

GARLAND COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

NEWS AND VIEWS

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www.garlandcountycd.org

Board of Directors: Tommy Sorrells Doug Meredith David Parker Davin Anderson Kayla Hardage



As we take a moment to look back on the past year, it is crucial to acknowledge and appreciate all of our achievements, triumphs, challenges, and struggles. By recognizing and being grateful for these moments, we can learn and evolve for the upcoming years. We sincerely wish you a prosperous new year filled with immense joy, peace, love, and inspiration!

Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame Inductee-Melvin Daniel



Longtime GCCD board director Melvin Daniel will be posthumously inducted into the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame March 1st in Little Rock. Daniel spent 37 years teaching agriculture education in the Glenwood, Lake Hamilton and Foreman

school districts. He helped to produce Lake Hamilton's first FFA state officer, its first American Degree Recipient and trained 33 state-winning FFA judging teams. After retiring, he worked as director of the Master Gardeners program with the Garland County Cooperative Extension Service.

AACD Dave Ferguson Scholarship



The 2023-2024 Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts "Dave Ferguson" scholarship contest gives a young person in Garland county the chance to win **\$250** towards college expenses. Local high school students planning to

study a conservation related field are encouraged to apply. As well as receiving the district scholarship, the winner will be eligible to compete at both the area and state level. AACD awards two scholarships (\$1,000 and \$500) based on the student's required essay on this year's topic: "May the Forest Be With You Always". The rules are simple, and the contest is open to all sophomores, juniors, and seniors with a minimum 2.5 GPA who reside in Garland County. Entries must be submitted by **February 16, 2024**. For more information visit www.garlandcountycd.org

Arkansas GROWN Conference & Expo January 25-27



The Arkansas Department of Agriculture will partner with several agricultural associations and organizations to host the second Arkansas Grown Conference and Expo on January 25-27 at the Hot Springs Convention Center. The Arkansas Grown Conference and Expo is open to all parties interested in the Arkansas agriculture industry and will focus on farmers and producers who produce for the local food system. The three-day event will consist of workshops, speakers, off-site farm tours, networking opportunities, and a vendor trade show. Partner associations include the Arkansas State Horticulture Society, Arkansas Farmers Market Association, Arkansas Blackberry Growers Association, Arkansas Agritourism Association, Arkansas Association of Grape Growers, Arkansas Pecan Growers Association, Mid America Strawberry Growers Association, and the Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts. Register and learn more about the Arkansas Grown Conference and Expo at <https://arkansasgrown.org/arkansas-grown-conference-expo/>

Thank You!

We extend our most sincere gratitude to Garland County Judge Darryl Mahoney and the members of the Garland County Quorum Court for their continued support. We also thank our legislators for supporting their local conservation district. Many thanks to our community and customers for your ongoing patronage. We look forward to continuing to serve Garland County in the coming year!

Camp Tanako Pollinator Garden



GCCD was awarded a \$2,500.00 grant from the Arkansas Department of Agriculture-Natural Resource Division to create a pollinator garden at Camp Tanako. The garden will serve as a valuable learning

tool for school-aged children, highlighting the significance of providing habitat for pollinators. GCCD will assist in the implementation and upkeep of the garden. We will also provide educational materials to encourage our future generations to conserve our natural resources.

Cutter Morning Star Community Garden



GCCD received a \$5,000.00 grant through Arkansas Department of Agriculture-Natural Resource Division to assist with the development of the Cutter Morning Star School District's Community Garden. Students in Heather Slay's EAST class designed raised beds that were then constructed with help from community volunteers. Vegetables grown will be used in the schools cafeteria, Family and Consumer Science classes, and also sent home with students as part of the school's back pack program. GCCD employees along with Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) personnel provided technical assistance to students on soil health, water conservation, greenhouse/high tunnel fundamentals, hydroponics and proper land use.



Winter Sowing

Winter sowing is an incredibly easy method of starting seeds outdoors in winter. This method is generally done with seeds that require a period of cold stratification. By planting seeds in containers, such as old milk jugs, you are essentially creating a mini greenhouse. This method allows seedlings to harden off on their own. The best time to begin winter sowing is in December after the winter solstice.



Lake Hamilton School-Melvin Daniel Farm



GCCD received an \$8,000.00 grant through Arkansas Department of Agriculture-Natural Resource Division for the purchase of a

high tunnel for the Lake Hamilton High School Melvin Daniel FFA School Farm. Melvin Daniel served on the GCCD board of directors for 21 years. All produce will go back to use in the school cafeteria, family and consumer science program, and the school food bank. GCCD will provide technical assistance throughout the planning, development, and implementation of the project.

- Collect and wash jugs, discard caps
- Make 5 or 6 drain holes in bottoms; use a drill or tip of a hot glue gun (minus the glue) or the heated tip of a screwdriver
- Slice jug in half, leaving handle attached to form a hinge
- Place 3-4" of wet soil in the bottom of the jug
- Sow seeds on top of soil but pay attention to any seed germination specifics as far as depth. If necessary, sprinkle a thin layer of soil on top of seeds.
- Tape jug back together with duct tape and label
- Place jugs outside where they will get water from rain/snow
- Open and vent the seedlings once they have germinated and if you have a day of unseasonably warm temperatures, you don't want to fry them!



Mini Bacon and Egg Bakes

-BHG Test Kitchen

Ingredients

- 12 slices bacon
- 9 eggs
- 1/3 cup milk
- 2-3 cups chopped fresh spinach
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 Roma tomato, cut into 12 slices

Directions

1. Coat twelve, 2 1/2-inch muffin cups with nonstick cooking spray. Cook bacon on a foil lined baking sheet at 400 for 12 minutes or until cooked through but still pliable, just starting to brown. Drain on paper towels
2. Whisk together eggs, milk, spinach, garlic, cheese, salt, and pepper.
3. Wrap one slice of bacon around the inside of each muffin cup. Divide egg mixture among cups. Cover; chill overnight.
4. Preheat oven to 375. Uncover muffin cups. Top each with a tomato slice. Bake 25 minutes or until eggs are puffed and set. Let cool 5 minutes before removing from cups.
(These can be stored in an air tight container in the fridge up to 4 days.)

*Do you have a favorite recipe you would like featured in our newsletter? Mail to our office or email hesper.hortman@usda.gov
Happy cooking!*

Breakfast is often called 'the most important meal of the day'. As the name suggests, breakfast breaks the overnight fasting period. Eating breakfast gives us the opportunity to fuel our body with nutrients to help boost energy levels and alertness. Nutritious foods that are often eaten for breakfast are: eggs, oatmeal, berries, yogurt, nuts and nut butter. Here are some simple make ahead meals to help get you going!

Fruit, Nut, and Brown Sugar Freezer

Oatmeal Cups -BHG Test Kitchen

Ingredients

- 5 cups water
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 cups regular rolled oats
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 Tbl butter
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- Milk (optional)
- 1/2 cup dried tart cherries, cranberries or raisins
- 1 cup fresh blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, and/or chopped strawberries
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts and/or pecans, toasted

Directions

1. In a medium saucepan bring the water and salt to boiling; stir in oats. Cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally (mixture will be very thin). Remove from heat. Stir in brown sugar, butter, and cinnamon. Transfer to a bowl; cover and chill until cool (mixture will thicken as it cools). Stir in dried fruit.
2. Grease twelve 2 1/2-inch muffin cups. Spoon about 1/2 cup of the oatmeal into each prepared muffin cup. Sprinkle with fresh berries and nuts; press lightly. Cover and freeze 6 hours or until firm.
3. Let stand at room temperature 5 minutes. Transfer oatmeal cups to freezer bags or airtight containers. Freeze up to 3 months.
4. To serve, in a small bowl microwave one frozen oatmeal cup at a time, covered, 2 minutes or until heated through, stirring once. Stir before serving. If desired, stir in milk.

ACT NOW

Funding Sign-Up



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources
Conservation Service

Fiscal Year (FY)2024 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) ACT NOW allows Arkansas NRCS to immediately approve and obligate ranked applications in a designated ranking pool when an eligible application meets or exceeds the state-determined minimum ranking score. **ACT NOW** will utilize minimum ranking score thresholds for each ranking pool. This means no longer having to wait for all applications to be reviewed and preapproved in a ranking pool.

“If a farmer or rancher has a pending Environmental Quality Incentives Program application at their [USDA Field Service Center](#), or has never applied for EQIP, this is their chance to **ACT NOW**,” said Mike Sullivan, Arkansas NRCS state conservationist. “This provides producers an opportunity to update their conservation plan or apply for a conservation plan for EQIP to address resource concerns on their property.”

Arkansas FY2024 ACT NOW Opportunities include:

- **AR Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative**
- **AR Soil Health Initiative**
- **AR Energy Initiative**

NRCS accepts applications for conservation programs year-round, but to be included in this **ACT NOW** funding opportunity, interested producers should contact their local USDA Service Center. Arkansas NRCS will use the **ACT NOW** process for some EQIP funding pools and projects beginning **January 22, 2024, through February 22, 2024**.

Applicants are encouraged to work with NRCS and the USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) to complete eligibility requirements at their earliest convenience during the application process and to update all their agricultural records for FY2024. Please contact your local USDA Service Center at **501-624-2574** for additional information about ACT NOW or for information about other NRCS Farm Bill programs.