

Greetings: My name is Morning Starr Robinson and I am the new Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator in Cuyahoga County. I hold a B.S. in Animal, Poultry and Veterinary Sciences from Tuskegee University and am a graduate student at North Carolina A&T State University studying Agricultural Education. I look forward to all we will accomplish in Cuyahoga County.

Best regards,

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**USDA Announces Grants for Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is making available up to \$7.5 million for grants through its Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP). Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP) competitive grants initiate or expand efforts of farmers, gardeners, citizens, government officials, schools, and other stakeholders in urban areas and suburbs. Projects may target areas of food access; education; business and start-up costs for new farmers; and development of policies related to zoning and other needs of urban production. The competitive grants will support the development of urban agriculture and innovative production projects through two categories, Planning Projects and Implementation Projects.

USDA will accept applications on Grants.gov until 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 27, 2023. This [link](#) provides an overview of the grants' purpose, project types, eligibility and basic requirements for submitting an application.

**Groundhog:** Before groundhogs come out of hibernation, let's take some time to learn about management methods. Groundhogs, also known as woodchucks, usually are viewed as nuisance animals for homeowners and farmers. There are many passive and active methods for controlling groundhogs. Having a predator type pet, such as a cat or dog, mark your yard will deter rodents from moving onto your property. An active method is by trapping or physically remove pests. You can do this yourself, but there are licensed wildlife removal services available. Always check with the land or homeowner, if applicable, as well as your city government before you begin implementing any of these methods.

Check out the [link](#) to view a video detailing things you can do to minimize and prevent damage to plants, deter or remove wild animals, and preserve the plants in your space, also visit The Ohio Department of Natural Resources website to read their nuisance species article about groundhogs: <https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/wildlife-management/nuisance-wildlife/nuisance-groundhogs>.

**Maple Season:** Late winter and early spring is maple season; that time of year when maple producers in Ohio and other parts of northeastern North America tap maple trees to collect sap. This sap is boiled down to produce maple syrup, or further processed into maple sugar, fudge, nougat, cream or other products. It's easy, great fun and a very educational family activity. You can produce your own maple syrup and perhaps even have enough to use as gifts for family or friends.

Ohio State University Extension offers an Ohioline [fact-sheet](#) where you can find information on maple identification, tapping, sap boiling, syrup drawing and finishing. Answers to more specific maple queries can be found through the website: <https://mapleresearch.org/>.

**East Ohio Women in Ag '23:** Ohio State University (OSU) Extension will host the 8th Annual East Ohio Women in Agriculture Conference. The conference is planned for Friday, March 24 from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Shisler Conference Center, 1680 Madison Ave, Wooster, OH 44691. All women and young women (high school age) who are interested, involved in, or want to become involved with food, agricultural, or natural resources production or small business are encouraged to attend. Follow the link [here](#) to get more information about the conference and to find the link to register to attend.

**Soil Health 2023 Webinar Series:** The USDA attests that healthy soil is the foundation of productive, sustainable agriculture. Managing for soil health allows producers to work with the land - not against - to reduce erosion, maximize water infiltration, improve nutrient cycling, and save money on inputs. The Agronomic Crops Team at OSU brought back the Soil Health Webinar Series. You won't want to miss out on this year's line-up of farmers and academic experts covering a wide range of soil health topics. Click [here](#) and you can find more information on program topics and a link to register for the webinar series.

**Community Garden Training, registration open:** The Dig In! Community Garden Training Program is for anyone interested in Community Gardening. It is required for new garden leaders in the Summer Sprout Program but is open to all. The application link is available on the Cuyahoga County Extension website, open through February and closes March 17, 2023. You can find more information at the Cuyahoga County Extension website under the community gardening tab.

Don't forget to order your bee packages and now is the time to start your celery, onion, and asparagus seeds indoors.