

**All Gardens  
Great & Small**  
by  
York Co.  
Horticultural Agent  
**Tom Becker**



### Too Wet? Plant A Groundcover

This is the second article in a monthly series on managing nutrients in the garden. Soil erosion contributes to decreased plant growth. Soil erosion results from storm run-off from unprotected garden areas and landscape beds. Herbaceous perennials, groundcovers and turf reduce soil erosion.

Soil sediment constitutes the largest volume of contaminant carried by run-off. Phosphate and pesticides pollutants often attach to soil particles in run-off water. Therefore, controlling erosion makes a significant contribution to the control of water pollution.

The erosion process is initiated when the impact of falling raindrops or irrigation water detaches soil particles. When

there is too much water to soak into the soil, it fills surface depressions and begins to flow. With sufficient velocity, this shallow surface run-off carries away the detached soil particles.

Look for these signs of erosion in the garden. Tree roots, small stones or rocks become exposed. Small rills or gullies begin to grow. A build-up of silt may occur in certain low areas of a yard or garden. Also, loose soil splashes on windows and outside the walls of your home.

Use groundcovers, organic mulches or cover crops to reduce the quantity and velocity of run-off water through your yard. Groundcovers include any plants that cover exposed soil. A thick lawn acts as an ideal groundcover. The fibrous roots of turf grasses firmly hold soil in place. Herbaceous perennial

plants and low shrubs also work well as groundcovers in landscape beds.

Groundcovers conserve soil moisture and lower soil temperatures during periods of extreme heat and utilize nutrients in the soil for plant growth. Groundcovers also reduce lawn maintenance and fill narrow, odd shaped planting beds where mowing and edging might be difficult.

Lastly, groundcovers create more interesting landscapes by providing variations in height, texture, and color.

Groundcovers require extra maintenance during the first three years. Once established, use organic mulch to control weeds. Fertilize to encourage vigorous growth all season. Irrigate groundcovers in times of drought and provide disease and pest control when needed.

Newly cut banks and any slopes greater than 12 percent are best planted with groundcovers rather than sod to reduce maintenance. Around buildings, groundcovers are superior to paving or structural controls for reducing heat, glare, noise and dust.

**Enhance your lawn health:** Bagging grass clippings and throwing them out with the trash robs your lawn of valuable nutrients. Grass clippings from a properly mowed lawn are a fertilizer resource. Left on the lawn after mowing, the clippings reduce the amount of fertilizer needed for a healthy lawn and reduce the potential for fertilizer to move into the water system. Leaving grass clippings on the lawn also saves you local government the cost of disposing of them at area landfills. During peak growing periods, usually in April or May, it may be necessary to collect grass clippings. If you must gather up the clippings, add them to your yard's compost pile for later use as mulch.

Any questions regarding the above article can be addressed to Tom Becker, Penn State Cooperative Extension at (717)840-7408.

## From Farm To Table Series Set

WEST CHESTER (Chester Co.) - To keep consumers up to date on the latest in nutritional meal planning and food safety techniques, Penn State Cooperative Extension presents the "Farm to Tables series."

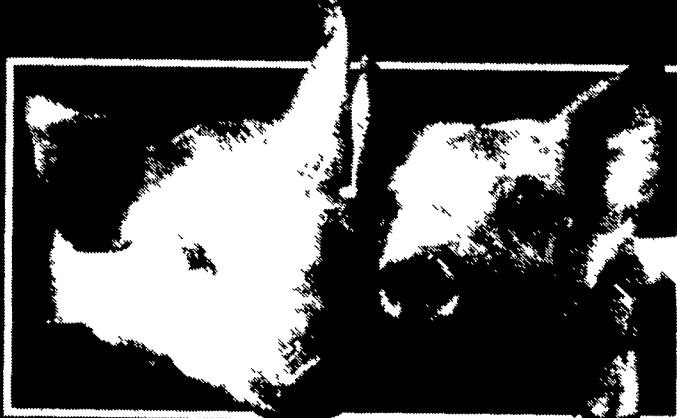
The first program, "Spring Meal Tidbits," will be Wednesday, April 15, from 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at the extension office, Government Services Center, Suite 370, West Chester. Registration fee of \$5 is due by April 8.

Join Trudy Dougherty, CFCS, extension home economist, and Becky Scotland, family living assistant, to learn more about trimming calories, fat, and portions to add "lite-ness" to your meals. Try samples of sun-chokes, jicama, turnips, mushrooms, and sweet potato sticks. Pick up some important tips to help keep your meals safe from storage to cooking.

Call the extension office at (610)696-3500 for registration information for "Spring Meal Tidbits" or other programs planned for consumers this season.

# A GUIDE TO RAISING PIGS

Care · Facilities  
Management · Breed Selection



Kelly Klober

## From Farrow To Finish

POWNA, Vt. — Which of the following statements is true:

- Hogs are dirty
- Hogs are vicious and treacherous
- Hogs are gluttons

Answer: All of the above are false! In his new book *A Guide to Raising Pigs*, Kelly Klober debunks these myths and many others, explaining in clear, lively language how to raise swine successfully for profit, showing, or consumption.

In America today, pork production is a popular industry, from large- to small-scale farms, and pork has quickly become recognized as a high-protein, lean meat ever popular on the family table. According to Klober, the pork produced today is as much as 30 percent leaner than the pork of the '50s: "Through selective breeding, better management, and improved feeding practices, modern pork has become a source of high-quality protein and such valuable nutrients as iron and zinc, with a fat content comparable to chicken in the same-size serving portions."

Although the Midwest is the area most known for pig raising, hog farms are found from coast to coast, from Maine to Washington. *A Guide to Raising Pigs* reaches out to all farms, offering clear, illustrated information about every aspect of pig raising, including choosing the best breed for a farm, feeding and housing, keeping swine healthy and disease-free, butchering and pork processing, showing, and raising pigs as a business.

The introduction thoroughly covers the history of the pig, from the Eurasian wild boar to today's domestic barnyard livestock, giving the reader a rich background on where today's numerous cross-breeds originated.

Klober writes, "Of all the major livestock species, none is more misunderstood or less appreciated than the hog. The rooting, squealing, twisted-tailed mortgage lifter

of the Midwest is actually known and valued far beyond the Corn Belt and the rim of the breakfast plate."

Klober's honest love for hog-raising is truly apparent in his writing and dispels all myths about hogs. In addition, Klober offers readers insight into pigs as an American tradition, from pig lingo to pork recipes to showing market hogs.

*A Guide to Raising Pigs* joins *A Guide to Raising Chickens* and *A Guide to Raising Llamas* as the third title in Storey's Animal Handbook series. It is available wherever quality books are sold for \$18.95 each (or \$22.40 postage paid, by calling 800-441-5700, Dept. YP or visiting [www.storey.com](http://www.storey.com).)

Kelly Klober is a farmer, writer, and 4-H Club leader who has raised purebred Duroc hogs for nearly 30 years. He and his wife, Phyllis, live and work on their farm in Silex, Missouri.

## Berks County Dairy Princess Candidates

LEESPORT (BERKS CO.) — The Berks County Dairy Princess Promotion Committee is seeking candidates to serve as Berks County Dairy Princess. All single young women from a dairy background or with an interest in the dairy industry are encouraged to respond.

Frances Davis, chairperson of the Berks County Dairy Princess Committee, has announced that the 1998-99 Berks County Dairy Princess will be selected on May 9. The deadline for registering as a contestant is March 31. Anyone between 16-24 years of age and single should contact Frances Davis, 1240 Fairview Drive, Leesport, PA. The Little Miss contestants' deadline will be April 25.

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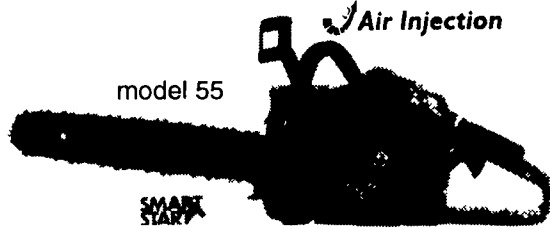
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