

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



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When you support Extension, youth engage in learning, develop skills, and explore career opportunities.



The Extension Plant Pathology Specialist and Jefferson County Horticulture Agent conducted programs at Fern Creek High School.

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Extension Re-ignites the Urban Farm at Fern Creek High School

Jefferson County Extension collaborates with high school teachers to reestablish an urban farm and immerse students in the food system through hands-on engagement.



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The 4-H Club is an invaluable part of Fern Creek High School's farm program. The representatives from 4-H facilitate practical and engaging learning experiences for my students and fellow faculty members. Because of 4-H's involvement, I see students engaging in agricultural and animal husbandry tasks with more knowledge, passion, and collaboration.

Fern Creek High School Teacher

Fern Creek High School, in Jefferson County, has over 1,400 students with more than 50% qualifying for free or reduced price school meals. Approximately 10% of the students, accompanied by a teacher, will visit the urban farm on the school campus daily.

The urban farm was on hiatus until the summer of 2017. Then, a new English teacher with a background in commercial, organic vegetable farming joined the faculty. After learning about the urban farm, the teacher agreed to reestablish its production. The teacher enlisted the assistance of the Cooperative Extension Service through the Horticulture and 4-H Youth Development Agents. Collaboration of the three entities created educational programs in the garden as well as a Fern Creek High School 4-H Club.

Educational programs include an advanced placement course for environmental studies to bring the garden back to life. Students identified and evaluated plant health. The Vegetable Disease Extension Specialist for Plant Pathology taught the students to identify plant disease and create disease management plans. An Extension agent with fruit tree expertise guided the students in the rehabilitation of the apple trees. Students learned to graft tree stock, which is a specialized skill integral to fruit tree production. New additions to the farm include chickens, a green house, and low tunnels over raised beds.

Using UK Extension resources, the students developed a school-year-centric planting plan. By using UK plant growing guidelines, the students were able to harvest enough from the garden to create a salad for their first farm-to-fork experience.

As a result of Extension's programming, the urban farm is now a thriving and



The overgrown garden created a learning environment for students as they cleaned and restored the garden.



The students discovered a variety of lettuces with different, distinctive flavors. One student shared, "I'm usually not a big salad eater, but since I planted and weeded it, I'll eat it."

important component of learning at Fern Creek High School. During 2017, Fern Creek High School 4-H Club had 15 members. Four teachers and over 300 students supplemented their education with Extension presentations, resources, and experiential learning experiences.

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