



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
EXTENSION

DeSoto County Extension Office Newsletter

DESOTO COUNTY

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2025

It's November folks, and December is just around the corner. That means the first "holiday" in our series of holidays between now and 2026 is less than 4 weeks away.

Where oh where have the past few months gone!?! We'd love to know! Since moving we've been trying to get settled and into the swing of things in our new space as well as, maintaining normalcy around the Extension office.

Inside this month's newsletter, you will find it packed with information we hope you will find useful. With many upcoming programs, events and information, we feel are hot topics for the upcoming months of November & December. Our office will be closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday, November 27th & 28th and again for a winter break December 23rd -January 1st . Sorry for any inconvenience this may cause. As always please let us know if you have questions because we are here to assist you!

Jessica Hickey Laura Anglin Lara Angel M. S.

Oh Mum! How do I care for you?

Mums are a fall favorite across the country. Each year, in late summer, they pop up on store shelves everywhere. However, making the most out of their color is the frustration of many home gardeners. They provide a burst of fall color with their large number of blooms and wide variety of color options. Additionally, in most climates (USDA Zones 5-9) these hearty, deep rooted plants will be perennial. Planting them in the spring in a well-watered but well-drained soil will help them thrive, developing deep roots and prolific blooms. Shaping them up by pinching or clipping back the stems helps to encourage that round bushy shape we have come to love. Here are some tips to get the most out of your store-bought mums:

It can be tempting to buy a mum that is in full bloom at the store. However, to get the longest amount of color out of your new mum, make sure to buy one that has a lot of tight blooms on it. These will start to open and maximize the time you have color on the landscape. Try to avoid disturbing the roots. The mum is happy in its container, and the blooms will last longer if the plant is not disturbed. I just place mine, in its pot, into a more decorative pot to dress it up a little.

Keep up with watering but water right. Mums that start to dry out won't bloom as long. Being seasonal bloomers, once they fade, they likely won't bounce back. Also, water from the bottom. Mums don't like their leaves getting wet and doing so can encourage diseases. Water from the bottom, or as close to the soil surface as you can when the soil begins to dry out and you will have blooms to enjoy for weeks



**DESOTO 4-H
CHILI & DESSERT
COOK-OFF**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15
DESOTO COUNTY AGRI-EDUCATION CENTER
1170 STARLANDING RD W, NESBIT MS 38651
2:00-4:00 PM

**ALL AGES WELCOME TO
SIGN UP TO ENTER**

**PUBLIC
ENCOURAGED
TO JOIN
TO CAST YOUR
VOTE!**

No cooking at the event
Recommend a
crockpot to keep
entries warm

**Proceeds go
towards the
DeSoto Kids
and Kits 4-H
Club**

HOW TO PARTICIPATE?
SIGN UP BY SCANNING THE QR CODE
\$10 PER DISH ENTERED
**\$1 PER VOTE* TO VOTE ON YOUR
FAVOTITE CHILI AND DESSERT**
*no limit to the number of votes you may cast
cash or venmo accpeted



1700 STAR LANDING WEST SUITE B NESBIT, MS 38651

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Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. ANGUS L. CATCHOT JR., Director

2025 MS STATE FAIR RECAP



LIVESTOCK SHOWS

Congratulations to all of our 4H livestock exhibitors!

Beef Cattle: Weston Ricker, Easton Ricker, Cheyenne Ricker, Chandler McKnight, Savana Stewart, & Hannah Powell

Rabbits: Dusti, Willow, Robert Cox–Osborne; Jasidy, Addilyn, Zandrew Gomes; Lillian, Hazel, and Evie Bemis; Charlotte and Dominick Kouba

Poultry: Emma Wofford, Ellie Treadway, Hunter Rule, Truenne and Brynley Speck, and Julie Chamberlin

Dairy Goats: Dusti, Willow, Robert Cox–Osborne; Anthony and Nathan Bula; Michael, Sidney, Jayden, Londyn Simpson; Hannah Powell

STATE FAIR CONTESTS

DeSoto County 4-H had members competing at the 4-H Day at the State Fair in a variety of contests!

Share the Fun: Dusti, Willow, Robert Cox–Osborne; Emily, Nolan, Robert, Elam

Public Speaking: Willow Cox–Osborne

Chopped Challenge: Dusti, Willow, Robert Cox–Osborne; Emily, Nolan, Robert, Elam

Omelet Cook Off: Lola Edwards

Lego Build: Henry Elam



DESOTO COUNTY 4-H STATE FAIR EXHIBITS

The following 4-Hers had items selected to be on display at 4-H Day at the Fair!

They made or grew all of the items that were selected to be showcased!

Brynley Speck, Charlotte Kouba, David and Leah Angel, Dominick Kouba, Dusti and Willow Cox–Osborne; Emily, Nolan and Robert Elam; Hunter Rule, Fenix and Janika Schaafsma



DeSoto County 4-H Shooting Sports Program

Calling all of those that are interested in 4-H Shooting Sports for 2026!
Save this date and attend our Shooting Sports Interest and Safety Meeting!

4-Her & one parent must attend the Interest and Safety Meeting to participate in the 2026 shooting sports season. No exceptions!

4-H Shooting Sports Interest and Safety Meeting

January 13, 2026 6:00 pm

**DeSoto County Agri-Education Center
1170 Star Landing Rd West, Nesbit, MS 38651**

**All paperwork to sign up will be given at this meeting. You can NOT pick up the paperwork to sign up at our office.
There will not be any make up meetings.**



Use QR Code here to enroll your 4-Her(s). Each year we ask for everyone to update their information by re“enrolling”. The 4-H Year officially starts in October.

4-H Western Heritage Making Great Strides

If you are interested in volunteering your time to coach any discipline in shooting sports, please reach out to our office at desoto@ext.msstate.edu or call 662-469-8480

“Western Heritage Shooting Sports program in Mississippi started in 2023 with DeSoto County having 5 participants. Since this time, the program has grown rapidly and over the last year DeSoto County 4-H has started a club called Western Wranglers. The club currently has 19 members, 18 of which will be competing at the 2025 State Shoot in West Point, Mississippi this month. Western Wranglers meet once a month up until July. Starting in August, we start meeting every week in preparation for the state contest in October. The State Competition consists of a written test, persona interview, and shooting contest. Each year Mississippi will pick a theme from western history in the years 1860s- 1900. This year's theme is Pony Express; the members of our club have been studying the history of the Pony Express. This information as well as period firearms, dress and gun safety will be on the written test. The persona portion of the competition allows participants to develop a character from the time period of the 1860s - 1900 and learn the history of the character. The participant will research, develop and act out their persona in a persona interview. In the shooting portion of the event, the participants will compete in timed shooting stages that measure accuracy, speed and ability to follow the proper shooting procedure and safety rules. The Western Heritage program is the fastest growing discipline in Mississippi shooting sports with DeSoto county being the biggest county in the state.” ~ **Dusti Cox-Osborne, DeSoto 4-H Western Wrangler Reporter**



Western Heritage is where learning meets fun and community is formed! I started out as just a parent with a student interested in participating, but it didn't take long for me to realize just how amazing this program is! I took the first opportunity possible to get trained to be a coach so I could bring the fun of the west, thrill of the “ping” heard when you hit the target, and excitement of creating your own Western frontier story to more students in our county! Hands on activities, friendly gatherings, and growing together. What more could you ask for! ~**Kira Warren, Desoto 4-H Volunteer and Parent**

From our humble beginnings in 2023 with just five passionate members, the Western Heritage program in DeSoto county has blossomed into a thriving community of 24 enrolled students—19 of whom are actively participating and 18 preparing to represent us at the state competition this year. That's not just growth; it's a movement. To think that out of 38 students competing statewide, nearly half—18—hail from our county alone is nothing short of extraordinary. We now make up more than 30% of the total competitors, a testament to the dedication, enthusiasm, and spirit of our youth and the unwavering support of our community. *This journey has been one of grit, heart, and heritage. We are proud. We are inspired. And we are just getting started.*

~**Maila Rogers, Desoto 4-H Volunteer & Club Volunteer Leader**

2025 NORTH Mississippi Beef Expo NOVEMBER 14, 2025

Registration 12:30 - 1:00 PM
Batesville Civic Center



Speakers

Dr. John Byrd, Weed Scientist/Weed Control
Dr. Carla Houston, MSU Vet - Beef Cattle Herd

Health/Biosecurity

Josh Maples, Ag Economist
Brett Rushing, Forage Specialist
Producer/Industry Panel Discussion

To register contact your local MSU Extension Office, not sure
how to contact your local office scan the QR Code.

SCAN ME



For more information contact Tracy Boone at t.robertson@msstate.edu or 662-237-4413
Mississippi State University is an equal opportunity institution.

Tate/DeSoto Forestry Association



WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT

NOVEMBER 20TH | 6:00 PM

DeSoto County Agri-Ed Center, 1170 Starlanding Road West, Nesbit, MS 38651

Register by calling the DeSoto County Extension Office at 662-469-8480.

Guest Speaker: Houston Havens, Waterfowl Program Coordinator, MDWFP

Don't miss your chance to win a 2025 Federal Duck Stamp Print or a DU LED Flying Mallard!
Tickets available at the meeting - come early! Donated by Tunica County Chapter.



Tunica County



DeSoto
County

*Registration
Is Open!*

Register at the DeSoto
County Ext. Office

*Master Gardener
Face-to-Face Trainings*

WHEN: MARCH 10TH, 2026 TO APRIL 9TH, 2026
TUESDAY AND THURSDAYS 8:30AM TO 12:00PM

WHERE: 1170 STAR LANDING RD W. NESBIT, MS

COST: \$175 PER PERSON

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ACCOMMODATIONS
CALL 662-469-8480



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
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Master Urban Homesteader Workshop

Save
the
Dates



Tuesdays &
Thursdays
May
2026

Join us for our hands on workshop series focusing on
gardening, seed starting, floral design, home food
preservation, baking, livestock basics, small flock
poultry management, and more!

Cost \$100

Registration
coming soon...

More details to
come...



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Winter Preparedness: Weatherproofing Homes and Barns

As North Mississippi heads into the winter months, now is the perfect time to make sure your home, barns, and equipment are ready for colder temperatures. A little preparation can go a long way in preventing costly repairs and keeping your family and livestock safe.

Below is a practical **“Winter Weather Checklist”** tailored for DeSoto County homeowners and agricultural producers.

Home Weatherproofing Tips

1. **Inspect and seal drafts.** Check around doors, windows, and vents for gaps. Use weather stripping or caulk to seal leaks and improve energy efficiency.
2. **Protect your pipes.** Wrap exposed pipes with insulation or heat tape, and know how to shut off your main water valve in case of freezing.
3. **Check your heating system.** Have your furnace or space heaters serviced before the first freeze. Replace filters monthly for efficiency and safety.
4. **Clean gutters and downspouts.** Remove leaves and debris to prevent ice buildup and roof damage during freezing rain or snow events.
5. **Prepare an emergency kit.** Include flashlights, batteries, blankets, bottled water, and non-perishable food in case of power outages.

Barn and Farmstead Preparation

1. **Inspect roofs and doors.** Repair leaks, secure loose panels, and ensure doors close tightly to reduce drafts and moisture buildup.
2. **Protect livestock water sources.** Use heated buckets or tank de-icers to keep water from freezing. Check them daily for safety and function.
3. **Stock feed and bedding.** Cold, wet weather can disrupt deliveries. Keep extra feed, hay, and dry bedding on hand for a few weeks' supply.
4. **Check electrical systems.** Inspect cords, lights, and outlets in barns for wear or damage. Avoid using extension cords long-term or in damp areas.
5. **Ventilate safely.** While sealing drafts helps retain heat, maintaining airflow prevents condensation, mold, and respiratory issues in animals.



Equipment and Property Readiness

- Service tractors, trucks, and small engines—change oil, check antifreeze, and inspect tires and batteries.
- Store fuel safely—keep gasoline and diesel in approved containers, away from heat sources.
- Mark driveways and paths in case of snow or ice to ensure access for emergency vehicles or feed delivery.

Stay Informed

Keep an eye on local forecasts and sign up for weather alerts from trusted sources. The Mississippi State University Extension Service and the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) both offer helpful resources for seasonal preparedness.

A little prevention now can save time, money, and stress later.

By preparing your home, barn, and farmstead before freezing weather arrives, you'll help ensure a safer, smoother winter for everyone, two and four legged alike.



Events Calendar

November
2025

Mondays
3, 10, 17

Dining with Diabetes

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Southaven Library
RSVP (662) 342-0102
Series starts Oct. 27

Saturday
8

Sustainable Style: Floral Designs for the Holidays

Horn Lake Library
with Master Floral Designer
Tommie Rodgers

Saturday
15

Why Do Leaves Change Color in the Fall

11 a.m. @ Walls Public Library
Master Gardener Georgette Etherton

Thursday
Friday
20/21

Holiday Wreath Ideas with Lara

Nov. 20- 10:00 a.m. Olive Branch Library
Nov. 20- 1:30 p.m. Walls Library
Nov. 21- 11:00 a.m. Southaven Library
RSVP with each individual library

Thursday
11

4-H Chopped Gingerbread Houses

Horn Lake Library
4 p.m.

Tuesday
16

Salt-Free Spice Blends

Southaven Library
with Lara Angel
11:00 a.m.

December
2025



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Don't Let Disease Hitch a Ride:

Protecting animal health starts with strong biosecurity. Whether you raise poultry, horses, or cattle, consistent prevention practices are the best defense against disease threats. The Mississippi State University Extension and the Mississippi Board of Animal Health encourage livestock and poultry owners to review biosecurity measures this season.

Poultry

Backyard and commercial flocks remain at risk from highly pathogenic avian influenza, which can spread quickly through contact with migratory wild birds. Limit visitors to coops and poultry houses, secure feed and water sources, disinfect equipment, and quarantine new or sick birds. Even small steps reduce risk and protect Mississippi's largest agricultural industry.

Equine

Horse owners should be alert to mosquito-borne diseases such as Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) as well as contagious conditions like strangles and equine influenza. Reduce standing water around barns and pastures to control mosquito populations, vaccinate horses regularly, avoid sharing equipment, and isolate new or returning horses for at least two weeks.

Cattle

Producers should maintain vigilance against parasitic threats like the New World screwworm, along with diseases such as bovine viral diarrhea (BVD) and trichomoniasis. Regularly inspect animals for wounds or signs of infestation, maintain a closed herd when possible, test animals before introducing them, and provide clean feed and water. Keep records of animal movements and consult your veterinarian for herd health planning.

General Practices Across Species

- Control farm traffic—limit entry to essential personnel only.
- Provide clean footwear or disposable boot covers for anyone entering animal areas.
- Sanitize equipment regularly.
- Quarantine new or returning animals before mixing with the herd or flock.
- Stay informed on regional disease updates through Extension and the Mississippi Board of Animal Health.

Strong biosecurity not only protects your animals—it safeguards your farm, your livelihood, and Mississippi agriculture as a whole.

Seasonal Alert: Watch for These Animal Health Threats

- Avian Influenza – Wild bird migration increases the risk to backyard and commercial poultry.
- Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) – Spread by mosquitoes; vaccination and mosquito control are key for horses.
- New World Screwworm – Monitor cattle and other livestock for wounds or infestations; report suspicious cases immediately to MSBOAH.

Got a Holiday Houseplant?



Plants make perfect decorations and gifts during the holidays, especially Thanksgiving and Christmas. Read this publication for care tips for plants typically available during the holidays.

'Tis the Holiday Season

The holiday season is upon us and it is a time for social gatherings with friends and coworkers. AND you cannot forget about sharing family meals together! If you are like me you might enjoy hosting events to bring people together. One of the highlights of our year is when family comes to town!

It is very important to stay healthy during the holidays because no one wants a food borne illness to spoil their holiday fun! There are a few food safety guidelines to consider whenever you're hosting, preparing, cooking, serving and storing food. This holiday season make your event(s) food-safe:

Clean and Sanitize

Handwashing is the first step to avoiding foodborne illness. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before, during, and after handling food.

Avoid Cross-Contamination

Cross-contamination is the spread of bacteria from raw meat and poultry onto ready-to-eat food, surfaces, and utensils. One way to avoid this is by using separate cutting boards — one for raw meat and poultry, and another for fruits and vegetables.

Thaw Safely

Use your refrigerator to safely thaw out meat. Another option is to thaw food in cold water, but the water needs to be replaced every 30 minutes and food needs to immediately cooked after being thawed. Or you can always thaw foods in the microwave according to package directions, then immediately cooking after thawing.

Cook Thoroughly

Cook foods until done and they reach a safe internal temperature: Chicken-165 F, Beef & Pork- 145 F, Ground Meat: 160 F. Reheated foods 165 F. Insert a food thermometer into the thickest part of the meat and/or the innermost part of the meat to check its internal temperature.

The Two-Hour Rule

Don't leave your food sitting out too long! Refrigerate all foods sitting out at room temperature within two hours of being cooked, or one hour if the temperature is 90 F or above. After two hours, perishable food will enter the "Danger Zone" (between 40 F and 140 F), which is where bacteria can multiply quickly and cause the food to become unsafe. Discard all foods that have been left out for more than two hours. Remember the rule — keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

Do you want more resources on how you can make your holiday events safe and healthy? We have you covered! Just reach out and we can connect you with resources!



With the upcoming holiday get-togethers and festivities around the corner, it can be easy to move less, sit more, and gain weight. Join our Walk with Extension 12 Days of FITMAS Challenge this year starting around Dec. 5th. Check out our DeSoto County Extension Office Facebook or Instagram accounts to find out how to join. This info wasn't available when our newsletter went to the print shop.

- The 12 Days of Fitmas challenge is a social media campaign emphasizing moving more and eating more fruits and vegetables.
- Each day, we will share a fruit or vegetable of the day, along with walking and movement tips to help you improve your health!
- If you would like a "paper version" of this please let our office know if you're not on social media. Join us!

Re-Think Your Drink

It's that time of year when all of the festive holiday drinks are back on the menu! But you might want to "re-think" your drink. Did you know that just consuming 100 less calories every day could significantly affect your weight. 100 calories less per day for 365 days adds up to saving on 36,500 calories on the whole year. That equates to about 10.5 lbs saved, just by doing something as minor as cutting out the whipped cream! Read the list below for ideas on healthy swaps you could save yourself over the next year, in terms of both weight and money....

- Try sparkling or seltzer water for soda
- Opt for flavored coffee beans vs coffee syrups
- Use a holiday-flavored tea rather than adding sweeteners/creamers
- Infuse water with fruit in place of punch
- Make eggnog low-fat or buy a low-fat version
- Remember that spirits add up. Choose lower calorie mocktails if available.
- Stay HYDRATED with WATER
- Order black coffee with "light" syrup (1/2 of a pump)
- Get a latte with non-fat milk & SF syrup
- Skip the whipped cream -it will save you 70 calories!

NOV.-DEC. 2025

November

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3 Dining With Diabetes @ SH Library Kids and Kits Club meeting 4 pm	4	5	6	7 Western Heritage Meeting	8 Floral Program with Tommie @ HL Library
9	10 Dining With Diabetes @ SH Library	11 4-H Awards Banquet	12	13 Delta Ag. Expo Cleveland, MS	14 North MS Beef Expo Batesville, MS	15 Fall Leaves with Georgette @ Walls Library
16	17 Dining With Diabetes @ SH Library	18 Pick-up 4-H Cooking Kits	19	20 Wreath Ideas @ OB & Walls Library Waterfowl Mgt. Workshop	21 Wreath Ideas @SH Library Lucky Leaders 4-H Club	22
23	24 	25	26	27 MSU Extension Office Closed	28 	29
30	1 Kids and Kits Club meeting 4 pm	2	3	4	5	6 Western Heritage Christmas Party
7	8	9	10	11 DNA Validation Oxford 2-6 pm GB Houses @ HL Library	12 MG Awards	13
14	15	16 Pick-up 4-H Cooking Kits Salt-Free Spice Blends @ SH Library	17	18	19 Lucky Leaders 4-H Club	20
21	22	23 MSU Extension Office Closed	24	25 	26	27
28	29 MSU Extension Office Closed	30	31	1 	2 Extension Office Re-open	3

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

MISSISSIPPI STATE, MISSISSIPPI 39762-5446
PO BOX 5446

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