



As a non-profit organization, the Rice County Council on Aging advocates for, serves and empowers the aging citizens of Rice County, Kansas, providing them with the resources needed to continue living an active, healthy and independent lifestyle.

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Grains of Rice

Grains of Knowledge for Rice County Seniors



Enjoy the Benefits of Spring Gardening

As the winter weather thaws and we jump into spring, start planning your garden! Whether this is your first time gardening or long-term hobby, gardening can be an enjoyable activity to improve your wellness.

BENEFITS OF GARDENING

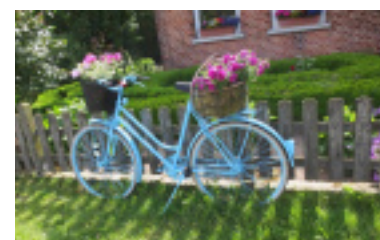
Enjoy Nature

The fresh air brushes against your skin, your hands get dirty, you can listen to the sounds of nature and watch things blossom. Start moving and get away from your desk to become in touch with nature.



Emotional Well-being

Gardening can reduce stress and improve mood.



Decorations

Selecting a variety of plants indoors and outdoors can enhance your home.

Environment

Plants can reduce air pollution and decrease your chemical exposure depending on gardening methods.



Physical Activity

Gardening requires movements such as raking, digging, planting and weeding, which can aid in stretching or building muscle strength. This low-impact and leisurely exercise can increase daily activity.



Nutrition

You can eat produce fresh from your garden. You know where it came from and how it was handled. Gardening can be a way to increase your consumption of plant-based foods.

Become inspired towards a sustainable lifestyle.



While gardening can require time, the experience may be meaningful. Some years you may yield more bountiful crops than others. Each year brings opportunity for improvement. Be realistic and experiment. Your garden may not be perfect, but it's worth the effort.

Try starting with a seed exchange or a public garden with your family, neighbors or co-workers. You can swap produce with others and donate extra crops to a local food pantry. Start small with a plant or two.

Roll up your sleeves and have fun!

Renee Pieroth is a registered and licensed dietitian. The Hillsborough resident is a board-certified specialist in oncology nutrition and works at Cancer Treatment Centers of America in Philadelphia. She is also a certified group fitness instructor by the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America, and writes a blog titled Renee's Healthy Weighs.

NO BULL FROM ROCKY

ROCKY GAINES
RCCA BOARD PRES.

Beaver hats! Who would have thunk?

Beaver hats were all the rage in Europe for over 300 years (who knew?). Chaucer even mentioned them in the late 1300s. The beaver hat was what drew French, Spanish, and Americans into the Rocky Mountains to trap the wily beaver for plews (pelts). Only a change in style in the mid-1850s saved the beaver from extinction.

As more trappers moved into the west, traders in Missouri realized they had a captive market. The trappers, the residents of Santa Fe (part of Mexico), and folks in between needed pots, pans, needles, knives, forks, and spoons. The merchants then would take wool, mules, and the plews in trade and sell them back east. And so began the Santa Fe Trail, a main line of commerce for over 60 years, until the railroad made its way into the area.

Kansas is the only state that the Trail goes completely through. This year marks the bi-centennial anniversary of the commercial venture, and the Santa Fe Trail Association www.santafetrail.org has a year-long plan to celebrate. This summer the Quivira Chapter, which includes Rice County <https://www.santafetrail.org/chapters/quivira/> will conduct three one-week acting camps in June. Participants will use diaries, letters, and other references to research their characters, then be part of a performance at the end of the week.

For more information on the Santa Fe Trail, check out:

<https://www.nps.gov/safe/index.htm>

<https://www.history.com/topics/westward-expansion/santa-fe-trail>

<https://www.kshs.org/kansaspedia/santa-fe-trail/12195>



1886 Photograph of
Men in Beaver Hats

Ride.

QUIVIRA TRANSIT

Rice County's only
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PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR BUG SEASON

May 2021 Issue of the SWKAAA Older & Bolder

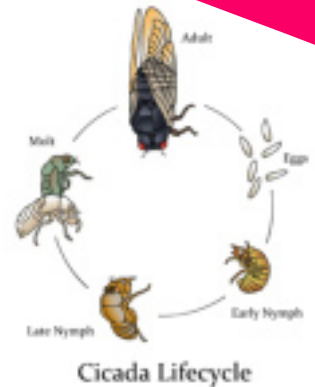
Spring is the official start to bug season, making it important to prepare your home. Here are four steps you can take to keep bugs at bay.

DO A SPOT CHECK

Check windows and door screens for tears to prevent flying bugs from getting in the home and make repairs where necessary. Also, take a quick look around for areas with standing water and try to eliminate them. Standing water creates a breeding ground for mosquitos. Lastly, even the sturdiest of garbage bags can't entirely prevent leaks and spills, and over time, your trash bins can begin to accumulate residue inside and around the rim. Bugs, especially flies, love leftovers, so give your garbage cans a through rinse.

BE READY

Put an effective pest control product in your shopping cart early in the season so you're ready when you see the first signs of bugs in your home. If you see one cockroach, chances are there are more hiding in nooks and crannies. It's hard to put a pin on how many, but an old saying is that for every one you do see, there are 10 more you don't. Striking at the first sign of ants or roaches can help you avoid big problems down the line, as these insects can multiply very quickly. One solid choice is Zero Instant Action Bug Killer Spray. Zevo's Bio Selective Technology targets and shuts down biological pathways found in bugs, not in people or pets. Easy to use, just spray on pests, then wipe up the dead bugs, as well as any excess product. Zevo is now available nationwide at The Home Depot and Target, and online at zevoinspect.com.



COUNT ME IN!

Please take a little time to fill out the coupon below. This helps us to use the funds we have wisely and to know whether Grains of Rice is serving the seniors of our community.

☐ I want to support the Grains of Rice, enclosed is my donation.

☐ I wish to receive the Grains of Rice as an email attachment. My email address is:

PROTECT YOUR TREES

Prepare for the upcoming visit of the 17-year cicadas. In many parts of the country, billions of cicadas will swarm and the females will scrape small twigs to lay their eggs under bark. Protect small and vulnerable trees (ones that are under 4 or 5 feet tall) with cheesecloth to spare them from attack.

KEEP AN EYE ON PETS

Pets are liable to gobble up large helpings of dead cicadas. While not toxic, too many cicadas could cause some digestive issues for furry friends. Help keep them healthy by watching what they eat!

During the spring season, it is necessary to take steps both to keep bugs out, and to be ready if they do invade.



Would you like an
email copy
of the Grains of Rice?

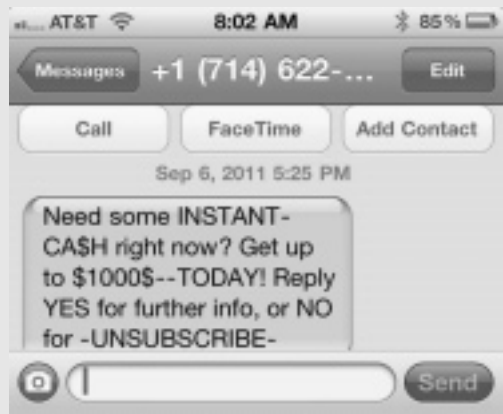
Call the office to sign up!
620-257-5153

In these days of increased requests for service & decreased funding,
we are most grateful for each one that donates.

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Anonymous
Betty Link
Bill Baxter
Bill Richta
Bobby & Rose Small
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Bonnie Minix
Bonnie VonLehe
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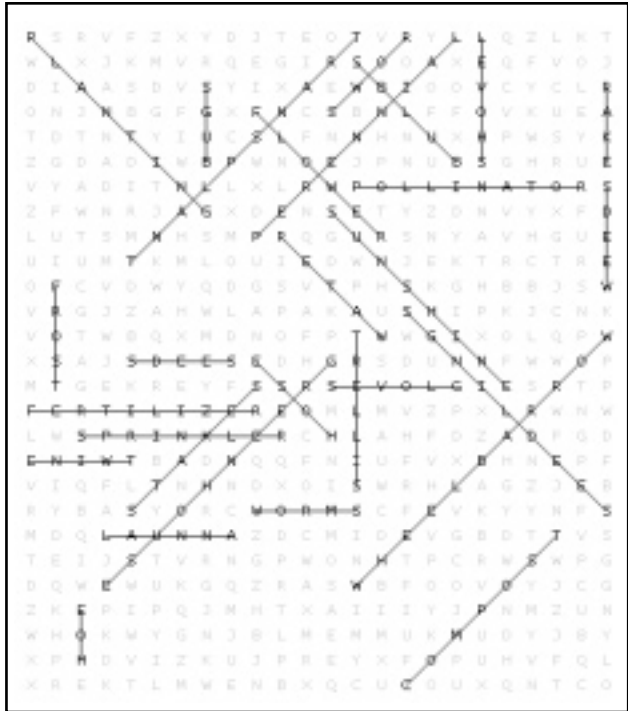
HOW TO RECOGNIZE & REPORT SPAM TEXT MESSAGES

If you have a cell phone, you probably use it dozens of times a day to text people you know. But have you ever gotten a text message from an unknown sender? It could be a scammer trying to steal your personal information. Find out what you can do about unwanted text messages and how to report them.

Scammers send fake text messages to trick you into giving them your personal information. Things like your password, account number, or Social Security number. If they get that information, they could gain access to your email, bank, or other accounts. Or they could sell your information to other scammers.

The scammers use a variety of ever-changing stories to try to rope you in. They may promise free prizes, gift cards, or coupons. They could offer you a low or no interest credit card. They can also promise to help you pay off your student loans.

Scammers also send fake messages that say they have some information about your account or a transaction. The scammers may say they've noticed some suspicious activity on your account. Claim there's a problem with your payment information. They'll send a fake package delivery notification, or send a fake invoice for merchandise you haven't purchased.



The message might ask you to give some personal information like how much money you make, or how much money you owe, or any other personal information. They may tell you to click on a link to learn more about the issue. Some links may take you to a spoofed website that looks real but isn't. If you log in, the scammers can then send steal your user name and password. Other messages may install harmful malware on your phone that steals your personal information



Article taken from the FTC Consumer Information

without you realizing it.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT SPAM TEXT MESSAGES

If you get a text message that you weren't expecting and it asks you to give some personal information, **don't click on any links.** Legitimate companies won't ask for information about your account by text. If you think the message might be real, contact the company using a phone number or website you know is real. Not the information in the text message.

There are many ways you can filter unwanted text messages or stop them before they reach you. Your cell phone may have an option to filter and block messages from unknown senders or spam. Your wireless provider may have a tool or service that lets you block calls and text messages. Some call-blocking apps also let you block unwanted text messages. You can also research for apps online. Check out the features, user ratings, and expert reviews.

HOW TO REPORT SPAM TEXT MESSAGES

If you get an unwanted text message, there are three ways to report it. Report it on the messaging app you use. Look for the option to report junk or spam. Copy the message and forward it to 7726 (SPAM). Report it to the Federal Trade Commission at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint).

Pressure Overload

HelpGuide, National Institute of Mental Health

You just knew it was going to be one of those days. It's hard to live a stress-free life. But too much stress isn't good for your health or happiness. Over time, it may cause you to lose sleep, have headaches or be depressed. It can make you irritable and angry. And it can raise your risk for serious illness, such as high blood pressure and heart disease.



GrYgg@Ygg If stress is a constant companion these days, give the following six stress-busters a try:

1 Ask yourself, "Am I taking on too much?" Often, stress comes from dueling demands on your time. So if family or work responsibilities are spilling off your plate, decide which tasks must get done now and which ones can wait. Be honest with yourself and others: You can politely say no to a new request if you have more than you can handle.

2 Take charge when you can. It's important to realize that you can't control all the stressors in your life. Identify the ones you can, and focus on changing them. If you're prone to procrastination, for instance, break big projects into smaller tasks. If talking to a relative makes you tense, limit how much and how often you talk.

3 Nurture your body. Do you tend to head to the couch with your tablet or TV remote after a hectic day? Opt for a walk - even for 10 minutes - instead. Exercise releases mood-lifting endorphins. Eating nutritious foods, getting enough sleep, and avoiding alcohol and too much caffeine are other healthy ways to cope with stress.

4 Bring on the calm. Develop a list of go-to strategies for relieving stress when it strikes. Frazzled by a deadline? Close your eyes and sit quietly for a few minutes. Stuck in traffic? Turn on upbeat music to tune out the tension. Exhausted after a long day at work? Take a warm shower to help ease tense muscles.

5 Recharge your sense of joy. Even if your schedule seems maxed-out, try to squeeze in time for activities you enjoy. Maybe that's working on a hobby, seeing a movie or having dinner with a friend.

6 Tell a good listener. Everyone has a bad day, and it may help to talk about yours with loved ones or trusted friends. You'll face the next day a bit stronger with their love and support.

SUDOKU

The rules to play Sudoku are quite simple. Fill in the blanks so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 grids contain one instance of each of the numbers 1 through 9.

2			3	8	7			
	3							
	1			5				9
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	4	8						
				1			8	
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5		2			8			6

PUZZLE #823

				9			5	1
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		2		1	5			
			4		8		3	
	8	6			2			
	9						8	2
	6							
						4	1	

PUZZLE #824

SAFE DRIVING FOR OLDER DRIVERS

(Information from the National Institute on Aging)

Have you been worried about your driving?

Have your family or friends expressed concern? Changes in your health affects your driving skills over time. Don't risk hurting yourself or others. Talk with your doctor about any concerns you may have about your health and driving.

Stiff Joints and Muscles

As you age, your joints may get stiff, and your muscles may weaken. Arthri-tis, which is common among older adults, might affect your ability to drive. These changes can make it harder to turn your head to look back, turn the steering wheel quickly, or brake safely.

Trouble Seeing

Your eyesight can change as you get older as well. It might be harder to see people, things, and movement outside your direct line of sight. It may take longer to read street or traffic signs or even recognize familiar places. At night, you may have trouble seeing things clearly. Glare from oncoming headlights or street lights can be a problem. Depending on the time of day, the sun might be blinding. Eye diseases, such as glaucoma, cataracts, and macular degeneration, as well as some medications, can also cause vision problems.

Trouble Hearing

As you get older, your hearing can change, making it harder to notice horn, sirens, or even noises coming from your own car. Hearing loss can be a problem because these sounds warn you when you may need to pull over to get out of the way.

Dementia & Alzheimer's

In the very early stages of Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia, some people are able to keep driving. But, as memory and decision-making skills get worse, they need to stop driving. People with dementia often do not know they are having driving problems. Family and friends need to monitor the person's driving ability and take action as soon as they observe a potential problem, such as forgetting how to find familiar places like the grocery store or even their home. Work with the doctor to let the person know it's no longer safe for them to keep driving.

Slower Reaction Time and Reflexes

As you get older, your reflexes might get slower, and you might not react as quickly as you could in the past. You might find that you have a shorter attention span, making it harder to do two things at once. Stiff joints and weak muscles also can make it harder to move quickly. Loss of feeling or tingling in your fingers and feet can make it difficult to steer or use the foot pedals. Parkinson's disease or limitations following a stroke can make it no longer safe to drive.

Medications Can Affect Driving

Do you take any medications that can make you feel drowsy, lightheaded, or less alert than usual? Do medications you take have a warning about driving? Many medications have side effects that can make driving unsafe. Pay attention to how these drugs may affect your driving.

Be a Safe Driver

Maybe you already know that driving at night, on the highway, or in bad weather is a problem for you. Some

older drivers also have a problem when yielding the right of way, turning (especially making left turns), changing lanes, passing, and using expressway ramps.

Do You Have Concerns About an Older Driver?

Are you worried about an older family member or friend driving? Sometimes, it can be hard for an older person to realize that they are no longer a safe driver. You might want to observe the person's driving skills. If it's not possible to observe the older person driving, look out for these warning signs: multiple crashes, or near misses; traffic tickets or warnings; increased car insurance premiums; comments from neighbors or other family members; anxiety about driving at night, health issues and recommendations from their doctor. Talk with them about driving. Be positive and supportive, but avoid confrontation. Focus on safety by discussing the driver's skills, not their age. Also discuss maintaining their independence by finding out about local services to help someone who can no longer drive. The **Rice County Council on Aging** offers public transportation for all ages and income levels. Call us at **620.257.5153** for more information.

Stay alert and be safe.



10 Unexpected Health Benefits

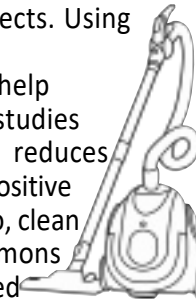
of Spring Cleaning

Claire Nowak, Updated: Apr. 04, 2021

This season, "cleaning" is about more than just tidying up your house.

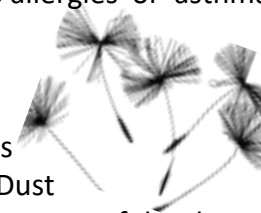
IT'S A PROVEN DE-STRESSER

More clutter means more stress. So it shouldn't be surprising that housework can cut stress and anxiety by 20 percent, according to a Scottish Health Survey. However, you do need 20 minutes of activity to get these effects. Using lemon-scented cleaning products can help you de-stress faster; studies show this happy smell reduces stress and leaves a positive impression on others. So, clean your house with real lemons instead of citrus-scented chemicals.



IT HELPS YOU BREATHE BETTER

If you're prone to allergies or asthma attacks when spring rolls around, don't assume pollen is the only culprit. Dust and pet dander are powerful asthma triggers, especially in children, says Jennifer Mc-Donnell, MD, of Rush University Medical Center.



IT IMPROVES YOUR MOOD

A thorough house cleaning—and then keeping it that way—is one mood boost you'll definitely want to make a habit. In a study from the Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, women who described their homes as stressful, in particular talking about clutter and unfinished projects, were more likely to have an increasingly depressed mood throughout the day. That, in turn, led to more fatigue after work. On the flip side, women who described their homes as relaxing (and less cluttered) became less depressed as the day went on.

IT GETS YOU ACTIVE WITHOUT REALIZING IT

Indiana University researchers made a surprising discovery about the correlation between physical activity and cleanliness: The cleaner the participants' homes were, the more exercise they got. Simply burning calories while cleaning is one explanation for the find, but this relationship could be connected to self-regulation, the ability to act in a way that drives you toward your goals. If individuals are motivated to take control of how clean their homes are, they may be able to use that drive in another area of their lives, like physical fitness.

IT CAN MAKE YOU MORE PRODUCTIVE AT WORK

Spring cleaning your office is just as important as tidying up your house, especially if the papers and folders cluttering your desk hinder your ability to work. A whopping 77 percent of working Americans surveyed by OfficeMax agreed that clutter damages their productivity at work. Adding "Clean desk" as a calendar appointment can help hold you accountable, but why not start now?



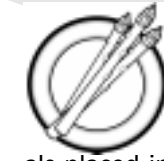
IT DRIFTS YOU OFF TO SLEEP

Can't sleep? Don't reach right for the sleeping pills and try tidying up your bedroom. People who make their beds daily are 19 percent more likely to consistently sleep well, according to the National Sleep Foundation. A survey from the organization also found that 75 percent of respondents slept better on clean sheets because they were more comfortable. Who knew doing laundry had such added perks?



IT INFLUENCES A HEALTHY DIET

As long as we're talking about other ways to spring clean our lives, let's talk about our diets. The idea of "clean eating" has been circulating for a while, but did you know a clean home could help you eat cleaner—or at least healthier? Researchers at the University of Minnesota found that individuals placed in a clean, orderly room were more likely to choose healthier snack options than those in a disorderly room.



IT PREVENTS INJURIES

Having your kids clean up their toys every day will prevent the pain of stepping on a Lego, but young families aren't the only ones who can avoid injury with a clean home. About one in four adults 65+ fall each year, resulting in 2.8 million ER visits, according to the National Council on Aging. The organization recommends keeping walkways clear to prevent falls. Help elderly loved ones clear old newspapers and other tripping hazards from their floors.

IT COULD PREVENT SICKNESS

Spring cleaning gives you an excuse to wash those spots you usually overlook in your daily or weekly cleanups. For instance, small kitchen appliances can be filled with old crumbs and oil splatters, while washing machines can harbor mold and bacteria from your dirty laundry. Wash away food contamination; or run vinegar and baking soda through a hot laundry cycle to get rid of the germs hiding inside.

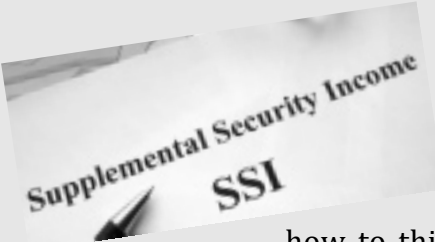
IT IMPROVES HEART HEALTH

A 15-year Swedish study of 851 adults found that sitting for just half an hour less every day reduced risk of fatal car-diovascular disease by 24 percent. Even low-intensity activity like household chores had the heart-healthy benefits, so you can feel good about picking up your vacuum.



Reaching the Vulnerable with Supplemental Security Income

By Meghan Klaassen



If this past year dealing with COVID has taught us nothing else, it has taught us how to think outside the box in seeking resources and assistance. The RCCA has always assisted the seniors of Rice County with their Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, along with other financial assistance programs, to make their monthly income stretch farther. We assist anyone who needs help, no matter their financial resources.

During this past year, the Social Security Administration has not accepted in-person appointments. You have to call and schedule a phone appointment for Medicare, retirement help, and disability benefits. These phone appointments are booked several weeks in advance. If you miss the phone appointment, you receive a letter notifying you of the missed appointment, and the process begins again.

If you have access to and know how to use a computer, you can apply for benefits on their website <http://www.ssa.gov> or access information about other programs.

If you get Social Security benefits, but have limited income and resources (belongings), you may qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). SSI comes from general revenues, not Social Security taxes. SSI makes monthly payments to people who are age 65+ or who are blind or disabled. They do not count some of your income and some of your resources when they decide whether you are eligible for SSI. For example, your house and your car are not counted as resources.

The RCCA can help with the application process for SSI if you do not have access to a computer. **Call our office at 620.257.5153 for information.**



GARDEN VEGGIE CHICKPEA (GARBANZO Bean) SALAD SANDWICH

- FOR THE SALAD:**
- 15 oz can chickpeas/garbanzo beans, drain/rinse
 - 3 stalks green onion
 - 2 stalks celery
 - 1/4 c chop/shred carrots
 - 1/4 c fine chopped red bell pepper
 - 1/4 c fine chopped dill pickle
 - 1/4 cup mayonnaise
 - 1-2 tsp dijon mustard
 - 1 tsp yellow mustard
 - 1/8 tsp dried dill or fresh
 - 1/8 tsp salt
 - 1/8 tsp pepper
 - 3 tbsp unsalted roasted sunflower seeds
 - 2 tbsp fresh chopped basil

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Drain & rinse your chickpeas and add them to a large bowl. Mash with a potato masher until texture appears flaked, almost like tuna. You could also use a food processor and skip the arm workout!
- Chop your green onion, celery, carrots, pepper, and pickles.
- Add to the bowl with your chickpeas, then add mayo, dijon, yellow mustard, dill, salt, & pepper. Stir well to coat.
- Fold in sunflower seeds and basil to taste.
- Pile high on bread with all your sandwich fixings or enjoy as a wrap, with crackers, on a salad, or simply dive into the bowl spoon-first – anything goes!

RECIPE NOTES: The salad will be great for approx. four days in the refrigerator.

Great use for the Garbanzo Beans from Commodity Distribution!



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6	3	7	9	4	1	2	5	8
8	1	4	2	5	6	3	7	9
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3	7	6	4	1	9	5	8	2
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SOLUTION #823

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4	7	9	5	8	1	6	2	3
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9	5	1	4	6	8	2	3	7
3	8	6	9	7	2	1	4	5
1	9	5	6	4	7	3	8	2
8	6	4	1	2	3	5	7	9
2	3	7	8	5	9	4	1	6

SOLUTION #824

In the Garden



P S R V F Z X Y D J T E O T V R Y L L Q Z L K T
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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE TOKYO OLYMPICS

After an unprecedented year-long delay, the Tokyo Olympics are on course to take place this summer.

Fans wondering what to expect from the global sporting event should prepare for a Summer Games unlike any other — both because of what is expected to take place and what isn't.

When are the 2020 Summer Olympics taking place?

Postponed a year because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Summer Olympics are scheduled for July 23 - August 8.

Who is hosting the Games?

Tokyo is the host city, and most events will be staged throughout the Japanese capital. Several sports will be held in other Japanese cities and towns, however. Road cycling, for example, will take place in the foothills of Mount Fuji; surfing will be held 40 minutes outside of Tokyo; and the men's and women's marathons, as well as the race walking events, will take place in Sapporo. The soccer matches will be played in six cities, and baseball and softball games will be held in Fukushima and Yokohama.

These Summer Games mark the second time Tokyo has hosted an Olympics. The 1964 Games also were held there, the first time the Olympics were staged in an Asian country.



What do we call the Tokyo Olympics?

These Games mark the first time an Olympics has been postponed. Even though the Tokyo Games are taking place in the summer of 2021, they'll still be referred to as the 2020 Olympics. The International Olympic Committee and the Tokyo organizers agreed that the Games would retain all of the 2020 branding, which means all signage, television graphics, souvenirs, apparel — even the medals won by the athletes — will say "Tokyo 2020."

How will the coronavirus affect the Olympics?

Organizers have promised an Olympics that looks and feels different than previous Summer Games, but they're still working out some key details. In March, Tokyo officials said only Japanese spectators will be allowed, but had not yet made any decisions on the capacity at Olympic venues or protocols for fans.

The Olympics typically draw together more than 11,000 athletes & 25,000 journalists from more than 200 countries. Plenty of protocols will need to be in place to ensure a healthy and safe Summer Games.

The Games likely will be scaled back a bit, but they'll still feature a full slate of sports, nations and athletes. There will be guidelines in place to encourage social distancing, restrict movement and limit face-to-face interaction.

Athletes will be allowed to stay at the Olympic Village only for the duration of their competition, and they'll be subject to regular coronavirus testing and temperature checks throughout their stay in Japan. They also will be barred from using public transportation or visiting any public places that aren't approved by Olympic officials.

How can I watch the Tokyo Games?

NBC once again will be providing extensive coverage of the Olympics, broadcasting events across several channels, including NBC, NBC Sports Network, CNBC and USA Network. Cord-cutters will be able to stream Olympics coverage on NBCOlympics.com and the NBC Sports app, and Spanish-language coverage will be available across all of Telemundo platforms.

While many events will air live, given the 13-hour time difference between Tokyo and the United States' Eastern time zone, many others will be broadcast on tape delay.

The opening ceremony is scheduled to begin at 8 p.m. in Tokyo, and NBC will broadcast the event live, which means it will air at 7 a.m. EDT in the United States.

What's the schedule for the Olympics?

The first medals will be handed out July 24, followed by more than two weeks of dizzying action. Swimming and gymnastics likely will take center stage in the opening week. Swimming competition runs July 24-Aug. 1, and gymnastics is July 25-Aug. 3.

Track and field events begin July 30 and conclude with the men's marathon Aug. 8, the final day of the Olympics.

Many Olympic tournaments run nearly the duration of the Games, including basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball, water polo, soccer and beach volleyball, and don't award medals until the final days.

Who are the athletes to watch?

While qualifying will continue through July, the United States is expected to field a star-laden squad with several athletes seeking multiple medals in Tokyo. Gymnast Simone Biles, the defending Olympic all-around champion and five-time world champion, is looking to cement her place in history. In the swimming pool, Katie Ledecky, Caeleb Dressel and Simone Manuel are expected to take aim at five or more medals. On the track, a new generation of American sprinters should include Noah Lyles and Michael Norman, while Allyson Felix is trying for her fifth Olympics and Justin Gatlin for his fourth.

The U.S. men's and women's basketball teams again

will be a who's who of all-star players, and the women's soccer team will feature many of the same stars who won the 2019 World Cup, likely including Megan Rapinoe and Rose Lavelle.

Other familiar faces include shooter Vincent Hancock, a three-time Olympian who won gold in 2008 and '12; fencer Mariel Zagunis, 35, who will be competing in her fifth Olympics and taking aim at a third gold medal; and runner Galen Rupp, who will be competing in his fourth Olympics and trying to improve on his third-place finish from the 2016 Olympic marathon.

Who are the up-and-comers?

Sprinter Noah Lyles will be 24 by the start of the Olympics, and after just missing the 2016 team, he hopes to compete in both the 100- and 200-meter races in Tokyo. He'll likely face stiff competition on the track from fellow American 23-year-old Michael Norman.

Five years ago, 16-year-old Sydney McLaughlin was the youngest track athlete to make the U.S. team in more than a quarter-century. In Tokyo, she's a strong contender for the medal podium in the 400-meter hurdles.

Swimmer Regan Smith, 19 graduated high school last spring. She's the world record-holder in the 100- & 200-meter backstrokes.

Skateboarding will feature a ton of young talent. Nyjah Huston, 26, a four-time world champion in the street event, is a leading candidate for Team USA, and Brighton Zeuner, the youngest-ever X Games competitor, turns 17 not long before the Olympic park event begins.

When surfing makes its Olympic debut, it'll showcase some of the world's top talents, including John Florence, 28, a two-time world championship, and Carissa Moore, 28, a four-time world champ.

What are the venues?

More than half of the 43 Olympic venues predate Tokyo being awarded the Summer Games, which means organizers have been able to focus on renovations more than new construction. Tokyo's National Stadium was the centerpiece of the 1964 Games and has undergone a complete overhaul for this summer. The 68,000-seat stadium will host the opening and closing ceremonies, as well as track and field and the women's gold medal soccer game. Initial designs for the stadium were scrapped in '15 when costs ballooned to \$2 billion and organizers settled on a more modest renovation.

Tokyo's Metropolitan Gymnasium is also a holdover

from the 1964 Games, when it was used for gymnastics and water polo. This time around, the 7,000-seat arena will host table tennis.

While the Tokyo Olympics don't feature centrally-located venues in "clusters," like recent Summer Games, most are still consolidated in Tokyo. In all, 28 are located within five miles of the Olympic Village.

Just 11 new venues were constructed for the Tokyo Games, including the 15,000-seat Tokyo Aquatics Center, home of the swimming events; the 12,000-seat Ariake Arena, which will host volleyball matches; and the 15,000-seat Oi Hockey Stadium, site of the field hockey tournament.

Is Russia competing in Tokyo?

Russia won't formally be competing in Tokyo, but plenty of Russians will be. Still dogged by a lingering doping controversy, the country was issued a four-year ban from international sporting events in 2019, which was reduced last December to two years by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). The punishment still means Russia will have no official presence — no flag, no anthem.

Many of its athletes will be eligible to compete, as long as they haven't been implicated in the country's state-sponsored doping scheme. Branded formally as "ROC" athletes — an acronym for Russian Olympic Committee — will be allowed to wear Russia's colors. Their flag will include the ROC's logo: a white, blue and red-striped flame above the five Olympic rings.

At the 2018 Olympics, 168 Russians competed as "Olympic Athletes from Russia." According to the court's decision, any Russian athlete wishing to compete in Tokyo should not be "subject to suspension, restriction, condition or exclusion imposed by a competent authority in any past or future proceedings."

What other controversies should we expect?

The Olympics always seem to offer a heavy dose of intrigue and controversy. And even without the coronavirus casting a shadow over the lead-up to these Summer Games, there will be no shortage of hot-button issues in Tokyo.

From the day Tokyo was awarded hosting rights in 2013, there have been concerns about the heat athletes and spectators will face. Many weather watchers and Olympic historians predict this will be the hottest Summer Games ever. Knowing this, teams and athletes have been doing heat-training, particularly those in endurance sports that take place outdoors, and are preparing for difficult conditions.

Russia aside, doping concerns are a regular part of

Rick Maese

the Olympics, and the swimming world has been closely monitoring the situation with Sun Yang, China's most accomplished swimmer. In 2018, Sun ordered a security guard to smash a vial containing his blood sample. The World Anti-Doping Agency took the case to CAS, which issued an eight-year ban last February. Sun appealed the decision to Swiss Federal Court, which in December kicked the case back to CAS. A new panel of judges is expected to hear his appeal in May.

The U.S. gymnastics team will head to Tokyo bearing the pain and scars from a sexual abuse scandal that rocked the sport, pitting the top American gymnasts against their national governing body, USA Gymnastics. Top athletes, such as Biles, have been outspoken on the abuse they suffered at the hands of Larry Nassar, a former team physician, saying USA Gymnastics refuses to operate in good faith, thus prohibiting the gymnasts from finding any semblance of closure. The gymnasts were not happy with a settlement proposal last year and have had to vie for a spot on the U.S. Olympic team even as they continue to battle the key decision-makers who run the sport in the United States.

Both USA Gymnastics and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee will come to Tokyo as revamped organizations. But despite substantial leadership changes, both are still subject of ongoing congressional scrutiny with many athletes and advocates saying more change is needed.

Who has the best uniforms?

The colors alone give many of the Team USA uniforms a futuristic Captain America feel, but fans might gravitate toward some of the skateboarding gear. The Nike-produced ensemble features colorful, abstract designs, fitting for a sport that embraces expression and individuality.

Skateboarders from Brazil and France will wear a similar design. Animal motifs are embedded in each uniform, a bald eagle for the U.S. team, a toucan for Brazil and a rooster for France.

The U.S. squad also will be outfitted with loosefitting cargo pants, while the French team has an all-red, industrial-looking boilersuit.

On the medal stand, American athletes will wear an all-white ensemble produced by Nike, providing a simple background for the medal to shine.

