



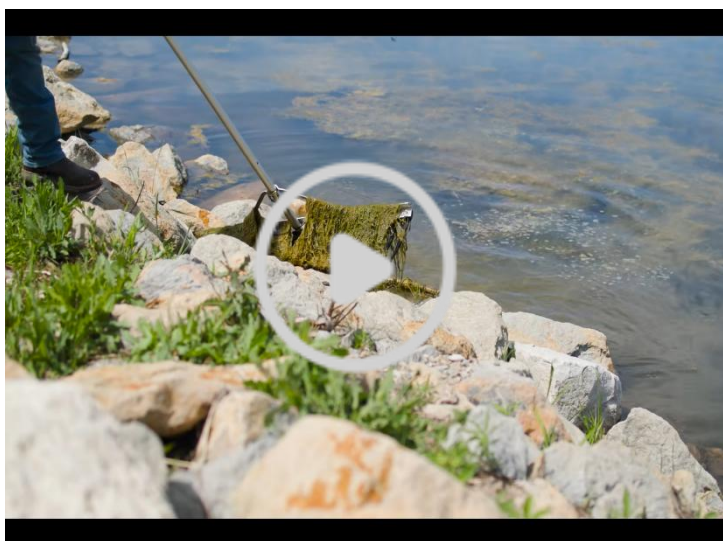
Horticulture Newsletter

August 4, 2026

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY

Horticulture and
Natural Resources

Video of the Week:



Algae and moss are a common sight in Kansas ponds over the summer months. Whether it's a back yard water feature or a community pond, algae and moss can establish rapidly, covering the pond and causing issues for aquatic life. Dr. Joe Gerken, Fisheries & Aquaculture Extension Specialist from K-State, provides suggestions on how to get algae and moss under control in your pond. [This week's video covers the right way to get rid of pond moss/filamentous algae \(in under 120 seconds\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0EMugu7PY), and discusses the key things you need to know when caring for your pond: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0EMugu7PY>

Announcements:

August K-State Garden Hour:

Join us tomorrow, Wednesday, August 5, 2026, for the next K-State Garden Hour webinar on "Local Food Gardening Projects in Kansas". Join us to explore the gardens and projects that help expand access to healthy food across Kansas. Gather inspiration and innovative ideas for ways to improve the success of your produce garden. The presentation will be live from Noon to 1pm. Register to join us live, or view the recording afterwards online at: <https://ksre-learn.com/KStateGardenHour>

#KSTATEGARDENHOUR

K-STATE GARDEN HOUR

Local Food Gardening Projects in Kansas
Wednesday, August 5th 12:00PM - 1:00PM CST

Extension is committed to community success and expanding access to healthy food. Join K-State Horticulture Agents from around the state to learn more about food gardening initiatives in Kansas. Explore the success stories of these gardens and discover how these programs give back to the community through education, volunteerism, and shared harvests. Dive into practical strategies that inspire collaboration and help expand food gardening opportunities statewide.

Register Here!

Please register for this free Zoom Webinar at:
ksre-learn.com/KStateGardenHour

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY
Extension

K-State Open House Brings Gardening Research to Life This Weekend At The John C. Pair Center:

Imagine the possibilities of having a lush green lawn all summer long, and never having to water it to keep it green. Imagine brightly colored flowers filling the landscape with flowers that bloom so long and so hard, they

hardly seem real. Imagine growing new varieties of vegetables that produce crops bigger than you thought possible. Picture towering shade trees that grow fast, look great, have beautiful fall color, and handle every weather extreme in Kansas. While these ideas may sound too good to be true, these are the exact types of research that the John C. Pair Horticultural Center is researching to make a reality.

Join us this Saturday, August 8th to get a firsthand look at this research and more at the **John C. Pair Horticultural Center Public Open House**. From 7:00am to 1:00pm, take tours, ride the tram, engage with interactive booths, participate in youth activities, and more! This is a FREE, come and go event designed for the whole family.

Ten current research projects will be highlighted, including:

- No Irrigation Turfgrass Trials: What if your lawn could survive KS summers without ever begging for a drink?
- Recommended Trees for Kansas: We're searching for trees so tough, Kansas weather might finally meet its match.
- New Annual Flower Variety Testing: Tomorrow's show-stopping flowers are blooming here before they hit your garden center.
- Water-Wise Landscape Design Research: Beautiful landscapes, tiny water bills. It sounds impossible, so we're testing it.
- Local Vegetable Variety Testing: The next great onion or tomato could be growing in our plots right now.
- Mulch-Driven Soil Improvements: Can a simple layer of mulch transform your soil? The results might surprise you.
- Industrial Hemp Variety Trials: Finding the hemp varieties that maximize the Kansas sunshine.
- Organic Sweet Potato Production: Sweet potatoes so productive, you'll wonder why every Kansas field isn't growing them.
- Best Drought Tolerant Turfgrasses: Demonstrating grass that stays green in the dry Kansas summers.

John C. Pair Horticultural Center Public Open House

**Saturday, Aug. 8, 2026
7:00 am - 1:00 pm**

At The John C. Pair Horticultural Center
1901 E. 95th St. South, Haysville, KS

- FREE ADMISSION
- OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
- COME & GO EVENT
- FAMILY ACTIVITIES
- INTERACTIVE BOOTHS

Explore 55 Years Of Plant Research Featuring Tours Of:

- Annual Flower Trials
- Best Trees of Kansas
- No Irrigation Turfgrass
- Industrial Hemp
- Water-Wise Landscapes
- Sunflower Varieties
- Sweet Potatoes
- Turfgrass Varieties



This come and go event is located at the John C. Pair Horticultural Research Center in Haysville, just south of Wichita (Address: 1901 E 95th St S, Haysville, KS 67060). Learn more about this event at:

<https://www.sedgwick.k-state.edu/news/newsreleases/2026/Pair-Center-Public-Open-House-26.html> or

[follow our Facebook Event](#) for previews of the research throughout the week:

https://www.facebook.com/events/2115097699387989/?active_tab=discussion

We look forward to seeing you this Saturday!

Garden Calendar:

- Provide approximately 1 inch of water per week to the vegetable garden. Consistent water is important for produce development.
- Start a fall garden by planting beets, carrots, beans, and turnips for an autumn harvest.
- Ease fruit loads on tree branches by propping them up with wooden supports.
- Divide irises and daylilies during this dormant period.
- Cut back and fertilize annuals to produce new growth and fall blooms.
- Take a soil test to determine what fertilizers are needed in your lawn fertility program.
- Eradicate unwanted bermudagrass and zoysia in your cool season lawn in before overseeding this fall.
- Water young trees every 7 to 10 days by thoroughly soaking the root system.
- Check plants for bagworm activity. Feeding will likely be wrapping up in the next few weeks. Only apply insecticides if bagworms are actively feeding. Otherwise hand-remove bagworms.
- Water houseplants regularly and fertilize to promote growth.

Vegetables:

Look For Spider Mite Activity In The Garden:

Most types of spider mites thrive in hot and dry weather conditions. After several weeks of these conditions in Kansas, we are seeing spider mite populations start to explode.

Spider mites are tiny arthropods (they are not true insects). They are very small (0.3 to 0.45 mm long), oval-shaped, and may vary in color from green to yellow to red-orange depending on the host plant they feed on. They are born from eggs, hatch into yellow-green, six-legged larvae, and quickly mature into eight-legged nymphs, and then adults. All stages of spider mite development (except as eggs) feed on plant leaves with piercing-sucking mouth parts, causing plant damage.

To identify spider mite damage, look for stippling on the upper surface of the leaves (areas of tiny, bleached, yellow or white dots on plant leaves). Since spider mites are sap-sucking pests, they remove the green chlorophyll from the plant leaf, leaving the white or yellow leaf spots. In heavy spider mite populations, fine webbing on the underside of the leaves may also be visible.

Spider mites themselves are often difficult to see due to their size and their habit of feeding on the underside of leaves. If spider mites are suspected, hold a sheet of white paper beneath a leaf and vigorously shake the leaf above the paper. Spider mites will be dislodged from the leaf, and can be seen as dark, tiny specks (resembling flakes of black pepper or dust) on the paper that move about across the paper. If you rub your hand across the paper, spider mites will smear, leaving a streak across the paper.



Spider mite control can be challenging. Often the best method of control is to spray infested plants with a strong jet of water to remove the mites. Be sure to use a high-pressure spray on all surfaces of the leaves to dislodge the mites. For best control, be sure to direct water to the undersides of the leaves. Plants should be sprayed with a strong stream of water at least twice a week under hot, dry conditions. Spider mite eggs hatch within only 7 to 10 days, so repeat water sprays are required for good control (every 3 to 4 days).

Horticultural oils and insecticidal soaps can also be helpful on some landscape plants. These products must be sprayed early in the morning when temperatures are cooler and plants have rehydrated. Most spider mite eggs will survive chemical sprays, regardless of the kill rate achieved on adults and nymphs, so additional treatments are still usually required. Retest leaves over a white sheet of paper to determine if resprays are necessary.

Visit our [Two Spotted Spider Mite Fact Sheet](https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/horticulture-resource-center/common-pest-problems/documents/Two-spotted%20Spider%20Mite.pdf) for more information about spider mites and their control: <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/horticulture-resource-center/common-pest-problems/documents/Two-spotted%20Spider%20Mite.pdf>



Turf:

Caring For Dormant Cool Season Lawns This Summer:

Kansas summers can be tough on cool season turfgrasses in Kansas, especially tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass lawns. These grasses grow best when temperatures are cool (between 60°F and 75°F) and growing conditions are moist (with adequate rainfall). Naturally, these grasses struggle during periods of prolonged heat and drought.



Instead of constantly trying to keep cool season turfgrasses green during the summer months, consider allowing the lawn to go dormant. Summer dormancy is the natural defense mechanism for cool season lawn survival in the summer heat. Instead of fighting this response, consider embracing turfgrass dormancy during the summer. This management strategy not only helps to conserve water, but also protects the long-term health of turf, allowing for plant recovery when cooler, moist conditions return.

During dormancy, dormant turfgrass will turn tan or brown and stop active growth, but the crowns and growing points of the plant remain alive. While a dormant lawn may look dead, it can recover quickly when cooler temperatures and adequate moisture return in late summer or fall.

To keep dormant turf alive, apply enough water to prevent desiccation of the crowns and roots. Water turfgrass just enough to keep plants alive, rather than watering to keep the lawn green and lush. During extended dry periods, this means about ¼ to ½ inch of water every two to three weeks. This minimal amount of water is often sufficient to maintain survival, especially during periods of extreme heat. Again, the goal is to simply keep the lawn alive, not thriving, until ideal growing conditions return.



While the lawn is dormant, avoid heavy fertilization and minimize traffic on the turfgrass. Brittle leaves and stressed crowns of dormant lawns are more susceptible to injury. Mowing dormant lawns is also unnecessary since growth is paused.

A healthy, established tall fescue lawn can usually survive for up to 8 weeks in dormancy without substantial irrigation. To learn more about watering the lawn to promote summer dormancy, visit our [Watering Established Lawns publication](https://bookstore.ksre.k-state.edu/pubs/watering-established-lawns_MF2803.pdf) online at: https://bookstore.ksre.k-state.edu/pubs/watering-established-lawns_MF2803.pdf

If irrigation is available and maintaining green turf is desired (avoiding summer dormancy), water deeply and infrequently rather than with frequent, shallow applications. Deep watering encourages healthier root systems and improves stress tolerance.

Trees & Shrubs:

Look For Large Bagworms Now:



Most gardeners notice bagworm damage in late July to early August, when bagworms are reaching their mature size and wrapping up their feeding activity. As bagworms grow, they consume larger and larger quantities of plant material, making their damage most noticeable this time of year. Bagworms, however, are difficult to control when they are large.

Around mid-August bagworms reach their mature size, about 2 inches long. At this point, the larvae stop feeding and seal the top of the bags, tying their bags around a branch several times with their silken string, signaling the end of their feeding. The larvae then enter the pupae stage. Adult bagworms will develop and mate, with the male bagworms emerging as a moth that will travel to female bags. After mating, female bagworms lay eggs



within the bag. The eggs overwinter inside the dead female's bag, often with 500 to 1,000 eggs per bag. Young larvae normally hatch and emerge during mid to late May in Kansas, beginning the process over again.

Bagworms are always easiest to control when they are small. At this time of year, bagworm control becomes very time sensitive, and options become more and more limited.

If bagworms are present on your plant, first check to see if they are actively feeding. Bagworm caterpillars will partially emerge from the end of the bag during the day to feed on plant material. If bagworms are actively feeding, chemical control may still be a viable option. Use insecticide products that contain the active ingredients acephate, permethrin, cyfluthrin, bifenthrin, or lambda-cyhalothrin. Thorough spray coverage of all plant foliage is essential for good control with any of these products.

As bagworms reach their full size and cease feeding, insecticides will no longer be an effective option for control. At that point, hand removal of mature bags is the only option during the fall and winter months. No additional plant damage will occur during this time, however, removing mature bagworms will help reduce next year's population by destroying the overwintering eggs.

[Visit our Bagworm publication](#) for more information on the bagworm lifecycle:

https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/download/bagworm-insect-pest-of-trees-and-shrubs_MF3474

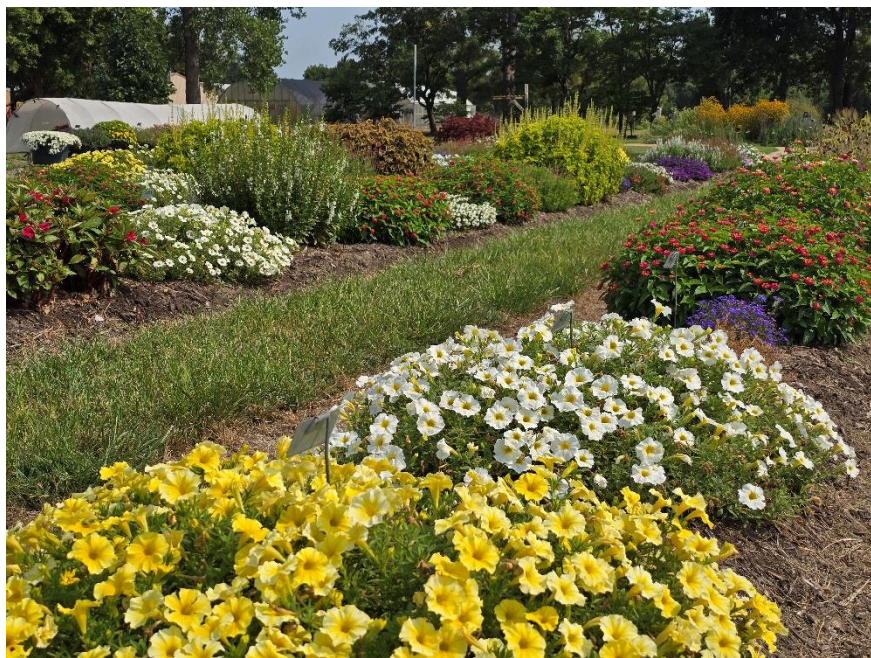


Miscellaneous:

New Annual Flower Variety Research Efforts:



Each year, plant breeders around the world develop new varieties of annual flowers. Often breeders are looking for new colors, unique sizes, increased numbers of blooms, and resistance to common pests. While hundreds of new varieties are released for sale each year, new does not always mean better. Often times we find that new varieties of annual flowers do not all perform equally well in Kansas, given the tough growing conditions of our summers. Extreme heat, drought, drying winds, insects, and disease all limit the success of our annual flowers. That is where research comes in.



This year, I am conducting new research at K-State to evaluate many new varieties of annual flowers for their performance in Kansas. Planted at the John C. Pair Horticultural Research Center, there are 40 new flower varieties that are planted and being monitored to document their performance. Each month, the flowers are evaluated on their vigor (how quickly and healthy they grow), uniformity (do all plants of the same variety look the same), floriferousness (the amount of flower coverage, or leaf color on non-flowering plants) and stress tolerance (tolerance to insects, diseases, and environmental stresses).

Plants are scored on a scale of one to five in each category, and top performers are identified each month.

The flowers in this trial are all being grown with minimal care. We hope to identify varieties that can thrive in Kansas with minimal effort. Fertilizer, mulch, and weed preventers were applied at planting. Most plants are being grown in the ground in full sun, with a few varieties in containers or under shade, depending on plant needs. Each week the in-ground plants are watered by drip irrigation only 2-3 times per week, with the pots watered daily or every other day due to the limited growing space. Additional fertilizer is applied every other week during the growing season (beginning after one month of establishment). The rest is up to the plant, in order to see how it performs.

The annual flower varieties included in this year's research trial include:

1. Angelonia Guardian Angel Berry Sparkler
2. Angelonia Guardian Angel Blue
3. Angelonia Guardian Angel White
4. Blue Felicia Daisy Sea Spray
5. Calibrachoa Cabaret Frosty Lemon
6. Chlorophytum saundersiae 'Starlight'
7. Coleus ChargedUp Keylime Fringe
8. Coleus ChargedUp Dragon Heart
9. Coleus ChargedUp Prismatic
10. Coleus ColorBlaze Pepper Flakes
11. Coleus Ignite Heartbreaker
12. Eucalyptus
13. Fuchsia Sun Pendants Hot Pink
14. Gomphrena Pinball Purple
15. Helianthus Suncredible Yellow
16. Impatiens SolarScape XL Red Glow



17. Lantana Landmark Sunrise Rose
18. Lantana Little Lucky Peach Glow
19. Lantana Little Lucky Yellow
20. Lantana Lucky Cherry Sunrise
21. Lantana Lucky Flame 27
22. Lantana Luscious Vanilla Breeze
23. Lantana Shamrock Cherry Sunrise
24. Lobelia Heatopia Blue 27
25. Petchoa Caliburst Nectarine
26. Petchoa Caliburst Nectarine
27. Petchoa CitraNova Lemon Zest
28. Petchoa CitraNova Limone
29. Petchoa EnViva Blue Vein
30. Petunia E3 Easy Wave Midnight Marble
31. Petunia NewBee
32. Petunia Supertunia Bordeaux
33. Salvia Mystical White
34. Salvia Outshine Orchid
35. Salvia Outshine Red
36. Scaevola Blazen Blue
37. Scaevola Blazen Compact Blue
38. Scaevola Blazen White
39. Verbena Endurascape Hot Coral
40. Verbena Firehouse Violet Vortex



All of these varieties of annual flowers are being evaluated before you can buy them. These varieties will potentially be released at local garden centers and nurseries starting in Spring 2027. With this research, the data will help both growers & consumers select high-quality annual flower varieties to grow and buy next spring.

Now is the time to see these plants before you can buy them and begin your plant wish list for next spring. This weekend I would like to invite you out to see these new flower varieties and take part in the research



yourself. We will be hosting a people's choice contest, where you will have an opportunity to provide us with your feedback, and vote on your favorite new annual trial flower of 2026. I would love to get your opinion. Join us at the John C. Pair Horticultural Center Public Open House to participate, this Saturday, August 8th from 7am to 1pm in Haysville, KS (Address: 1901 E 95th St S, Haysville, KS 67060). Learn more about this event at: <https://www.sedgwick.k-state.edu/news/newsreleases/2026/Pair-Center-Public-Open-House-26.html> or [follow our Facebook Event](#) for more updates.

Contributors:

Matthew McKernan, Consumer Horticulture Extension Associate

For questions or additional information, contact: hortsupport@ksu.edu

To have the KSU Horticulture Newsletter emailed to you, subscribe by sending an e-mail message to hortsupport@ksu.edu listing your e-mail address in the message.

*The KSU Horticulture Newsletter is also available online at:
<http://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/>*

Mention of trade names, brand names or commercial products in this newsletter is solely for identification purposes and does not imply recommendation or endorsement by Kansas State University, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned. Although every attempt is made to produce information that is complete, timely, and accurate, the pesticide user bears responsibility of consulting the pesticide label and adhering to those directions.

Kansas State University is an equal opportunity provider and employer.