips, hay, straw, dried grass clippings and prunings from small branches. These materials can be mixed together at the start or layered. If layering, alternate layers of brown materials (6 to 8 inches deep) with green materials (2 to 3 inches thick) until you reach a height of 3 to 5 feet. If green materials are in short supply, add 1 to 2 cups per square yard of a commercial garden fertilizer. (Ward Upham)