



Welcome to the K-State Olathe Horticulture Center's quarterly newsletter. If you prefer to visit our web site, click [HERE](#) for the online version of this edition.

## Happenings at OHC

Summer research projects are well underway so there will be plenty to see at our Commercial Vegetable Field Day scheduled for Monday, August 12. Current research projects include OREI (Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative) high tunnel cover crop studies; tomato rootstock comparisons using BHN 589 on five different rootstocks; pepper, cucumber, and tomato variety trials; Tasti-Lee® tomato study; and probiotic treatment comparisons. In addition to vegetable research, OHC has an industrial hemp research plot, licensed by the Kansas Department of Agriculture, examining plant spacings, row cover variations, and high tunnel vs. outdoor planting of an oil-type hemp variety.



*Center Director Cary Rivard plants the OHC's first industrial hemp seedling in a high tunnel on June 4, 2019*

Speaking of research, HortTechnology, the journal of the American Society of Horticultural Science, has published a paper about sweetpotato slip research conducted at OHC and the John C. Pair Center in Haysville, authored by Zac Hoppenstedt, former graduate student, Jason Griffin, Eleni Pliakoni, and Cary Rivard. ["Yield, Quality, and Performance of Organic Sweetpotato Slips Grown in High Tunnel Compared with Open Field"](#) appeared in Volume 29, Issue 2 of HortTechnology.

Earlier in the Spring, OHC gave away an estimated 400 Cherokee Purple Tomato plants at K-State Olathe Open House. The tomato give-away has become a popular feature at Open House. Seedlings were started in the OHC Greenhouse and given away by faculty, staff, and students who were on hand to dispense plants, answer questions, and promote K-State Research and Extension, Horticulture and Natural Resources, and K-State Olathe.



*Students staff the OHC exhibit at K-State Olathe Open House. On the left side of photo L to R: Tricia Jenkins, Kostos Batziakas, Cassidy Fleck*

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# Turfgrass Program Update

By Jack Fry,

## *Studying Horticulture at K-State*

Horticulture undergraduates continue to be in high demand – we don't have enough graduates to fill all the positions available. K-State has been tightening their relationship with Johnson County Community College to make the transition to K-State Horticulture very easy.

Know anyone in the Kansas City area interested in studying Horticulture at K-State? If so, have them reach out to Dr. Jack Fry ([jfry@ksu.edu](mailto:jfry@ksu.edu)); 913-856-2335 Ext. 103. I'd be happy to sit down with them here in the KC area – they don't have to go to Manhattan to learn more about the program.

## *Zoysia Research in Focus*

Since 2004, K-State has worked with Texas A&M AgriLife Research - Dallas in the development of high quality, cold tolerant zoysia grasses. Mary Lou Peter, Communications Specialist with K-State Research and Extension put together a great summary of the progress that has been made, including information on 'Innovation' zoysia, a cultivar that was recently released through this effort. Here's the link to the article:

<https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/news/stories/2019/05/zoysia-for-home-lawns.html>



*Ten experimental zoysias were planted at Shadow Glen Golf Club in Olathe, KS*

Along these lines, we recently planted 10 experimental zoysiagrasses at Shadow Glen Golf Club (on their driving range) for further evaluation. These particular zoysias have shown good quality throughout the central and southern U.S. and also have tolerance to a large patch, a disease which is common in this species. We appreciate the support of the United States Golf Association in establishment and evaluation of this trial, and the cooperation of Mr. Scott Johnson, golf course superintendent at Shadow Glen (and K-State alum!).

In the next couple of weeks, 39 experimental zoysias will be planted at the Olathe Center as part of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program 2019 Zoysia Trial. There is lots of variability among these grasses and it will be interesting to see how they perform here in Kansas.

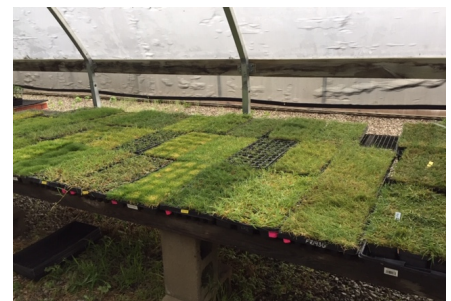
## *Turf Field Day on August 1*

The **Kansas Turfgrass Field Day** will be held Thursday, August 1 at the K-State Olathe Horticulture Center in Olathe (35230 W. 135th).

The field day program is designed for all segments of the turf & ornamentals industry - lawn care, athletic fields, golf courses, landscape, nursery, and grounds maintenance. Included on the program are research presentations, problem diagnosis, commercial exhibitors, and equipment displays. There will be time to see current research, talk to the experts and get answers to your questions.

One hour of pesticide recertification credit in both 3A and 3B are available, as well as GCSAA education points.

Click [here](#) the program brochure with registration form, or you can register online at <https://2019turfday.eventbrite.com>



*Thirty-nine experimental zoysias in trays and ready to be planted in the field as part of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program Zoysia Trial.*



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## Rosedale Middle School Field Experience

Twenty-two, 7<sup>th</sup> graders from Rosedale Middle School (RMS) visited OHC for a Field Experience on May 8. (photos). OHC staff, Extension Master Gardeners, and KSU graduate students staffed learning stations about: Underground arthropods, the difference between water infiltration and runoff during a rainfall event, plant propagation, soil composition, and more during the 3-hour visit. Their teacher even had time to launch the school's drone to film the OHREC site.

Field Experiences for Junior High and High School students for Fall 2019 are available on Wednesdays in September and October. Contact Martha Nowak at K-State Olathe, [msnowak@ksu.edu](mailto:msnowak@ksu.edu) or Kerri Ebert at OHC, [kebert@ksu.edu](mailto:kebert@ksu.edu) to schedule a class Field Experience. The fee for a Field Experience is \$5 per student.



*RMS students sift through soil in search of underground arthropods at K-State OHC.*



*RMS students learn about plant propagation in a session led by Extension Master Gardeners.*



*RMS students learn the difference between water infiltration and water runoff.*

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## OHC Spotlight



*Ashlee Skinner, graduate student in Urban Food Systems, works with soil samples in the OHC lab.*

Ashlee Skinner is a Graduate Research Assistant at the OHC pursuing a Master's Degree in Horticulture with an emphasis on Urban Food Systems at K-State Olathe. Originally from Tampa, Florida, Ashlee earned her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Florida at Gainesville in plant science and sustainable food production. Knowing that she wanted to pursue higher education outside of Florida, she chose K-State because of the Urban Food Systems Master's Degree Program. Her research focuses on the use of cover crops in high tunnels and their impact on soil health.

In 2018 Ashlee wrote a successful \$11,999 proposal to the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE) Graduate Student Grant Program to analyze the relationship of cover crop mixtures in high tunnels and belowground arthropod communities. In addition to her research, Ashlee has become a go-to teacher for OHC Field Experience educational sessions with her

interactive session helping students sieve soil to find hidden insects. Her talents will be missed as she anticipates graduating from KSU in December 2019.

Following graduation, Ashlee plans to work in an urban area on food insecurity issues with a long-term goal to start a not-for-profit focused on increasing food security and human health in urban areas. First, however, she plans to take some well-earned time off to travel and relax after graduate school.



*Ashlee Skinner teaches middle schoolers about living organisms under the soil during a field trip to the OHC.*

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## Backyard Garden News

Open Garden Wednesdays at The Backyard Garden (BYG) at OHC have begun. Extension Master Gardeners (EMG) are available every Wednesday between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. (weather permitting) to answer questions, share expertise, and guide garden tours. Special BYG events for Summer include: July 10 – All American Selections (AAS) Display; August 28 - Tomato Tasting Day; August 28 - Arranging Flowers From Your Garden (registration required).



*EMG Paula Dix leads an educational session for kindergarteners from Prairie Center Elementary at the BYG.*

The BYG hosted 90+ kindergarteners, teachers, and parents from Prairie Center Elementary on May 15. Students rotated through educational stations in the Backyard Garden to learn about plants, soil, and insects in the garden.

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## Upcoming Field Days & Events

- All American Selections Display – July 10
- Turf Field Day – August 1
- Commercial Vegetable Field Day – August 12
- Tomato Tasting Day - August 28