

Fun with mulch



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Mulch and compost is a vital part of any garden, and as these Colby Girl Scouts were demonstrating at the Community Garden, it can also be fun. Grass clippings from lawn mowing are an easy way to provide mulch for any garden.

Free resources available for vegetable gardeners

Home vegetable gardening has been a strong and growing trend for several years, according to Ward Upham, horticulturist at Kansas State University.

Before that, the number of Americans growing food crops had been declining for decades. As a result, many of today's vegetable gardeners are still gaining skills and looking for reference materials, said Upham, who heads the Master Gardener program for K-State Research and Extension.

He recommends gardeners look into three useful publications that are easily available. Kansans can get copies at their local K-State Research and Extension office. Anyone can access them on the Web. The resources are:

- "Fertilizing Gardens in Kansas:" a revision of a classic with new artwork and updated information. The 12-page publication has information on soil testing, fertilizers, composting and pH. It includes facts on changing pH, as well as fertilizing specific fruits and

vegetables. (www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/hort2/mf2320.pdf)

- "Vegetable Garden Planting Guide:" timeless information on (a) amount of each vegetable to plant per person, (b) expected yields, (c) plant spacing and (d) days to first harvest. The factsheet includes a chart with suggested planting and probable harvest dates for Kansas. (www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/hort2/mf315.pdf)

- "Recommended Vegetable Varieties:" just what its name suggests, plus a useful shopping list for gardeners in the central United States. (www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/hort2/L41.pdf)

- "Kansas Garden Guide:" a 76-page, four-color publication that covers everything from planning to soil preparation, composting to recommended varieties, and irrigation to pest control. It charts the annual and perennial herbs plus discusses each of the major vegetables. It costs \$5 in hard-copy form, but is

free to download from the web. (www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/hort2/s51.pdf)

Upham has posted links to other informa-

tion about plants that perform well in Kansas at www.hfrr.ksu.edu/p.aspx?tabid=731.

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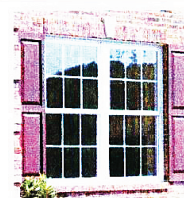
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