



EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

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Cultivating Growth: 4-H youth thrive with planter workshop taught by local greenhouse owners

Hands-on workshops are a great way to cultivate new skills, hobbies, and sometimes future careers. Hodgson's Produce and Greenhouse operators shared their expertise as local Mason 4-H members gathered for a hands-on planter workshop. The event, hosted by the local greenhouse, was designed to educate and inspire the next generation of green thumbs, merging fun with valuable skills.

The family owned greenhouse, known in the community for its vibrant selection of plants, produce, and commitment to local agriculture, opened its doors for a unique experience tailored to 4-H youth. The workshop aimed to teach participants the art and science of planting and nurturing their own garden creations, as well as to help provide 4-H members with a start to a potential 4-H Show exhibit.

Hodgson's owner Julie Hodgson and her daughter Cheryl Thomas, both 4-H alumni, shared their passion for plants and gardening with the attendees. "This workshop will provide youth with a completed planter; however, it will require the 4-H member to use the skills they learn from the workshop to care for it throughout the summer months prior to 4-H exhibition time," commented Julie.

Members learned about flowerpot and plant selection, soil and plant preparation, reading plant labels, and finally watering and fertilizing. The instructors emphasized the importance of choosing the right plant for the right environment. Youth were tasked with deciding the location for their future planter prior to the workshop, which was crucial knowledge for plant selection during the event.

The focus then shifted to creativity and design. With guidance, youth selected plants, designed their own planter arrangements, while learning about spatial considerations and aesthetic choices. The greenhouse provided a vast variety of plants, as well as a flowerpot and premium soil to get the planter off to a good start. Participants got their hands dirty, planted their chosen species into their planters while learning proper planting techniques, watering routines, and basic plant care. The hands-on experience allowed them to immediately apply what they had learned.

The youth who chose to exhibit their project at the 4-H Show, proudly displayed their planters and engaged in meaningful conversations with floriculture experts. The showcase provided a platform for the young gardeners to discuss their design choices, plant selection, and care techniques with knowledgeable adults. The 4-H Show is a time of reflection and accomplishment, allowing youth to demonstrate their newfound skills and articulate the thought process behind their creations.

Hodgson's Produce and Greenhouse is also a generous donor to the Mason County 4-H clubs. The greenhouse has contributed plants for the club gardens at the Mason County Fairgrounds, enhancing the club's gardening projects and providing essential resources for hands-on learning. This commitment underscores the business's dedication to fostering a love for gardening and supporting local agricultural education.



4-H member Melvin Fornoff gets his hands dirty at the 4-H planter workshop hosted by Hodgson's Produce and Greenhouse in Kilbourne. Instructor Cheryl Thomas taught the participants visual placement and growth habits of plants they selected for their planters. Some youth went on to exhibit their project at the 4-H Show.

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