



JULY is here! That means it is officially summer now! Inside we have packed this newsletter with things that have happened and/or things that are going to happen soon! Please keep in mind our office will be closed for the 4th of July holiday on Friday July 3rd.

Sincerely,
The Extension Agents
Jessica
Mary Chandler
Matt
Lara



The Fourth of July is almost here, and this year's holiday marks an extra special milestone: The United States of America is officially 250 years old! Happy Birthday America! Have you thought how you will commemorate the occasion? I am sure with lots of red, white and blue! Besides the typical watching fireworks, picnicking and grilling, a day off work, and family time take a moment and think of ways you can commemorate this momentous occasion! Here's a few ideas to consider:

- Make a family time capsule. Bury it in the backyard (or in a safe place somewhere in your home) and make plans to dig it up either on America's 275th or 300th birthday!
- Take a moment to discover more about the founding of our country. This will help you appreciate the USA!
- Visit historical places this summer to immerse yourself in history of the past that helped shape us to where we are today.
- Host a community potluck July 5th.



1170 STAR LANDING RD. WEST NESBIT, MS 38651

Inside this Newsletter:
Western Heritage Info

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Calendar of Events

Mississippi State University Extension will provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities and individuals with limited English proficiency. Language access services, such as interpretation and translation of vital information, will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request. Contact our office (662-469-8480 or desoto@ext.msstate.edu) prior to a program or event to request reasonable accommodations.

WESTERN HERITAGE

Hands on History Education



INTEREST/SAFETY MEETING JUNE 29, 2026 @ 6 P.M.

Shooting Sports meets the study of the American Frontier

THE 4-H WESTERN HERITAGE PROJECT IS A COMBINATION OF SHOOTING SPORTS AND THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER FROM 1860-1900. MEMBERS DRESS IN AUTHENTIC CLOTHING, DEVELOP A NINETEENTH CENTURY PERSONA BASED ON HISTORIC RESEARCH, AND COMPETE IN A TARGET SHOOTING CONTEST USING PERIOD-CORRECT FIREARMS.

THREE COMPONENTS OF THE CONTEST

1. SHOOTING USING PERIOD CORRECT FIRE ARMS
2. PERSONA INTERVIEW
3. WRITTEN EXAM

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MASTER GARDENERS INFORMATION SERIES

Cooking with Herbs



Come join DeSoto Master Gardener Tommie Rodgers as she discusses the power of herbs. Learn to prepare, store and use fresh and dry varieties to transform your home cooking with a burst of seasonal flavor.

Wednesday, July 22

9:30 - 10:30 am



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370 West Commerce Street
Hernando, Mississippi 38632
Phone: (662) 429-4439 Fax: (662) 429-8625
A branch of First Regional Library
www.firstregional.org



Lunch and Learn

Wednesday July 8th

12:15pm - 1:15pm

1170 Star Landing Road W Nesbit, MS

GUEST SPEAKER:
MELISA KNIRR

TOPIC:
LOW PRESSURE, HIGH YIELD: DRIP IRRIGATION IN THE GARDEN

COST: \$10 A MEAL WILL BE PROVIDED

RSVP REQUIRED BY CALLING:
DESOTO COUNTY EXTENSION
AT 662-469-8480



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NEW SOIL TESTING INFO

Follow the steps below to submit your soil sample.

- ORDER ONLINE
- CHOOSE PAYMENT OPTION (Cash, Check or Invoice)
- PREPARE & LABEL YOUR SAMPLE
- SHIP OR DROP OFF YOUR SAMPLE
- RECEIVE RESULTS

Important Info

Cost is \$12 per soil sample.

You may pick up your soil sample containers from your county Extension office.

Clients are responsible for shipping samples to the soil testing laboratory.

Results will be sent to the client and the county Extension office.

Shipping Address and Drop Off Location

Southern Soil & Plant Lab, LLC
117 Haley Barbour Parkway
Yazoo City, MS 39194

soiltesting.extension.msstate.edu

Contact your local Extension office for help with collecting soil samples, understanding crop codes, interpreting soil test reports and general soil fertility questions.

DESOTOCOUNTY 4-H



What: At Home Learning Kit complete with supplies and cooking tool to engage youth! Target age is 5-18 years old. Helps youth build kitchen confidence!

When: July, August & September!

Cost \$40 (Check/money order payable to DeSoto 4-H). Pickup dates July 28, August 25, September 29



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY... EXTENSION



DESOTO COUNTY 4-H
HORSE CLUB

August 17, 2026

Join us for our first official meeting! We will be meeting ever 3rd Monday at 4pm. We will begin discussing all things horse management!



1170 Starlanding Rd West Suite B
Nesbit, MS 38651



mck329@msstate.edu



662-469-8480



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY... EXTENSION

PREPARE ITEMS FOR COUNTY 4-H EXHIBIT DAY

Enter our County 4-H Exhibit Day. Enter items September 10 at the Extension Office. SUMMER is a great time to work on these! Exhibits will be judged and on exhibit September 14-19 at the DeSoto County Agri-Education Center. Winners will advance on to the State Fair!

Agribusiness

- Animal Science
- Field Crops
- Plant and Soil Science

Environmental Shop

- Conservation of Natural Resources
- Forestry
- Wildlife
- Fisheries

Creative Arts

- Home Environment
- Visual Arts

Bug Shop

- Insect Collections

Safety and Health

- Safety
- Aerospace
- ATV
- Automotive
- Bicycle
- Electric
- Healthy Choices Promo

Horticulture

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Nuts

Fashion Shop

- Clothing

Culinary Arts

- Baking
- Recipe Collection
- Canning
- Drying

Clover Shop

Youth ages 5-7 years old can submit entries in any of the categories. Only two entries per youth



Scan the QR code to read more about each division and other contests at the Fair. This is last years book so a few things may be subject to change

DESOTO COUNTY 4-H LIVESTOCK NOMINATIONS

Due by September 1, 2026 @ 5 pm to
the DeSoto County Extension Office

All cattle, swine, goats, dairy goats and sheep that are going to show at the MS State Fair must be nominated. IF you have a commercial or market animal, it must be tagged before nomination forms are completed.



LIVESTOCK VALIDATION DATES AND LOCATIONS

**Classification/DNA Collection
Week – September 14-16, 2026.
Locations TBD. Contact our office!**

All market steers, commercial beef heifers, market lambs, market hair sheep, commercial meat goat does, wether dams, breeding hair sheep, market hogs, poultry and market goats MUST BE validated to show at the 2026 MS State Fair

DATES TO KNOW & SAVE:

Mississippi State Fair, Jackson
October 8-18, 2026

Showing at Dixie Nationals?

Classification/DNA Collection Week
– December 14-17, 2026

NW District Show, Batesville –
January 14-16, 2027

Dixie National Junior Round-Up,
February 1-11, 2027

MS STATE FAIR PRINCESS/ AMBASSADOR CONTESTS

Categories: Junior and Senior Dairy Cattle Sweetheart, Junior and Senior Dairy Goat Sweetheart, Junior and Senior Meat Goat Princess, and Junior and Senior Lamb Ambassador will be announced during the Mississippi State Fair.

Email desoto.ext@msstate.edu
for an application.

Office Deadline to apply is
August 25, 2026

DESOTO COUNTY 4-H

4-H POULTRY & RABBIT County Show

**SAVE THE DATE
09.19.2026**

Join us to support our 4-Hers as they exhibit their poultry and rabbit projects at our county show!

**DeSoto County Agri-Education Center
1170 Star Landing Rd. W
Nesbit, MS**



4-H Record Books

Deadline to remember

(due to DeSoto Co. Extension Office)

July 15 Juniors and Intermediate

Got questions?

Reach out to us at the Extension Office!



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

State 4-H Congress



We had a great time at 4-H Congress this year! DeSoto County took 19 youth and 7 4-H volunteers to Starkville to compete in a wide variety of contests, explore new experiences in different workshops on Mississippi State Campus, run for offices and ambassador positions, and meet new friends from across the state! Our county had the largest delegation there at State 4-H Congress!

We had the following youth participate in the following contest:

- 4-H Shooting Sports Quiz Bowl- Team members were Daniel Matlock, Ella Marsden, Ava Marsden, and Cameron Kelley – 1st place!
- 4-H Rabbit Skill-a-Thon – Jasily Gomes placed 1st place!
- 4-H Interior Design Contest- Isabella Hancock 2nd place!
- 4-H Livestock Quiz Bowl- Team members were Daniel Matlock, Cheyenne Ricker, Weston Ricker, and Savanna Stewart. 4th place!
- 4-H Modeling Squad- Members were Dusti Cox-Osborne, Robert Cox-Osborne, Willow Cox-Osborne, Riley Cross, Brynley Speck, Clara Trudell, Maci Warren- 3rd place!
- 4-H Forestry Judging- Team members Jasily Gomes, Lane Warren, Cason Cross
- 4-H Consumer Judging- Team members included Riley Cross, Dusti Cox-Osborne, Robert Cox-Osborne
- 4-Hers ran for State 4-H Officers positions & Dusti Cox-Osborne was named the new Mississippi 4-H Sergeant at Arms!
- 4-Hers applied to be Mississippi State 4-H Ambassadors and were accepted to the 2026-2027 Ambassador Team- Congrats Robert, Willow and Dusti Cox-Osborne, Casen Cross and Isabella Hancock.

Last but not least, we are proud of all our 4-H Congress participants who got out of their comfort zones to compete in a new contests, run for office, and make new friends! We are very THANKFUL for our volunteers!

Canning Foods

Fresh home grown produce is in full abundance now either in your home garden if you have one or locally at farmers market(s)! An option to preserve your fresh produce is to can your fruits and vegetables. It is best to can foods as quickly as possible to preserve their quality. When deciding which foods to can versus which ones to freeze think about what type of produce do you have and how do you desire its texture be when you eat it. Canning is great if you are short of freezer space and you don't have to worry about keeping the food safe if the electricity goes out. Once items are canned using a safe home canning method then they become shelf stable. It is recommended to keep home canned items up to one year in a cool dry place.

Canning is a method that's been around almost 200 years and over time the process has developed as more and more research was conducted. Today canners have safety measures in place to help keep you safe while preserving foods. Don't be intimidated! If you can follow directions and read a recipe you will do amazing in canning! Keep reading to learn more.

Which canner do I use?

- Boiling-water canners are used to process jams, jellies, preserves and high-acid foods, such as tomatoes and some fruits.
- Pressure canners are used when processing low-acid foods such as vegetables, meats, milk, and seafood.

When preparing for canning, an important step not to skip is to make sure you are using a research based method in preserving. Also make sure you are using the right canner! One wrong recipe could cost your your health. But why you ask?!?!? Growth of the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum* in canned food may cause botulism—a deadly form of food poisoning. *Clostridium botulinum* is commonly found in soil, on raw fruits and vegetables, on meat and fish, and on many other foods and surfaces. Botulinum spores are on most fresh food surfaces. But if you can foods you are bottling up the toxin for later consumption if you use an improper method. Keep in mind botulism can grow only in the absence of air, but it's harmless on fresh foods. The foods acidity level comes into play too in helping control botulinum bacteria. Acidic foods like most fruits or pickled foods you "add" acid to are not at risk. Low-acid canned foods are not acidic enough to prevent the growth of these bacteria. Acid foods contain enough acid to block their growth, or destroy them more rapidly when heated. But low-acid foods not so much! That's why it's recommended to pressure can low acid foods.



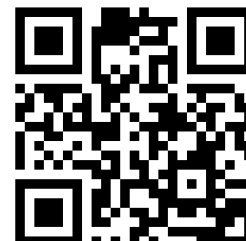
Canning also stops enzymes from working in the foods. Enzymes help fruits and vegetables to grow and develop, but once the item is harvested you want to slow the enzymes down because the food will continue to ripen and mature. Canning helps you to preserve the flavor and color of the food at its peak of freshness while destroying the enzymes so you can enjoy the foods later in the year.

Wondering where to start when it comes to canning? Here's some tips...

- Decide what you want to can and make sure you have research-based recipes. Below we included a couple QR Codes for 2 great places to start!
- Gather the needed equipment:
 - boiling-water canner
 - pressure canner
 - canning thermometer
 - Mason type home-canning jars with two-piece lids
 - canning lids and rings
 - canning utensils: jar lifter, big-mouth funnel, headspace gauge, clean cloth or paper towels, narrow bubble spatula or plastic knife, and magnetic lid wand
- Inspect all equipment to ensure it is safe to use. Get your dial gauge tested, check gasket for cracks, check jars for cracks, and make sure your rings are rust free. Then gather all your supplies together before you start to make sure you have everything before you start.

If you're reading this and still feel unsure about home canning we hope to offer more home canning workshops in the fall! Let us know if you would like to be added to the waiting list so we can let you know when it is published.

To read more on this topic visit the MSU Extension publication on this below using the QR Code and visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation.



Planting Pumpkins

Most gardeners are well under way to what will hopefully be a successful gardening season. While most of are warm season garden plants are already well on their way, pumpkins are one that we typically often forget about. Pumpkins are a great addition to the menu, roasting and baking, and decorating. Like other winter squash pumpkins have the ability to be stored for long periods of time and remain fresh, but that clock starts ticking once they are harvested which makes planting them later in the season a good choice for using them for fall decorations and cooking.

Planting - Pumpkins take 90 to 120 days to fully mature. That means planting them mid-summer will put them ripe and ready to pick in early October, just in time for Halloween. They can be direct sown or planted as transplants. Transplanting them can be helpful for home gardeners as it provides easy and deliberate spacing. Spacing will vary based on variety, but these are large aggressive vining plants that will need plenty of room in the garden to spread out and will usually be planted 4-8 feet apart in hills.

Managing - Pumpkins will continue to grow and set fruit along the vines. To produce larger pumpkins, limit the number of fruits it produces. Water during the season is also important. These large plants need plenty of water to fill out fruit. If the plant becomes water stressed bloom will fall off and reduce yields. Through most of the season 1 in of water a week is ideal, but later in the season up to 2 in of water may be needed for larger varieties to reach their potential

Keep in mind that moisture and humidity can increase disease pressure. Powdery mildew is one of the most common diseases of pumpkins, but resistant varieties are readily available. Chemical control with chlorothalonil or copper sulfate are effective against these diseases when applied timely and with thorough coverage.

Insect Pressure - Like all summer and winter squash plants, pumpkins are vulnerable to a wide variety of insects. Some of the most common and most damaging insects include squash vine borer and squash bugs. Scouting regularly is essential to early detection of these insects and treatment. Pyrethroid insecticides such as permethrin, zeta-cypermethrin, and bifenthrin are effective at controlling these pests. These can be rotated with products containing Spinosad and malathion to ensure control and reduce pesticide resistance. Make sure to read and follow all pesticide labels for specific instructions on mixing, handling, and applying.

Harvesting - The part we have all been waiting for. When fully mature pumpkins will have developed their full color and a thick skin resistant to puncture with a fingernail. Keep in mind that one plant may have pumpkins in several stages of maturity, but harvesting all pumpkins before the first frost is critical to optimal storage. When picking pumpkins make sure to cut the stem 2-4in long. Wiping the skin down with a antibacterial wipe will help prevent disease issues during storage. Storing pumpkins in a cool dry place. Indoors is fine, but around 55 degrees F is ideal.

Watermelon Wisdom: Tips for Picking the Best One

Here's how to pick out the best sweet and juicy watermelon:

The best way to find a ripe watermelon is by looking at its field spot. The field spot should be yellow- or cream-colored. It may even appear orangish in color! The bigger the spot, the better! This means the watermelon was ripe when it was harvested. If the spot is white or pale green, that means it was harvested too early.

The best watermelons are dull in color and heavy. If the exterior is shiny, that's a good indicator the interior is not ripe yet. Remember, watermelons are made mostly of water! If you pick up a melon and it's not heavy, put it back. The heavier the watermelon, the more water it's made of. The more water, the juicier it will be!

You can also tap the underbelly and listen for a deep sound. Deep sounds indicate a ripe watermelon, while a hollow sound means it's not ripe yet. This is not always a reliable indicator, as it's more important to rely on its appearance.



DeSoto County
Master Gardeners
Summer 2026 Series




Planning a
Fall Garden
with Pam Olson
Saturday, June 27
11:00 am

Becoming a
Master Gardener
with Kathleen Losapio
Wednesday, July 22
1:00 pm



M.R. DAVIS PUBLIC LIBRARY
8554 Northwest Drive
Southaven, Mississippi 38671
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JULY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	1	2	3 Office Closed	4 
5	6	7	8 Lunch & Learn MG Board Meeting	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 Junior 4-H Record Book Due MG Monthly Meeting	16	17 State 4-H Shoot 	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 Pick-Up 4-H Cooking Kit	29	30	31	1

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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EXTENSION

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