

Extension Edge

An educational publication of Purdue Extension — DeKalb County



Extension - DeKalb County

November/December 2023

Thank you Kim!!



It is with saddened hearts that we are announcing Kim's retirement from our office. Kim's last day will be December 15th. We greatly appreciate everything Kim has done to help with the transition from our old staff to our new staff. She has been an amazing asset and has helped bring several things up-to-date to leave them in the best hands possible as we search for her replacement. If you are interested in working as an Administrative Assistant in our office, you can check out the job posting [here](https://www.indeed.com/jobs?q=administrative+assistant&l=Auburn%2C+IN&vjk=a99076602e41b920)

<https://www.indeed.com/jobs?q=administrative+assistant&l=Auburn%2C+IN&vjk=a99076602e41b920>

In This Issue

4-H at a Glance.....	2	Chalkboard frame.....	8	Bundt Cake winners.....	15
Auction Info.....	3	Sweet Potato Apple bake....	9	Snow and Gardens.....	16
4-H important dates	4	Homemaker's Christmas party	11	Pear Month.....	17
4-H enrollment.....	5	Homemakers Important dates	14	Agriculture and Holidays.....	18
Holiday spending.....	7			Spice up your Holidays.....	19

2023 4-H At a Glance

This was another fabulous year for the DeKalb County 4-H program! We had a record number of registrants for 4-H Camp, saw an increase in enrollment across 4-H and Mini 4-H, and members did an amazing job exhibiting what they learned from their projects in the last year. This would not have been possible without the dedication from 4-H Families, Adult Volunteers, and the support of the community, so thank you!

Top 3 favorite projects

- Arts & Crafts
- Construction Toy Scenes
- Photography

Top 3 life skills gained

- Doing Your Best
- Self-Motivation
- Goal Setting & Planning/ Organizing

FALL FAIR

1013	animals exhibited
276	exhibitors
298	youth in Battle of the Barns
296	rabbit projects
227	poultry projects
142	swine projects
11	goat projects
67	sheep projects
70	dairy feeder/steer projects
65	beef projects
34	dairy projects



2023 Battle of the Barns Champions – Swine 2 Team!

AUCTION INFORMATION

We had a great 4-H Auction this year with great support from the community! For those of you that participated in the auction, be sure to read the information below to know what your next steps are to receive your check.

Very shortly, the Township Auction Chairmen (or the Office) will be sending out letters to each auction participant with a list of the people who donated to your lot, with their addresses.

Youth must write thank-you letters to each donor and turn them in, ready to be mailed, to their Township Auction Chairmen...NOT the Extension Office. Once this is done, your child will receive their check from the auction.

TOWNSHIP AUCTION CHAIRMEN

Township	Chairman	Phone
Butler/Keyser	Julie Malcolm	260-357-6255
Concord/ Spencer/Newville	Melanie McClain	260-437-6172
Fairfield	Tom Orwig	260-541-0068
Franklin	Travis Fry	260-570-3516
Jackson/Union	Mandy Young	260-908-1624
Richland	Stephanie Haynes-Clifford	260-413-2904
Smithfield/Grant	Montana Tiernan	260-235-9230
Wilmington/ Stafford/Troy	Mandy Capp	260-908-3033

CHECK DEDUCTION EXPLANATIONS:

1% will be deducted from the check to defray costs of conducting the regular sale (i.e.- postage, checks, sale cards, etc.)

2% will be deducted from the check for a Capital Improvement Fund for improvements to 4-H buildings on the Fairgrounds.

4-H VOLUNTEERS

If you are a 4-H volunteer, don't forget to log into your 4HOnline account and re-sign your Adult Behavioral Expectations (ABE) form.

After you have completed the initial Re-enrollment or enrollment, please Go to the Trainings tab to begin your training. Each module must say "Passed" next to it to be considered complete.

4-H Council Members!

Your training must be completed by January 15th!

If you would like to become a 4-H volunteer, please contact the Extension Office for a New Volunteer packet.

4-H/Youth Development

Art 101 Registration is Open!

Want to complete a 4-H project early and have less stress later? Want to learn how to create a work of art from sketching to framing? Then come to Art 101 and learn new skills (or improve your current ones) while learning skills to improve your mental health through creativity. Register by November 1 at <https://bit.ly/23Art101Register> Cost is \$20 per participant. You will receive a full art kit and a frame for your finished artwork. Participants must attend all sessions to create their artwork.

**Art 101:
Embracing Your Creative
Mess**

ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL HAVE A FINISHED AND FRAMED WORK OF ART!

Grades 6-12 and Adults are welcome!
November 7, 14, 21, & 28
6:00-8:00 pm
1500 S. Cedar St. Auburn, IN
Cost - \$20 per participant

**Register at bit.ly/23Art101Register
SIGN UP BY NOV. 1**

PURDUE UNIVERSITY Extension at Work Purdue University is an equal opportunity/ equal access/affirmative action institution.

2023 & 2024 4-H IMPORTANT DATES

November 7, 14, 21, 28	Art 101: Embracing Your Creative Mess (sketching to framing art class for grades 6-12 and adults), 6:00-8:00 pm - Auburn Parks & Recreation 1500 S. Cedar St. Auburn, IN Register now until November 1 - https://bit.ly/23Art101Register
November 8	14-H Council meeting, 7:00 pm – Exhibit Hall
November 16	Watercolor Cookies (Create your own edible art, grades K-12), 6:00-7:00 pm - County Office Building, Back door 215 E. 9th. St., Auburn, IN Register now until November 13 - https://bit.ly/WaterCookies
December 20	Sweet Treats (Candy Making) STEAM workshop, 6:00-8:00 pm - Exhibit Hall 708 S. Union St. Auburn, IN Registration opens in November (open to grades K-12)
December 13	4-H Council meeting, 7:00 pm – Exhibit Hall
January 15, 2024	Enroll in 4-H so you don't miss out on upcoming events (registration will remain open until May 15) Volunteer re-enrollment is also due at this time!
January 22	4-H Orientation, 6:00 pm - Exhibit Hall
January 24	Biology is a Hoot STEAM workshop (Owl Pellet dissection), 6:00-8:00 pm - Exhibit Hall 708 S. Union St. Auburn, IN Registration will open in December (open to grades K-12)
January 29, 31, February 5, 7	Go without Going - Your Passport to VR Travel (Join us as we explore the world through virtual reality), 6:00-8:00 pm - Exhibit Hall 708 S. Union St. Auburn, IN Registration opens in December (open to grades 3-12)

2024 4-H ENROLLMENT

NOW thru January 15, 2024

Re-enroll at v2.4honline.com

COST: \$25 4-H Fee* (Grades 3-12) paid at time of enrollment.

\$25* each for up to three children, \$10* for each additional child.

*\$25 each for up to three children, \$10 for each additional child.

\$5 for Mini 4-H (Grades K-2) paid at first meeting in May

4-H Fees are non-refundable and paid at the time of registration.

The fee can be paid online with credit or debit card

OR at the Extension Office with cash or check.

(Extension Office cannot take credit cards).

THANK YOUR AWARD SPONSORS

Don't forget to send a THANK YOU note to your award sponsors. Your appreciation may encourage them to contribute again next year. Your notes can make a difference!

Award sponsors' information is attached to the award that you received.



7 STEPS TO A GREAT THANK YOU NOTE

- 1 A greeting to the thank you note recipient
- 2 Specific reason you are thanking them
- 3 The reason you appreciate them
- 4 How you plan to use the gift or why the gift was important to you
- 5 A comment or detail about yourself
- 6 A repeat of your thank you
- 7 A closing and signature of your name



Happy Holidays

Winter Cancellation Policy

Historically, we have followed schools in regards to meeting and event cancellations. If one school canceled for the day, we canceled all events for that day. However, with schools offering e-learning days, we think they will be quicker to react and cancel.

We certainly care about your safety, but want to be mindful that sometimes the fog fades and the snow is cleared by evening.

Moving forward from this point on, we will use cautious discretion and/or consult with the Sheriff's Department regarding cancellation of DeKalb County 4-H programs, events, activities, and meetings.

CLOVER HUNT

Find the black & white 4-H clover logo hidden somewhere within this newsletter. To win the 2023 prize (Support Local Farmers Bag & Sticker, 4-H Tumbler, 4-H Agriculture Puzzle Cube, and 4-H Pencil), email Effie (campb314@purdue.edu) with the correct description of it's location and have the chance to win this month's prize. Winner will be announced on November 17, 2023.

Contest open to Mini 4-H and regular 4-H members ONLY. Prize will be available for pick-up at the Extension Office once winner has been notified.



Sample only



4-H/Youth Development

SHOOTING SPORTS

AIR PISTOL

Air Pistol (Beginner and Advanced) starts October 12, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. and will run each Thursday night through at least December 7 (excepting Thanksgiving Day) at the Exhibit Hall. Shooting Sports is open to Members in the 4th school grade and up. A parent/guardian must be present for a portion of the first class. Beginner and Advanced meet at the same time. If a member previously completed the Beginner Air Pistol Class, they are eligible to shoot Advanced. Cost is \$25 per student, due on the first night of class.

If a member is already registered for Shooting Sports for the 2023 season, they may attend Air Pistol. If the member is not registered for Shooting Sports or will be a new member, they MUST immediately register to be a 4H Shooting Sports member when the enrollment period opens in October 1.

Please send any questions to dekalb.shootingsports@gmail.com.

Noble REMC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

4-H Enrollment (State) Fee Reimbursement!

The first 25 youth who enroll in 4-H by Jan. 15, 2022 and whose families are Noble REMC electric customers, can have the State portion of the 4-H Program Fee reimbursed by the REMC. Upon enrolling and paying the Program Fee, a credit voucher can be obtained by contacting the Extension Office. Bring in or mail the voucher to NOBLE REMC for a \$15 bill credit.

Watercolor Cookies – Make Your Own Edible Art! Registration is open now until November 13!
Register at <https://bit.ly/WaterCookies> or scan the QR code below!



Watercolor Cookies

Create your own edible Art!
And decorate cookies for the Holiday season!

November 16
6:00-7:00 pm
County Office Building, 215 E. 9th St. Auburn, IN

Registration Open Now!



HOW TO KEEP YOUR HOLIDAY SPENDING ON BUDGET

10 holiday shopping tips for finding the perfect gift at the right price

There is such a thing as being too generous, especially during the holidays. In 2022, Americans budgeted, on average, \$8671 for presents. That can be a tough bill to face in the new year. Here are some holiday spending tips to help get you through the season with your wallet intact.

1

Value your relationships

Write down everyone you plan to give gifts to—from your nearest and dearest to your in-laws and the mail carrier. Then put a dollar figure next to each name. Setting price limits helps you keep your holiday budget on track.

2

Price check with your phone

Despite your best intentions, perfect gifts have a way of blowing your holiday budget. If you find a gift that's over your budget, use your phone to see if you can find a better price elsewhere. Many stores have price-match policies if you find a better deal.

3

Be proactive

One of the surest ways to overspend is to wait until the last minute and buy all your gifts in a rush. Not only are you more likely to overspend, but it also makes an already stressful time of the year even more so.

4

Buy last year's electronics

For many people, the latest and greatest

features aren't important. You're likely to save big by gifting an older version of a device that was the latest and greatest just a few months ago.

5

Know the truth about Black Friday and Cyber Monday

Chances are, you started hearing about "doorbuster" deals back in October. But there often isn't a huge difference in markdowns between one-day promotions, such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday, and regular holiday sales. Instead of focusing on event-style sales, look for deals every day.

6

Stay on top of your spending

Spend wisely by reviewing your account statements, paying your bills regularly and using online banking to easily monitor your accounts. If you purchase using a credit card, using a card that offers cash back or other rewards is another smart holiday budgeting tip. Since you're going to spend the money anyway, you might as well get something—whether it's retail discounts or travel deals—in return. We put together some tips on choosing a rewards credit card.

7

Consider making gifts

Homemade presents are great ways to save money while creating something memorable. These gifts might not work for everyone on your list, but they're good options for some. Consider photos for grandparents or cookies for your kids' teachers.

8

Save up for expensive presents

Putting money aside for big-ticket items can prevent you from depleting your accounts or going into debt during the holidays. We've put together some tips on saving for a large purchase, but one of the best savings tools to use is automatic transfers, which nearly all banks offer. This can help you save without thinking about it.

If you're a Bank of America customer, you can sign up for automatic transfers and decide how much money to move from your checking account to your savings account and how often.

9

Try to avoid shopping sprees

Retailers are really good at enticing people to buy. Everything from display placement to lighting and music is designed to trigger impulse purchases. Researchers have dubbed this the "shopping momentum effect," noting we're more likely to keep spending once we've gotten started. You can counteract the phenomenon by sticking to your shopping list and leaving the store for a few minutes when you're tempted to make off-list purchases.

10

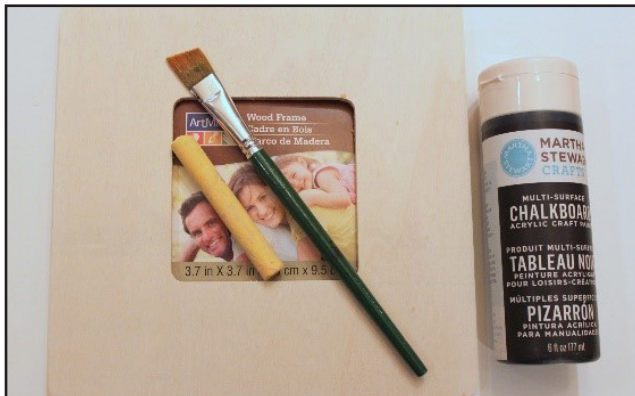
Factor in shipping

It's not unusual for an online item to appear cheaper than its in-store counterpart—until you add in shipping costs. Take note of any delivery or service fees, as well. Keep in mind, many retailers offer shipping coupons or free shipping days to attract customers, so do some research before you click "buy."

Source: <https://bettermoneyhabits.bankofamerica.com/en/saving-budgeting/holiday-shopping-tips>

Chalkboard Frame: Homemade gifts

Homemade gifts not only help with the holiday budget, but also add a personal touch to any gift. Here is a tutorial that the whole family can participate in:



Step 1

Purchase a wood frame in a craft store that has a nice large space to be able to draw and write on and chalk paint in the color of your choice.



Step 2

Give it a couple of coats of paint.



Step 3

Once the paint dried, begin drawing, writing, and creating!



Final result!

This would be a fun gift, and a great way to give your photos a title.

SWEET POTATO AND APPLE BAKE



Recipe credit

Colorado State University and University of California at Davis. Eating Smart Being Active Recipes

About this recipe: Serves 6

Serving size

3/4 cup, 1/6 of the recipe

Special criteria

Vegetarian recipes

Ingredients

- 3 1/2 cups sweet potatoes, drained (2 - 15 ounce cans; save 2 Tablespoons of the liquid)
- 2 cups apples (peeled, cored and cut into bite-sized pieces)
- 6 teaspoons brown sugar (2 Tablespoons, packed)
- 1/3 cup chopped nuts (pecans, walnuts or any other type)
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted (unsalted)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Put sweet potatoes in baking dish.
3. Add apples.
4. Pour 2 tablespoons of the sweet potato liquid over the mixture.
5. Mix brown sugar, nuts, flour, and melted butter together in a small bowl.
6. Sprinkle over the top of the sweet potato/ apple mix.
7. Bake for 20-30 minutes, until the top is golden brown and bubbly.

Tips and variations

Granny Smith apples tend to work best in this recipe.

Nutritional info

Calories 231, Total fat 9 g, Saturated fat 3 g, Cholesterol 10 mg, Sodium 64 mg, Total carbohydrates 38 g, Dietary fiber 4 g, Protein 3 g, Total sugar, 15 g

Source: <https://reallifegoodfood.umn.edu/snacks-and-sweets/sweet-potato-and-apple-bake>

Happy fall y'all,

Fall is my favorite time of the year. I love the smells, color and seeing all the farmers hard at work. My garden did very well this year. The Fall District meeting went very well. We had so many compliments. Thank you to Penny and your committee, you did an outstanding job! The food, decorations and the way everything was set up was just wonderful. It's nice to see you all work together.

Homemakers Day at the fair was well attended with 39 people attending the programs and two crafts. What a great turnout! We had 20 adult Bundt cakes and one youth. This is the most we have had in while. Ginger, you and your mom did a wonderful job on the crafts.

Seven people attended the men's dress shirt apron class and they all turned out very cute.

At the September sew day, two nurses came from Parkview Health and shared how we can continue making baby blankets and they would see that the doctors in the DeKalb area would give them out to newborns they care for. They also brought pie, cookies and flowers decorated in fall fashion for each of us. Our next sew day is November 14. Please bring a dish to share.

Our Spaghetti Dinner is October 25th from 4:30 - 7:00 p.m. I hope to see all of you there to help and eat! We will be making pies on October 24th at the Jackson Twp. Fire Hall. I hope we have a good turnout as we try something new.

Also, start thinking and get ready for our Cookie Candy Stroll on November 18th from 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Please bring cookies and candies to the Exhibit Hall on November 17th from 1-4 p.m.

This too shall pass.

**It might pass like a kidney stone
but it will pass**

President Martha Close

Hey you...
Coming to the party?



The DeKalb Extension Homemaker's
Annual Christmas Party

Monday, December 4, 2023

6 p.m. Exhibit Hall



Butch Heritage
Baking & Catering

BINGO

Dinner Menu

Chicken and Roast Beef • Mashed Potatoes and
Garvey • Green Beans • Salad • Bread
Pie • Coffee • Water

Please make reservations by
November 16, 2023

Penny Sleeper 1693 CR 10, Ashley IN, 46706
260-587-3394

Cost: \$15.00 for Club Members
\$20.00 for Non-Club Members



**It will be...
"Snow Much Fun"**



Visit to Sunny Meadows

DeKalb County Extension Homemakers'
Spaghetti Dinner

Wednesday October 25, 2023

4:30 - 7:00 p.m.

At the Exhibit Hall

Dinner includes: Spaghetti, garlic bread stick,
tossed salad, homemade pie, and drink

Free will offering will be collected.



**Homemade
noodles will
be available to
purchase for
\$4.00 a pound**

Extension Homemakers



Nurses from Parkview DeKalb family Birthing Center came to the Homemakers September Sew Day. They wanted to show their appreciation for over the last 20 years we have donated an average of 25 baby blankets monthly. They presented the ladies with flowers, Cookies and dessert, plus a wonderful poem. We are able to do this through our fall dinners and many donations We will continue making the blankets giving them away in different ways.



Extension Homemakers

DEKALB COUNTY EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS

Christmas GNOME CRAFT

Thursday,
November 9th

6 p.m. at the County
Office Building
(lower level)

Cost: \$5.00

Only 24 spots available!

Call Linda Wilson at
260-909-0358 to reserve a spot.

DEKALB COUNTY EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS

Cookie/Candy Stroll

Saturday, November 18th
8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

at the Exhibit Hall

Already wrapped or bagged items (caramel corn, caramel apples, chocolate covered nuts, etc.) will be priced separate and everything unwrapped will be sold at \$8.00 per pound.



DEKALB COUNTY EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS

Learn to Knit and Crochet

Monday, November 27th
at the
County Office Building
No Cost, supplies will be
provided

Call Linda Wilson at
260-909-0358 to save a spot.

DEKALB COUNTY EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS

CANDY MAKING THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7 & 14

You are
so
Sweet

6 P.M. AT THE COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
(LOWER LEVEL)

COST: \$15.00 FOR BOTH DAYS

GIVE LINDA WILSON A CALL AT
260-909-0358 TO SAVE A SPOT.

HOMEMAKERS 2023 IMPORTANT DATES

Oct 23-27	IEHA Week
Oct 25	Spaghetti Dinner - 4:30-7pm, Exhibit Hall
Nov 2	EH Council 6 pm, COB (lower level)
Nov 9	Gnome Craft, Cost \$5.00 - 6 pm, COB (Lower level)
Nov 14	Sew Day - 9 am - 3 pm, bring a covered dish to share
Nov 17-18	Cookie/Candy Stroll, Exhibit Hall
Nov 23-24	Thanksgiving - Extension office is closed
Nov 27	Learn to knit and crochet - 6 pm, COB (Lower level) No cost
Dec 4	County Extension Christmas Party - 6 pm, COB (lower level)
Dec 7	Candy Making - Cost is \$15.00 for both days 6 pm, COB (lower level) 1st Class
Dec 12	Sew Day - 9 am - 3 pm, bring a covered dish to share
Dec 14	Candy Making - Cost is \$15.00 for both days 6 pm, COB (lower level) 2nd class
Dec 22 & 25	Christmas Holiday - Extension Office Closed

2024

Jan 1, 2024	New Years Day - Extension Office Closed
Jan 4	EH Council - 6 pm, COB (lower Level)
Jan 15	Martin Luther King Day - Extension Office Closed
Jan 24	Game Night - 6 pm Exhibit Hall, Bring a snack to share
Feb 6	Sew Day - 9 am - 3 pm, bring a covered dish to share
Feb 14	<i>County 1st Timer Application due in Extension Office</i>
Feb 15	Rock Painting - Cost is \$5.00 - 6 pm, COB (lower level)
Feb 19	Presidents Day - Extension Office Closed

*COB - Lower Level of County Office Bldg., 215 E. 9th St., Auburn.



BUNDT CAKE WINNERS



Kim Heiser- 1st place Adult
Cranberry Apple Pumpkin Cake



Linda Wolf- 2nd Place Adult
Sour Cream Blueberry Bundt Cake



Ginger Wilks - 3rd place Adult
Apple cider Donut Bundt Cake



Heather Harrington - Merit Adult
Lemon Blue Berry Bundt Cake



Kara Oliver - 1st place Youth
Red Velvet



Snow Is Good for Gardens

By: Rosie Lerner, retired Purdue University Horticulture Specialist

Though your aching back may not agree, recent heavy snows actually will be good for your garden and landscape. Snow provides moisture as well as protection from cold and wind.

Snow is an excellent insulator against low temperatures and excessive winds. The extent of protection depends on the depth of snow. In addition, the soil gives off some heat so that the temperature at the soil surface can be much warmer than the

air temperature. One study found that the soil surface temperature was 28°F with a 9-inch snow depth and an air temperature of -14°F!

Snow brings welcome moisture to many landscape plants, which will in turn help prevent desiccation injury. Even dormant plants continue to lose moisture from twigs (as water vapor) in

the process known as transpiration. Evergreen plants, which keep their leaves through the winter, are at even greater risk of injury.

On the other hand, it is possible to have too much of a good thing. Some evergreens will suffer from too much snow load. The weight of

snow and ice can bend or even break branches, particularly on multi-stemmed shrubs, such as arborvitae. If needed, snow should be gently removed by brushing away with a broom or rake. Do not try to remove ice, since it is more than likely that you will break the stems.



Photo credit: Rosie Lerner, Purdue Extension

Snow provides insulation for garden plants.

Multi-stemmed shrubs that are known to be susceptible to breakage can be bound with twine to hold branches together to prevent them from splitting apart.

Of course, there's still more winter to come before we'll know how well our plants fare. In the meantime, rest assured that there really is a silver lining to this storm cloud.

Agriculture & Natural Resources

Celebrate National Pear Month in December

Bartlett



Starkrimson



Seckel



Forelle



Concorde



Bosc



Comice



Red Bartlett



Red Anjou



Green Anjou



Try all 10 pear varieties grown in the U.S!
To learn more about pears, visit: <https://usa-pears.org/>.

UPCOMING EVENTS AG IMPORTANT DATES 2023

NOV 2	6-8:30 PM Beef Quality Assurance Training in Shipshewana, IN at the Shipshewana Livestock Auction. Register by calling 260-499-6334
NOV 7	6-8:30 PM Beef Quality Assurance Training-Milan Center Feed and Grain, 15402 Doty Rd, New Haven, IN, Please pre-register at: https://tinyurl.com/MilanBQA
DEC 15	9 AM-3 PM Commercial Pesticide Applicator Workshop, Walb Student Union, PFW, 2101 E Coliseum Blvd, Ft Wayne, IN

LOOKING AHEAD: 2024

JAN 16-18, 2024	Fort Wayne Farm Show, Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, Fort Wayne, IN
Feb 21-22, 2024	Ag Women Engage Conference, Grand Wayne Center, Fort Wayne, IN

Agriculture helps celebrate the holidays

By Christen Clemson, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation Member

With the most wonderful time of the year approaching, I thought it might be fun to examine the role agriculture plays in celebrating the holiday season.

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, the Winter Solstice, Las Posadas, Diwali, Chinese New Year or another holiday, agriculture plays a role in your celebrations in unique ways.

Since I celebrate Christmas, this will be my main focus, but for those of you that may celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice or Yule (celebration of the winter solstice), Las Posadas Diwali (the Hindu festival of lights), and Chinese New Year (the first day of the first month in the traditional Chinese calendar), I believe that there are some elements of my Christmas celebration that are mirrored in yours. I think that we can agree the holiday season is not only a time to celebrate family, friends and possibly religion, but also a time to celebrate food and agriculture.

One of the first things that immediately pops into my mind in the celebration of Christmas is obviously the tree. Growing evergreen trees is considered an agricultural endeavor and there are approximately 350 million Christmas trees growing on 15,000 to 20,000 Christmas tree farms in the United States (University of Illinois Extension). Almost 100,000 people are employed either full- or part-time in the Christmas tree industry and these people sold 32.8 million real Christmas trees and brought in over \$1 billion in

2018 (National Christmas Tree Association). For every Christmas tree bought, anywhere from one to three seedling are planted the following spring to keep up with demand. While not every holiday has a live tree, many holidays celebrate with other symbolic and agriculturally produced goods like wooden candle holders or wrapping paper.

The next place my mind goes to for a celebration is food. I am going to lump food together and try to discuss it all because food plays such an important role in celebrations. In our case, Christmas features a large ham, mashed potatoes, vegetables of some sort, bread rolls and either pie or cookies. The statistics are a bit old, 2011, but they are the most recent I can find and I apologize. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2011, 224 million turkeys were raised and 22 million made their way to the Christmas table (Delish). Along with our delicious feathered friends, 7.3 billion shrimp were devoured at 46 million different holiday parties (Delish). However, the favorite meat of the season tends to be pork, and the U.S. is the third largest producer of pork.

How many of us are celebrating the holidays in clothes? I'm truly hoping we all raised our hands or nodded our heads, but hey, you celebrate the way you like. However, as you don that ugly Christmas sweater over your blue jeans headed to a friend's Christmas party, know that you are supporting farmers. Seventeen states produce cotton; Texas leads the way followed by Georgia and Mississippi. The annual business revenue provided

by cotton is over \$120 billion, which makes it America's number one value-added crop (cotton.org). So while you're out shopping for gifts, make sure to check that label and buy your best friend that fabulous cotton shirt.

On the subject of clothes, how about U.S. wool production? U.S. farmers produce almost 26 million pounds of wool that is made into sweaters, socks, mittens and scarves to keep us from freezing. In 2017, U.S. shorn wool production was at 26 million pounds, and this came from the 3.4 million head of sheep and lambs (AgMRC). So, for that hard-to-buy for friend on your Christmas list, look to support American sheep and lamb farmers by buying wool scarves, sweaters, mittens or other wool gifts.

Finally, and weirdly put in a category of its own, I have decided to explore maple syrup and its role in the holidays. Especially in northeast Ohio, this delicious, sticky, beautiful brown syrup makes its debut on pancakes, sticky buns, oatmeal and even in my coffee. Pretty much everyone loves maple syrup, no matter what holiday you celebrate. The U.S. makes 4.27 million gallons of maple syrup; this comes from 13.3 million tapped trees and added \$147 million to the economy (National Agricultural Statistics Service).

So as we enter into the holiday season, no matter what holiday we celebrate, we need to give thanks to American farmers for not only the food that brings together friends and family, but for the gifts we exchange, and the traditions we are able to carry on. Happy Holidays!

Spice Up Your Holidays

By: Rosie Lerner, retired Purdue University Horticulture Specialist

Some of the most popular spices used this time of year are harvested from various parts of exotic tropical plants, lending a special flavor to holiday recipes.

Ginger is harvested from the rhizomes (underground stems) of a tropical/sub-tropical herbaceous plant, *Zingiber officinale*. Ginger is native to tropical Asia and is grown commercially in Hawaii and many other countries, including China, India, Thailand and Brazil. The rhizomes are harvested after the first year of the plant's growth. The rhizomes can be washed and used fresh, dried whole or ground, pickled, crystallized or boiled and stored in syrup.

It is possible to grow ginger as a houseplant, though a typical home is not the best environment to keep this plant happy, especially in winter. The plant thrives in warm, humid air and well-drained moist soil. Select healthy fresh rhizomes from the market, and look for the small "eyes" or buds to plant eyes facing upward, about 2-3 inches deep. Once the leaves emerge, set the plant near a bright window where it will get at least a half day of direct sun.

The popular spice of cinnamon is derived from several closely related species. Ceylon cinnamon comes from the bark of the semi-tropical evergreen tree *Cinnamomum zeylanicum*, native to Ceylon and southwest India and hardy in the U.S. Gulf states. For the best quality cinnamon, the bark is cut in strips from two-year-old branches, just as the new foliage leaves out and the bark slips easily from the wood. The bark is then dried and either ground or sold in the curled strips called "quills." The quills of Ceylon cinnamon are light brown, and their interior

consists of several thin layers.

The cinnamon found in most grocery stores is more likely to be the cassia cinnamon, harvested from the related *Cinnamomum aromaticum*. This type of cinnamon has a darker, thicker bark, and its quills are hollow. This form is less expensive, so it is more commonly found and is stronger in flavor than the true cinnamon.

Cloves are native to the Moluccas (Spice Islands) and are the dried, unopened flowers of the tropical evergreen tree *Syzygium aromaticum*. The name clove is derived from the Latin *clavus*, meaning "nail," as the dried flowers do rather resemble their namesake.

Nutmeg and mace are both harvested from the fruits of yet another tropical evergreen tree, *Myristica fragrans*, also native to the Moluccas. These fruits have a fleshy outer husk that splits upon ripening to reveal the seed with a red, leathery covering. Nutmeg is made from the ground seed kernel, while mace is made from the leathery seed cover.



STAFF:

Elysia Rodgers
 eberry@purdue.edu

Angela Sorg
 asorg18@purdue.edu

Effie Campbell
 campb314@purdue.edu

Kim Quintrell
 kquintrell@purdue.edu

Brenda Cureton
 bcureton@purdue.edu



Extension - DeKalb County



The Problem

- The federal Broadband Equity, Adoption, and Deployment (BEAD) program is deploying broadband funds.
- Indiana is receiving close to \$870 million from the federal government starting mid to late 2024.
- A Federal Communications Commission (FCC) map will dictate where these funds go.

The Solution

- The Purdue Broadband Team's (PBT) goal is to make make Indiana's broadband map more accurate and help with broadband adoption.
- PBT will spread the word on the following resources:

Share validating tool for addresses and internet service on the FCC map.	Learning more about the Indiana Connectivity Program (ICP).	Share tool for speed tests or reporting a lack of connectivity at your address.	Learning more about the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

Purdue University is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution.

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service is an Affirmative Action, Equal Access/Equal Opportunity Institution.

Extension - DeKalb County



Non-Profit Org
 U S Postage Paid
 Auburn in 46706
 Permit No. 80

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

County Office Building
 215 East 9th Street—Ste. 300
 Auburn, IN 46706