

Agent addresses poinsettia care, area calving school

Well here we are again at the Christmas holiday season and the end of another year. With all the “challenges” of this past



Darl Henson
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year, many are ready to put it behind us and are looking forward to what is hopefully a more “normal” future. This time of year a couple of questions I often get pertain to one of the season's most favorite and recognizable plants – the poinsettia. For many, the rich color of poinsettias is a comforting symbol of the holidays. With proper care, the popular plant can last through the end of the year and beyond. Here are some tips and reminders on maintaining the popular plant.

Horticulture specialists say that poinsettias should be kept in a spot where daytime temperatures are 65 to 75 degrees F, and 60 to 65 at night. Temperatures above 75 will shorten the life of blooms, and below 60 degrees may cause root rot.

Place your poinsettia in a sunny window or the brightest areas of your room, but don't let it touch cold window panes. Move plants away from drafty windows at night, or draw the drapes to avoid cold damage.

Poinsettias are “finicky” when it comes to soil moisture. Avoid over-watering poinsettias because they do not like wet feet. On the other hand, if the plant is allowed to wilt (due to not getting enough water), it will drop some leaves. To maintain proper moisture, stick a finger about ½ inch deep into the soil. “If it's dry to ½ inch, the plant needs water. When it becomes dry to the touch, water the plant with lukewarm water until some water runs out of the drainage hole, then discard the drainage water.

Another concern often expressed is whether or not Poinsettias are poisonous. Despite rumors to the contrary, poinsettia leaves are NOT poisonous to humans or animals. Members of the Society of American Florists have tried to dispel the rumors in the past by eating poinsettia leaves at press events.

Some members of the genus Euphorbia, to which the poinsettia belongs, have a toxin that can cause vomiting. The poinsettia, however, does not contain that toxin. The plant could cause an allergic reaction to the milky sap in the leaves. There has never been a recorded case of poisoning due to a poinsettia.

After the holiday season and as we head into the new year, KSU Extension also heads into a very active season of public educational and informational sessions and events. Cattlemen around the area will also be readying themselves for calving season. In antici-

pation of calving season, beef cattle experts from the Kansas State University Department of Animal Sciences and Industry and K-State Research and Extension are planning a series of calving schools beginning in early January.

A.J. Tarpoff, Extension beef veterinarian in charge of coordinating those schools, says the calving schools aim to increase producers' knowledge, practical skills and the number of live calves born. Each day-long program outlines overall calving management, including stages of the normal calving process and tips to handle difficult calving situations.

The goal is for producers to leave better prepared for calving season. Tarpoff and others will discuss timelines on when to examine cows for calving problems, and when to call your vet for help if things are not going well. It's an excellent program regardless of experience level.

Speakers will share tips on when and how to intervene to assist the cow and how those times may be different when dealing with young heifers. Presenters will demonstrate proper use of calving equipment on a life-size cow and calf model. The meetings will cover such topics as body condition scoring, colostrum management and animal health product storage and handling.

Meeting scheduled most convenient for those in the Coffey County area will be held Wednesday, Jan. 6, in Emporia. For more information you can contact the Coffey County Extension Office.

Another program a ways down the road, but one I would encourage all the ladies involved in the farming/ranching operation to get on their calendar, is the Women Managing the Farm conference slated for Feb. 10-12. Women Managing the Farm will be held virtually Feb. 10-12. Organizers say the format – like many other events brought about by the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic – will continue to offer a supportive setting for women to develop the skills, resources and knowledge needed for success in the competitive agricultural industry.

Nearly 300 women attended the in-person conference in early 2020. Women Managing the Farm has been held each year since 2005, attracting women farmers, rural business leaders and landowners.

During the upcoming three-day, virtual conference, conference speakers will focus on creating community online and at home by providing attendees with tools that cover such topics as: Relationships and health; Agricultural and estate law; Crop production; Marketing; Management. Registration and more information is available online, and costs \$50.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year everyone and look forward to seeing you “unmasked” in 2021.



4-H ESSAY Homegrown honey vs. store bought honey: Why homegrown honey is the better choice

Mackenzie Krueger
Stringtown Bombers 4-H Club

Has anybody in here ever had pure honey from a specific state? For those of you who have, was the honey bought from the store? Just said “Pure honey” on the label?

For those of you have, I don't mean to burst your bubble, but there is a good chance it was at least partially imported from another state or even another country.

As some of you may or may not know, HONEY IS NOT TESTED! Honey is not tested

because you can't dig DNA out of honey to find which plant in which exact location gave the nectar that the bee drank, and even if they could, nobody would have time to go through every flower in the state to make sure all of the honey is from Kansas and nothing is imported. Because of this, the package could say that you are eating “Pure Kansan Homegrown Honey,” but it could be from California, and 13 percent imported from Japan! Ain't nobody knows what kinda stuff people in Japan feed bees!

Got a cough or a sore throat? Go home and have a

spoonful of honey in your tea! Bam! Nice blend of Californian and Japanese processed cure! We have absolutely no idea what these bees are taking nectar out of! Not a clue! Google doesn't tell you what bees from other states or countries eat!

BUT, here's the thing: If you or a family member owns bees, you know for a fact exactly what they could be eating. Maybe a little bit of ragweed mixed with your mama's petunias. Go ahead and throw in a couple dandelions and irises off the side of the river. It could be any local plant, and as long as you know the plants inhabiting your environment, you know all the possibilities of what the bees are eating so you know what you are eating.

Now, some of you may be wondering why honey is good for you at all. How is honey healthy? Honey contains numerous minerals that can help support vital organs in your body, such as copper, potassium, magnesium, iron, and several more, along with Vitamin B2, Vita-

min B3, Vitamin B5 and Vitamin C. These vitamins can boost metabolism and benefit your teeth and gums. Honey can help you overcome colds by soothing coughs and sore throats. It can also prevent some cancers and heart diseases.

If you are like me, you do not like sports at all. Well, did you know honey can increase athleticism? It can also help to avoid ulcers and regulate blood sugar.

As long as you have homegrown raw honey, you know for a fact exactly what plants your bees are making honey from, and you know that all of the minerals are still contained in the honey (when regular honey is being processed in the factories, it goes through multiple processes. It then does not retain the minerals and vitamins it naturally contains). That is why homegrown honey is always better than store-bought honey.

— Mackenzie Krueger, a member of Stringtown Bombers 4-H Club, is starting her second year in the 4-H Beekeeping project.

Organize your home office

Remote working has become popular in recent years, but the “working from home” economy bloomed exponentially as the world was forced to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Stanford economist Nicholas Bloom, as of summer 2020, 42 percent of the United States labor force was working from home full-time.

The need for home office spaces has increased as more people work from home. Many people have retrofitted various spaces around their homes into areas to get work done. More organized home work spaces can increase productivity. Individuals can follow these guidelines to create effective, organized home offices.

Begin with the desk

The desk is the primary spot where work will take place. The right desk accessories can provide visual appeal and also serve practical

purposes. Have cups for holding pens and pencils, baskets and bins for larger items, and store whatever you can elsewhere so it does not lead to clutter on the desk. Store wireless printers in a cabinet or even on a bookshelf so it doesn't take up real estate on the desk.

Create a printing station

While you're moving that wireless printer elsewhere, designate a space to serve as the central printing hub. This way, children who need to print assignments for school will know where to go as well. Printer supplies like extra ink cartridges and printer paper can be kept in decorative storage boxes nearby.

Increase shelving

Shelving can help keep items organized and off the desk in home offices without

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How does a Loan (Mortgage) Policy differ from an Owner's Policy?

A Loan Policy protects the lender's interest (when there is a mortgage placed on a piece of property) and the policy amount decreases as payments are made that reduce the principal balance of the secured loan and eventually disappears as the loan is paid off. Consequently, the cost of a Loan Policy is less than for an Owner's. An Owner's Policy, on the other hand, maintains its top value from the day it is issued until the owner sells the property to someone else.

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