



Keeping you connected

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University of Arkansas System

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Arkansas Plant Health Clinic solves thousands of myseries a year

From hydrangeas to soybeans, lab workers at the Arkansas Plant Health Clinic see it all and know just what's wrong with your plant.

The Arkansas Plant Health Clinic, located in Fayetteville, diagnoses plant health problems for Arkansas growers, homeowners and nurserymen. As a branch of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, the clinic is free to Arkansas residents.

"We receive plant disease samples from every county in the state and most of the samples come through the extension offices in each county," said plant diagnostician Sherrie Smith. "If a county agent gets a sample and they can't diagnose it, they fill out a form and ship the sample to our lab where we examine it, run tests and give a diagnosis and recommendation."

With 75 counties and a typical 24-hour turnaround, it's no surprise the lab stays pretty busy.

"We're a very busy lab," Smith said. "Our busy season starts at the beginning of March and it tapers off towards October and November. We get approximately 3,500 samples given the season. Right now, we're at 3,400."

With writing newsletters and attending field days, the Plant Health Clinic isn't an ordinary lab.

"We have a portable diagnostic lab that we take to field days and flower and garden shows so people can bring their samples," Smith said. "We also write weekly newsletters during the busy weeks."

Although the newsletters are sent out to interested parties, they also serve as a resource for online research. Each newsletter is posted on the Cooperative Extension Service website and can be accessed at any time.

"There's an A-Z search for our newsletters as well," Smith said. "Say you want to know about spots on an apple tree. You can search apples and it will pull up all the newsletters that have apple articles."

Garden trends

Arkansas is home to a wide variety of plants, and it shows in the diverse samples that come through the clinic. However, Smith has noticed some trends.

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Sherrie Smith at the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show in Little Rock.

THE INSIDE STORIES

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

from your Editorial Board

*Stan Chapman, Ella Geisler, Diane Jones,
Tom Leslie, Darlene Millard, Donald Plunkett,
Lott Rolfe III, and Earl Wilson*

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Voluntary Enhanced Driver's License or Identification Card

Many Arkansans are not aware of the possible need for an Arkansas Voluntary Enhanced Security Driver's License or Identification Card. Arkansas is taking part in the federal initiative to improve the security of state-issued drivers' licenses (DL) and identification cards (ID). The card's design is meant to fight terrorism and reduce identity fraud. On Oct. 1, 2020, anyone who boards a domestic flight or enters a federal building will either need an Arkansas Voluntary Enhanced Security DL or ID, or you will need to provide a regular card and additional accepted forms of identification.

Your options when applying for or renewing a driver's license or identification card are:

1. You may choose the new Arkansas Federal Voluntary Enhanced Security DL or ID. This new card will be compliant with the Federal "REAL ID Act of 2005," and will provide enhanced security from fraud and identity theft. The new card will cost the same as a regular DL or ID card. The new card will also contain a gold star on the upper right corner.
2. You may choose to renew your regular DL or ID cards, which are not compliant with the Federal "REAL ID Act of 2005." The non-compliant cards include a mark, "Not for Federal Identification."

If you do not have a Voluntary Enhanced Security DL or ID card, you can still use your regular card after Oct. 1, 2020, but you must also show extra forms of identification to the Transportation Security Administration to board a plane or enter a federal facility.

Only 25 regional offices located around the state are authorized to issue the enhanced cards. You may locate the list of regional offices at <https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/office-locations/arkansas-real-id-dl-id-offices/>.

To get an enhanced ID, you must provide source documents to prove the following:

- Legal Presence and Identity
- Residency
- Social Security Number

The list provides several options for each category. Each document can be used only once. Please be aware that if your name is different on any of the documents you provide, you must also bring the document that changes the name (marriage license, divorce decree or a court order, to name a few). To access the list of acceptable documents, go to https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/driverServicesOffice/Req_Doc_for_VES_color_version.pdf.

The Arkansas Voluntary Enhanced DL or ID will not replace a U.S. Passport. If you are going overseas, on a cruise or leaving the United States any time, you will still need a U.S. Passport/U.S. Birth Certificate. This card will not be for crossing the border into Mexico or Canada. It only works within the borders of the United States, for domestic flights and federal buildings.


More information is located on the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration website located at <https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/driver-services/arkansas-voluntary-enhanced-security-dl-or-id/>. 



Sample of currently available enhanced driver's license.

Opportunities for end of year charitable contributions

Many Arkansans give much of their yearly charitable contributions during the month of December. If you are making charitable contributions during the holiday season, don't forget that you can make tax deductible contributions to several worthy causes through the secure UACES online giving website: <https://www.uaex.edu/donations/default.php>.


The CES Retiree Scholarship Endowment, The Mildred and Liz Childs CES Professional Development Fund, the Janet Carson Master Gardener and Consumer Horticulture Endowment, and AR 4-H are just a few of the options. 

Scholarship donations

The following gift was recently received to support professional development opportunities for faculty and staff of the Cooperative Extension Service.

■ Extension Service Retiree Scholarship Fund

In memory of Orva Dee Peachey

by James Peachey 

Avoid holiday scams targeting seniors

According to the Better Business Bureau, the holidays have become a prime time for senior adults to be targeted by scammers. The common types of scams targeting seniors are:

Phony websites – Not all advertisements and links in online search engines are legitimate. Some links will lead to websites designed to steal your financial information. Watch for too-good-to-be-true pricing on popular items and research websites you’ve never purchased from before. Verify the website is secure and encrypted before buying.

Free trials – Items advertised online for free or items in which you pay a small shipping fee rarely live up to the advertised statement. Face creams and diet pills are commonly advertised in this manner. The reality is, if you’re providing your credit or debit card number for a free trial, you’ll unknowingly get enrolled (and charged) in many more product offers that are difficult to cancel.

Charity scams – Find out where and how your potential donation will be used. Will it stay local or offer help in another state or country? Research the charity on give.org for legitimacy and transparency. Watch for emotional appeals that pull at your heartstrings but don’t actually offer assistance for a cause that you believe in. It’s okay to say no to someone soliciting for an organization until you determine the charity’s authenticity.

Grandparent scams – This “family emergency” scam happens when someone calls pretending to be or represent a family member, most frequently a grandchild. They will scare the call recipient into believing a relative has been in an accident or arrested while out of town and they will request money to be sent ASAP to help. If you receive a call like this, ask specific questions about your family.

Red flags of scams targeting seniors:

- Requests to wire transfer money
- Requests to provide money via gift cards, especially iTunes or Best Buy cards
- Winning a lottery or sweepstakes that you never entered to win
- Unsolicited calls or emails informing you of a problem with an account (credit card, retailer, package delivery service, utility, computer, etc.)

Be careful with your information. If something does not seem legitimate, it is probably not. Move on until you can verify that in fact it is a valid business, charity, etc.

Source: Better Business Bureau website 

To our Extension retirees

December is here, with all its complexity. This is my favorite month in some ways, and my least in others, and I think a lot of people share that sentiment.

The Cooperative Extension Service meets in person and virtually each December to share our successes for the year, and to recognize achievement or life changes. This conference was held Dec. 3, and honorees for years of service, professional excellence and scholarship seemed an all-time high. Those who recently announced retirement were noted and included Mark Keaton, Baxter County; Nita Cooper, Boone County; Carla Vaught, Polk County; and the one and only Janet Carson, state specialist in horticulture – all legends. Nita Cooper also was honored as Employee of the Year for Extension. For Extension’s sake, I regret that these outstanding colleagues, and others, have elected to move on and try to deal with the plans and “put-offs” of the past 30 to 40 years, but also recognize that there comes a time for each of us to make that decision. I am aware of others coming in 2019.

We were honored to host Dr. Deacue Fields, the new dean, and Carmen Alessi, the dean’s assistant, from the Bumpers College on the main campus. Dr. Fields provided a clear and positive vision for building the College with student excellence right here in Arkansas. He has already reached out to county agents, 4-H, FFA, schools and others in each county to implement a new and wide-ranging in-state recruiting plan. Cooperative Extension and the Division of Agriculture stand ready to help achieve that goal of students from every county in our state, attending and excelling in the 21st Century Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences.

While there were many awardees at our conference, I would share two of special import to me, and that over time, seem to have not been mentioned enough. I often refer to your legacy as retirees, and part of our legacy should be permanent contributions to betterment of the future, and future generations, of our organization and its principles. Many of you contribute to the retiree scholarships, and that is very important to the legacy of what we have built. Two others awarded in December to very deserving employees were:

The Lynn R. Russell Endowed Award for Professional Excellence – awarded to Amy Cole in

(See Cartwright, page 4)



Kay Dickens dies

Mary Kay Dickens, 76, of Conway died Dec. 5. Dickens had 30 years of service with the Cooperative Extension Service, beginning in 1964 as senior records clerk. She served in several clerical positions before becoming an administrative assistant (title later changed to Extension management specialist) in 1973, a position she held until her retirement in 1997.

She was member of the Conway First Church of the Nazarene.

A graveside service was held on Dec. 8 at Oak Grove Cemetery in Conway. [e](#)

Plant Clinic, cont.

“The types of samples we get have shifted dramatically in years. Now, about 44 percent of all samples are ornamental trees and shrubs,” she said. “The majority used to be field crops, but we have excellent agricultural agents out in the fields, and ornamentals are a huge industry across the state.”

Although their samples range from soybeans to sweet peas, sometimes they get samples that are ... different.

“Someone once sent a strange object in to be identified and it looked like a strange fungus found in a ditch,” Smith said. “Turns out, it was one of those rubber balls with the plastic spikes. It wasn’t a plant or a fungus, it was a foreign object.”

Whether it’s rubber balls, plants or even balls of dust, it’s probably gone through the Arkansas Plant Health Clinic.

For more information on diagnostic services, visit www.uaex.edu. [e](#)

Cartwright, cont.

Information Technology and Taylor Knox in 4-H, both examples of the pursuit of professional excellence. I knew Lynn Russell, and she exemplified professionalism and the vision and mission of Cooperative Extension, every day in every situation. While I may seem confused and hurried in my presentations, it is always a deeply meaningful moment for me to present this award in her name to colleagues building their lives and careers toward Lynn’s example.

The Mildred and Liz Childs Professional Development Fund Scholarship – awarded to Joy West, one of our truly excellent and dedicated FCS agents who exemplifies professional development and work ethic. It is always an honor to present this scholarship in the name of Mildred and Liz, both examples of lifelong learners and who sought excellence in everything they did or have done.

With all this said, I am not asking for money, I am simply asking that all of you remember. We really should not forget those who gave so much, to all of us, and to the future of this organization.

– Rick Cartwright



CHRISTMAS HOPE – Volunteers for the Christmas Bring Hope project pack food donation boxes at the Independence County Fairgrounds. This has been a project of Batesville community members since the early 1980s and feeds about 1,000 families. (Photo courtesy of Nathan Reinhart, Independence County staff chair.)

January Birthdays

Kelly Gage, January 1	Keith F. Martin, January 9	Dianne Knuteson, January 17	Barbara G. Ball, January 24
Betty Sutton Harrison, January 3	Terrie M. Treadway, January 9	Robert Seay, January 17	Laura L. LaRue, January 24
Doris Jean Thomas, January 5	Steve Culp, January 11	Shirley W. Cleek, January 18	Margie Jones, January 25
Earlene D. Brecheen, January 6	VeEtta Simmons, January 12	Doug Petty, January 19	Nina S. Coffee, January 25
John Lee Turner, Jr., January 6	Ricky L. Thompson, January 14	Jerry W. Williams, January 20	Shirlye G. Hopkins, January 28
Alva Ray Siler, January 8	C. C. Schaller, January 15	Ramona Gordon, January 23	Lois Perkins, January 29
Mona L. Norris, January 8	Bobby J. Malone, January 17	Donna Rinke, January 23	Gary Huitink, January 29
Fann J. Woodward, January 9	Shirley Bennett, January 17		

Yes, I will subscribe to the *Extension Cord*.

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NOTE: Please do not combine payment for an Extension Cord subscription and a scholarship donation in one check. Payment for the **Extension Cord** should be made to **UA CES**. Payment for **scholarship donations** should be made to the **UA FOUNDATION**. If you include payment for an Extension Cord subscription in a check made payable to the UA Foundation, the entire amount will go to the UA Foundation.

Yes, I want to support the fundraising initiative in support of the Cooperative Extension Service Retiree Scholarship.

Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____. My gift is in honor / in memory of _____.

Name/Address for notification of honorary and memorial gifts: _____

Please make check payable to the **UA Foundation** and mail to Brian Helms, Development Office, 2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72204-4940.