

spring/summer 2021 newsletter

K-State Olathe Horticulture Center

Welcome to the K-State Olathe Horticulture Research and Extension Center's quarterly newsletter. To learn more about the Center, click [HERE](#) to be directed to the Center's web site.

Fruit & Vegetable Research Update

2021 Commercial Fruit & Vegetable Field Day happened on August 2 featuring Walk-and-Talk tours of the growing fields, updates on current research projects, progress report from the Kansas Specialty Crop Growers Association, and graduation recognition of the 2020-21 Growing Growers KC Apprentices. The crowd of about 50 enjoyed a cookout featuring hamburgers and hotdogs from JET Produce & Meats in Leavenworth, KS following the research reports.

Some of the current research at the OHC includes:



Strawberry research enters a second year comparing two day-neutral varieties grown in the high tunnel using multiple mulch treatments to determine differences in quality, yield, and economics. The goal of the research, sponsored by the Kansas Department of Agriculture, is to provide Kansas producers with an alternative, high-value crop.

Investigation into transportation stress on tomatoes is in its second year. This research simulates the effects of transportation stressors, such as exposure to high temperatures and darkness, on grafted tomato plants and how stress affects transplant quality and early growth.





Lettuce trial beginning to harvest



Lettuce harvest

Spring 2021 was the fourth and final year for a lettuce trial in the moveable high tunnel that looks at exposure time to full sun and how that exposure time affects nutritional quality of the lettuce. The high tunnel was positioned to vary the amount of direct sunlight on the lettuce. Harvest took place on May 19 with samples analyzed at the Post Harvest Physiology Lab at K-State Olathe.



Congratulations to Megan McManus, graduate student in Urban Food Systems, who completed her Master's degree in May. Megan has provided much-needed farm assistance over the last couple of years balancing that work with her studies, coordinating Growing Growers KC apprenticeship program, and conducting research on business practices of specialty crop producers. We wish her the best.

Turfgrass Program Update

Resources for Turf and Landscape Information at K-State

If you're looking for information on managing turf and landscapes in Kansas, there are several resources and social media sites with which you should be familiar.

K-State Turf and Landscape Website: www.ksu.edu/turf

The website offers information on undergraduate education at K-State, extension articles, research reports, and much more.

Visit the K-State Turf and Landscape blog to find more articles related to turf and landscape: <https://blogs.k-state.edu/turf/>

Follow us on Facebook to stay up to date with the most recent news: <https://www.facebook.com/KSUTurf>

Please like and follow the K-State Turf and Landscape Team on Twitter: @KSUTURF

We have an exciting new series on the K-State Turf and Landscape Blog. It's called "K-State's Sodcast," which is a short interview with an individual to learn about their involvement in the turf profession. Several of these will be put together each year. In the first interview, Ted Wilbur, co-owner of Sod Shops in Wichita, KS, provides an overview of his experience in sod production.

K-State Sodcasts are done to highlight professionals who have been supportive of K-State, not to advertise their accomplishments or their business. I'd like to acknowledge the help of Gerry Snyder with K-State's Division of Information Technology for helping put this together. Click on the following link to watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3pv7IPQLbKk>

Turfgrass Graduate Student

We welcomed Dani McFadden to the OHC this summer. Dani just completed her Master's Degree in Turfgrass Science (Congratulations!) and is pursuing a Ph.D. also in Turfgrass Science. Her research examines use of preemergent herbicide on zoyzia grass springs with special emphasis on Innovation zoyzia grass. She is also instrumental in monitoring a national zoyzia grass variety trial plot at the OHC.



Dani McFadden prepares zoyzia plugs for research trial



On planting day, it's all-hands-on-deck



Dani sprays pre-emergent herbicide on a recently sprigged turf plot

Backyard Garden Update



*Baby bluebirds welcomed
Backyard Gardeners in the
spring.*

After a year of extremely limited activity because of COVID-19, Extension Master Gardener Backyard Garden (BYG) volunteers were able to return to regular work days the Center for 2021. All produce harvested from the BYG is donated to local food pantries. As of August 22, the BYG had donated 1,660 pounds of produce.

Activities at OHC

Just in time for tornado season, the Center installed two, strategically-placed shelters. One is located just outside the front doors of the main building. The second is located adjacent to the EMG Backyard Garden and the OHC growing fields for easy access by volunteers and work crews in the fields. Each shelter holds 10-12 people.



Farm crew preps for storm shelter.



Bottom half of shelter is set.



*Shelter nearly ready for
occupancy.*

The irrigation pond continues to hold water (after re-sealing in late 2019) and work has begun to get all systems in place to begin watering the research fields from the pond. Water lines are in place in anticipation of installing a solar-powered pump. When the system is up and running, the pond will be used to water all vegetable research plots.



Farm crew trenches water lines.



Water line from holding pond to plots.



Water line adjacent to research plots.

The Center received a SNAP-ED mini grant to help increase availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in the area. The grant was used to grow produce for After the Harvest (ATH). The OHC Veggie Crew planted collards, swiss chard, kale, cherry tomatoes, and watermelon to be donated to After the Harvest. As of early August, the ATH plots had produced nearly 1,100 pounds of fresh produce that has been distributed to food pantries and kitchens in the KC metro area.



Seedlings of spring greens grown for donation to After the Harvest



First harvest of greens by the ATH Gleaning Crew



Wheat research plot in Spring 2021

Wheat research continues at OHC. These plots were planted last fall for a project conducted by Dr. Jessica Rupp, Plant Pathology Department. Data was gathered throughout the growing season. Plots have now been expanded for future projects.

This summer we said farewell to two OHC colleagues. Mary Lou Peter, Extension Department of Communications and Marketing, who maintained an office here for many years, retired in June. Brian Boutte, Operations Supervisor (aka Farm Manager) retired in August. We wish them both a happy, healthy retirement.



Mary Lou Peter (center) at her retirement party on June 18



Less than 2 months later, we wished Brian Boutte a Happy Retirement

K-STATE

Research and Extension

**Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station
and Cooperative Extension Service**

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, J. Ernest Minton, Director.