Still Growing: K-State Garden Hour preps for fall series

Nearly 10,000 gardeners have participated in popular lunch-hour program this year.

MANHATTAN, Kan. – The popularity of gardening in Kansas and across the United States has been on full display during a lunch-hour program launched by Kansas State University during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Organizers of the K-State Garden Hour said that 9,882 participants have attended at least one session in 2021 – more than half of those to the live program and the rest who viewed online recordings. Those numbers, they say, already have surpassed attendees for all of 2020.

Matthew McKernan, a K-State Research and Extension horticulture agent in Sedgwick County, added that participants have come from 104 counties in Kansas, as well as 37 states and four countries.

“In my opinion, a lot of the success of this program lies in the fact that many people like to garden,” McKernan said. “Gardening is something that appeals to people of all ages and walks of life, and can be something as simple as a few pots, or as big as a few acres.”

The friendly format – in which a K-State horticulture professional presents on a topic of choice – also appeals to gardeners of all ability levels, he said.

“Even the most veteran of gardeners knows there is something more they can learn,” McKernan said. “We try to offer that new knowledge with our programs, and do it in the most accessible way possible, and that’s what I think helps to make the K-State Garden Hour so popular.”

The K-State Garden Hour will kick off its fall online series on August 4 with ‘Organic Gardening.’ The program will be held the first and third Wednesday of each month through Sept. 15 from noon to 1 p.m. (CST).

A one-time registration fee gives viewers free access to all of the fall’s sessions, which include:

- Aug. 4 – Organic Gardening.
- Aug. 18 – Gardening with Beneficial Insects.
- Sept. 1 – Basics of Growing Berries in Kansas.
- Sept. 15 – Composting with Worms – Vermicomposting 101.

Organizers also have set the schedule for the winter (Oct. 6 through Nov. 3) series. The programs planned and a description of each is available online. Recordings of last year’s and this year’s sessions also are available.

“The K-State Garden Hour was originally a collaborative effort born from the pandemic, but has since grown into something larger,” McKernan said. “We have already begun planning for the K-State Garden Hour in 2022. We want to continue pairing the expertise and knowledge of our horticulture team with the topics and interests that most excite our growing audience.”

In addition to information online, interested persons can also contact their local K-State Research and Extension office for more details on the K-State Garden Hour.

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K-State Research and Extension, statewide offices, www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html

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