



Happy New Year from Lauderdale County Extension!

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2025! We're excited to kick off the year and share all the great things we've accomplished in the last quarter, as well as what we have in store for the upcoming months. From educational gardening series to hands-on tech time, and everything in between – there's something for everyone in our upcoming programs!

In this issue, we'll recap the highlights from the past few months and give you a sneak peek into the exciting events and opportunities that lie ahead. Whether you're looking to grow your gardening skills, get hands-on with technology, or dive into fun activities like Lego building or livestock education, there's always something new to discover at the Lauderdale County Extension.

Stay tuned for more details, and we look forward to seeing you in our upcoming events!

Let's make 2025 a year of growth, learning, and fun together!

Katrina McCallie

Myf Kinn

Dia Phong



Brailey Boykin



Daniel Newell



Elizabeth Simpson and Jacob Kitchens



Colton Temple

Save the Date

- Jan. 27-Feb. 6 - Dixie National Junior Roundup
- Jan. 28-10:00 a.m.- CDC meeting
- Jan. 30-4:00 p.m.-Science in the Kitchen
- Feb. 6-11:00 a.m.-Master Gardeners
- Feb. 13-3:30 p.m.-Valentines for Seniors
- Feb. 13-5:30-7:00 p.m.-Horse Club meeting
- Feb. 15-9:30 a.m.-Agri-Science Club meeting
- Feb. 18-1:30 p.m.-Tech Time Tuesday
- Feb. 19-11:00 a.m.-Herb Garden workshop
- Feb. 20-4:00 p.m.-Lego Meeting
- March 4-4:00 p.m. -4-H Biscuit Workshop
- March 6-11:00 a.m.-Master Gardeners
- March 11-5:30 p.m.-Horse Club meeting
- March 18-1:30 p.m.-Tech Time Tuesday
- March 20-4:00 p.m.-Lego Meeting
- March 20-11:00 a.m.-Starting seeds workshop
- April 8-5:30 p.m.-Horse Club meeting
- April 17-11:00 a.m.-Planting summer bulbs

Lauderdale County Sheriff Deputy, Mariss Combs spoke to the Agri- Science Club about gun safety at their recent meeting



Lauderdale 4-H Club decorated a Tree at Merrehope for the Christmas tour.



**Lauderdale County Extension office
Lauderdale County 4-H**

1022 HWY. 19 SOUTH, MERIDIAN, MS 39301 601-482-9764



2024 4-H BANQUET

In October, the community gathered to celebrate the accomplishments of our dedicated 4-H members at the annual 4H banquet. Throughout the evening, 4Hers were recognized for their outstanding participation in both local and statewide events, showcasing their hard work and dedication. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the incredible 4H volunteers whose support and commitment make these achievements possible.



SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS: Breann Newell received Outstanding Cloverbud. Brailey Boykin received Outstanding Intermediate. John Clayton Kitchens received Outstanding Senior. Mary Welch, Agriscience Club volunteer, received Outstanding Volunteer. Tammy Thompson received the Friend of 4-H award.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM RECENT 4-H EVENTS

This quarter, 4-H members participated in several hands-on programs. At the "Lego Meeting on Tall Towers," participants worked to build the tallest and most stable structures. In the "Disguise a Turkey" event, young artists creatively camouflaged their turkeys for Thanksgiving. Members also gathered for the "Decorating Ornaments" workshop, making festive decorations for the season. These programs promote creativity, strengthen community ties, and encourage teamwork among participants.



For more information about upcoming dates or events, please contact our office.

A Successful County Livestock Show and Sale!

We are thrilled to share that the Lauderdale County Junior Livestock Show and Sale was a tremendous success! The hard work, dedication, and determination of all the exhibitors were evident throughout the event. These young individuals have spent countless hours preparing both themselves and their animals for the county show, and their efforts truly paid off.

A special thank you to all the exhibitors, their families, and the volunteers who helped make the event run smoothly. The commitment to excellence was on full display, and it was inspiring to see such a high level of skill and sportsmanship.

We also want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our supporters and sponsors. Your generous contributions and support make events like this possible and help provide valuable opportunities for our youth. We are incredibly grateful for your continued dedication to the success of our programs.

As our exhibitors now look ahead, we want to wish them the best of luck as they move forward to represent Lauderdale County at the District Show in Hattiesburg, MS and the Dixie National Junior Roundup in Jackson, MS. We know they will continue to do great things and showcase the fruits of their hard work at these prestigious events.

Best of luck to all, and thank you again to everyone who helped make the county show such a memorable and successful experience!



McKinley Johnson



Laci Long



Cora Freeman

Participating in livestock shows through 4-H provides youth with valuable life skills that extend far beyond the barn. From raising and caring for animals to preparing for competitions, young exhibitors learn important lessons in responsibility, budgeting, public speaking, and much more.

Responsibility: Taking care of livestock requires daily attention, feeding, and grooming, which teaches youth about consistency and accountability.

Budgeting: Managing the costs of raising animals, including feed, supplies, and show expenses, helps young exhibitors understand budgeting and financial planning.

Public Speaking: Presenting their animals and explaining their care and preparation to judges, sponsors, and spectators builds confidence in public speaking and communication skills.

Teamwork & Leadership: Working with fellow 4-H members and adults fosters collaboration, leadership, and a sense of community.

Problem solving: Facing challenges with animal care or competition preparation helps youth develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

By participating in livestock shows, 4-H members gain not only a sense of pride and accomplishment but also essential life skills that will serve them well in the future.



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UPCOMING 4-H EVENTS



Valentines for Seniors

Help Lauderdale County 4-H spread love to our local nursing homes and assisted living communities by making Valentine's Day cards and crafts.

February 13
3:30-5:00

Lauderdale County Extension Office
1022 Hwy 19 S
Meridian, MS 39301
601-482-9764

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LEGO MEETING

RSVP BY FEB. 18TH

FEBRUARY 20
4:00-5:00PM

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BISCUIT WORKSHOP

Hands-on workshop to learn how to make the famous State Fair Biscuits

MARCH 4

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LEGO MEETING

RSVP BY MARCH 18

MARCH 20
4:00-5:00PM

1022 HWY 19 S
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Mississippi State University Extension will provide reasonable accommodations to persons with disabilities or special needs. Please contact our office (601-482-9764, bar159@msstate.edu) prior to a program or event to request reasonable accommodation. Language access services, such as interpretation or translation of vital information, will be provided free of charge to limited English proficient individuals upon request.

TECH TIME TUESDAYS

*You're invited to join us for a series to improve your technology skills with our **FREE** hands-on sessions. Seats are limited and registration is required.*



TECHNOLOGY SESSIONS:

The MSU Extension Lauderdale County Office is offering a three part series about technology for those that want to learn. The sessions will take place at the Lauderdale County Extension Office at 1022 Hwy 19 South; Meridian, MS from 1:30 p.m.



DATES AND TOPICS

Smartphone 101

February 18, 2025

Technology After Death

March 18, 2025

Online Safety and Security

April 15, 2025



THE COST IS FREE, BUT SEATING IS LIMITED. PLEASE CALL 601-482-9764 AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE TO REGISTER.



Mississippi blueberry producers and prospective producers can attend an in-person or virtual workshop to learn more about production of the state's largest fruit crop. The in-person workshop will be held Jan. 29 in Hattiesburg at the Mississippi State University Extension Service office. The virtual workshop will be held Feb. 7. (File photo by MSU Extension Service)

Blueberry workshops set for Jan. 29, Feb. 7

[Ms. Susan M. Collins-Smith](#) MSU Extension Service

HATTIESBURG, Miss. -- Mississippi blueberry producers have two opportunities to learn more about production of the state's largest fruit crop.

The Mississippi State University Extension Service is hosting an in-person workshop in Hattiesburg and a virtual workshop.

The in-person workshop will be held Jan. 29 from 9 a.m. to noon at the MSU Extension Service office in Forrest County. The office is located at 952 Sullivan Drive in Hattiesburg. A virtual workshop will be held Feb. 7 from 1 to 2 p.m.

Both workshops are open to blueberry producers and those interested in growing blueberries at any production level.

Speakers for the in-person workshop include Eric Stafne, Extension fruit and nut specialist and Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station researcher; Blair Sampson, U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service researcher; Christine Coker, Extension commercial horticulture specialist and MAFES researcher; and Elizabeth Canales, Extension economist and associate professor.

Topics for the in-person workshop include considerations for sustainable blueberry production, organics and sustainability, sensory drivers and barriers for fresh blueberry consumption and cotton-based nanofibers for protecting blueberries from freeze damage, crop pests and disease.

Speakers for the virtual workshop include Canales, Sampson and Rebecca Melanson, Extension plant pathologist and associate professor.

Topics for the virtual workshop include integrated pest management resources for commercial production, sensory drivers and barriers for fresh blueberry consumption and cotton-based nanofibers for protecting blueberries from freeze damage, crop pests and disease.

Both events are free. Preregistration is required for the virtual workshop. To sign up, visit the Extension registration portal at <https://tinyurl.com/3xd6x24v>.

No registration is required for the in-person workshop.

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Released: January 15, 2025

Contacts: [Dr. Eric Stafne](#)



Ways to Conquer Household Clutter

What Is Clutter?

The word clutter is often used to describe an overaccumulation of items located together in a disorganized fashion. Household clutter is quite common today. Over time, this clutter can feel overwhelming and even negatively impact personal health and well-being. Besides this, natural environments can be negatively impacted when valuable natural resources are consumed during material production, only to become unused clutter or garbage in landfills.

Determine the Type of Clutter

Before deciding what to discard, determine whether you have regular household clutter or sentimental clutter. Clutter comes in many forms. Household clutter might include items like toys, mail, books, cleaning supplies, and hobby materials. On the other hand, sentimental clutter often consists of items passed down from loved ones, such as sports memorabilia, dishes, photographs, jewelry, and other heirlooms. Identifying the type of clutter that you have will help you make better decisions on how to part with it.

How Does It Happen?

Clutter can accumulate over both short and long periods, often taking over before you realize it. Household clutter builds up when we hold on to items that no longer serve a purpose. This clutter can result from various factors, including excessive spending, lack of storage, receiving gifts, buying bulk items, emotional attachment to items, and mental health conditions.

Benefits of Reducing and Preventing Household Clutter

Financial Savings

Experts have estimated that Americans now spend \$300 a month on impulse purchases. In addition, only 20 percent of items are used in the home, while the other 80 percent is potential clutter. Being mindful of your spending habits can prevent clutter in the home and greatly improve

financial well-being. In addition, selling unused items—that would otherwise only be collecting dust—can create additional income.

Less Stress

Most of us spend a large percentage of our time in and around our homes. Research has shown that clutter can reduce our ability to focus and concentrate, which can increase the stress hormone cortisol. Our homes are intended to be the places we relax and recharge after long workdays. But instead, a cluttered home will remind you of all the things that need to be done. Reducing household clutter can lessen your stress and calm your mind. Your home will then rightly serve its purpose as a place for relaxation and socialization with friends. Decluttering is also an opportunity to engage in more movement and physical activity, which supports stress management and builds healthy habits.

Improved Environmental Stewardship

Reducing clutter in your home enables you to properly recycle and donate items that you do not need. Less clutter also helps to reduce carbon emissions by factories and shippers because fewer items are having to be produced and delivered to you. In addition, landfill space is saved when you have less to throw away.

Saves Time

Whether it's moving, storing, cleaning, or looking for lost items, clutter can consume a lot of your time and energy. Decluttering a space will take some time in the beginning, but the result will free up your time over the long run.

Less Allergies and Hazards

A cluttered home is harder to vacuum and dust. This creates the perfect environment for dust mites, pollen, pet dander, and other pests to accumulate. Mold also may go undetected. All these items can cause allergic reactions and asthma symptoms. A clutter-free home is easier to clean and provides a healthier and safer living environment.

**For more information, see Publication 4052
By Sherry Bell Surette, PHD, Associate Extension Professor, Central Mississippi
Research and Extension Center, and Jasmine Harris-Speight, Extension Instructor,
Biochemistry, Nutrition, and Health Promotion.**

Avian Influenza (AI) What to Do as a Backyard Grower

Promptly report any observation of domestic or wild birds with AI symptoms!

If you suspect your birds have avian influenza, report it online at <https://hpa.ms.gov/> or by calling the Animal Disaster hotline at 1-888-722-3106.

Avian influenza (AI) is a disease caused by Type A viruses. These viruses thrive in wild aquatic birds and can infect domestic poultry such as backyard birds. Infection can occur through contact with fecal material, saliva, or mucous. Infection causes bird illness or even death.

MONITOR YOUR FLOCK!



Mild AI symptoms are similar to a respiratory disease:

- Swollen face
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Watery eyes
- Nasal discharge



Severe symptoms include:

- Decreased feed and water intake
- Decreased production
- Increased mortality and morbidity
- Soft eggshells
- Discolored combs and feet
- Diarrhea

PROTECT YOUR FLOCK!

- Practice a strong biosecurity program.
- Use dedicated footwear for your coop.
- Wash your hands.
- Don't let poultry drink from an untreated water source.
- Prevent contact between your birds and wild birds.
- Limit hunting trips and contact with any other birds (neighbor flocks, auctions, and markets).
- Report sick or dying birds to proper officials.

Questions about avian influenza?

Call your local MSU Extension agent, the MSU Extension poultry specialist at (662) 325-3416, or the Mississippi Board of Animal Health at (601) 359-1170.

Scan for information on infected flocks by county:



Scan for information on how to protect your flock:



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