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*January 17th Office
will be closed in
for MLK Holiday*



Scan and go directly to
AgriLife website or click
link below
orange.agrilife.org



Texas A&M
AgriLife Extension
Orange County




Your invited to join us for a Fresh Start to a Healthier You 2022

<p>January 4, 11, 18, 25 2 pm - 3 pm Whispering Oaks 2835 Western Ave</p>	<p>January 5, 12, 19, 26 2 pm - 3 pm Park Avenue Manor 2540 W Park Ave Orange</p>	<p>January 7, 14, 21, 28 2 pm - 3 pm Reserve at Cypresswood 1010 State Hwy 87 Orange</p>
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January session should rsvp by Jan. 3rd

<p>February 2, 9, 16, 23 2 pm - 3 pm Velma Jeter Manor 2500 Allie Payne Road Orange</p>	<p>February 3, 10, 17, 24 2 pm - 3 pm Willow Bend Apartments 4030 Sikes Rd Orange</p>	<p>February 4, 11, 18, 25 2 pm - 3 pm Twelve Oaks Apartments 2405 Highway 12 Vidor</p>
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February session should rsvp by Feb. 1st



Come learn about food safety, shopping on a budget, and much more.

Incentive items will be given out at each class!

Partnering with  Health Services

Per ITEX masks are required!

To register contact:
Tommy Byers BLT Nutrition Educator
at 409-882-7010

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP. The Better Living for Texans and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. If can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.





Come Celebrate a Fresh Start to a Healthier You!

Thursday January 6, 13, 20, 27, 2022
Time: 2 PM- 3 PM
Raymond Gould Community Center
385 Claiborne St, Vidor, TX 77662

This event is free to anyone 18 years and up!
Recipe Samples, hands on activities, and incentive items will be given out at the end of all four sessions.




For questions or to R.S.V.P
Contact: Tommy Byers BLT Nutrition Educator
At 409-828-7010

New Recipes

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP. The Better Living for Texans and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. If can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.

FREE

**Food Handlers Certification
2 hour course
Tuesday, February 8th
AgriLife Extension Office**

\$20 per person
payable at the beginning of class

Check or money order payable to
AgriLife Extension Act#230202

Call the AgriLife Office
to reserve your spot
409-882-7010

**Certified Food Managers
2-Day Course with Test
Wednesday Feb. 9th and Thursday Feb. 10th
9 am to 4 pm
AgriLife Extension Office**

Must pre-register by obtaining registration form from
<http://foodsafety.tamu.edu>

Complete form and submit with payment of \$125 check or
money order payable to:
AgriLife Extension Act#230202

Mail completed registration form with payment to:
**Food Safety Education Program
2253 TAMU 118 Cater-Mattil
College Station, TX 77843-2253**

Course instructor will be
Fallon Foster, M.P.H.
County Extension Agent
Family & Community Health

Question, contact the AgriLife Office
409-882-7010



DO WELL, BE WELL WITH DIABETES

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is excited to offer free educational programs focused on managing type 2 diabetes.

Dates: February 15th, 22nd, March 1st, 8th, & 15th

Time: 10:00 am to 12:00pm

Location:

City of Orange -Neighborhood Facilities Bldg

5
classes

Learn how to manage your diabetes through food & exercise.

Learn more about medication, self-care, and more.

To register, contact your local county agent!

Neighborhood Facilities Bldg
303 North 8th St
Orange, TX 77630

Orange County Extension Office
11475-A FM 1442
Orange, TX 77630
Call 409-882-7010 to register.

Taught by:
Fallon Foster, M.P.H.
Orange County Extension Agent
Family & Community Health

THESE PROGRAMS ARE OFFERED FREE DUE TO SUPPORT OF GRANT FUNDING.

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

Old Fashioned Hamburger Hash

Serves 4



- 3 medium russet potatoes peeled and chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 1 lb. lean ground beef
- 1 medium white onion diced
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons garlic minced
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 2 1/2 cups sharp cheddar cheese shredded

1. Boil potatoes in water until tender but not too soft/mushy, about 5 to 7 minutes. Drain water then set potatoes aside.
2. In a large nonstick skillet, over high heat, cook ground beef until browned. Drain off fat. Put cooked beef in a separate bowl and set aside.
3. In the same skillet over medium heat fry together vegetable oil, onion, potatoes, Italian seasoning, minced garlic, salt, and pepper. Toss well to evenly coat potatoes and onions in seasoning. Cook until potatoes and onions have started to brown, about 5 minutes and stirring often.
4. Add ground beef back to the skillet and stir well to mix. Add cheese and stir until melted.
5. Remove from heat.
6. Serve hot.

Notes

TIP: Always start your potatoes in cold water. If you add them directly to boiling water, the outsides will cook immediately while the insides will take longer, leaving you with some pieces that are still hard.

TIP: Use a fork to gently pierce the potato easily but not break it apart, your potatoes are probably ready.

TIP: To bring out the flavor of your spices, rub them between your palms to break them up before adding them to your recipe. Just make sure your hands are clean and dried first!

<https://spaceshipsandlaserbeams.com/>



Orange County Master Gardener
* Annual Plant Sale *
March 12th, 2022
8am - 1pm

Cold PROTECTION

1. In absence of a good rain, water well the day or night before a freeze. The moist soil and higher humidity around the plants will moderate temperature extremes.
2. Mulch with leaves or wrap with paper the more tender tropicals like hibiscus.
3. Consider a plastic frame and light bulb around special plants like tender citrus.
4. Do not wash frost off plants the morning after a freeze. This action raises the temperature too quickly and usually damages cell tissue.
5. Sit tender potted plants in protected areas on the ground. Do not leave them in exposed windy locations on concrete.
6. The special plants in pots that are subject to freeze can be brought into the house or garage when freezes threaten.

Holiday Wreath Making Class



We Have the Best & Freshest Pecans Available for Sale at the AgriLife Office

Orange County 4-H has been selling the Durham-Ellis Pecans for over 40 years as their primary fundraiser each year. The proceeds from the fundraisers allows us to send our youth to leadership training, educational opportunities, supplies for projects, scholarships, provide fun events for our youth, assist with 4-H enrollment scholarships along with much more!



Call or come on in and check out our selection of goodies

Welcome Holiday Additions: Poinsettia Care

By John Green, Orange County Master Gardener

Another year is rapidly coming to an end and Christmas is close at hand and with it the joy of spending time with friends and family. Many of us will be shopping for gifts, food, and sweet treats. Why not include a bright, festive holiday plant or two for yourself or as a wonderful holiday gift! Poinsettias make dramatic focal points as holiday decorations and when placed strategically throughout your home, command attention from anyone who views them.

But caring for them once the holidays are over seeming to be something most people do not remember to do, and invariably, they are left out to be retrieved with the post-holiday trash.

However, it doesn't have to end this way for these beautiful plants. In fact, with the proper care, poinsettias can live for many years, and if unfettered by a terrible freeze, can reach heights greater than ten feet when planted in a landscape!

Caring for Poinsettias



Poinsettias prefer bright, indirect light, and lots of it. Six hours of bright light every day is recommended, however, they do not thrive in direct sunlight. Plants kept indoors, need to receive diffused light such as near window with thin curtains. They also prefer cooler daytime temperatures, so a normal household with fans or air-conditioning should do them well. If the temperature is too high, the plants will graciously respond by becoming tall and "leggy" in appearance.

Avoid drafts and do not place them near heat sources.

Like many house plants, poinsettias prefer soil which is slightly moist but not wet. Well-drained soil is a must for them, or they will suffer from root rot if water is allowed to stand at the plant's base. Soil that is dry to the touch one inch from top indicates it is time to water them, as would drooping bracts or leaves.

The beautiful red, pink, white or variegated bracts of the poinsettia are what appear to be the plant's flowers. They are in fact leaves and will remain beautiful for weeks at a time and can reappear each year if proper care is given to the poinsettia plant. Once the bracts lose their color, near spring's arrival, cut the plant back to approximately seven to nine inches in height. Within a month or so, new growth will appear. Begin fertilizing monthly with a weak mixture of commercial fertilizer (at half strength).

Keep the plant pruned throughout the summer to ensure the plant remains compact, but do not prune after August 31. Continue to keep the plant watered properly and provide indirect lighting all

year round. Poinsettia bracts recolor as the nights in autumn begin to get longer. Place the plant where it can enjoy these longer nights remembering that exposure at this time to too much light will inhibit the plant's natural tendency to put on colorful bracts and will remain green.



Once a year, repot your poinsettia in a good quality potting soil. This is best done after pruning and just before the new growth appears in Spring. I hope with these easy-to-follow directions, you can have a beautiful poinsettia plant which renews its holiday beauty year to year!

Poinsettia Care: Quick Reference for year-round care guide Christmas Holiday Care

- * Poinsettias require bright, indirect light while inside
- * Water when potting mix feels dry to the touch
- * Keep away from drafts (hot or cold)
- * Begin fertilizing once color begins to fade
- * Protect from temperatures below 50°F

After Holiday Care thru Early Fall

- * Place Poinsettia in a sunny indoor location and keep soil barely moist
- * Trim to about 7-9" tall once leaves fall in the Spring, keep watered and fertilized
- * After new growth appears and repot. Place outside in morning sun and fertilize weekly
- * Pinch back tips of the Poinsettia by one quarter to foster branching
- * Bring indoors when night temperatures fall below 50°F

October 1 to December 15

- * Total darkness required from 4PM to 8AM. Ensure the poinsettia receives no light between these hours
- * Allow the plant to receive only 8 hours of sun light daily
- * Once bracts begin to color, discontinue long nights and fertilizer
- * Poinsettia can now be placed in its holiday location

For more information or to have your gardening questions answered please contact us:
Orange County TX Master Gardeners
Website: <https://txmg.org/orange>
Facebook: Orange County Texas Master Gardeners Association.

Orange County Master Gardener Helpline: (409) 882-7010
Email: extension@co.orange.tx.us



Health Initiative Winners

Within 8 weeks we lost a total of 109.6 lbs. and collected 328 hours and 20 minutes of physical activity.



Wendy Garrison 11.1%



Andre White 13.2%



Franny Woods 5.9%

TEXAS FARM BUREAU SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Apply by March 1, 2022

Details at texasfarmbureau.org/scholarships



Calling high school and college students! Invest in your future, and apply for one of our Texas Farm Bureau scholarships today! Deadline is March 1, 2022

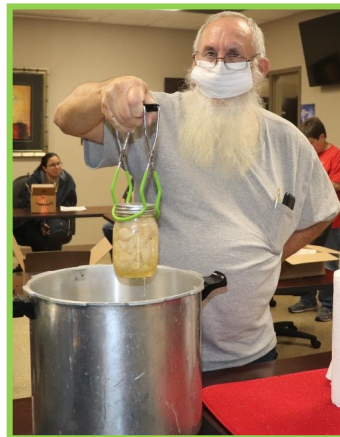
Learn about the different scholarships, applications details, eligibility and more at

<https://texasfarmbureau.org/>

THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE FOLLOW PASSION NOT PAYCHECKS.

WhippedDream.com

Meat Canning Class



Facebook
Orange County Texas Master Gardeners Association

Website: <https://txmg.org/orange>
Email: ocmg1990@gmail.com

Gardening Hot Line
Tuesdays & Thursdays 10 am to 2 pm
Call 409-882-7010

Or can email questions, concerns and or pictures to extension@co.orange.tx.us



*Orange County Master Gardeners
2021 Christmas party/meeting*

Great food and company, recognized the interns who've completed their 50 training hours, listened to an interesting talk presented by Katie Krantz (with Shangri La), and installed our new officers for 2022.



Falling Leaves: Rake or Not?

By John Green, Orange County Master Gardener

Hello fellow gardeners and Merry Christmas! Today I'm standing at the kitchen sink and beside me sits a steaming cup of coffee, as I peer outside the window mesmerized, once again witness to another dreary, damp overcast day. You see I'm pondering this week's gardening article. Through the kitchen window I'm watching an abundance of leaves free-fall, suddenly whisked away at breakneck speed by an invisible force, driven without cause to the yard's perimeter. Mounds of crisp and damp, multicolored dunes carelessly undulating with each passing breath of winter. One of my four, four-legged companions choose this moment to bark, a passing squirrel possibly? At this moment I'm pulled back into reality. Falling leaves, this is a good topic. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the fall/winter. This is a survival mechanism, going dormant which allows the tree to conserve energy and water. This week I'm writing about two schools of thought to rake leaves or not?



Why Utilize Fallen Leaves:

Removing fallen leaves from the base of the tree canopy where they typically mound may inhibit many microorganisms, insects, and small animals which are beneficial to the environment. Raking, removing, and composting leaves may destroy the habitat of many small animals which require the cover of the leaves in the winter. Working with nature and the ecosystem, you are being a steward of the land while also improving the lawn. Allowing the leaves to remain in place will provide a healthier beneficial insect and animal population in the spring.

Below is list of a few of the beneficial animals which removing leaves may displace:

- Frogs, Toads, Newts, Salamanders, and other amphibians
- Snails and Slugs
- Crickets, Beetles, Millipedes, Centipedes, and other insects
- Field Mice
- Box Turtles
- Snakes
- Spiders and other arachnids
- Moths and butterfly pupae
- Worms and other soil aerators
- Bacteria and Soil-improving microorganisms
- fungi and as well as needed healthy bacteria

Healthy insect populations require leaf litter in winter. These insect populations also feed birds and predatory insects. Allowing leaves to winter in place will form natural fertilizer improving your soil over time, while suppressing weeds thus saving you effort and the cost of bagging.

What to do instead of discarding fallen leaves:

- Place raked leaves on the perimeter of the lawn
- Rake leaves and place them over garden beds as mulch or protection
- Use a mower with a mulching blade to make leaves smaller pieces
- Place raked leaves around base of shrubs and trees



Removing fallen leaves:

There is a good reason behind raking leaves, and it has to do with lawn health as well as aesthetics, a tidy-looking lawn. Some of you may have heard the following warnings about allowing leaves to stay on top of your lawn:

The lawn will be smothered if a thick layer of leaves is left on top of it
 A leaf layer will invite pests, disease, or other serious issue like brown patch.
 A leaf layer forms a barrier blocking water, nutrients, and air flow from getting to the root system of your lawn
 Wet leaves form a mat, which can keep new grass blades from emerging in spring.

Don't use your rake, use your lawn mower on the mulch setting. You've probably already been doing some mulching mowing since fall but if you have not then go ahead and start now with your blades set high to lightly mulch the leaves. Then in a couple of weeks, lower the blades some and mulch again. As you are doing this you are providing food for those small animals that I listed above. Please do not use a blower! You end up blowing leaves and the small animals away which robs the soil of nature's greatest resource – rich, natural compost from decomposing leaf litter.

Too Rake or Not? Rake for aesthetics and utilize the raked leaves in areas around trees and shrubs as well as vegetable and flower gardens. We should be mulch mowing leaves from our lawns and letting them go right back into the grass and soil for the small animals to take advantage of.

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Orange County Food Safety

Tips for Meal Kit and Food Delivery Safety

Mail-order food, subscription meal kits, home-delivered groceries and restaurant deliveries can be convenient. Make sure food safety is part of the package, too. Home-delivered food, like all food, must be handled properly to prevent food poisoning.

Handling delivered food safely is important for everyone, but especially if you are buying food for someone who is more likely to get food poisoning:

- Adults aged 65 and older,
- Children younger than 5,
- People who have health problems or take medicines that lower the body's ability to fight germs and sickness (weakened immune system), and
- Pregnant people.



Meal Kits and Other Shipped Food

Food shipped to your home need to stay at a safe temperature to prevent the growth of germs that could make you sick. This includes mail-order food and subscription meal kits.

Before Ordering Food for Delivery

Ask questions first. Research companies and call customer service to ask about food safety practices.

Ask how the company responds if food is delivered at an unsafe temperature or is otherwise not safe to eat. Find out if the company provides information with each shipment or delivery on safe handling and preparation of food, including cooking temperatures.

Safe Food Delivery and Receipt

Arrange for delivery when someone is at home so perishable foods such as meat, seafood, poultry, eggs, or dairy can be quickly stored in the refrigerator or freezer instead of being left outside until someone is home. If you can't be there in person, see if a neighbor can store the food until you return.

Examine the items and packaging to ensure they are intact.

- Make sure the company used insulated packaging and materials such as dry ice or frozen gel packs to keep perishable food cold in transit.
- Look for labels that say "Keep Refrigerated" or "Keep Frozen" if you ordered perishable food.

Use a food thermometer to check the temperature of perishable food when it arrives.

- Perishable food that has been shipped should arrive frozen, partially frozen with ice crystals still visible, or at least as cold as it would be in a refrigerator (40°F or below). Even if a perishable food product is smoked, cured, vacuum-packed, or fully cooked, it still must be kept cold.

Store perishable food at a safe temperature. After you make sure perishable food was delivered at a safe temperature (40°F or below), store it in the refrigerator or freezer as soon as possible until you are ready to prepare it.

Notify the company if food arrives above 40°F. Don't eat any of the food, or even taste it, to see if it is safe. Food can be unsafe and still taste, look, and smell OK. When in doubt, throw it out.

Local Restaurant Deliveries

Check inspection scores. Check a restaurant's inspection report at your health department's website or ask the health department for a copy of the report.

Be aware of delivery times. Cooked meals can make you sick if they sit out for more than 2 hours, or as little as 1 hour if it's 90°F or warmer outside. Delivered restaurant meals should be eaten right away or refrigerated if they contain a cooked or cold product, such as a salad of fresh cut fruit or a grain and vegetable bowl with grilled chicken.

If you have leftovers or are saving a hot food delivery for another day, refrigerate within 2 hours. Make sure how long your leftovers will keep in the fridge or freezer.

To read the full article visit <https://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/tips-meal-kit-and-food-delivery-safety>



James Scales, Health Inspector
Deputy Director
Orange County Environmental Health and
Code Compliance



Fallon Foster, M.P.H.
County Extension Agent
Family & Community Health
Orange County

Savory Garden Harvest Veggie Tart Recipe

Start with a tart or pie crust, smooth on a creamy garlic parmesan cheese spread, then pile on your favorite veggies for a wonderfully bright and fresh veggie tart.

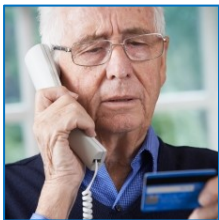


- * 1 large pie crust, see notes below
 - * 8 oz mascarpone or cream cheese
 - * 2 teaspoons chopped garlic, about 3 large cloves
 - * 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - * 1/2 teaspoon pepper
 - * 1/2 cup grated or pearly parmesan cheese
 - * 2 large sliced tomatoes, see notes below
 - * 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes
 - * 1-2 zucchini, medium-sized, sliced thinly
 - * 1/2 cup red onion, sliced thinly
 - * 1 large handful raw kale leaves, stems stripped
 - * 1 bell pepper, the color of your choice, sliced thinly
 - * 4 oz. goat cheese, or tangy substitute
 - * Egg wash (1 egg yolk + 2 teaspoons water), to brush on the crust for even browning
 - * Flaky sea salt to sprinkle on the baked tart
1. Preheat the oven to 425°F.
 2. Prepare your pie crust and line a shallow 9x13 inch jelly roll pan, or your tart pan of choice. See notes below for options.

3. In a small bowl combine the mascarpone (or cream cheese) with garlic, parmesan, salt, and pepper. Stir to combine.
4. Prepare your sliced veggies. See notes below.
5. Spread the garlic parmesan cheese mixture over the bottom of the pie crust.
6. Place the sliced veggies on top of the cheese spread mixture in one even layer. Arrange the veggies closely together but try to no overlap them. Try to build different layers of volume by rolling the zucchini ribbons and ruffling the kale leaves into little bunches.
7. Pull off small knob of goat cheese, placing pieces here and there on the tart.
8. Brush the pie crust edges with egg wash.
9. Bake in preheated oven for 15 minutes, then turn the heat down to 375°F. and bake 20-25 minutes longer until the tart crust appears baked and the veggies are starting to take on color. You'll see crispy brown edges on the kale and zucchini. You can tent very loosely with foil to prevent over-browning. Just make sure it's loose so the veggies don't steam and get mushy.
10. Remove from the oven and sprinkle on some flaky sea salt to finish. Slice and serve.

Notes: You can add chopped herbs of your choice to the crust. You will need enough for 2 tablespoons. Depending on what you might have on hand it might be parsley, basil, lavender, summer savory, oregano, thyme, chives, etc.
 Notes: Can use store brought pie crust, flatbread, and also frozen puff pastry. If you use puff pastry, just be sure to poke holes in the bottom with a fork so it doesn't over-puff and displace your toppings.
<https://afoodloverslife.com/>

Health Fraud



Health fraud involves selling drugs, devices, foods, or cosmetics that have not been proven effective. Keep in mind - if it sounds too good to be true, it's probably a scam. At best, these scams don't work. At worst, they're dangerous. They also waste money, and they might keep you from getting the treatment you really need.

Health fraud scams can be found everywhere, promising help for many common health issues, including weight loss, memory loss, sexual performance, and joint pain. They target people with serious conditions like cancer, diabetes, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, arthritis, Alzheimer's, and many more.

To protect yourself, recognize the red flags such as:

- Miracle cure
- Quick fix
- Ancient remedy
- Secret ingredients
- Scientific breakthrough

Before taking an unproven or little know treatment, talk to a doctor or health professional- especially when taking prescription drugs.

medlineplus.gov

Healthy Swaps

DINNER TONIGHT
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Try these swaps for a healthier charcuterie board!

REDUCE ADDED SUGARS

- Switch dried fruit with fresh fruit
- Opt for sugar free or no sugar added dips & spreads

LIMIT SODIUM

- Switch salted nuts with unsalted/raw options
- Select lower sodium cheeses such as swiss, fresh mozzarella, or goat cheese

GO WHOLE GRAIN

- Switch regular crackers with whole grain options such as multi-grain crackers, whole wheat baguettes, or whole grain crostini

ADD HEALTHY FATS

- Add nuts and seeds to add some heart healthy fats to your board



Strawberry Oatmeal Cookie Balls

16 Servings

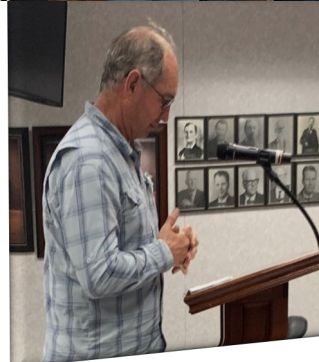
- 1 cup Medjool dates pitted
- 4 medium ripe strawberries
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup old fashioned rolled oats dry
- 3/4 cup whole almonds
- 1/4 cup unsweetened coconut flakes

1. Use a food processor to blend the dates, strawberries, vanilla extract, oats, and almonds together.
2. Process until the almonds are in pieces but not completely ground.
3. Use 1 tablespoon measuring spoon to scoop out mixture from food processor before rolling. Roll into a small ball, place on a plate and refrigerate for 1 hour.
4. Clean food processor and add coconut flakes. Process until broken down into small pieces.
5. Pour out coconut onto a clean plate and roll chilled balls over coconut, topping well.

Nutrition facts: Serving size 1 ball. Calories 40, Total Fat 6 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 0 mg, Total Carbohydrate 21 g, Dietary Fiber 3 g, Total Sugar 13 g, Protein 3 g.



Helping Texans Better Their Lives 2021 Annual Making a Difference Interpretation presentation to Orange County Commissioners Court



Garden Tool Maintenance

By John Green, Orange County Master Gardener

Hello gardening friends, our local weathermen and women are predicting a warmer weather pattern for the next several days. If you are like me, making the time to perform maintenance on garden tools doesn't rank high on my "to do list" but it is a necessary task. As most other gardening chores are now completed: lawn maintenance and fertilizer application, house plants slowly transitioned indoors, flower beds weeded and mulched, and vegetable beds growing green cover crops or heavily mulched. Of course, if you are like me-you planted a couple vegetable beds for Winter harvest and they are diligently producing daikon radish, collard greens, green onions and bok choy. You know that a little winter preparation can really pay off when spring arrives, but don't forget that your garden tools need a little TLC as well. Here are some tips on how to keep them in great shape while they await the return of warm, sunny days.



December typically is a good time of year to perform basic garden tool maintenance which includes rust removal, tool sharpening, and tool lubrication and proper storage. First let me say, prevention is the best defense to mitigate tool rusting, so cleaning your gardening tools after each use is the best path to take but not always realistic given our hectic schedules. A thorough cleaning using water with liquid detergent is usually adequate to remove soil and debris. Sap or pine residue will require additional scrubbing with a brush. Dry the cleaned tool completely, then lightly coat with mineral oil or spray with WD-40. Or if you chose to perform garden tool cleaning annually rather than after each use here are some tips on how to keep your garden tools in great shape.

- Remove all dried or caked-on soil with a wire brush, rinse and dry thoroughly. (Soak especially dirty tools in water first.)
- To remove rust, make a 50% vinegar solution in a five-gallon plastic bucket. Mix one-gallon white vinegar with one gallon of water. Add rusted tools to the solution and allow rusted areas to remain submerged for 24 hours. Use a steel wool pad or wire brush and scrub the tool using small circular motions until rust is removed.

Note: Wear protective clothing and safety glasses, set up a workstation away from pets or children.

- Wash thoroughly with liquid soap and water and dry completely. Coat metal surfaces with mineral oil or WD-40.
- Sharpen dull tools using a whetstone or file. Secure the garden tool using a clamp or vice before beginning to sharpen the tool. Working at a 45-degree angle, start at the outer edge and slowly move toward the center.
- Wipe a light coating of linseed oil or paste wax on wooden handles to preserve them and prevent cracking or splitting.
- Store hand trowels and other small tools in a bucket of sand soaked in mineral oil to further deter rust and hang rakes and shovels.



- Store water hoses out of the weather by first draining, then coiling them. Repair leaks using a hose repair kit which you can purchase at your local home or garden store. There's no need to buy a new hose! Even leaky fittings can be replaced with minimal time, money, and effort.
- On your mower, be sure to clean and sharpen the blades (grass clippings rust mower decks. Avoid storing gasoline in your mower over the winter; run the mowers tank out of gasoline or add gasoline stabilizer in the gas tank.

Note: Remember to practice safety while sharpening tool. Wear protective clothing and safety glasses, set up a area away from pets or children, and always secure the tool you are working on.

Quality gardening tools are expensive. Take good care of them and they will contribute to many years of productive gardening.

For more information or to have your gardening questions answered please contact us:

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Orange County Food Safety Home Canning and Botulism

What You Need To Know

You cannot see, smell, or taste the toxin that causes botulism, but taking even a small taste of food containing this toxin can be deadly.

Follow these steps to protect yourself and others from botulism:

- Always use proper canning techniques and the right equipment for the kind of foods you're canning.
- If you have any doubt about whether a home-canned food was canned properly, throw it out!
- Also throw out home-canned and store-bought food that has signs of contamination. Never taste food to see if it's safe!



vegetables (including asparagus, green beans, beets, corn, and potatoes), some fruits (including some tomatoes and figs), milk, all meats, fish, and other seafood.

Pressure canning is the only recommended method for canning low-acid foods.

- **Do not use a boiling water canner for low-acid foods** because it will not protect against botulism.
- **Do not use an electric, multi-cooker appliance**, even if it has a "canning" or "steam canning" button on the front panel.

When pressure canning, keep the following things in mind.

- Use a recommended pressure canner that holds at least four one-quart jars sitting upright on the rack.
- Be sure the gauge of the pressure canner is accurate. Many county extension offices will check gauges. Contact the pressure canner manufacturer for other options.
- Clean lid gaskets and other parts according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Vent the pressure canner before pressurizing and follow recommended cooling steps.
- Use up-to-date processing times and pressures for the kind of food, the size of jar, and the method of packing food in the jar. Pay special attention to processing times for low-acid foods.

Botulism is an emergency. Seek medical help immediately if you or someone you know has symptoms.

Home canning is an excellent way to preserve garden produce and share it with family and friends, but it can be risky—or even deadly—if not done correctly and safely.

It's time to harvest your delicious produce, and you may be thinking about canning some of it. But beware! If home canning is not done the right way, your canned vegetables and fruits (as well as canned meats, seafood, and other foods) could cause botulism.

What Is Botulism?

Botulism is a rare but serious illness caused by a toxin that attacks the body's nerves. It can cause difficulty breathing, muscle paralysis, and even death. The toxin is made most often by *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria. Improperly home-canned, preserved, or fermented foods can provide the right conditions for the bacteria to make the toxin.

You cannot see, smell, or taste the toxin, but taking even a small taste of food containing it can be deadly.

Botulism is a medical emergency. If you or someone you know has symptoms of botulism, contact your doctor or go to the emergency room immediately.

How Can I Help Prevent Botulism From Home-Canned Foods?

You can protect yourself, your family, and others by following these tips.

1. Use proper canning techniques.

The best way to prevent foodborne botulism is by carefully following instructions for safe home canning from the [USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning](#). Only use recipes and cookbooks that follow the steps in the USDA guide. Don't use other recipes, even if you got them from a trusted friend or family member.

2. Use the right equipment for the kind of food you are canning.

Low-acid foods are the most common sources of botulism linked to home canning. These foods have a pH level greater than 4.6. Low-acid foods include most

3. When in doubt, throw it out!

If you have any doubt whether safe canning guidelines have been followed, do not eat the food.

Home-canned and store-bought food might be contaminated with toxin or other harmful germs if:

- the container is leaking, bulging, or swollen;
- the container looks damaged, cracked, or abnormal;
- the container spurts liquid or foam when opened; or
- the food is discolored, moldy, or smells bad.

What Else Should I Know About Preventing Botulism?

- Refrigerate any canned or pickled foods after you open them.
- Always use traditional methods when preparing Alaska Native foods.
- Refrigerate homemade oils infused with garlic or herbs and throw away any unused oils after 4 days.
- If you bake potatoes wrapped in aluminum foil, keep them hot (at temperatures hotter than 140° F) until they are served or refrigerate them with the foil loosened so they get air.

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/home-canning-and-botulism>



James Scales, Health Inspector
Deputy Director
Orange County Environmental Health
and Code Compliance



Fallon Foster, M.P.H.
County Extension Agent
Family & Community Health
Orange County

Orange County 4-H Annual Christmas Party 2021



4-H enrollment members will never be turned away from joining a club or participating in a project.

4-H Connect enrollment website

<https://v2.4honline.com/>

Youth Club Member Participation Fee

\$30 November 1st to the completion of
4-H year
(clover kids, ages 5-8* are free)

*A youth that is 8 years old and going into the 3rd grade must wait until September 1st to enroll for proper fees to be accessed.
The Texas 4-H year officially starts September 1st.

Dusty Trails 4-H & Clover Kids Club

1st Tuesday
6:30 pm 4-H Office
Club Manager
Anna Bandy
409-988-3666

Adult Volunteer Application Fee

\$10

County 4-H Council

All enrolled 4-H youth are welcome to be a part of County Council
1st Monday 6 pm
4-H Office

Mighty Pirates 4-H

2nd Tuesday 7 pm
4-H Office
Club Managers
Lisa Edwards
409-554-1960

Adult Leaders Association (ALA)

1st Monday 6 pm
4-H Office
All enrolled Adult Volunteers are welcomed to be a part of ALA

OC 4-H Judging Club

Practice Thursday's
6 pm 4-H Office
Club Manager
Melissa Pyatt
409-679-2441

Projects outside of clubs

Photography

2nd Monday 6 pm
4-H Office
Leader Cynthia Parish

Robotics

4th Monday
4-H Office
NEW TIMES
Youth 5-8
6 pm-7 pm
Youth 9-18
6 pm to 8 pm
Leader
Cindy Childress

Clay Busters Shotgun Sports

Meetings 3rd Tuesday
6 pm 4-H Office
Practice Tuesdays 6 pm
Orange County Gun Club
Club Manager
Robert Caffey
409-767-6222

Equine

Riders & Non-Riders
3rd Monday 6pm
Tin Top 2 (T2) Arena
Old Peveto Road Orange
Leader Sharon Dowden

Food & Nutrition

3rd Tuesday 6pm
4-H Office
Leader Lettie LeBert

Fashion & Interior Design

4th Tuesday 6pm
4-H Office
Leader Patience LeBert

If you need any type of accommodation to participate in this program or have questions about the physical access provided, please Orange AgriLife Office 409-882-7010, at least 2 weeks prior to the program or event you are interested in.

2021 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

11475-A FM 1442
Orange, TX 77630
Phone: 409-882-7010

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Orange, TX
Permit #12

Return Service Requested

AgriLife Orange County 2022 Calendar

JANUARY

4th, 11th, & 18th

Walk & Talk

6th, 13th, 20th, & 27th

Fresh Start to a Healthier You

Starting January 4th

Fresh Start to a Healthier You (see flyer in
this newsletter)

17th

MLK JR. DAY Holiday- Ofc Closed

FEBRUARY

Starting February 2nd Fresh Start to a
Healthier You (see flyer in this newsletter)

8th

Food Handlers Certification

9th & 10th

Certified Food Managers Course and Test

15th & 22nd

Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes (continues
through March)

MARCH

1st, 8th, & 15th

Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes continues

12th

Orange County Master Gardener
Annual Plant Sale