

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

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*Garden Season Is Upon Us*

I've had people describe gardening to me as their therapy, their alone time, their happy place. Gardening is such a rewarding hobby. Working with your hands, in the earth, seeing your labors pay off in nutritious home grown fruits and vegetables for your family and friends, to some there is absolutely nothing better!

This time of year many gardeners are getting ready to transplant their vegetables into their garden. Many times we have either started these plants from seed, or we have recently purchased them from a greenhouse. Either way, being planted in this crazy Kansas weather can be a shock for those young plants. K-State Research and Extension's State Horticulturalist, Ward Upham, shares a few tips you can take to help your transplant vegetables get off to a good start. Plants can be acclimated to outside conditions by placing them outdoors in a location protected from wind and full sunlight such as the side of your house for a few days before transplanting. If you can, check several times during the day to make sure they don't become too dry. The leaves will develop more of a waxy cuticle during the hardening process so that they can better withstand out Kansas winds. New transplants, even those hardened off, may need protection from stronger than normal Kansas winds when set out. Wooden shingles placed to block the wind used to be recommended but are now difficult to find. Try a plastic milk jug or a 2-liter soda bottle with both the bottom and top cut off. Push the jug or bottle into the soil far enough so it won't blow away. In windy conditions, it may need to be stabilized with a wooden dowel or metal rod. Remove once the winds subside.

Whether you are an experienced gardener or this year will be your first time planting a garden, the Greenwood County Extension Office can assist you with any of your horticulture questions.

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Lindsay Shorter, at [lindsayshorter@ksu.edu](mailto:lindsayshorter@ksu.edu), or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.