

April 2014



KICKAPOO ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE

# The Green Clan

## An Introduction To Our Newest Team Member

By Lewis Messner, Environmental Specialist, 785-486-2601 x 5

My name is Lewis Messner, and I recently joined the Kickapoo Environmental Office as the new Environmental Specialist. I come here with over 3 years of experience in the environmental sector, 2 of which were specifically related to wetlands. I am excited for the opportunity to work with the KEO staff, and I look forward to using my role to bring new ideas for implementing water quality standards.

While growing up in rural Michigan I have acquired a love for many outdoor activities including backpacking, jogging, and outdoor rock climbing. I recommend a visit to the Grand Traverse Bay region for anyone's first visit to the "Mitten" state. Aside from outdoor activities I share the hobby of ballroom dancing with my fiancée, and have competed in numerous locations across the Midwest.

I am honored to have been offered the position at KEO, and I look forward to building new personal and professional relationships in the years to come.



## Garden Projects for Early Spring ([www.eartheasy.com](http://www.eartheasy.com))

### • Weed young spring weeds. Mulch bare spots in beds.

Any weeds which appear in your garden beds will be easiest to pull now, as the roots are shallow. Covering bare spots with mulch or ground cover will minimize the emergence of new weeds. Adding mulch to a depth of 3 to 4 inches is usually sufficient. Black plastic sheeting can also be used to cover the beds before planting as a way to suppress emerging weeds. If you flip the sheeting over once a week you may likely find slugs which have been hiding in the bed. This is a simple way to reduce the slug population in garden beds.

### • Prepare your lawn for spring.

Rake the lawn to remove dead growth and winter debris. This helps bring light and air to the soil level, encouraging the grass to grow. Re-seed bare patches of lawn. Rake bare spots firmly with a metal rake before seeding. Sprinkle grass seed into a bucket of soil and spread evenly over the bare spot. Keep well-watered until seeds germinate and the new grass establishes. Pre-emergent herbicides such as corn gluten may be applied now.



### • Plant early spring vegetables when soil is workable.

Soil is ready for gardening once it is free of ice crystals and crumbles easily. Soil that is too wet is easily compacted, reducing beneficial soil aeration. Common early spring crops are peas, spinach, lettuce and leeks. For a prolonged harvest, plant several varieties, each with a different maturation date. Follow these crops with broccoli, cabbage, radishes, kale, turnips, new potatoes and onions. Mulch early bulbs if you live in areas where freezing temperatures hang on.

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*Working Together for a Better Community!*



## Upcoming Events

\* **Tuesday, April 22: Gardening Workshop, Senior Citizen Center**

\* **Thursday, April 24: Kickapoo Earth Day Celebration—K-20 Clean Up**

\* **Friday, April 25: Arbor Day, 5:00 PM—Golden Eagle Casino**

## Garden Projects for Early Spring

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### • **Protect seedlings from hard frosts.**

Early spring plantings are vulnerable to hard frost. If you expect a hard frost, cover seedlings overnight with anything you have on hand - an overturned bucket or cardboard box (with a rock on top) or large flower pot, a portable garden cloche, or a cold frame. If your garden has the space, and your budget allows, a starter greenhouse is ideal for starting seedlings early in the season and protecting them from inconsistent early spring weather.

### • **Prune out dead or damaged branches.**

Prune unwanted branches of trees and shrubs after new growth has begun. Cut back any remaining dead foliage from last season. Prune roses just before they start to bud out. Spring blooming trees and shrubs, however, should not be pruned in late winter; their flower buds are ready to open as temperatures warm. Azaleas, forsythia, weigela, dogwood, and other spring shrubs can be pruned.

**[ATTEND OUR FREE KICKAPOO GARDENING WORKSHOP at the Senior Citizen Center on Tuesday, April 22nd 2014 at 5:00 PM](#)**

This event is sponsored by the Kickapoo Environmental Office, Haskell Indian Nations University and K-State Research and Extension. Topics to be discussed include use of cover crops, insect control methods, and growing tips for onions, peppers and tomatoes. There will be door prizes, free garden plants, and berry plants for purchase (thornless blackberries for \$2 and gooseberry bushes for \$8).