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Mole Control

If you haven't *seen* them already, it won't be long until you can *feel* them underneath you as you mow. Moles: one of a homeowner's biggest nuisances...

The soil upheaval is a result of the moles looking for food. With earthworms as their primary food source, moles burrow in the soil in search of them (and grubs), disturbing everything as they go. They can even uproot small plants and feed on flower bulbs.

Control is difficult. Almost everyone has a home remedy (chewing gum, broken glass, etc...), but most are inconsistent and unproven. Poison baits tend to fail because moles feed on earthworms and grubs, not the vegetable matter typically the base of most baits. Grub control products might help with grub populations, but they aren't effective against earthworms, leaving the primary food source untouched. Traps are the best control method. They come in different forms (harpoon, choker, and scissor-jawed) and each are effective once their placement and setting is fine tuned.

For best trapping results, start by determining which runs are active. Some may be abandoned soon after construction while others are used for a longer time period. Determine active ones by using a broomstick or other object to poke holes in a number of runs. Come back a day later. If they've been repaired, they are active runs and should be used for trap placement.

Place traps in active runs by digging out a little soil, placing the trap and then replacing loose soil. Secure the trap well so that the recoil will not lift it out of the ground. Make sure the triggering mechanism is in the center of the run.

Finish by pushing down two more holes, one on each side of the trap. The hope is that moles will be caught when they try to repair the tunnel. If you haven't caught a mole in three days, move the trap and start over!

For more information on mole control as well as "How-to" videos, see the K-State Research and Extension wildlife control page on moles located online at <http://www.wildlife.k-state.edu/species/moles/index.html> . Publications are also available from your District Office.

Cindy Williams
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Summer a Time to Simplify Life

Before the summer is filled with activities, it is a good time to think about your families' lifestyle. Consider taking some time to evaluate your family schedule. Are you doing what you really want to be doing? Are you letting life get filled with too many things that do not bring meaning to your family? Some things cannot be changed, some things have to be done, but there are other things that could be eliminated from your life.

Consider the following and then spend some time deciding if your family life is what you want or if there are other things you could do to lead a simpler life. An off-course test pilot once radioed back to the control tower, saying, "I'm lost, but I'm making record time." Many families are like that test pilot, moving faster, doing more. With little time for reflection, one activity after another is squeezed into frenzied lives. But are you really getting anywhere? What would it take to put your family on course to a simpler lifestyle, an uncluttered, focused, and rich life?

According to University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension specialist Sam Quick and Robert Flashman, it is important to let go of nonessentials so that your family can embrace what's most meaningful. This involves clearing away things that clutter your life and detract from what you really want. It means taking a fresh look at what you value and making sure you're spending your time, energy, and money to support your goals. Voluntary simplicity doesn't mean a bare-bones budget or shunning the wonders of modern technology. It may mean buying new technology to be able to keep in contact with family members. It may mean splurging for a family vacation you have talked about for years before the children are away from home. Because every family has different values, gifts, and dreams, the ways of determining what is best for your family will be unique to your family. There is no one right way. Each must follow their passions, listen to each family member's thoughts, and create your own lifestyle.

Think about your dreams, values and life goals. List the five most important things you want to do with your family. Look over your answers. Of all the things you listed, put a star by the three most important. What steps toward your dreams and goals do you want to begin taking this summer?

This is a good first step to making sure your lifestyle is what you want it to be. Spend some time soon reflecting on your family's lifestyle and determine if you are heading the direction you want to be.

Nancy C. Nelson
Meadowlark Extension District
Family Life

April is Food Waste Awareness Month

In the U.S., more than one-third of all available food goes uneaten through loss or waste, and food is the single largest type of waste we discard as trash or garbage. April has been designated as “Winning on Reducing Food Waste Month.”

On average, Americans toss and waste 23 pounds of potentially edible food per person each month. At this rate, food waste is costing the average family of four approximately \$190 per month.

Studies show that better meal planning and careful food storage can help prevent food waste at home.

Buy what you need. Keep a running list of meals you enjoy and their ingredients. Inventory your refrigerator, freezer, and cupboards to avoid buying food you already have.

Plan meals before you go shopping, make a list, and buy only the quantities you need.

Buy in bulk only if you are able to use the food before it spoils.

Check cooled storage temperatures — your refrigerator should be at 34° to 40° F and your freezer at 0° F or colder. For cupboard storage, choose a cool, dry, dark location away from heat and chemicals.

Freeze food such as bread, sliced fruit, or meat that you know you won't be able to eat in time.

Prepare and freeze meals ahead of time so you spend less time in the kitchen. Prepare and cook perishable items before they spoil, then freeze for later. Example: Cook and freeze chicken breast or taco meat.