



Geary County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

November 2024

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Moving Your Plants Indoors



Kyler Langvardt, Ag & Natural Resources Agent

Cold temperatures have come to Kansas in bits and spurts this year, but enough so that many gardeners have moved cold-sensitive plants indoors recently.

It begs the question: Now what?

“Hopefully, you were able to transition your plants to the indoors (by gradually introducing them to less light), but if not, they may go through a period of shock,” said Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini.

Symptoms of shock may include yellowing leaves, dieback and wilt, she said.

“Some plants won’t survive the shock if it’s extreme,” Domenghini said. “Others will recover over time and with proper care.”

Domenghini offers tips for helping plants survive their new indoor environment.

Water and fertilizer

Whether indoors or out, the amount of light decreases from fall to winter, resulting in slower plant growth. “This means the fertilizer and water needs will decrease,” Domenghini said.

She suggests only providing water when the soil is dry about one-inch deep.

Fertilizer can be applied at one-fourth the recommended rate in November, then again in February.

“Plants in smaller containers often require water more frequently, but less fertilizer because they have less soil,” Domenghini said. “This varies based on species, so do your homework and research individual plant needs.”

Temperature

If the air temperature drops below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, the leaves of more sensitive plants may begin to yellow. “Keep this in mind if you adjust the thermostat during times when nobody is home, such as vacations,” Domenghini said.

Humidity

When the humidity is lower, plants release more water from the leaves. Many common indoor plants prefer high relative humidity.

“To increase the relative humidity, you can create a micro-climate by grouping plants closer together,” Domenghini said. “Another option is to place a shallow container below each plant and fill it with water. Elevate the container by placing some gravel in the saucer so that the plant isn’t soaking directly in the water.”

Misting plant leaves is recommended by some, but Domenghini says it is not a practical strategy to effectively increase humidity.

Light

Indoor plants should receive bright, indirect light either from a window or grow lights. Avoid placing plants too close to windows that are drafty, or next to heat vents.

Some indicators that plants are not receiving enough light include:

- Elongated internodes (space between leaf/stem unions).
- Pale foliage color on new leaves.
- Dieback of older leaves.

Medicare Open Enrollment Reminders



Renaë Riedy, Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

Medicare Open Enrollment is October 15-December 7. Time to check your coverage to see if you are in your lowest cost option. Here are some Medicare points to ponder:

- 90% of what you get in the mail, see on TV, the internet or phone calls related to Medicare is a marketing solicitation. They are not looking out for your best interests. The other 10% would be your explanation of benefits from Medicare Part B, C, or D, and the yearly Annual Notice of Changes that you typically get in the fall. The 10% described are the important items to read.
- With the new \$2000 cap on out-of-pocket cost (not including premiums), changes are expected with Medicare Part D prescription drug plans and Part C Medicare Advantage plans. A monthly payment plan arranged with your prescription drug plan is a new option this year too. This is not a discount, simply a way to spread out the co-pay costs that will then be paid to the drug plan instead of the pharmacy directly. Consider this payment plan with caution, due to the formula used to determine the monthly payments. It may just push your cost toward the end of the year.
- Every year, Part D and Part C Medicare plans can change the premium and how they are covering a procedure or prescription drug.
- The Medicare Part B premium is anticipated to increase, and the amount is unknown at this writing. Social Security recipients will be receiving a 2.5% cost of living increase.
- Financial assistance programs such as Extra Help for prescriptions or Medicare Savings Program for Part B Medicare premiums are available to those who are

income eligible. A certified SHICK counselor can help you determine if you might qualify and can help with the paperwork.

- Medicare Advantage plans (Part C) require you to pay the Medicare Part B premium still, even though you no longer have Part B. It is not premium free.
- If you enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan, check to see that your doctors, hospital and other healthcare providers are in network or where you might have to travel to for an in-network provider. Save for your cost share that will be required as services are provided. Make sure you understand HOW these plans are going to pay and their coverage, particularly during and after a hospital stay.
- You may get a new Medicare number and card. This is due to scams. Likely, a new card will arrive in the mail, so it is important to open your mail before discarding. If you receive a new card, please call 1-800-Medicare (800-633-4227) to confirm that a new number has been issued to you, because this can also be a scam. Medicare cards continue to be printed on special paper, not plastic cards.

If you have any questions, you can get no cost assistance with Medicare Open Enrollment or Medicare questions by calling

A Senior Health Insurance Counselor of KS
(SHICK) certified counselor

North Central Flint Hills Area Agency
on Aging --1-800- 432-2703

Renaë--K-State Research and
Extension—785-238-4161

Your Local Pharmacy



**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL MEMBERS HONORED
AT THE RECENT 4-H ACHIEVEMENT NIGHT!**

Risks of Offering Wrapped Hay Bales to Cattle



Kyler Langvardt, Ag & Natural Resources Agent

When driving in Kansas, it is easy to spot big, round hay bales that are wrapped in plastic and ready to be fed to cattle. When it is time to feed the bale, some producers put the hay with the wrap on in a grinder and chop it up together, while others choose to remove the wrap before offering free choice hay to the herd.

Which way is best for the cows? That is a question that the experts at Kansas State University's Beef Cattle Institute answered on a recent Cattle Chat podcast.

The question came from a producer who discovered that one of his cows who died had a ball of plastic in her gut that likely came from eating the bale wrap and caused her to have a blockage that ultimately led to her death.

"Even chopped plastic can form a ball in a cow's gut that will accumulate over time and can in some cases lead her to die," K-State veterinarian Bob Larson said.

This has to do with how feed moves through the rumen, which is a chamber in the cow's stomach, K-State beef cattle nutritionist Phillip Lancaster said.

He shares that as the feed passes through the rumen in the normal digestion process of a beef animal, there is a liquid layer that the feed must sink through to get to the next chamber – the reticulum.

"The particles have to be dense enough to sink into the reticulum, but plastic pieces are very light so they float and can accumulate in the rumen over time," Lancaster said.

He added that death can happen when the plastic ball acts like a plug either preventing gas release or passage down the digestive tract.

Eating chopped plastic is a greater challenge for cows than for cattle on feed because of the years of a cow's life versus that of a feedlot steer, Lancaster said.

"A greater percentage of a cow's diet is hay, and she is

consuming it over a lifetime compared to a steer who only has about 10% of his diet as hay and he is only in the feedyard for about five months before being processed," Lancaster said.

With that in mind, the experts agree that the best strategy for the herd is to remove all plastic wrap before offering the hay to the herd.

Along with the lessened risk of digestive issues, K-State Brian Lubbers added that removing the wrap is also physically safer for the cattle.

"That wrap can get stomped in the mud and get tangled around their legs, which in some cases leads to lameness for the animal," Lubbers said.

BEFORE YOU FEED HAY

Let us help you test your bales to know what you're feeding.

Use our bale probe to collect a sample to send to analyze nutrients, proteins, nitrates and more.

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TO END THE 4-H YEAR, MEMBERS REFLECT ON THEIR PROJECTS AND SUBMIT RECORD BOOKS TO BE JUDGED.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Geary County 4-H Foundation Bingo/Soup Supper:

Join the Geary County 4-H Foundation at their annual Bingo/Soup Supper on Sunday November 10th at the Geary County 4-H/Senior Citizen Center! Soup and cinnamon rolls will be served at 5:30 p.m. for goodwill donation with bingo starting at 6:15 p.m. Each bingo card will be \$1. Come and enjoy an evening of fun and fellowship while supporting Geary County 4-H members.

Living Well Wednesdays:

Wednesday, November 13th at noon, Erin Martinez, PhD, Extension Adult Development and Aging Specialist, will help you discover practical tips and exercises to improve your balance, reduce risk of falls, and help you live a more independent and active life. Visit our website to learn more: www.ksre.k-state.edu/fcs/livingwellwed



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