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**For Immediate Release**

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Date:

**Annual K-State Horticulture Center Field Day July 29**

OLATHE, Kans. — While urban gardening continues to rise in popularity, another new hot trend has appeared on the horizon — cultural gardening. Urban gardening uses containers, patios, balconies and raised beds on smaller city homes or suburban lots to satisfy peoples’ desire for home-grown fresh vegetables. With cultural gardening, many of these same gardeners are embracing their heritage through plants and creating themed gardens centered around that heritage.

The K-State Research and Extension Horticulture Center’s will feature these two trends along with the newest exciting horticulture introductions at their Annual Field Day Saturday, July 29, from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Each year this research facility opens its doors to the public and invites everyone to come see the hottest and newest plants while enjoying cool educational classes in air-conditioned comfort. You can enjoy ice cold water while wandering the field trials, learning about the latest and greatest before it ever hits the garden centers. You’ll be able to talk with the experts and learn about the latest varieties and methods for achieving growing success here in Kansas City’s challenging growing conditions.

Admission is $5 per person, which includes ice cold bottled water, seminars, classes and demonstrations. K-State Research and Extension horticulture research develops its list of recommended grasses, flowers or vegetable varieties through university research conducted in Olathe to determine what grows best in our Kansas City landscapes.

**What you'll see**

The Center conducts research in flowers, turf, and vegetables. Visitors can speak with university professors heading up the research and Johnson County K-State Extension Master Gardener volunteers.

**Highlights – Flower Area**

* **Annual flower trials** **–** Companies from around the world submit their newest developments. This year over 500 cultivars have been planted for evaluation. The research trials show which flowers can withstand the Kansas City climate. The trials illustrate that not all varieties are created equal. Check out the container plantings as some annuals are only meant for use in pots.
* **Dwarf Cannas and Coleus – bigger is not always better. These hot new introductions are great for in-ground gardens but also shine in containers. Returning All Stars include Canna 'Cannova' and 'Under the Seas' Coleus**
* **Pollinator friendly plants – more annuals are being introduced for attracting and sustaining butterflies and pollinators. See what’s new to help be pollinator friendly**.
* **Vegetables to eat or admire** – to meet the demands of urban/suburban dwellers, researchers are studying vegetables suitable for small spaces and containers. The Center’s research concentrates on tomatoes, peppers and eggplant. One new interesting plant is an Ornamental Oregano 'Kirigami.' There will also be new ornamental peppers, corn, millet, etc.

**Highlights – Vegetable Area – Growing Local Food**

Come and find out what K-State Research and Extension is doing to assist local farmers support the growing local food movement. While at the research center, you will learn about many of the innovative things that local farmers are doing. Projects include:

* **All America Selections Variety Trial program –** see what’s new in varieties and the trend of using more vegetables as ornamentals. Combine edibles and ornamentals for that "foodscaping" element.
* A shade vegetable garden demonstration and a twenty-foot "home-built" high tunnel that provides environmental protection and season extension for growing produce in a back yard.

**Highlights – Turf Area**

Research continues to evolve in the turf area. Growing thicker, darker and greener grass with less inputs is one focus. The K-State turf specialist will be on hand to answer your questions.

* **New this year** – turn your backyard into a putting green or athletic field. While there join the fun! See if you can get a hole-in-one. Participate in a chipping contest, foot golf course and a simulated soccer field. Grass is more than just to look at. Find out how to grow your own playing “field.”

**Highlights – Extension Master Gardeners Backyard Garden Demonstration Garden**

Vegetable gardening is as popular as ever. This Extension Master Gardener’s project demonstrates various methods of growing vegetables from raised beds, vertical gardening and a new spin on the square foot concept. The garden also features a wide variety of herbs, a colorful flowering cutting garden and extensive fruit plantings. They will have the answers to your gardening questions.

* **Cultural gardening** – discover vegetables commonly used in Mexican/Hispanic, Asian, Italian and Deep South USA cuisine. Also featured are herbs commonly used in those cultures. Observe plants commonly grown in an early 1900 Kansas farmstead garden (potatoes, beans, corn, rhubarb, peas, squash — all the old-time regulars). Be sure and check out the bee hive demonstrations and sample the fresh comb honey.

**Other attractions:**

* Fresh produce market stand from veggie research, they don’t get any fresher than this!
* Call Hall Ice Cream for sale. A Kansas State University Wildcat tradition!
* Friendly people to help you grow as a gardener and more.

**Free soil tests**

Johnson County residents can bring their soil and get ***one*** free soil test per Johnson County address, compliments of Johnson County Stormwater Management. A soil test determines the nutrients in the soil. It is important to know the nutrient levels to grow healthy plants. Go to [www.johnson.k-state.edu](http://www.johnson.k-state.edu) to learn how to take a soil sample. At least 2 cups of dry soil are needed for a proper test.

**How to get there**

The Research Center is located at 35230 West 135th Street, Olathe. The entrance is approximately nine miles west of Highway 7 on 135th Street. Admission is $5 at the gate. Lunch will be available for purchase during the event. For information call (913) 715-7000, or visit [www.johnson.k-state.edu](http://www.johnson.k-state.edu).

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