

Small Farm and Garden Conference This Weekend

By Larry Caplan, Extension Horticulture Educator, Vanderburgh County, IN

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The University of Kentucky and Purdue University Extension Services have teamed up to offer the Ohio Valley Small Farm and Garden Conference to help current, beginning, and prospective small farmers in the Tri-State plan, improve, and diversify operations. The conference will be held Saturday, March 12 at the Henderson County Cooperative Extension Service Office, 3341 Zion Road, Henderson, KY. Registration begins at 8:30 AM CDT. Presentations and demonstrations will run from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM. Registration fee is \$10 per person by March 7 or \$15 per person at the door.

The day-long conference is filled with an array of small farm presentations and demonstrations. Presentation topics will include growing tree fruit and brambles, pond management, nuisance wildlife management, organic soil amendments and pest control, backyard poultry health and nutrition, sheep and goat parasite management, high tunnel production, food safety and preservation, and small farm and niche marketing.

There will be demonstrations throughout the day that include nuisance animal trapping, cover crops, beekeeping, sheep and goat hoof trimming, drip irrigation, and more. Conference participants will receive information on production methods and processes from a variety of local experts to plan for new ventures, improve profitability, and diversify current operations.

For more information or to obtain a registration brochure, contact me at the Purdue Extension office at (812) 435-5287.

Also this weekend is the annual Spring Farm Fest at Angel Mounds State Historic Site. We'll be kicking off the planting season with a fun-filled weekend of crafts, demonstrations, and kids' activities. From early Native American roots to the present, the event honors centuries of Indiana farming. The event features pioneer farming, lye soap making, corn grinding and shelling, rope making, blacksmithing, pedal tractor pulls, and more.

For a small fee, pony rides will be available on Saturday with proceeds benefiting A Hoof & A Prayer Horse Rescue. There will also be "The Art and Music of Minnie Black," an exhibit featuring the works, and honoring the life, of Minnie Black, widely known as "The Gourd Lady." You won't want to miss a special performance by Minnie's New Gourd Band, a revival group playing instruments crafted by the Gourd Lady herself – Saturday at 2 pm. The Magic Gardener will also make an appearance on Sunday, performing his Salute to Farming show.

The event runs Saturday, March 12, 9 am - 5 pm, and Sunday, March 13, 1 - 5 pm. Cost for the event is \$5 per person, with children under age 3 free. Angel Mounds is located at 8215 Pollack Avenue, Evansville, Indiana.

Also coming up later this month: a program on Emerald Ash Borer on Tuesday, March 15, 6:30 pm, at North Park Library; and a Garden Workshop sponsored by Keep Evansville Beautiful on Saturday, March 19, 9 am to noon, at Combs Landscape & Garden Center. Both of these events are free and open to the public.