

NEWS FROM EXTENSION

Wood County | May 2024



Horticulture Update

by Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator

Tea & Tulips, A Wood County Master Gardeners Event

The Wood County Master Gardeners hosted Tea & Tulips at the South Wood County Historical Museum on April 20, 2024. Members of area garden clubs and the public were invited to enjoy refreshments in the beautiful, historic home of Issac and Charlotte Witter. Horticulture Educator, Janell Wehr, presented "What's the Deal with "No Mow May?".

"No Mow May" has become a catchy phrase in Wisconsin, encouraging homeowners to allow their lawns to grow during May. But does this practice actually support pollinators? Janell shared how unmowed lawns may impact pollinators and how everyone can support pollinators all year long. She shared science based resources to help residents make informed decisions about lawn care and create a pollinator-friendly landscape.

Twenty eight members of the community learned pollinator friendly lawn care strategies that homeowners can use. Janell identified gardening practices that support pollinators in residential yards throughout the year, including providing forage and habitat and reducing stress such as pesticide reduction or elimination. She also shared where to find science-based resources for best practices for lawn care, pollinators, pollinator friendly gardening, and more.



Earth Day Tree Planting with Youth at Upham Mansion



Wood County Extension Horticulture Educator, Janell Wehr, partnered with the North Wood County Historical Museum and Jeff Sorenson from the DNR to deliver an Earth Day/Arbor Day program for area youth. Jeff Sorenson directed the youth in planting a maple on the museum grounds and guided five youth to pot up their own red pine saplings. Janell shared how trees can have both adaptive and mitigating effects on climate change and how individual small changes can lead to exponential impacts.

Helping Youth Thrive in Wood County 4-H

by Laura Huber, 4-H Program Educator

It's one thing to believe that a program is meeting its goals, it's another thing to KNOW it is.

One way to measure success is by participation numbers. In 2023, Wood County 4-H had 564 youth members and 115 adult volunteers. Youth membership increased 8.25% over 2020-21. While that's a great number, it doesn't really say much about the actual impact of the 4-H program.

In 2020, Wisconsin 4-H began participating in the 4-H Thriving Survey. The survey is based on the 4-H Thriving Model which predicts that youth who participate in high quality 4-H programs will thrive and achieve long-term successes.

Survey results measure program quality, youth thriving, and developmental outcomes. Survey results indicate that Wood County 4-H is a high quality program.

In addition to providing quantitative data, the survey also captures qualitative data. Youth were asked, **"Tell us something interesting or important you learned in 4-H"** and here are a few replies:

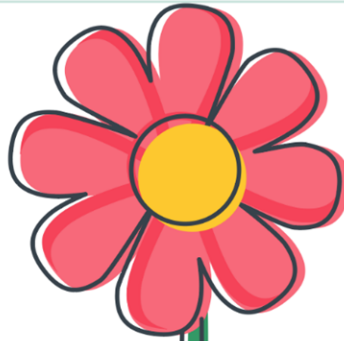
- *"I learned just how much 4-H can make a positive impact on our community. There have been quite a few terrible things happening in our area, and knowing 4-H is there for others brings me so much comfort."*
- *"I learned that, while every individual has their beliefs, the shared belief over helping the community can connect anyone."*
- *"I have learned how to be a great role model for my younger peers."*
- *"I have seen the importance of helping others in the community and the positive reactions/outcomes from helping them."*
- *"4-H is a great way to meet new people and get involved in the community."*

Learn more about the [4-H Thriving Model](#).



UW-MADISON EXTENSION
WOOD COUNTY

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES



- Academic or Vocational Success
- Civic Engagement
- Employability & Economic Stability
- Happiness & Wellbeing

- Positive Academic Attitude
- Social Competence
- Personal Standards
- Connection with Others
- Personal Responsibility
- Contribution

DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES

(Positive Youth Development)



YOUTH THRIVING

(Social, Emotional & Cognitive Learning)



- Growth Mindset
- Openness to Challenge & Discovery
- Hopeful Purpose
- Prosocial Orientation
- Transcendent Awareness
- Positive Emotions
- Goal Setting & Management

DEVELOPMENTAL CONTEXT

(4-H Programs)



- Sparks
- Belonging
- Relationships
- Engagement



4-H Thriving Model – Program Quality Scores

Wood County - 2023

The 4-H Thriving Model predicts that youth who participate in 4-H programs that provide a high-quality developmental context will thrive, and thriving youth achieve key developmental outcomes.

Youth 4-H members, age 13 and up, were invited to take survey* asking questions about their 4-H experience. The results below are from the survey conducted in autumn 2023. The survey will be repeated in annually.

Each component of the model was assessed on a scale of 1-7; 7 meaning outstanding program quality. Scores between 4.9 - 6.1 represent a high quality program.

*The survey was developed by Mary Arnold, Oregon State University and Ryan Gagnon, Clemson University.

5.38

Youth Sparks

The Youth Sparks outcome measures how 4-H programs give youth opportunities to explore topics they are interested in learning about, passionate about, engaged with.

6.0

Challenging Growth

Challenging Growth outcome measures the extent to which adults in the program help youth to see new possibilities, push them to reach higher and hold them accountable.

6.15

Youth Belonging

This outcome measures how safe, welcome and supported youth feel in 4-H programs

6.16

Youth-Adult Partnerships

This outcome measures how youth feel about adult volunteers working with them and if they feel respected, listened to and have their ideas taken seriously.

6.02

Caring Adults

This outcome measures how youth feel the adults in their 4-H programs care about them and investing time in youth.

5.94

Program Quality Overall Score

What does it mean?

Wood County 4-H's program quality is very good, and there is room to grow. The lower score for Youth Sparks is not surprising – Sparks are tied to the opportunities to learn new things (projects) and develop an interest in a topic/project. In 2023, we worked on ways to offer more project-based learning for members. Caring adults and Challenging growth also received good scores with room to grow. Wood County 4-H began offering special learning opportunities for volunteers focused on building healthy relationships, creating a safe environment for youth, and allowing youth to lead.