STATE AWARDS

Members who are interested in being a part of the State Awards for 2014 need to plan on attending a workshop to be held on January 7th, at 7:00 p.m. at the Extension Learning Center.

Members will be given copies of the forms and guidelines, we will discuss potential areas they may be interested in and have some hands on experiences as we begin to work toward completion of the application.

Completed award forms will be due on March 1st. Monroe County 4-H members who will be 13 as of January 1st, 2014, and have not reached their 20th birthday before January 1st of 2014 are eligible to apply, a member may win up to two state awards.

Members who are 11 and 12 may compete for State Recognition in the Mark of Excellence Essay Contest. Two 4-H members will be chosen from Monroe County for this award. The criteria for this award will also be discussed at the January 4th meeting.

Scholarships for Exploration Days will be given to all Regional State Award winners and to our Mark of Excellence winners.

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 6, 2014

MSU EXTENSION OFFICE
HOURS WILL BE
9:00 am - NOON & 1:00 - 5:00 pm
MONDAY—FRIDAY

For more information, visit our website at www.msue.msu.edu/monroe

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.
MONROE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

WINTER OPPORTUNITIES

provided by Bill Cook, Forester & Biologist, MSU Extension, Upper Peninsula, email: cookwi@anr.msu.edu, 906-786-1575 (voice mail)

Winter is an optimal time to get out onto your forestlands, prepare for the next spring, and to get some background work completed. Some forestry practices are best done in the winter. For many of us, there is also more time to do some of the things we don't seem to get done during the warmer months.

Property taxes will be on everyone's agenda soon enough. For the forest owner, consider enrollment in one of Michigan's two forest property tax programs. The Commercial Forest Program offers the most tax reduction but requires public foot access for hunting and fishing. The Qualified Forest Property Program has less of a tax break but does not require public access. The latter program may have some changes this year. In either case, do your homework to determine if either program might work for you. Information about each of these property tax programs can be found on the Michigan DNR website.

For forest owners who received income from timber sales in 2011, now is a good time to begin figuring the impact on federal income taxes. The most expensive option is to simply declare the income as ordinary income. The IRS has special regulations for timber sale income that favor the property owner. The National Timber Tax website is an excellent resource for tax-saving advice and current updates [http://www.timbertax.org]

Winter is an excellent time to have a forest management plan prepared by a professional forester. These plans yield a variety of benefits. Consulting foresters work with forest owners in nearly every part of the state. There are a couple of government cost-share programs available to help defray expenses of developing a management plan. In some parts of the state, foresters employed by forest industry provide these services. Many conservation groups also provide certain kinds of information to forest owners.

For forest owners already in possession of a plan, winter might be a good time to review what has been written, consider modifications, update schedules, and figure out what ought to be done next year. Investing time in planning makes the activities go much more smoothly during the crunch times.

If tree planting will be part of the warm season, then now it the time to investigate sources of planting stock. Many county conservation districts sell tree seedlings, as do many commercial nurseries that can be found on-line. Hopefully, the site preparation was done this past fall! Especially for large projects, working with a forester is a good idea in order to avoid costly and disappointing mistakes.

Winter might also be a good time to work on succession planning. What would you like to happen with your forestland after you die? Now is the time to involve family in the process, as well as using the forestland to help bring families together for any number of activities. MSU and others have a few "Ties to the Land" programs scheduled to different locations to help families work through some of these difficult issues. More information can be found on the internet about this nationwide program.

For those who heat homes with wood, winter is often the best time to buy hardwood cordwood for future years. Winter wood is lower in moisture, so seasons quicker. It is also harvested when the ground is usually snow covered and frozen. This means less dirt and gravel for the chainsaw to find.

Winter is also a great time to work on tree identification. Most of the characteristics are more readily observable, except hardwood leaves, of course. Beginning with the 14 species of conifers will bring rapid confidence. Only 25 species of trees comprise nearly all the volume of the Upper Peninsula forest. This idea would hold true throughout the Lake States, although the species will change a bit from region to region.
**PROTECTING FAMILY ASSETS:**

**PART II**

**SOURCES OF FAMILY FINANCIAL RISK AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

**WHY IS INSURANCE IMPORTANT?**

This is part two of a two part series on Protecting Family Assets. Regardless of our family situation, each of us desires the peace of mind that comes with knowing that our financial situation and our assets are protected from serious harm or loss. Part one started us thinking about the types of financial losses that might happen and then we took a look at the options available to us to reduce the impact of the losses. This month, we will discuss the different types of insurance in more detail and how each helps to protect family assets.

There are several types of insurance that can be purchased to protect families against devastating events that can cause financial stress. These are: health, homeowner’s/renters, auto, liability, life, and disability. Each one of these insurances has a common purpose and that is to protect the policyholders from losing all their assets from a major catastrophic event. Let’s talk a little about each type of insurance that is available.

Health insurance is a major topic of conversation currently with the next phase of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) going into effect on January 1, 2014. Why is health insurance so important? It is very expensive and one major medical issue could wipe out a family financially. Another purpose of health insurance is to provide preventive care to help keep the cost of medical care down. Health insurance coverage is often offered as a benefit through your employer. With ACA, individuals and families that do not have health insurance can purchase insurance through the Marketplace. Different forms of managed care available are: Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), Point of Service (POS) and Preferred Provider Organization (PPO). Michigan State University Extension offers a program called Smart Choice to help families choose the best plan for them that they can afford.

Homeowner’s and renter’s insurance provides a combination of property and liability coverage into a single package. The property insurance protects you from financial losses resulting from the damage to or destruction of your property or possessions in the home. The liability protects you if someone is hurt or their property is damaged while on your property. There are different forms of homeowners insurance depending on your living situation and or dwelling (own home verses renting or condo owners). If you have a mortgage on your home, you are required to have homeowners insurance.

Auto insurance is important to cover auto repairs and replacement in an event of an accident. It is also to cover auto-related lawsuits against you. In Michigan, no fault insurance is required by law in order to obtain license plates. Often called liability insurance, this coverage must include personal injury protection, property protection insurance and residual liability insurance. You may also purchase full coverage which will also include collision, comprehensive and uninsured motorist coverage.

Life insurance is to protect others by compensating for income loss due to death. It can potentially provide funds for household expenses, death expenses, education etc. People who benefit the most are those who depend on the insured’s income for a desired standard of living. How much is needed in life insurance will depend where you are in your lifespan. Young families with children may need more coverage verses a family where the children are out of the house and the house mortgage is paid in full.

Lastly but surely not the least important of insurances is disability insurance. This insurance replaces part of your income if you become disabled due to injury or illness and you are no longer able to earn an income.
All these types of insurance are ways you can reduce risks to you and your family’s financial well-being. As you think about what insurance to purchase and what types of coverage you want keep in mind the following:

- Purchase insurance to cover situations and or losses that threaten you financial wellbeing.
- Do not purchase insurance for items you can afford to pay for out of pocket.
- Read policies carefully and understand the coverage you are buying.
- Take advantage of insurance options available through your employer or group affiliate.
- Review and update your policies periodically.
- If choices are necessary, cover risks that are the most likely to damage your financial wellbeing.

Insurance is one of the basic elements in a solid family financial plan. For more information go to: Michigan State University Extension—mimoneyhealth website.

For additional information and resources go to: www.extension.org or www.mimoneyhealth.org

**LET’S HAVE A FAMILY MEETING!**

Families that check in regularly are stronger.

Does your family have regular meetings? Learn more!

Family members need to feel that their opinions and points of view are valued. They need to pay attention to each other’s ideas, concerns and feelings. Scheduling and participating in regular family meetings, either formally or informally, gives each person a chance to share, solve problems and make decisions as a unit.

If your family would like to formally set up family meetings these are some suggestions on how to make them successful. Choose a time and place to meet and try to hold the meetings on a regular basis. If you only meet when there is a problem, this can create a negative tone to the meetings. Family meetings are not only to solve problems but can be used to plan vacations, major family events or changes in schedules. At each meeting select a chairperson to manage the meeting. This does not need to be an adult. This is a great opportunity for children to learn how to run a meeting. If you like to keep a record of the meeting discussion, select someone to take notes for future reference. Some families ask members to share topics they would like to discuss and post them on a board as an agenda.

Family members should feel free to express feelings, thoughts and opinions without fear of retribution but they should also be reminded to be respectful. Another ground rule might be when someone is talking, everyone else is expected to listen to what is being said and that interruptions are not allowed. If someone wants to speak they should ask the chair for the floor.

It is the chairperson’s responsibility to make sure that all items the family wishes to discuss are covered in the meeting as well as make sure that everyone is heard without interruption.

If there is a problem to resolve, everyone should have a chance to discuss it. Following are the five steps of problem solving:

1. Define the problem from each person’s point of view respectfully. It is okay to disagree, but not to put down.
2. Brainstorm solutions. Write down everyone’s ideas. The chair should take on this role as the scribe.
3. Discuss the pros and cons of each of the suggested solutions.
4. Choose the solution/s that makes the most sense to everyone.
5. Agree to try out the solutions for a specific period of time. Meet again to review if the solutions are working.
Make sure the meeting is no longer than an hour, especially if young children are involved. Try to end on a cheerful note such as a joke, family hug or refreshments.

My family had informal meetings almost every night when we ate supper together. Eating together was an important family value for us and it was an awesome way to learn, discuss and troubleshoot on a regular basis. Whatever works for you!

For more information on family and communication, go to the Michigan State University Extension website!

URL for more information http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/consumer/10249.html or http://casafamilyday.org/familyday/

## PARENTING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### NURTURING PARENTING ONGOING CLASS

Every Tuesday  
11:30 am—12:30 pm  
Arthur Lesow Community Center  
120 Eastchester  
Monroe, MI 48161  
COST: FREE  
Pre-register required  
734 240-3179  
Certificate of completion is awarded once six classes are completed.

### ABC’S OF BULLYING PREVENTION

Thursday,  
January 30, 2014  
5:15 to 8:30 pm  
MSU Extension Office  
705 N. Zeeb Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
COST:  
Free to 4-H Leaders  
$20 for all others  
Register by January 27, 2014  
By going to:  
http://events.anr.msu.edu/AGCWashJan2014/  

### ACA-SMART CHOICE WEBINARS

Mondays  
Consumers:  
9:00 am, 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm  
Small Business Owners and Farm Owners  
12:00 noon  
COST: FREE  
Log in at:  
https://connect.msu.edu/healthinsurance/  
Click “Guest” and type in any name. (You will be anonymous. No information is collected during the discussion).

## ALL ABOUT FOOD: FROM FARM TO FORK CONFERENCE

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**FEBRUARY 12, 2014 8:30—4:00**  
**FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:**  
http://www.macombfood.org/all-about-food-conference.htm/
Not sure what to expect from your health insurance?

Why do I need health insurance?

What do I need and want?

Why is it important?

What are my choices?

How much can I afford?

How much will it cost?

Learn how to make the Smart Choice.

Join us live online to learn how you can get the most out of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Individuals and families:
Join MSU Extension experts for a live, online webinar. Webinars will be held on Mondays. The same information will be provided at each of the following times:
- 9 – 11 a.m.
- 3 – 5 p.m.
- 6 – 8 p.m.

Farmers, self-employed people and small business owners:
Join us Mondays from noon to 2 p.m.

Visit aca.msue.msu.edu to see which topics we’ll cover each week.

JOIN US!
To participate, log on to: connect.msue.msu.edu/healthinsurance.
Click “Guest” and type in any name. (You will be anonymous. No information is collected during the discussion.)
Don’t have a computer with a high-speed connection? Visit your local library for access.
ABCs of Bullying Prevention:
Addressing Bullying in Community Settings

Bullying is widespread and of great concern to many of us – including young people, families, educators, youth workers and other community members. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, bullying is a form of youth violence that can cause physical injury, social and emotional distress, and even death. Bullying has serious consequences which put youth at higher risk for substance abuse, academic problems, mental health issues, and violence in adolescence and adulthood.

Providing adults with opportunities to explore and connect around these issues is the focus of a Michigan State University Extension workshop titled ABCs of Bullying Prevention: Addressing Bullying in Community Settings. This workshop is designed for adults who live with, care about and work with young people, including parents, caregivers and those who work in schools, youth and family agencies, youth organizations (such as 4-H, Scouts, and Boys and Girls Clubs), juvenile justice, faith-based communities, recreation departments and other community groups.

During the ABCs of Bullying Prevention workshop, participants will:

- Share perspectives on the prevalence and types of bullying behaviors affecting their communities – and explore how these perspectives connect with recent research.
- Examine bullying, bias and harassment through the lens of differences.
- Explore key strategies for addressing these complex issues at the personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural levels.
- Learn about programs and resources that can be used in community settings, including an MSU Extension initiative titled Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming and Fair Environments.

Workshop facilitators: The workshop will be facilitated by MSU Extension program leaders, Janet Olsen and Karen Pace, who are co-authors of the Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming and Fair Environments curriculum.

This course is approved for 3 continuing education units by the Michigan Social Work Continuing Education Collaborative.

For more information about MSU Extension resources and events related to bullying prevention, visit: http://msue.anr.msu.edu/topic/info/bullying.

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.
Making food choices for a healthy lifestyle can be as simple as using these 10 Tips. Use the ideas in this list to balance your calories, to choose foods to eat more often, and to cut back on foods to eat less often.

1 balance calories
Find out how many calories YOU need for a day as a first step in managing your weight. Go to www.choosemyplate.gov to find your calorie level. Being physically active also helps you balance calories.

2 enjoy your food, but eat less
Take the time to fully enjoy your food as you eat it. Eating too fast or when your attention is elsewhere may lead to eating too many calories. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues before, during, and after meals. Use them to recognize when to eat and when you've had enough.

3 avoid oversized portions
Use a smaller plate, bowl, and glass. Portion out foods before you eat. When eating out, choose a smaller size option, share a dish, or take home part of your meal.

4 foods to eat more often
Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or 1% milk and dairy products. These foods have the nutrients you need for health—including potassium, calcium, vitamin D, and fiber. Make them the basis for meals and snacks.

5 make half your plate fruits and vegetables
Choose red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, along with other vegetables for your meals. Add fruit to meals as part of main or side dishes or as dessert.

6 switch to fat-free or Low-fat (1%) milk
They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but fewer calories and less saturated fat.

7 make half your grains whole grains
To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product—such as eating whole-wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice.

8 foods to eat less often
Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt. They include cakes, cookies, ice cream, candies, sweetened drinks, pizza, and fatty meats like ribs, sausages, bacon, and hot dogs. Use these foods as occasional treats, not everyday foods.

9 compare sodium in foods
Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose lower sodium versions of foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals. Select canned foods labeled “low sodium”, “reduced sodium”, or “no salt added”.

10 drink water instead of sugary drinks
Cut calories by drinking water or unsweetened beverages. Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks are a major source of added sugar, and calories, in

Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF THE MOTHER TO MOTHER PROGRAM

Text BABY to 511411. Get FREE messages on your cell phone to help you through your baby’s first year. “text4baby” Founding Sponsor, Johnson & Johnson. A free service of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition.

What is text4baby?

If you’re pregnant or have a baby under one year, you can sign up for FREE text messages sent directly to your cell phone through text4baby. You’ll receive three text messages each week, timed to your due date or baby’s birthday. Messages start in pregnancy and go through your baby’s first year. You’ll get tips on prenatal and infant care, immunization, postpartum depression, nutrition, oral health, quitting smoking, safety, breastfeeding and more.

Thanks to the support of the CTIA—The wireless Foundation and participating cell phone companies, all messages you receive from text4baby are free! Even if you don’t have a text messaging plan, you can get these messages at no cost. If you have limited texting per month, text4baby won’t take away from your total amount of messages.

Participating providers include: Alltel, Assurance Wireless, AT&T, Bluegrass Cellular, Boost Mobile, Cellular South, Cellcom, Centennial Wireless, Cincinnati Bell, Cricket, MetroPCS, n-Telos, Nex-Tec Wireless, Sprint Nextell, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular, Verizon Wireless and Virgin Mobile USA.

Text4baby protects your privacy. Information collected from you when you sign up for text4baby is only used to send text messages. Your information is not sold or shared with anyone for any commercial purpose. You won’t get mailings or messages about any products because of text4baby.

TESTIMONIAL

“Being a new mother is very scary. There are so many changes that you have to adjust to, and so many things to learn. I felt more comfortable with my pregnancy, with the delivery, and with breastfeeding all because of the excellent support and information from the Mother-to-Mother program. Home visits and information were given to me during my pregnancy and after my son was born. I learned so much information that calmed my nerves, and made me more confident about being a mother. It was so beneficial having a phone number I could call if I ever had any questions or concerns. Even if I had questions that could not be answered, I was given the proper resources to get the information.

I have successfully nursed my son … for almost two years. If it were not for the support and information I received from this program, I would not have nursed more than a month. The support was incredible, and I am still able to communicate with them after two years. They are always available and willing to help in any way that they can. These women are simply amazing. Every new mother deserves the opportunity to meet these fabulous women, and gain the confidence that I had received from them when becoming a new mother. I will always remember them, and appreciate everything that they have done for me.”
**Mitten Tree**

The 4-H Mitten Tree has returned to the 4-H Office for another visit. Many clubs have purchased mittens, hats, and scarves to decorate the tree. These warm decorations will make many children’s Christmas happier and their winter much warmer.

Pat Webb and her volunteers wrapped the items and are delivering them to youth across the county who will appreciate the generosity of the 4-H members, friends of Extension and the 4-H clubs.

**Spaghetti Dinner and Holiday Auction**

What a great evening. We started with an overflow crowd but we were prepared this year as we broke down the tables and provided stadium seating. Our guests were great, understanding the need to provide more seating so the fun could begin. Of course the meal was excellent with Cindy Andrews’ special spaghetti and the homemade desserts.

Larry Hamblin began the auction at 6:30 p.m. 4-H Clubs and organizations donated items or created themed baskets and boxes for this year’s activity. During the evening New Horizons provided snacks for the audience.

The evening also featured a bake sale, silent auction, grab bags and the popular **pick a prize**. Many young 4-H members crossed the stage bearing wonderful items for auction. From a handmade rocking pig, to a Lazy-boy recliner, toys, candles, gift certificates and appliances anything you wanted could be purchased. A tremendous assortment of articles and gifts.

Thanks to everyone who contributed and attended. The funds raised will provide programs and help to maintain the Activity Center to allow for more activities for kids.

The final total for the evening was $18,306.00. Wendy and Rick Rozanski did a wonderful job of chairing the event.

**Leader Banquet**

Thanks again to the generosity of Monroe Bank and Trust, 250 of our leaders gathered to enjoy a delicious meal, experience a fun activity that Debbie Kraftchick created and recognize our outstanding leaders.

The evening started out with a wonderful meal prepared by Cindy Andrews. This was then followed with leader recognition. Pins were presented to all leaders in five year increments up to 25 years of service - beyond that point we recognized each individual who was serving our youth.

**Alumni Awards**

**Presented to Hope Blevins and Justin Rozanski**

Hope has moved to Marshall Town, Iowa – but she continues to come back and volunteer for the Monroe County 4-H program. She has served as an intern – as mentor, as a leader and as a superintendent.

Justin has served on the Council and on the Junior Livestock board. He is a livestock superintendent and this year he created Alumni Showmanship for Sheep.

Both are excellent role models for our current youth to follow.

**Leadership Awards**

**Martha Whiting** - Martha has served as community leader for our only in-school club. She not only taught them sewing, she encourages them to spread their wings and work at Agricultural Awareness Day.
Agnes Gutierrez – Agnes serves as a superintendent, as a volunteer project leader in her club, has worked on the Spaghetti Dinner and works on the garage sale—she is always ready for anything that has to be done.

Erv Bratt- Erv recently assumed the General Superintendent position for the horse program—he has empowered the kids. He has come up with some new challenges for the kids and program and does it all while letting everyone understand that what think they is important to the program.

Christy Wachowicz - Christy is a jack of trades – if there is a job to be done she does it. She also serves as a superintendent. Project leader, Gopher, and anything else she can find to do.

Meritorius Service Awards
• Jack Sturn – Jack’s Lawn Service – For almost 20 years Jack has supplied the truck that takes our Royalty in the fair parade. He provides the truck and the straw to make our kids feel special.

• Tom and Ruth Ruehs – were presented with the second award. Tom has been one of the biggest supporters of our spaghetti dinner—collecting donations and then proceeding to buy them back. Of course Ruth is our 4H personal banker. A wonderful couple and great supporters of the 4H program

• Dennis Langland – Dennis has taught Tractor Safety to the 4-H youth of Monroe County for almost 20 years. In fact—we have one of just a few counties that still have a tractor safety program. Thanks Dennis for all you have done for our kids

RIBBONS FOR FAIR 2014

Thanks to the Fair Association we had a very successful garage sale that made almost $1500 toward our ribbon fund for the 2014 fair.

Watch Network for another sale in late March.

This is a great way for you to convert those unwanted items to ribbons for our 4-H members.

The March garage sale will be on March 29th.

They are planning another sale for June 29th. Three days this year to get rid of your unwanted treasures.

COMMUNICATIONS DAY – DON’T MISS IT!!

The popular Communications Day will be held at the Extension office on Saturday, February 1st. Registration will begin at 9:00 am that day. For a flyer on the event just call the office – 240-3170. We will either mail or email one to you.

Included this year will be a community service project – each participant is asked to bring a canned good which will be donated to a local food bank.

Photography, drawing, demonstrations, speeches and many other opportunities to increase your skills will be the areas you may participate in.
**DID YOU KNOW YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE IS RECYCLABLE?**

Natural trees are biodegradable and have many alternative uses following the holiday season.

Posted on **December 20, 2013** by **Erin Lizotte**, and **Jill O’Donnell**, Michigan State University Extension

When the holiday season is complete and you are ready to take down the tree, be sure to recycle! With over 30 million real trees harvested annually, there is a huge opportunity to have a positive impact on the environment by ensuring your tree doesn’t end up in a landfill at the end of the holiday season.

According to the [National Christmas Tree Association](https://www.nationalChristmasTreeAssociation.org), trees may be “upcycled” as soil erosion barriers for lake and river shoreline stabilization and river delta sedimentation management. They can also be upcycled in lakes or ponds where they act as an excellent refuge and feeding areas for fish (watch a YouTube video on [Christmas Trees Support Fish Habitat at Ocean Lake](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=example_video) for more information). Also, your tree can have several uses in your landscape, such as mulch, protection for sensitive plants or standing it near your bird feeders to provide cover for birds and other wildlife.

There are a number of ways communities handle tree recycling, including curbside pick-up for recycling, recycling center drop offs, mulching programs, non-profit pickups and personal composting. In many areas, sanitation services collect trees during the weeks following Christmas; check with your service to see if this is an option and what they require in terms of size limitations and tree condition. Many counties also have free drop-off location; check with your county for more information.

Tree recycling and mulching programs have increased in recent years; your local department of public works can provide you with information on whether this service is available in your area. Public works will also be aware of any non-profit organizations in your area that are available to pick up your tree, often for a small fee.

Lastly, if you have a compost pile you can compost your own tree. Just be sure to chip or breakdown the tree so that it is able to be incorporated into the pile and break down in a reasonable time frame.

For more information on selecting and caring for your Christmas tree, see the following Michigan State University Extension articles:

- Picking and caring for the perfect Christmas tree
- Selecting the perfect Christmas tree: Tree types
- Keeping your real Christmas tree fresh this holiday season
- Enjoy a living Christmas tree for years to come
- Why is my Christmas tree beginning to grow?

Photo credits: **Marty Royer, Kluck Nursery**

This article was published by [Michigan State University Extension](http://www.msue.msu.edu). For more information visit [http://www.msue.msu.edu](http://www.msue.msu.edu) To contact an expert in your area, visit [http://expert.msue.msu.edu](http://expert.msue.msu.edu) or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).
 SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR SELECTING SOYBEAN CYST NEMATODE-RESISTANT VARIETIES

AVAILABLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION THAT WILL HELP YOU IMPROVE SOYBEAN CYST NEMATODE-RESISTANT VARIETY PERFORMANCE ON YOUR FARM IN 2014.

Soybean producers should utilize several sources of information when selecting soybean cyst nematode (SCN)-resistant varieties (see the Michigan State University Extension article “Characteristics to consider when selecting soybean cyst nematode-resistant varieties”). Seed companies provide ratings for SCN resistance and sudden death syndrome (SDS)-tolerance. University trials provide information regarding yield performance and SCN population suppression at infested sites. Select varieties based on the information provided by these sources and evaluate their performance under your management and environmental conditions.

Iowa State University conducts the most comprehensive SCN-resistant variety trials in the United States. The annual report, ISU Extension publication IPM 52, provides the source of SCN resistance, yield performance and SCN population suppression effects for all the entered varieties. The 2013 report will be available online by the end of December 2013 at www.isuscntials.info.

The University of Minnesota also conducts annual SCN-resistant variety trials including yield performance and SCN population suppression effects. The Minnesota field crop trials are also available online.

The Michigan Soybean Checkoff has provided funding for several sources of information regarding SCN-resistant varieties in Michigan. The 2013 Michigan Soybean Performance Report provides yield performance data and the SCN resistance ratings for all of the entered varieties. Typically, the performance trials are not planted on SCN-infested fields. However, in 2013 commercially available soybean varieties were planted at one site containing low SCN population densities. A special MSU SCN resistant variety performance report summarizing the yield performance and population suppression effects of the entered varieties will be published around Jan. 1, 2014.

One of the soybean variety trials conducted by the Thumb Ag Research and Education (TARE) project was planted at an SCN-infested site. The 2013 TARE annual report provides a summary of the yield performance and population effects of the 76 varieties planted at the Tuscola County TARE site.

The information published in the university trials (even Iowa and Minnesota) should be transferable and useful on your farm provided that the maturity groups tested are adapted to your farm and the SCN population type at the trial or trials is similar to the SCN population type in your fields. This is another reason for having your SCN-infested fields HG type tested.

The time and effort you invest in selecting SCN-resistant varieties will reap both short-term and long-term benefits through higher yields and SCN population reduction.

This article was produced by the SMaRT project (Soybean Management and Research Technology). The SMaRT project was developed to help Michigan producers increase soybean yields and farm profitability. Funding for the SMaRT project is provided by MSU Extension and the Michigan Soybean Checkoff program.

This article was published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit http://www.msue.msu.edu. To contact an expert in your area, visit http://expert.msue.msu.edu, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).
REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR THE 2014 INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT ACADEMY

LOOKING TO BRUSH UP ON YOUR PEST MANAGEMENT SKILLS? REGISTER NOW TO ENSURE YOUR SPOT AT THIS PIONEERING WORKSHOP DESIGNED TO SERVE SPECIALTY CROP, FIELD CROP AND LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS.

Posted on November 14, 2013 by Erin Lizotte, Michigan State University Extension

Michigan State University Extension is pleased to announce that the third annual Integrated Pest Management Academy will be held February 18-19, 2014, at the Okemos Conference Center in Okemos, Michigan, located just outside of East Lansing, Michigan. The 2014 Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Academy is a two-day workshop packed full of information to help you improve your IPM practices on your farm and take advantage of all the great resources MSU has to offer.

The presenters at this program include a number of MSU’s best and brightest research and Extension faculty, offering a rare opportunity to hear from experts working in a variety of disciplines and cropping systems at a single event. The first day of the program will cover fundamental topics including: IPM strategies for disease and insect control; promoting and protecting pollinators; alternative weed control strategies; pesticide basics; the impacts of weather on pesticides; invasive pests; and IPM resources from MSU. On the second day of the workshop, participants opt into two, half-day sessions focused on the topic of their choice. This year, the day two sessions include the following options.

Morning Sessions

Soil health: What is it, Why is it Important, and How Can it be Managed?
Soil is one of the most important, but often the ignored component of successful plant production. Understanding the importance of soil management and how soil interacts with nutrients, water and pesticides will be explored during this session. Attendees are encouraged to bring soil test results to get a personal recommendation for their site and crops. This is a cross commodity session, everyone’s welcome.

Landscape Design and IPM: Getting it Right from the Start
Many landscape plant problems are rooted in poor design or poor plant selection. This session will feature a discussion on landscape design, placement and selection of ornamental plants and their implications when dealing with pest management in landscapes. This session may be of interest to landscape professionals or backyard enthusiasts.

Stewardship of Pesticides in Michigan Field Crops
Farmers use many tools to manage weeds, insects and diseases in their cropping system. Still, chemical controls are often favored for their ability to provide efficient and effective crop protection. This session will offer an overview of the many pesticide options available to field crop producers, discuss their modes of action and highlight management strategies that can be used to limit the development of pesticide resistances as well as practices that can be used to manage pest populations that already exhibit resistance.

Hops: Getting Started
The morning hop session will cover an introduction to hops, soils and site selection, understanding soil and tissue testing, variety selection, trellising, irrigation and establishment costs.
Afternoon Sessions

**Hop Management**
The afternoon hop session will cover planting and training hops, fertilizer and nutrient requirement, common insect mite and disease problems, scouting for insects and diseases, weed management, and harvesting and processing hops.

**Ecologically Base Fruit Pest Management**
Growing fruit can be an input-intensive, challenging endeavor. Session participants will learn about ecologically sound preventative pest actions, pest management approaches, and horticultural practices that can help lessen the challenge of growing fruit.

**Managing Pests in Diverse Vegetable Rotations**
Michigan growers produce a wide diversity of vegetables at many different scales, which are challenged by a sometimes overwhelming diversity of insect, disease and weed pests. This session aims to introduce cultural, chemical, mechanical and biological approaches – that can be used to manage pests in an economically and environmentally sound way.

**Solving the Puzzle: IPM Planning and Implementation for Real-world Field Crops Systems**
Integrated pest management makes sense on paper, but how do you fit this broad philosophy into a real-world cropping system? In this session we will discuss how to develop a farm IPM plan that encourages pest management decisions that focus on maintaining efficiency and maximizing profitability. In addition, a panel of farmers will share with participants how they have successfully incorporated IPM principles into their farm plans.

**Emerging Pest Problems of Michigan Landscapes**
New of invasive pests can cause significant economic and ecological damage. This session will review current and potential pest problems to Michigan landscapes such as oak wild, hemlock woolly adelgid, thousand canker disease, Asian longhorn beetle and more.

**Registration**
The cost of this event is $225. Please not that snacks, lunch and parking are included. Participants also receive a notebook with program material and a complimentary IPM related MSU bulletin. Michigan pesticide recertification credits will be available; the exact number will be based on session selection, but participants can expect at least six credits (private or commercial core available).

For more information on the program, a full agenda or registration, visit [http://bit.ly/ipmacademy14](http://bit.ly/ipmacademy14). To register by phone, contact Betsy Braid at braidbet@msue.msu.edu or 517-884-7081.

This program was developed with support from the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

*This article was published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information visit [http://www.msue.msu.edu](http://www.msue.msu.edu). To contact an expert in your area, visit [http://expert.msue.msu.edu](http://expert.msue.msu.edu) or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).*
CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2013 / JANUARY 2014

4-H

January

1/1/14  NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS
OFFICE CLOSED

1/4/14  Beef Tagging
Monroe County Fairgrounds
10:00 am

1/6/14  4-H Council
New Member Orientation
Council Meeting
Extension Learning Center
6:00 pm
7:30 pm

1/7/14  2014 State Awards Meeting
Extension Learning Center
7:00 pm

1/13/14  Horse & Pony Board
Extension Learning Center
7:00 pm

1/16/14  REAACT
Extension Learning Center
7:00 pm

1/16/14  Junior Livestock Association
Extension Learning Center
7:00 pm

1/19/14  Fair Advisory Board Meeting
Rivers Edge—Monroe
6:00 pm

1/21/14  4-H Town Meeting—Every club required
to attend
4-H Activity Center
7:00 pm

1/27/14  Youth Leadership Board
Extension Learning Center
6:00 pm

1/27/14  Small Animal Association
Extension Learning Center
7:00 pm

1/28/14  C.S.I.
Extension Learning Center
7:00 pm

1/29/14  Teen Ambassadors
Extension Learning Center
7:00 pm

February

2/1/14  Communications Day
Extension Learning Center
9:00 am

2/3/14  4-H Council
Extension Learning Center
7:30 pm

2/15/14  4-H Town Meeting—Every club required
to attend
4-H Activity Center
7:00 pm

2/20/14  REAACT
Extension Learning Center
7:00 pm

2/26/14  Officers Training
Extension Learning Center
7:00 pm

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE

January

1/1/14  NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS
OFFICE CLOSED

1/7/14  Nurturing Parenting Ongoing Class
Arthur Lesow Community Center
11:30 am

1/14/14  Nurturing Parenting Ongoing Class
Arthur Lesow Community Center
11:30 am

1/21/14  Nurturing Parenting Ongoing Class
Arthur Lesow Community Center
11:30 am

1/27/14  Nurturing Parenting Ongoing Class
Arthur Lesow Community Center
11:30 am

1/30/14  ABC’s of Bullying Prevention
Washtenaw County MSU Extension
705 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor 48103
5:15 pm

February

2/4/14  Nurturing Parenting Ongoing Class
Arthur Lesow Community Center
11:30 am

2/14/14  Nurturing Parenting Ongoing Class
Arthur Lesow Community Center
11:30 am

2/18/14  MCHE Council
Extension Learning Center
10:00 am

2/21/14  Nurturing Parenting Ongoing Class
Arthur Lesow Community Center
11:30 am

2/25/14  Nurturing Parenting Ongoing Class
Arthur Lesow Community Center
11:30 am

HORTICULTURE

January

1/1/14  NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS
OFFICE CLOSED

1/18/14  MCMGA
Extension Learning Center
10:00 am

February

2/15/14  MCMGA
Extension Learning Center
10:00 am
## STAFF AND MSUE RESOURCES

The Monroe County MSU Extension office is open to the public on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 am—noon and 1:00—5:00 pm. The office staff may be accessed via the main phone line at 734-240-3170. Service is also available at the lobby counter during these hours. On Wednesday and Friday, staff may only be reached via their direct lines which are noted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Though Extension has recently reorganized our structure, Extension professionals are still located in communities across the state and are still working to address Michigan’s most pressing needs through four broad-themed areas; greening Michigan, agriculture and agribusiness, children and youth, health and nutrition. If you would like to learn more about these program areas, you can read about them in a document called “Carrying Out the Land-Grant Mission” that can be found at [www.msue.msu.edu](http://www.msue.msu.edu) To locate MSU Extension Staff across the state by name or area of expertise go to: [http://people.msue.msu.edu](http://people.msue.msu.edu)