The Great American Smokeout

This is the year– Stop smoking, live a healthier life

Lake Cumberland District Health Department

The Great American Smokeout is a national event dedicated to encouraging smokers to quit smoking and raising awareness about the health risks associated with tobacco use. Celebrated on the third Thursday of November, this annual initiative, spearheaded by the American Cancer Society, is a powerful reminder of the benefits of quitting smoking and the resources available to help individuals take that step toward better health. This year, the event falls on November 19.

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nearly 480,000 deaths each year, or about 1 in every 5, are attributed to cigarette smoking, including more than 41,000 deaths resulting from secondhand smoke exposure. Smoking is linked to numerous health issues, including lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Moreover, smoking not only affects the smoker but also poses significant risks to those around them. Secondhand smoke can cause serious health problems in non-smokers, especially children and pregnant women.



By participating in the Great American Smokeout, individuals can contribute to a broader movement that protects public health and encourages a culture of wellness.

The decision to quit smoking can lead to immediate and long-term health benefits. Within just 20 minutes of quitting, heart rate and blood pressure drop. After a few days, carbon monoxide levels in the blood return to normal, and within a year, the risk of heart disease is significantly reduced.

Over time, the lungs begin to heal, reducing the risk of lung cancer and other respiratory issues.

Beyond the health benefits, quitting smoking can also lead to significant financial savings.

Smokers often spend thousands of dollars annually on cigarettes, and quitting can free up funds for healthier alternatives, hobbies, or family activities.

For those considering quitting, the Great American Smokeout serves as a launchpad for a smoke- free journey. Numerous resources are available, including quitlines, support groups, and online programs that provide the necessary tools and encouragement to help individuals succeed. The American Cancer Society offers a wealth of information, including tips for managing cravings, finding support, and understanding the various cessation aids available. Free help is available from Quit Now Kentucky by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669).

The Great American Smokeout is more than just a single day on the calendar; it's a call to action for smokers to take control of their health and combat the smoking epidemic. By participating in this initiative, individuals improve their health and contribute to a healthier community. Whether you're a smoker looking to quit or a supporter of someone on their journey, this event encourages us all to envision a smoke-free future—one step at a time.

Source: cdc.gov/tobacco and cancer.org

Get a taste of Kentucky's food culture with the 4-H Country Ham Project

Green County Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Development
Sue Ann Loyall



Kentucky 4-Hers interested in learning about their state's food heritage can try their hand at the proud Kentucky culinary tradition of curing and aging their very own country ham.

Through the 4-H Country Ham Project, participating youth ages 9 to 19 are introduced to the process of dry curing step by step as they prepare and preserve supplied hams for competitive judging. Participants learn not only about important food handling and safety practices associated with this Kentucky delicacy, but also the vital livestock and food industries that supply and support it.

More than 1,100 4-Hers from 85 counties rolled up their sleeves in 2026 to take part in the hands-on program, which started in the late 1990s. The hams are prepared in accordance with both state tradition and local customs, producing smoked versions in the western part of the state or non-smoked varieties in eastern counties. Non-smoked groups will put their hams in to cure in mid-January, while smoked groups will typically start their curing process in February or early March.

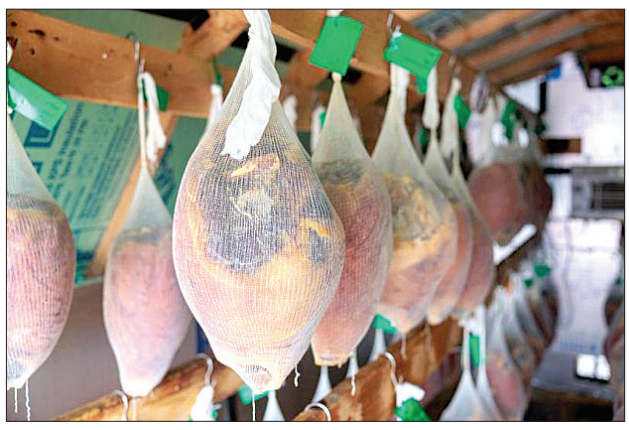


Photo by Matt Barton

The eight-month project culminates at the Kentucky State Fair, where the food preservation work of these young Kentuckians will be judged based on characteristics such as meatiness, shape, color, aroma and workmanship. Winning the competition, however, takes more than a well-tended ham. The 4-H ham crafters also demonstrate their knowledge by delivering a short prepared speech on the time-honored food preservation technique. The three-to five-minute presentation ultimately accounts for 60 percent of the participant's overall score. Older teens who have taken part in the program for at least three years can also apply to compete for a 4-H Country Ham scholarship.

In addition to enjoying a tasty end product, Country Ham Project participants gain many benefits from the experience, including a greater understanding of where their food comes from, practiced and confident communication skills, and the shared celebration of Kentucky's rich agricultural and food heritage. Last year, Green County 4-H had 7 youth participate in the project.

Interested 4-Hers will need to contact the Extension Office to learn how to sign up and submit their contracts for the 2027 Country Ham Project by November 30. For more information on the program and to find out how you can take part, contact the Green County Cooperative Extension office at 270-932-5311.

Educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expressions, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.

Seven simple steps to keep your indoor plants thriving through colder months

Kara Back
University of Kentucky Horticulture Agent

Want to keep your indoor plants thriving through winter? Here's a cozy guide to winter plant care—with tips, tricks and a few unexpected perks of greening up your space.

Winter doesn't mean saying goodbye to your green thumb. With a bit of know-how, your indoor plants can flourish even when the weather outside is frightful. Plus, having plants around isn't just about aesthetics — they boost mood and bring a sense of calm to your home.

Lighten them up. Winter brings shorter days and weaker sunlight, so your plants will benefit from being placed in the sunniest spots available. Try moving them closer to windows and rotating them every week or two to ensure even light exposure. If you're relocating plants to windows with direct sunlight, proceed with caution—some species can tolerate it, but they should be gradually acclimated over several days to prevent stress. For plants that thrive in direct sun, this slow transition helps avoid leaf burn. If natural light is limited in your space, consider using grow lights; LED options are both energy-efficient and effective. I like to use 40-watt full spectrum LED grow lights. This year I bought two plant stands for my sunniest window which faces South. My succulents and cacti that need full sun are next to the window. My African violets and ferns are on lower shelves and further from the window on the stand.

Water wisely and pause the fertilizer. Many plants are in rest mode during winter due to less light, so reduce water and skip the fertilizer until spring. Overwatering is a common winter mistake. You can cause pythium root rot from overwatering. Instead, check soil moisture by sticking your finger about an inch deep—if it's dry, water thoroughly. Many houseplants may only need watering every two to three weeks during winter but check them often as the interior climate can be quite dry. Holding back fertilizer for a few months helps prevent nutrient buildup and keeps your plants from getting leggy or stressed.

Mind the temperature and humidity. Keep your plants away from cold drafts, radiators and vents. Sudden temperature changes can stress or even kill them. Aim for a stable environment with moderate humidity. Grouping plants or placing them on pebble trays with water can help increase humidity levels. If pebble trays are used, ensure the bottom of plant pots is above the water level in the tray.

Check for pests. If outside plants came indoors, be sure to inspect them for pests like aphids, scale or spider mites. Wipe leaves with a damp cloth and consider neem oil or insecticidal soap if needed. Always read and follow product labels carefully.

Grow something new. Winter is a great time to experiment with indoor gardening. Microgreens—tiny edible greens like broccoli or beets—are easy to grow in shallow containers with clean potting soil. Also, they're ready in 12–14 days and packed with nutrients. You can also try garlic greens, scallions, carrots, leaf lettuce, or herbs like basil and parsley. Just make sure your containers have good drainage and use organic fertilizer for herbs. These microgreens are also suited to areas with lower light conditions.

Prolong your poinsettias. For this season's poinsettias, choose plants with small, tightly clustered yellow buds in the center of the colorful leaf-like bracts that are commonly referred to as the flowers. Water the plant when it feels dry and discard excess water in the saucer under the plant. Place the plant in a bright, naturally lit location and gradually introduce some direct sunlight. Keep the plant out of drafty areas and away from appliances that produce heat. Poinsettias will benefit from winter fertilizer treatments. Apply houseplant fertilizer according to the label directions before the new year.

The health benefits are real. Indoor plants do more than look pretty. Studies show that being around greenery can lower blood pressure and increase feelings of well-being. In the gloom of winter, that's a gift worth growing. So go ahead—give your plants a little TLC this winter. They'll return the favor with beauty, freshness and a touch of nature's magic right in your living room.

Source: Cindy Finneseth, Extension Specialist in Urban Horticulture; Sammie Lyle, Horticulture Faculty Lecturer (recommended as a houseplant expert)

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Green County Conservation District is offering a Livestock Water Cost-Share Program to qualifying Green County farm owners. Cost-share will be 50% of actual cost, not to exceed $3,000, with maximum payout of $1,500. Program guidelines and applications may be picked up at the Green County Conservation District office located at 103 Industrial Park Rd, Monday through Wednesday during regular business hours. Applications will be awarded on a first come-first served basis until funding is exhausted. Deadline to submit applications is December 1, 2026.

NOTICE OF BID FOR CONSULTANTS

The Green County Fiscal Court is seeking "SEALED BIDS" from qualified consultants with expertise in Emergency Planning, Disaster Recovery, and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) management, who are interested in providing professional consulting services to assist Green County in applying for and managing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants to address existing hazards and mitigate the effects of future disasters.

The bidder should include their professional qualifications, years of experience, and relevant work history as proposals will be scored using these criteria. The bidder should also include the proposed scope pf wok and how they will charge for their services.

The proposals must be delivered by hand or through the mail to Green County Fiscal Court, 203 West Court Street, Greensburg, KY 42743 and clearly marked as "Sealed Bid for Disaster Recovery Services."

Responses must be received by 4 PM Central Time on Friday, November 20, 2026, as no late proposals will be accepted. Proposals will be opened at the Green County Fiscal Court Monthly Meeting on Monday, November 23, 2026, beginning at 5 PM Central Time. Green County Fiscal Court reserves the right to accept or reject any proposals submitted.