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Livestock and Natural Resources

Much Anticipated It's Finally Here!

About six months ago, I wrote about a new publication coming on Cattle Handling Facility designs. I guess the whole process got complicated, but it's finally here! Cattle handling can be a time-consuming and complicated task, which is why many cattle operations invest a substantial amount of money in cattle handling systems. A well-designed system should allow the operator to work more efficiently by saving time and reducing animal stress (both two legged and four legged). When looking at corral layouts, consider the available space, cost and ease of installation.

One low stress option is the "Bud Box". The Bud Box was designed by stockmanship instructor, Bud Williams and is essentially a rectangular pen in which the alleyway leading to the chute is placed at a right angle at the point of entry into the box. This design is very simple and easy to design. The effectiveness of this design and the manner in which cattle flow into the alley is a result of several basic principles of cattle behavior and movement: 1) Cattle want to move past the handler 2) cattle want to be back with other cattle 3) cattle want to go back the way they came in.

This new publication "Designing a Bud Box for Cattle Handling" is now available at the Extension office or you can look it up online at the KSRE bookstore, MF 3349.

The publication has many drawings of the different configurations, plus all the space requirements for the different classes of cattle. There are even drawings for making your cattle tub part of the system.

I am so happy we have this resource! Be sure to check it out.

David Hallauer, Agent
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Dividing Peonies

One of the mainstays of numerous home landscapes is the peony. In addition to providing an abundance of early spring color, they also tend to require very little care. They are so low maintenance, in fact, that I'd bet some homeowners moved in after the peonies were planted are still enjoying them to this day – without a second thought about care of any type!

The time may come, however, when landscaping preferences change or work needs to be done and the flower bed is in the way. Maybe you are just want to 'spread' that spring flower color to another area? Since peonies are essentially dormant in mid-August (even though the foliage might still be green), fall is a great time to move plants using a process called division.

Step one in the division process is to find an appropriate place to plant the new plants! Planting locations should receive at least a half day of full sun, with the more the better! Next up: remove all foliage. Follow that by digging up the entire plant, shaking/washing off as much soil as possible. In this step, you are trying to get to the pink buds or 'eyes' so you can tell where to make division. Using a sharp knife (peonies roots are tough!), cut roots into separate pieces, making sure each division has three to four buds.

Replant in your previously chosen sunny locale, spacing plants so that there is at least two feet between dwarf types and four feet between standard types. Be sure the pink buds are about one inch below the soil surface, and not more than two inches deep, or flowering may be delayed or prevented. Once plants are set, firm soil often as it is added around the plant so the plants don't settle with the soil. Water well after planting and as necessary through the fall and winter to keep soil moist.

Winter damage via heaving is a concern. Help combat the freeze/thaw damage that can occur to weakly rooted plants by adding mulch to the planting. Do so after the soil freezes with a mulch of straw, leaves, compost or other material.

Peonies often take about three years to return to full bloom and size after division.

Lawn Care Resources

Last week's column was all about fall fertilization of turfgrass. Fall isn't all about fertilizer applications, though! There's overseeding...and aeration...and power raking...the list could go on and on!

This space isn't big enough to include any sort of lengthy discussion of any of the above, but that doesn't mean they aren't important! If you are looking at any sort of turfgrass selection, planting, or even general care this fall, contact your District Extension Office for informational resources.

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NO NEWS FROM CINDY

Nancy Nelson, Agent
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Family Life

How Smell Can Change as You Age

Smell is an important sense. Certain smells, like your dad's cologne, can help you recall a memory. Other smells, like smoke from a fire, can alert you to danger. When you can't smell things you enjoy, like your morning coffee or spring flowers, life may seem dull.

As you get older, your sense of smell may fade says the National Institute on Aging (www.nia.nih.gov). Your sense of smell is closely related to your sense of taste. When you can't smell, food may taste bland. You may even lose interest in eating.

Many problems cause a loss of smell that lasts for a short time. This temporary loss of smell may be due to:

A cold or flu that causes a stuffy nose. The ability to smell will come back when you're better.

Allergies. Try to stay away from things you're allergic to, like pollen and pets.

A harmless growth (called a polyp) in the nose or sinuses that gives you a runny nose. Having the growth removed may help.

Some medications like antibiotics or blood pressure medicine. Ask your doctor if there is another medicine you can take.

Radiation, chemotherapy, and other cancer treatments. Your sense of smell may return when treatment stops.

Some things can cause a long-lasting loss of smell. A head injury, for example, can damage the nerves related to smell.

Sometimes, losing your sense of smell may be a sign of a more serious disorder, such as Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's disease. Be sure to tell your doctor about any change in your sense of smell.

It's important to be aware of odors around you. You need to be able to smell: Smoke – check your smoke detectors once a year to make sure they work. Gas leaks – make sure you have a gas detector in your home. Spoiled food – throw out food that's been in the refrigerator too long.

Household chemicals – make sure there is fresh air where you live and work.