

Southwind Extension – Your Source for All Things Horticulture

Extension has been helping people for over 100 years. A lot has changed since the Extension service was created in 1914, but the one thing that remains the same is the mission of Extension. Extension means “reaching out.” Extension agents reach out and extend their knowledge and resources to the public. Extension is for everyone to use!

The Extension philosophy is to help people help themselves by taking university knowledge to where people live, work and play. We strive to be very attentive to the needs of the people and provide quality information and problem-solving tactics for everyday concerns.

In recent years with literally everything being on the internet, people might say we don’t need Extension anymore because I can get all the information I need on the internet. Although you can find tons of information on the internet, it is often difficult to determine what is true and what is not. Many times we get calls from people that have found information on-line, tried it and it actually made things worse. The growing environment in southeast Kansas is much different than is in say Ohio, but your internet search isn’t going to know that. It’s kind of like searching symptoms of bodily pains. If you search long enough, you will be convinced you are dying because your big toe hurts! We offer that human interaction that you just can’t get with a computer.

Anyone that has a lawn or landscape can benefit from the local Extension office. The weeds you try to keep from growing in your lawn, or the tree that has holes in the trunk, or the spots on your tomato leaves are all areas Extension offers advice.

Your local Extension office is here to help you with problem solving tactics specific to your needs and to give you the tools to improve the situation. On the horticulture side, you can obtain information on trees, turf, flowers, insects, gardens, soils and other related topics. The office can assist you with any specific plant or insect problem you may have encountered. Home evaluations are even offered when necessary to gather additional information about a specific horticulture problem.

Many times when I take a call, the person on the other ends starts the conversation by saying “I have a dumb question.” My response is always this – “There are never any dumb questions when you call the Extension office.” My job is to help the public with whatever question or issue they may have and to try to educate them. I may not always have the answer they are looking for immediately, but 99% of the time I can find an answer.

We often hear that Extension is the best kept secret. Many folks don’t know what we do or what we have to offer. I want you to know that we are your source for all things horticulture!

During the growing season, I am in the Erie office Monday, Wednesday and Friday; Iola on Tuesday and Fort Scott on Thursday. However, you can always reach me by e-mailing kharding@ksu.edu or call 620-244-3826.

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