Nobel Peace Prize winner highlights Feb. 7 K-State Garden Hour

Rice to talk on ‘Gardening for a Changing Climate’

By Pat Melgares, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Nobel Peace Prize winner Charles Rice will highlight Kansas State University’s popular Garden Hour series on Feb. 7 when he gives a talk on factors related to gardening in a changing climate.

The K-State Garden Hour is a free, online series held on the first Wednesday of each month from noon to 1 p.m. In 2023, organizers report that 13,794 participants were drawn to at least one presentation in the series.

Rice is a Kansas State University Distinguished Professor of Soil Microbiology who was a co-winner of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for his work with the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

His Feb. 7 talk will cover the difficulty of gardening in the extreme weather of Kansas, as well as information on how to adjust gardening practices in response to climate changes. Rice gave a similar talk during the International Master Gardener Conference in Overland Park, Kansas last summer.

The 2024 K-State Garden Hour series kicked off on Jan. 3 with a presentation on using nature’s décor in floral design. Matthew McKernan, one of the series’ organizers, said that session is available to view online.

Upcoming Wednesday sessions include:

- March 6 – Selecting and planting fruit trees for Kansas.
- April 3 – Companion plants for your garden.
- May 1 – Understanding water sources for your garden.
- June 5 – Growing cut flowers for the home and farmers market.
- July 3 – Success with cacti and succulents.
- Aug. 7 – Establishing a more environmentally sustainable lawn.
- Sept. 4 – Season extension in the vegetable garden.
- Oct. 2 – Evergreens in Kansas.
- Nov. 6 – Rabbit, mole and deer mitigation.
- Dec. 4 – Home hydroponics.
Full descriptions of each topic are available online. McKernan said all sessions are recorded and available shortly after to view online, as well.

“We want to invite all gardeners to participate in the 2024 series,” McKernan said. “Whether you join the presentations live or view the recordings, we hope each month brings inspiration to every level of gardener.”

Since the K-State Garden Hour began in 2020 – during the height of the COVID pandemic – McKernan said 62,887 participants have viewed the monthly discussions. He notes that 97% of the participants said the webinars have contributed to improvements in their physical and emotional health, including 98% who said they are more physically active, and 99% saying they have experienced more personal optimism through gardening.

Also, 70% of participants in the K-State Garden Hour reported making at least five efforts to improve water quality in their community, and 69% reported implementing at least five water conservation practices as a result of the webinar series.

The series has always been available for free, but McKernan said some assistance may be needed to keep it that way. Those who wish to make tax-deductible contributions to the K-State Garden Hour – McKernan said contributions pay for an annual Zoom webinar license – can do so through the KSU Foundation.

FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
K-State Garden Hour, https://ksre-learn.com/KStateGardenHour

K-State Garden Hour session descriptions, https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/consumer-horticulture/garden-hour

Giving to the K-State Garden Hour (KSU Foundation), https://www.givecampus.com/campaigns/33618/donations/new

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