4-H youth get ready to show at Ky. State Fair

Green County Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Development
Sue Ann Loyall

The hard work, budding talent and leadership potential of thousands of 4-H youth from every county in the state will be on full display at this year's upcoming Kentucky State Fair. The annual celebration, to be held August 20–30 at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky., marks the culmination of months of dedicated 4-H project work accomplished by young people across the Commonwealth.

A 4-H project is more than a hobby: it is a hands-on learning experience that gives youth the chance to explore their interests while developing important life skills. Kentucky 4-H invites young people to dive into a host of project opportunities across seven core areas: Agriculture; Natural Resources; Communication and Expressive Arts; Family and Consumer Sciences; Health and Wellness; Leadership; and Science, Engineering, and Technology.

Youth invest significant time throughout the year to develop skills and knowledge in their chosen fields, dedicating at least six hours to every project. In addition to individual study, they participate in club meetings and experiential learning activities, strengthening important competencies such as public speaking, record-keeping, goal setting, decision-making and problem-solving along the way. These experiences help in preparing young people to thrive in their schools, communities and eventual careers, making them truly Beyond Ready for the future.

Youth who earn champion honors for their project work at county-level competitions are invited to exhibit at the crowning state-fair event, where their projects are displayed for thousands of visitors. Their achievements will be found throughout the fairgrounds, from livestock exhibits in the West Hall to creative arts, family and consumer sciences, communications and STEM projects showcased in 4-H Cloverville in the South Wing.

"All 4-Hers who participate in county, regional or state fairs are winners," said Kimberly Schrader, Extension specialist for 4-H Youth Development. "They walk away with more than ribbons; they gain confidence, skills and a sense of accomplishment that lasts a lifetime."

Recent participation data show that more Kentucky youth are embracing the 4-H project challenge. In 2025, 9,325 projects were exhibited at the Kentucky State Fair, representing more than 56,000 hours of youth engagement in skill development for the year and a 20.5% increase in participation since 2022.

The public is invited to visit 4-H Cloverville during the Kentucky State Fair to celebrate the achievements of Kentucky's outstanding young people and to learn more about the positive impact of 4-H in their local communities. From livestock exhibitors and skilled craftspeople to innovators and future leaders, Kentucky 4-H members represent the best of youth development and the bright future of the Commonwealth.

For more information about 4-H project work and state fair participation, contact the Green County Extension office.

Educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expressions, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.

Summer rash: Identifying & taming poison ivy

Kara Back
University of Kentucky Horticulture Agent

Poison ivy is a common perennial plant notorious for causing itchy rashes and allergic reactions in humans. It can be challenging to control due to its ability to spread rapidly and its resilience in various environments. With proper knowledge and effective strategies, you can manage and control poison ivy.

Learn how to identify poison ivy. It is a deciduous vine, shrub, and ground cover that typically grows in clusters of three leaflets, although leaf count may vary. Its leaves are glossy, oval-shaped, and may have serrated or smooth edges. The plant's color ranges from light green to reddish orange, depending on age and time of year.. Birds love the white, waxy poison ivy berries.

The pesky plant poses health risks through its oily resin called urushiol, which causes allergic reactions. Direct contact with any part of the plant—leaves, stems, roots or even the smoke from burning it—can trigger a rash, accompanied by itching, redness, swelling and blisters. The oil can remain on clothing, pets, or tools that touch it.. Avoid unprotected contact with poison ivy and take necessary precautions when attempting to control it. Reponses may range from mild to severe depending on the person, the amount of oil contacted, the method of contact (touching, inhalation from burning, etc.) and the time of year.

Here are some effective strategies for controlling poison ivy growth:

Wear protective clothing. When dealing with poison ivy, wear long sleeves, long pants, gloves and closed-toe shoes to minimize skin exposure. Eye protection and a hat may be necessary. Use disposable gloves and turn them inside out when removing them. You may need to use disposable garment such as those used by pesticide applicators, or make sure to wash clothing separately from other items to prevent urushiol transfer.

You can manually remove small infestations of poison ivy by digging up the roots with a garden trowel or gloved hands. Ensure you remove the entire plant, including the roots, to prevent regrowth.

For larger infestations or difficult-to-reach areas, you may find herbicides effective. These herbicides can be selective to broadleaf plants, or a non-selective herbicide such as those containing glyphosate. The use of glyphosate-based herbicide is recommended in late summer through fall when the plant is preparing for winter and sending reserves to the roots and the chemical is transported with it to kill the root. Carefully read and follow the instructions on the product label and consider using a targeted application method like a paintbrush to minimize damage to desirable plants in the same area.

Smothering it with a barrier. Try using layers of newspaper or cardboard covered with mulch or soil to block sunlight and prevent the plant from growing. Regularly monitor the covered area for any new sprouts. Unfortunately, poison ivy can travel as a vine for a considerable distance so this method will not usually be very effective.

Don't be afraid to call in a professional. In severe cases, or if you are unsure about dealing with poison ivy yourself, consider seeking professional help from landscapers or pest control services experienced in poison ivy removal.

Now that you've removed the pest, you want to prevent it from regrowing. Remain vigilant with a few preventative measures:

Regularly inspect your property for new poison ivy growth, especially in areas where it is known to thrive, such as fence lines, wooded areas, neglected corners, and areas where birds roost.

When you spot new poison ivy plants, promptly remove them using the methods mentioned earlier to prevent their spread.

Educate yourself and others about poison ivy identification and precautions to avoid contact. Knowledge will empower you to take proactive measures and prevent accidental exposure.

Controlling poison ivy requires a combination of identification, protective measures, and effective removal strategies. By understanding the plant's characteristics and using appropriate methods, you can minimize the risks associated with poison ivy and regain control over your environment. Remember to prioritize safety and, when in doubt, seek professional assistance to ensure effective and long-lasting control.

Source: Shawn Wright, UK extension specialist

Plant problems: *Blueberry Phomopsis Twig Blight and Stem Canker*

Kara Back
University of Kentucky Horticulture Agent

Phomopsis twig blight and stem canker is becoming more common in Kentucky blueberries. Plants that are stressed are more susceptible to the disease. Also, fields that have a history of Phytophthora root rot or severe abiotic disorders such as winter injury or high pH.

Symptoms appear in the spring as blighted twigs with flower bud loss. Necrotic, reddish-brown lesions may develop around blighted areas and spread downward. Wilting and flagging is observed as stems die. Girdling cankers can also appear lower on stems. Leaf spots can occur On foliage, and fruit may ripen prematurely or rot. Disease develops more rapidly under warm, moist periods. Plants damaged by freezing temperatures or stressed by poor planting sites are more susceptible to disease. Caused by the fungus Phomopsis vaccinii. The pathogen survives winter in dead or infected twigs.

Management options include planting resistant cultivars such as 'Bluetta' and 'Elliott'. Prune out infected twigs by cutting a minimum of 6 inches below infected tissue. Discard cuttings; never leave them in the field. Avoid planting sites prone to late frosts. Maintain plant health with proper fertilization, irrigation, and weed management. Avoid wounding stems. Fungicides may be applied preventatively beginning at bud break and continuing through full bloom for plantings with high infection risk.

Homeowners may use fungicides that contain the active ingredients captan or propiconazole. Fungicides do not cure Phomopsis tip blight.

Source: Kim Leonberger, Plant Pathology Extension Associate, and Nicole Gauthier, Plant Pathology Extension Specialist

NOTICE
Lake Cumberland Community Action Agency Inc.'s central office is located at 23 Industry Drive, Jamestown, KY. Books of record are available for inspection Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM (CT) to 4:30 PM (CT).