

# Lewis & Clark County



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*Downtown Helena by Stella Duran.*

**T**hank you for your support of Montana State University Extension. MSU Extension is a partnership between Lewis & Clark County, Montana State University, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). This partnership provides educational programs in the areas of Agriculture, Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, Community Development, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Education. Lewis and Clark County hosts a population of 67,773 (2017 estimate). Helena, the county seat of Lewis and Clark County and state capital of Montana, hosts a population of approximately 29,000. Other communities include East Helena, Augusta, Lincoln, Wolf Creek, Craig, the Milford Colony, Wilborn, York, Silver City, Birdseye, Canyon Ferry, and Marysville. Our county is a mix of forests, mountains, prairies, valleys, and fields. The Missouri River runs through, creating water features and a wealth of recreation opportunities. Enjoy some highlights of the 2019-20 educational opportunities in Lewis & Clark County.

## Lewis & Clark 4-H Fosters Mental Health During a Pandemic

With the challenges of 2020 we were happy to continue offering both in-person and virtual 4-H opportunities to Lewis & Clark County families. Our 4-H community emphasized the importance of our fourth H: Health. We had a common goal of maintaining opportunities in the name of mental health and positive youth development, hosted a virtual Communications Day for 24 motivated youth who spoke on topics ranging from DNA to dog training. One participant who competed during 4-H Congress and placed second overall said, “[Communications Day] was the craziest 4-H event of the year. We were all nervous because no one had ever done a speech online. Instead of freaking out, [the organizers] kept everything organized and running smoothly...at virtual congress I finished my presentation and was thrilled to be in the finals. What I’m trying to say is none of this would’ve happened without 4-H. Thank you so much!”

This positive attitude extended to the planning and execution of our 4-H Fair and Livestock sale. One parent remarked, “COVID has made life very hard on our kids this year. I want to thank 4-H from the bottom of my heart. The perseverance

to make the 4-H Fair happen has provided an amazing moment in these hard times. Today I got to see my kids laughing and doing their regular fair routine. They did it with masks on and social distancing, but they got to do it! Thank you!”

## **SNAP-Ed’s Substantial Impact in Lewis & Clark County**

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), known in Montana as the ‘Buy, Eat, Live Better Program,’ teaches SNAP-Ed eligible youth and adults in the locations they eat, live, learn, work, play, and shop. The program collaborates with community and statewide partners to leverage resources and increase program outreach to eligible audiences, empowering organizations and individuals to create changes in policies, systems, and environments that make the healthy choice the easy choice for all Montanans.

In the 2019-2020 year, Lewis and Clark County Family and Consumer Sciences was invited to talk with a group of young men who were learning to become skilled tradesmen. One participant approached the instructor after class with detailed questions and ideas about incorporating more vegetables into his diet. Offering the knowledge and skills to make behavioral changes created a positive impact for the young laborer and resulted in Extension being invited back to reinforce the SNAP-Ed teachings later in the semester.

Our community has indicated a high need for the Buy, Eat, Live Better Program, and their reactions help enforce our drive to meet those needs. During the weekly COVID-19 Food Assistance Program distribution of food boxes, we used the time to talk with recipients about healthy food behaviors and give out SNAP-Ed recipes and tip sheets.

## **MT AgCast Podcast**

In January 2020, the MT AgCast launched its first episode titled “Montana Cattle Industry.” Since then Mat Walter, Lewis and Clark County Agriculture Agent, has created an additional four episodes, with a sixth planned. The MT AgCast was created as an outlet for Montana State University Extension faculty to reach clientele in new ways. The episodes are not scripted, and the viewpoints of the guests and host are not edited. Each episode contains an overarching theme: cattle industry, invasive plants, or scientific method. Since the first podcast aired, the five current episodes have received 654 downloads to date. Listeners have utilized a multitude of applications to download and listen. Between using a desktop or mobile device, 65% of all downloads and listens are done on mobile; 32% of listeners are utilizing a computer to listen either by app or browser. The remaining listeners are utilizing tablets, smart speakers and even a smart TV. The United States

has the top downloads with 635, but other countries such as Canada, Mexico, India and Indonesia have also downloaded episodes. Bozeman, Helena and Missoula are the top Montana download locations. Rural communities together make up a massive number of the downloads, which helps indicate that the podcast is reaching its intended rural audience.

## **Extension Goes Online**

Online formats have been the go-to method for providing effective programs for 2020. MSU Extension in Lewis and Clark county hosted several horticulture programs that were provided via Webex, an online video conferencing service. MSU Extension in Lewis and Clark County partners with Helena College to provide adult education courses during spring and fall semesters. During the spring semester in March, the class reverted to an online offering midway through the four week course. The fall course was offered solely online. The course was titled ‘Beginner Gardening’ for both semesters and focused on fundamentals for new gardeners.

Over the four weeks, students learned about soil health, garden planning, plant systems, pest management and irrigation management. During the fall, a new web series was introduced to local gardeners. The ‘Autumn Chill’ web series had three parts and hosted three guest speakers: MSU Extension Horticulture Specialist Abi Saeed presented on increasing pollinator health in gardens; Schutter Lab Pathology Diagnostician Eva Grimme presented on garden and soil sanitation to prevent pathogens; and Schutter Lab Arthropod Diagnostician Laurie Kerzicnik discussed the management of soil garden pests. Both the Beginner Gardening course and Autumn Chill series were great successes, and provided a way to connect with local gardeners.

## **Bees in Lewis & Clark County**

This year, Lewis & Clark County MSU Extension was proud to partner with and host two Department of Agriculture hives at the People’s Garden at the Fairgrounds. These hives are used to educate youth and adults on beekeeping methods and allow exposure to equipment, techniques, and hands-on learning. Kara Tangedal and Alyssa Piccolomini, the Montana Department of Agriculture Entomologist, co-taught a beekeeping basics course in the spring of 2020 to 22 students. One of those students enrolled to volunteer in 4-H in the fall and another of those students enrolled her family in 4-H as well. This year, we welcomed four 4-H youth to the group and they attended a beekeeping overview activity, a honey extraction meeting, and a honey tasting.

Piccolomini led a workshop for the group in November and welcomed 23 youth and adults to a demonstration on preparing hives for winter using tar paper and the mountain camp method to feed the honeybees and keep them warm



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### Helena Frost Free

State And Station Name	T (°F)	Spring (Date)			Fall (Date)			Freeze Free Period (Days)			P (Days)
		90	50	10	10	50	90	10	50	90	
Montana	10	May16	Jun05	Jan02	Aug26	Sept01	Sept11	116	95	71	5
HELENA-AP	12	May10	May18	Jan04	Sept01	Sept18	Oct13	140	121	102	00
	10	Apr16	Apr20	May01	Sept01	Sept08	Oct13	174	160	127	00

4x/0 / 6/1/2021



Untitled presentation - Google Slides

### What is portrait photography?

Portrait photography is capturing the essence of your subject.

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**Top Row: (left)** The 2020 4-H Fair looked a little different this year with masks, physical distancing, and constant sanitization of surfaces. But it was well worth it! By Dora Lindner; **(right)** 4-H families also benefit from SNAP education in their food and nutrition projects, by Dora Lindner; **Center Row: (left)** Mat Walter, Eva Grimme, Laurie Kerzicnik, and Noelle Orloff recording Episode 2, by Mat Walter; **(right)** Mat Walter teaching Intro to Gardening, by Mat Walter; **Bottom Row: (left)** Tangedal provided a list of where beekeepers can source bees and assisted beekeepers in installing bee nucs and packages, by Kara Tangedal; **(right)** 2020 4-H Virtual Communications Day presentation in action, by Kara Tangedal

through winter. In an effort to understand best practices for hive winterization in Montana and determine educational needs of hobbyist beekeepers, Tangedal created a survey that has initially garnered over 50 responses. She hopes to use this information to meet beekeepers where they are and to determine any trends in hive survival.

## Lewis & Clark 4-H Promotes Lifelong Learning

4-H isn't only a youth education program, but also promotes positive relationships with our 112 enrolled, caring adult volunteers. Every fall our 4-H families and volunteers celebrate our achievements during a virtual Awards Night, put on by our Lewis and Clark County Ambassadors. We celebrated our club of the year, Kountry Bumpkins, project awards, project sponsorships from the Lewis & Clark County 4-H Foundation and the Schatz family, and five incredible volunteers who have made notable contributions to our program. Our Distinguished Service in Volunteering award winner, David Hamilton, was nominated because, "[David] participated in 4-H as a youth and has been a dedicated volunteer in Lewis and Clark County 4-H for over two decades. When someone needed help, guidance or a change of pace, this volunteer has stepped up to assist. The nominee has encouraged the youth members to find their voice to guide the program. The volunteer has been there when tough calls have to be made... Time and time again this individual has found creative ways to accomplish goals that seemed overwhelming." 4-H truly is special in its community involvement and positive adult-youth partnerships.

## Lewis & Clark County Staff



Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA Veteran's Preference Employer and provider of educational outreach.

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