How does your garden judge?

We hate to be judgmental, but it’s that time! If you have not already scheduled a visit with your 4-H Agent, or someone on their behalf, you will be contacted soon. Someone will come out to your garden to take a look at your hard work. Our judges will be looking at:

- How well you picked your garden site:
  - Is there not enough or too much sun light?
  - Is there a near by water source?
  - Do you have erosion problems under control?
- How well you have prepared and maintained your garden:
  - Have you taken care of drainage problems?
  - Have you taken steps to improve your soil?
- Your Garden Design:
  - Is your use of spacing efficient?
  - Are your crops planted correctly?
  - Did you plant everything you were given by 4-H?
- Your Garden’s Productivity and Harvest:
  - Have you picked your ripe produce?
  - Do you have diseases or pests in your garden?

It is not required that you be in the garden for the judge’s visit, but it may be helpful if you are there to explain who ate all the corn? Gardens should be judged no later than Friday, July 27, so that you can have your project record book turned in by Tuesday, July 31.

What are we looking for when judging your project record book?

- Are your entries and handwriting easy to read?
- Have you completed every section?
- Is your information correct and are your math calculations right?
- Double check your spelling and grammar.
- Make sure the book is neat and organized.
- How much does it look like you have learned from this 4-H project?
- Did you put forth any extra effort or did you only do the bare minimum?

Please note that this year only projects scoring a 165 or more out of the available 220 points are eligible to move on to Regional and State judging.

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Signs of Wildlife in your Garden and What to Do About It

By Jenn Scales, Charleston and Dorchester County 4-H Agent

We know you like to visit your garden and look forward to enjoying the harvest, but, chances are, you may not be the only one. Keeping your garden safe from visiting wildlife is important for the health of the garden, and to protect your health. The following information will address some signs of wildlife, tips for prevention, and food safety precautions.

**Signs of Wildlife:**

Check your garden regularly for signs you may have had a visitor. Look for:

- Scat (also known as poop)
- Tracks
- Damaged or eaten produce
- Holes, digging, torn up garden beds

A few common SC visitors include deer, rabbits, raccoons, rats, squirrels, opossums, armadillos, and birds. If you see signs of wildlife, use the clues it leaves behind to figure out what it was and how to prevent it from paying another visit. Consider including photos or track casts from your visitors in your record book.

**Preventing Wildlife Damage:**

As with most problems, the solution will involve critical thinking, creativity, and trial and error. Evaluate your garden and the surrounding environment. What animals might live nearby? Don’t forget birds and burrowing animals. Once you have an idea on who might pay a visit to your garden, you can start to plan for how to protect the area. Here are some simple ideas to get you started:

- **Birds**– Keep bird feeders, houses, and baths far away from the garden plot; use bird netting to prevent birds from entering your garden area

- **Mammals**– Install fences; habitat modification (remove cover and hiding areas around garden); place wire mesh below garden plot; increase human activity

- Don’t forget to keep pets out of the garden.

**Food Safety:**

If you see signs of wildlife, the impacted produce should be disposed of immediately. If you find scat, safely remove and dispose of it, then dispose of any nearby produce. Take time to figure out what animal is impacting the garden, and take preventive steps to keep the rest of the garden safe. Do not eat anything that was marked or damaged by wildlife. Wash your hands after working in the garden, and wash produce before eating it. Not all wildlife intrusions are obvious, take a moment to wash before you eat.

Why does it matter? In short, wildlife visiting your garden has the potential to carry and shed pathogens that can cause illness. We want you to enjoy your garden and the wonderful fresh food it provides. Keep your Small Garden safe from wildlife, and feed them with 4-H Wildlife Plot food this winter!

Can you identify these muddy tracks?

What would you do to keep him out of your garden?

Send answers to JScales@clemson.edu. You might win a prize!
Recipe Spotlight: Cowboy Salad

Ingredients
- 2 cans (15 ounces) black-eyed peas or black beans (try a mix)
- 1 can (15 ounces) corn
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 1 bunch green onions (5 green onions)
- 3 medium tomatoes
- 1 avocado (optional)
- 1 Tablespoon canola or vegetable oil
- 2 Tablespoons vinegar or lime juice
- 1/2 teaspoon each salt and pepper

Directions
1. Drain and rinse the black-eyed peas (or black beans) and corn.
2. Finely chop the cilantro and green onions.
3. Dice the tomatoes and avocado.
4. Combine all veggies in a large bowl.
5. Mix oil, vinegar or lime juice, salt and pepper together in a small bowl.
6. Pour oil mixture over salad ingredients and toss lightly.
7. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Notes
* Serve with your favorite meal or as a snack with tortilla chips.
* Try adding other vegetables such as sweet or hot peppers or zucchini.
* Freeze extra lime juice to use later.
* Cook your own dry beans. One can (15 ounces) is about 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 cups drained beans.

Dates to know:

Friday, July 27: Deadline to have garden judged. Visit will be scheduled by your Agent.
Tuesday, July 31: Project record books are due to your Extension Office.
Friday, August 10: Deadline to register for the SC 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project.

Newsletter Sources

- https://hgic.clemson.edu/
- http://foodhero.org/recipes/healthy-recipes
The Wildlife Food Plot Project is a hands-on environmental education program and an independent-study project that allows youth (ages 5-18) an opportunity to establish, maintain, and observe a wildlife food plot. Youth learn concepts of wildlife conservation, plant identification, and habitat management and have the opportunity to put that knowledge into practice. Regional and state winners will receive awards sponsored by Quality Deer Management Association. Cost is $18 for current 4-H members (there is a $10 fee to become a 4-H member for the 2018-19 club year). If you would like to participate, but do not have available land, your local extension office may be able to help you locate a landowner with a suitable site.

Once you’ve registered, SC 4-H will supply the food plot seed from SC’s own Wannamaker Wildlife that is designed to attract and hold white tail deer and other wildlife. Participants will also receive a project record book, newsletters/informational resources to help you along the way, plus a one year QDMA Rack Pack membership (a $25 value that includes A Rack Pack blaze orange hat, a one year subscription to Quality Whitetails magazine, QDMA’s Aging & Scoring Bucks on the Hoof DVD, Rack Pack and QDMA decals, coupon to QDMA’s store The Shed, personalized member card and free admittance to field days). Hurry! The deadline to register is Friday, August 10. Contact your local Clemson Extension County office or visit the SC 4-H Wildlife Food Plot Project Website: [www.clemson.edu/extension/4h/project_areas/natural_resources/wildlife_food_plot](http://www.clemson.edu/extension/4h/project_areas/natural_resources/wildlife_food_plot) for more information and online registration.