

Garden boosted by grant

Among 35 projects from around the state chosen as grant recipients through the Kansas Community Gardens Project this year is the Thomas County Community Garden, which was awarded \$3,200.

A storage shed, compost bin, gardening tools and irrigation system are a few of the things that will be purchased with the money.

The project is a joint initiative of the Kansas Health Foundation and K-State Research and Extension. Grant recipients were selected through a competitive application process.

"Community gardens have the potential to do everything from providing food to local nonprofits and schools, to improving the personal health and well-being of those involved," said Steve Coen, president of the foundation. "These gardens can make a lasting and positive impact in the communities they serve."

"A big thanks is given to Southwind Plaza, Inc. for hosting the garden site. Rasure Lumber also gave support by giving a discount on wood and supplies used for the raised beds added last year," said Denise Singer, garden



SAM DIETER/Colby Free Press

Clae Schmidt (right) poured water to help Denise Singer as they planted banana peppers Saturday morning at the community garden.

coordinator for Thomas County. "Golden Plains Garden Center and Great Western Tire donated supplies as well. We are appreciative to all the support the community has shown."

Thomas County Community Garden is off to a good start as seeds have been planted. Colby High School FFA is working to again provide starter plants from their greenhouse. Wayne Horlacher has donated wood chips which will be used as an alternative to grass clipping for weed control.

It is time to recruit garden members and volunteers for the 2013 season, according to Singer, who said the garden is a great project for service groups as well as individuals. Last year, the Abilene Hustlers 4-H club volunteered time and used the garden as a service project.

Most gardening days will be scheduled for Tuesday evenings and Saturday morning. For information, contact Denise Singer at 465-9103.

Even animal lovers prefer no rabbits in garden

You've done it - tucked those tender bedding plants into the garden just so. And now you're looking forward to all manner of flowers and vegetables from your very own back yard. So what can turn this satisfying scene into one of big disappointment overnight?

"Rabbits in gardens are a perennial problem because of the wide variety of plants they can feed on," said K-State Research and Extension horticulturist Ward Upham. "This time of year, they gravitate to young vegetables and flowers. But there are some vegetables that are rarely bothered including potatoes, tomatoes, corn, squash, cucumbers and some peppers."

Fencing can provide a quick and effective control method for susceptible plants, said Upham, who is the coordinator of the Extension Master Gardener Program in Kansas.

"The fence does not need to be tall; 2 feet is sufficient for cottontails, but the mesh must be sufficiently fine (1 inch or less) so young rabbits will not be able to go through it. Support for the fence can be supplied by a number of products, but electric fence posts work well," he said.

In cases where fencing is not acceptable because it affects garden's attractiveness, there are other ways to control rabbits, he said,

including repellents, trapping and shooting.

"Repellents are often suggested for control, but often do not last long and require frequent reapplication," Upham said. "Also, many are poisonous and cannot be used on plants or plant parts destined for human consumption."

Live traps can be used to collect and move the rabbits to a rural area several miles from where they were trapped. A number of baits can be used to entice the rabbit into the trap, including a tightly rolled cabbage leaf held together with a toothpick. However, rabbits often avoid baits if other attractive food is available, he said.

A motion-activated sprinkler is another possibility, he added. These are attached to a garden hose and release a short burst of water when motion is detected. Some suppliers advertise that their sprinklers protect up to 1,000 square feet.

For those who live where it is safe and legal to do so, shooting is another possibility, he added.

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Early enrollment saves aggravation

Farm Service Agency administrator Juan Garcia this week encouraged farmers and ranchers to enroll for the 2013 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program or the Average Crop Revenue Election Program before the deadline. Producers who wait until the last minute to sign up could face increased waiting time in county offices, he said.

"We understand that producers have gotten busy, but they can't forget to visit their county office and sign up for DCP or ACRE," said Garcia. "Just as farmers and ranchers plan their spring plant-

ings, producers should plan to schedule an appointment ... at the earliest possible time. It's best to complete the paperwork now rather than to stand in line the day before the deadline."

The deadline to sign up for the averaging program is Monday, June 3. The direct payment sign up period ends Friday, Aug. 2.

Program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that participants may choose to enroll in either program.

For information go to the county office at 915 E. Walnut or www.fsa.usda.gov.

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