

Shoppers guide Article by Larry Crouse, Butler County Horticulture Agent K-State Research & Extension

GETTING HEALTHY WITH HERBS - Learn how to grow and use them!!!

On Tuesday, April 30th, at 6:30 PM in the Andover Central Park Lodge at Andover Central Park in Andover, KS we will be presenting our annual Herb Program. Kay Neff, owner of Neff Family Farms, will share her vast knowledge of all things herbal. Kay will not only be giving tips on what herbs grow here and how to grow them, she will also be sharing recipes and have a good selection of herbs for sale for those in attendance.

Barb Roths, Butler County Family and Consumer Science Agent, and her volunteers will be preparing different items that are relatively easy to make. So before, during and after the program people will be able to taste the different offerings to see what might interest them.

We are asking that you please pre-register for this event, this will help insure that we have enough materials for all attending. The cost to attend is \$5.00 per person, and the registration deadline is Friday, April 26th. To register, come by or call the Butler County Extension office at (316) 321-9660. Or you can e-mail the Butler County Extension office using aperry1@ksu.edu. Put "Herbs" in the subject line and include your name and phone number in the body of the e-mail. So please come and join us for information on buying, growing, preserving, using and cooking with herbs!

Mowing Low - How Low Should You Go

I'm often asked whether it is good to mow lower in the spring. The answer is yes and no. It doesn't hurt to mow lower than normal the first mowing or two. As a matter of fact, it can actually speed green-up by removing old, dead grass and allowing the soil to warm up more quickly. But the mowing height should be raised to normal after the first or second cutting to discourage crabgrass and encourage deep rooting. Crabgrass seed must have light to germinate, and a high mowing height will help shade the soil. Also, root depth and mowing height are related on upright growing grasses such as tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass - the higher the height of cut, the deeper the root system. A deeper root system means a more drought-resistant turf. So, how low should you go on the first cutting? On tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass, you can mow as low as 1 to 1½ inches. Be careful you don't go so low that you scalp the turf. After that, raise the mowing height for Kentucky bluegrass to 2 to 3 inches but 3 to 3½ inches for tall fescue.

Brown Coloration on Junipers (Eastern Red Cedar)

Certain eastern red cedar and various other junipers are showing a brownish cast when viewed from a distance. This may be the male flowers. Male flowers are on the tips of the leaves and look somewhat like a cross between a miniature hand grenade and a pinecone. Shaking the branches on dry days will often result in a cloud of pollen being released. Most junipers are dioecious, meaning they have both male and female plants. About half the junipers (the males) will have this coloration. The female flowers are much less obvious. If you have clients who are concerned about this brown coloration, have them check the plants to ensure the male flowers are the cause. If they are, assure them that this is normal and will fade with time.