

Something For Everyone At Dairy, Silage Producer Family Day

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Food And Family
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LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) — Learning and fun activities for the whole family dominated the annual Capital Region Dairy and Silage Producer Day at the Lebanon Valley Expo Center Thursday.

As usual a wide variety of workshops covered silage and dairy production and even offered pesticide updates, but new this year were family life workshops and day-long children's activities.

Participants could choose from the following workshops during the four separate sessions:

- **Pennsylvania Saves Program and Family Financial Review** — How to build wealth, not debt to become an American saver and learn basic financial record keeping taught by Sandra Hall, Lebanon extension family strengths agent, and Winifred McGee, Lebanon County Extension director.
- **Backyard Composting** — How to "grow" compost to enrich your garden and a chance to qualify for a free backyard compost bin. The session was taught

by Master Gardener Lisa Havath.

- **Soup's On** — Recipes, demonstrations, gift ideas and even taste testing was a part of this workshop by Marcia Weber, York County extension agent.

- **Growing Culinary Herbs in a Container** — How to plant a variety of herbs to grow year-round to use in cooking was taught by Master Gardener Millie Diefenbach.

- **What's New in Home Canning** — Nancy Wiker, Lancaster County extension agent, reviewed the latest in proper canning techniques. Participants could even bring their dial gauge pressure canner lid and have it tested.

- **Topiaries Made Easy** — Master Gardener Jane Yocum taught a brief history on the ancient art of topiary. Under Yocum's instructions, workshop participants made their own Valentine topiary to take home with them.

- **Desserts in Life** — "Look at the word desserts again and you'll see stress," said Jane Landis, Dauphin County extension agent. She gave tips for turning life's stresses into desserts.

- **Pest Control Around the House** — Participants were taught how to identify and control the top three household pest groups, fall home invaders, wood feeders, and pantry pests.

Here are some instructions to duplicate some of the projects taught during the workshops.

Planting Herbal Garden In Strawberry Jar

Master Gardener Millie Diefenbach said there are four herbal garden combinations, but select any combination of herbs you prefer to fill a container since most require medium to high light and similar watering conditions. However, basil does not grow well in pots.

For those interested the combinations include the following:

- **Tea Garden** — anise hyssop, mint, German chamomile and lemon balm.
- **Salad Garden** — Burnet, chives, nasturtium.
- **Flavor Garden** — Purple sage, rosemary, purple basil, parsley, and nasturtium.
- **Vinegar Garden** — Basil, tarragon, chives, and thyme.

For the demonstration, Millie used English thyme, lemon thyme, mint, dwarf sage, parsley, variegated oregano, and rosemary. Nasturtium seeds were planted on the top since they are an edible flower and bloom profusely.

Because a strawberry jar has openings at different heights, plants cannot be watered in the traditional method. Instead a pipe with holes or a cylinder of chicken wire filled with stones is inserted in the middle of the jar before packing with planting soil. She used PVC pipe and drilled holes in it at the same spots where the strawberry jar had openings.

Fill the jar with planting soil to the level of the bottom opening. Plant herbs in the bottom layer by sticking through opening. Fill with soil to the next opening until all openings are filled with herbs, always keeping pipe centered in the container.

For the top of the jar, choose an herb that tends to spread or plant nasturtium seeds or other flower seeds on top.

Fill the PVC pipe or chicken wire with coarse stones to create a filtering system that slows water flow and allows water to penetrate the hard-to-reach lower levels of the jar.

Since clay pots absorb more water, the strawberry jar should be watered every day through the PVC pipe. Feed with a liquid fertilizer in the water every two weeks.

Strawberry plants can also be planted in a strawberry jar or in a hanging basket. The plants will grow and cascade over the basket.

Valentine Topiary

Supplies needed:

- Ivy plant with trails
- 5-inch clay pot
- 36-inches of 15 gauge plastic covered wire (washline)
- Sheet moss soaked in water
- Floral wire
- Potting soil
- Newspaper
- Wire cutters
- Stand the wire next to the flower pot and mark where wire meets the top of the pot. Gently bend wire into heart shape beginning at the point marked. Leave excess wire for support in the pot.
- Fill pot half full with potting soil.
- Insert straight end of wire into soil. Pack loose soil tightly around wire.
- Pot a few ivy plants around base of wire. Fill in with soil.



Matt Grojewski, Womelsdorf, attends Dairy and Silage Producer Day every year. This year, he enjoyed the option of attending family workshops.

- Wring out the sheet moss and lay on newspaper to drain.
- Cut 12-inch pieces of floral wire.

- Tear sheets of moss and wrap around topiary form beginning at bottom. Secure with floral wire. Continue tearing and applying sheet moss until form is covered. Secure with floral wire.

- Wrap ivy tendrils around and up topiary form. Secure with floral wire if necessary.

- Moisten soil with water. Allow to dry between watering.

Place finished topiary in medium light inside. During the growing season, the topiary can be placed outside in the shade.



Master Gardener Millie Diefenbach demonstrates planting a culinary herb garden in a strawberry container that is placed indoors during cold weather but can be moved outdoors during warm weather.



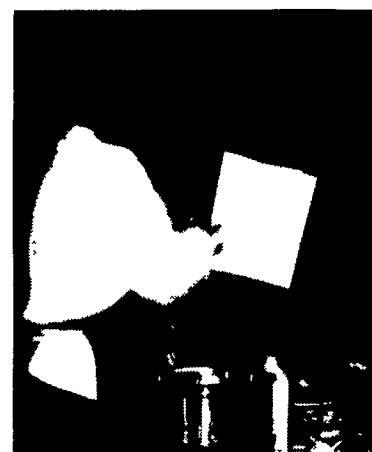
Topiary workshop participants wrap sheet moss around plastic-coated wire that forms the shape of a Valentine.



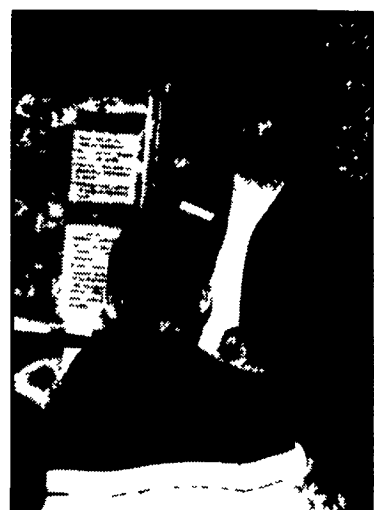
Backyard composting is fun, easy, and better for the environment according to Master Gardener Lisa Havath.



Master Gardener Jane Yocum plants a Valentine topiary. She said Egyptians and Romans first introduced topiaries. They became increasingly popular during the Victorian age.



Soup's on for Marcia Weber, York County family living agent, who taught a workshop on preparing tasty soups and gift ideas presenting soup mixes.



Dr. Winifred McGee teaches workshop participants how to build wealth, not debt.