Field Notes

Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture E-Newsletter

E-Field Notes
September 2017

In this issue:

President's Note: Kerr Center Prairie

Organic Establishment of Native Wildflowers

Beginning Rancher Resources

Beginning Farmer Resources

Early Fall Events: Monarch Run, Soil Health, Organic Oklahoma

Fall has arrived, and school bells are ringing - so for this issue, we're taking a back-to-school slant.

David Redhage has been out teaching about increasing and conserving pollinator habitat. We share a **presentation on establishing native pollinator plants organically** that he gave on a recent NRCS webinar.

Our **Beginning Farmer & Rancher training program** brought many farmers back into the classroom. Though it wrapped up four years ago, it was so popular that we still regularly field inquiries about it. Though the trainings themselves are no longer offered, the **resources are all still available free online** - books, reports, fact sheets, presentations, videos, and more, **from both horticulture and livestock tracks**.

But first, revisit the **native prairie site of this past spring's controlled burn**, and take in some fresh photos of **how the wildflowers fared** on it.

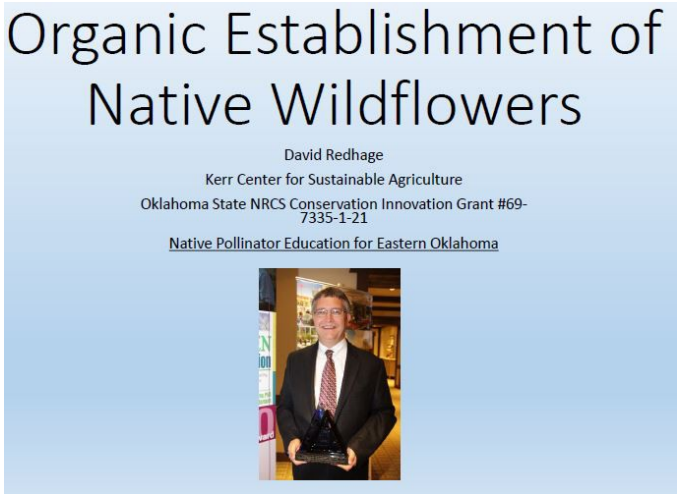
As always, **if you value our work, please consider supporting it**!

President's Note: Kerr Center Prairie

This spring we burned the Kerr Center Prairie. I mentioned we would post photos of the prairie over the summer. Well, here is a timeline of photos from the prairie. I am happy to report that the tall grasses are moving in rapidly. Dominant tall grasses include big bluestem, switchgrass, and Indiangrass. It has taken over four years to get to this point. The spring and early summer showcased the most wildflowers, especially liatris. I hope to seed or plug some eastern gamagrass into the prairie to add diversity.

View photo timeline....

Organic Establishment of Native Wildflowers



This presentation, by Kerr Center President David Redhage, is from a USDA-NRCS webinar held August 1, 2017. It describes the Kerr Center's e**xperiences and lessons learned from efforts to establish wildflower plantings** on the Kerr Ranch **using organic methods**.

The webinar (presentation plus audio of Redhage's narration) is available **free online** (registration required).

Beginning Rancher Resources

The livestock track for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher program had three full day workshops and one half-day workshop.

The first workshop addressed the importance of grazing management as it relates to the productivity of forage and livestock. It looked at designing a controlled grazing system that promotes healthy plants and increases forage utilization. Topics included water development, the importance of livestock shade, and the use of permanent and temporary electric fence.

The second workshop took place at the late Dr. David Sparks' ranch near Porum. He addressed all aspects of small ruminant management. Dr. Sparks was employed by OSU extension, and, along with his wife, ran both goats and cattle on their ranch.

The third workshop addressed the basics of forage growth and soil fertility. Also, this workshop focused on pasture plant identification. The last workshop was a half-day session addressing agroforestry, forestry, and riparian management.

Browse Beginning Rancher livestock materials.

Beginning Farmer Resources

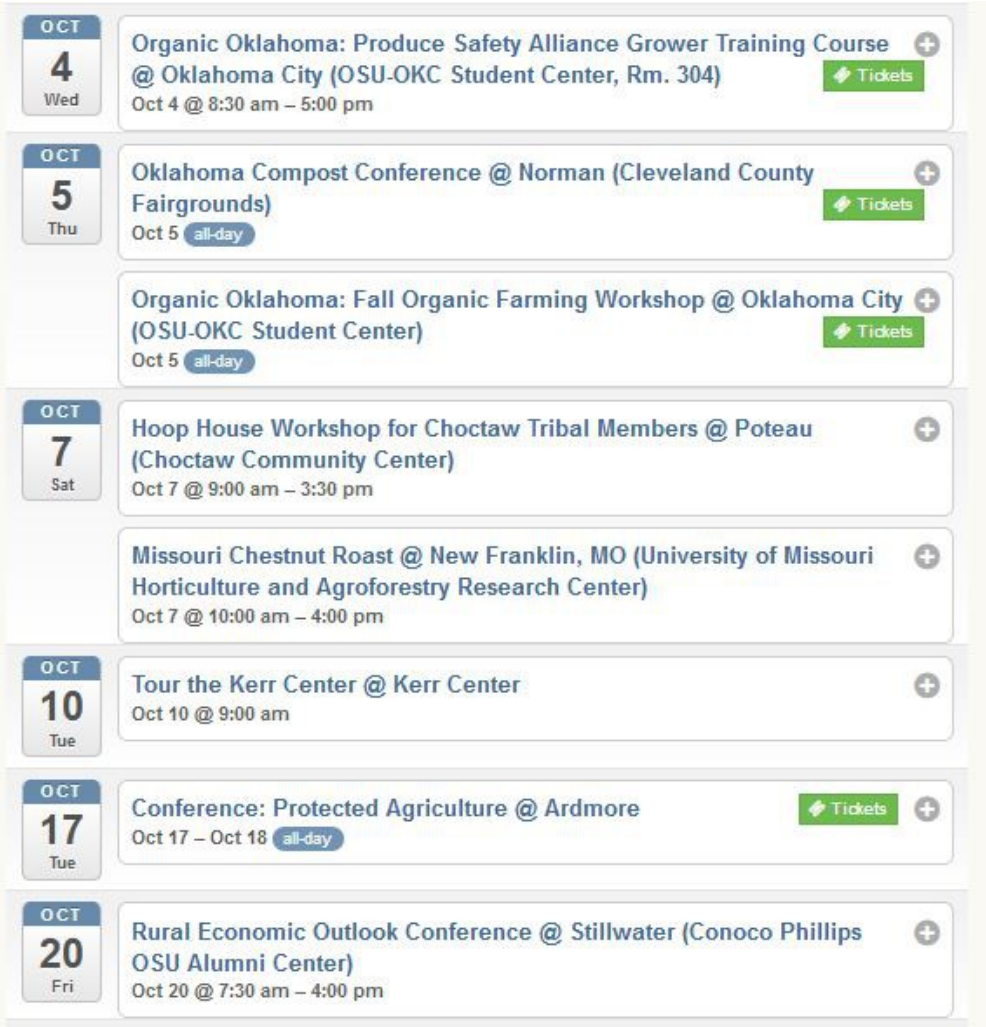
The **Beginning Farmer & Rancher Program horticulture** track concentrated on **small-to-intermediate scale market gardening**, with a specific focus on vegetable crops for **both fresh produce and seed crop sales. Organic production** was emphasized, though most of the information and techniques covered are appropriate for conventional management as well.

Topics included business and field planning, acquisition of supplies, **organic certification**, ground preparation and **fertility management**, irrigation, **weed and pest control**, harvest and post-harvest handling, and marketing.

The training was balanced between classroom education, field demonstrations, and hands-on activities. This program was intended primarily for those with little or no experience in growing horticultural crops.

Browse Beginning Farmer horticulture materials.

Early Fall Events: Organic Oklahoma, Produce Safety, Compost



The long-awaited **statewide organic gardening conference** comes to Oklahoma City (Oct. 5), accompanied by a **produce safety training** the preceding day. There's also a **compost conference** on the 5th. The latter half of October brings conferences on **protected agriculture** (Oct. 17-18, Ardmore) and **rural economics** (Oct. 20, Stillwater).

The Kerr Center's online **events calendar** provides full details on these and many other upcoming sustainable agriculture events around the state and region. It also serves as a reminder for the dates of **monthly Kerr Center tours**, which run all year round, every second Tuesday by appointment.

Don't forget that you can also use our online calendar to **keep yourself and your friends up to date** on these and other upcoming events, including our tours:
- **Subscribe to our feed** and receive **updates to your personal calendar** (Outlook, Google+, etc.) as they are made.
- **Share events on the calendar** via a number of **different social media sites**, including Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

Support the Kerr Center

Since 1965 the Kerr Center has been reaching out to folks in Oklahoma and beyond. Today, the Friends of the Kerr Center help us continue this vital work! If you enjoy reading this newsletter or visiting our website, please consider making a gift to the Kerr Center today!

Quick Links...

Kerr Center website

Find us on Facebook

Contact Information

The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture
24456 Kerr Road
Poteau, OK 74953
Phone: 918.647.9123
Fax: 918.647.8712
mailbox@kerrcenter.com