

PANHANDLE PATH TO HEALTHY LIVING



August 2020

GARDENING IS A GREAT EXERCISE IN MINDFULNESS

Getting Your Hands Dirty

Gardening engages you physically, mentally, and socially. Health benefits are numerous and you don't need to live in the suburbs or the country to experience gardening and its benefits.

Gardening can positively impact a number of health outcomes, including:

- *Reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety*
- *Decrease in reported stress and mood disturbances*
- *Decrease in BMI*
- *Higher reported sense of community*
- *Increased physical activity*
- *Improved cognitive function*

Gardening has both immediate and long-term effects on health. For individuals with mental health conditions, horticultural therapy – using gardening as a means to facilitate dialogue and skill building – has shown promise for improving chronic and acute mental health conditions. People report feeling happier almost immediately when engaging in gardening. Over time, individuals lowered their BMI through physical activity and improved nutrition. One study identified improvements in depression, life satisfaction, and cognitive function continuing for 3 months after therapy.

Earth Day and Arbor Day are great catalysts for encouraging us to spend more time in nature and trying out gardening as a hobby; but just how does gardening impact health?

Continued page 2.

Kelli Behman

Connecting with nature

Nature has been shown to be restorative to our minds, cognitively and emotionally. Spending time in nature helps improve our attention. According to researchers, nature restores our minds by attracting our attention without effort (unlike that spreadsheet you've been staring at). Using nature for therapy is also promising. Researchers found children with ADHD were more focused following walks in a park compared with walks in an urban setting.

Evidence also shows that even just living near green spaces – such as parks, gardens, or forests – is linked to benefits, such as:

- Reduced mental fatigue
- Lower stress
- Better protection against illness
- Overall feeling of better health
- Increasing physical activity

Increased physical activity has been shown to improve physical and mental health. Sure, you could get a gym membership, but with gardening, you're exercising in the sun. Physical activity while in the sun decreases cortisol, the stress hormone, and increases endorphins, which make us feel good (You should still protect yourself with sunblock, light clothing, and a hat).

With gardening you can choose your own level of physical activity (or your landscape will choose for you). If you want to really be active, double digging a new garden bed provides a strenuous workout. If you do not have the space for a whole bed, a few pots on the patio, balcony, or stoop works wonders as well. Consider three pots on the front stairs of a city row home. If you're in the third floor apartment, you'll need to walk stairs to water and weed. The tasks may not take long, but that's more activity than if the plants weren't there. Plus you're likely to linger outside, which leads to the next way gardening impacts mental health – by fostering community.

Interacting with others

After you walked downstairs to water a few plants on your stoop and pull a couple of weeds, you'll probably step back to admire your work, chat with your plants, and say hi to a neighbor walking a dog. You may get to chatting, find some things in common, and maybe even grab a coffee together. Trips to the garden center also create the opportunity to meet new people and chat about plants.

What's more, gardening can lead to many enhancements to your community as a whole. Backyard farmers can donate extra crops to food banks (Find local food banks and collection days at Ample Harvest). In Philadelphia, PHS oversees Roots to Re-entry and City Harvest, programs that create hope and opportunity for prisoners and citizens returning to their communities.

Community Gardeners, those who utilize an allotted plot in a larger group of plots, take this benefit of gardening to another level. Community gardens have shown to:

Improve relationships among neighbors,

Increase community pride,

Serve as a catalyst for other community improvements and mobilization.

Reduce social isolation,

Create places for positive social interaction,

Serve as meeting places.

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) – who has been cleaning and maintaining vacant lots in Philadelphia for years – studied neighborhoods around their pocket parks and saw reductions in gun assaults, vandalism, disorderly conduct, and illegal dumping.

Improving nutrition

Many gardeners grow their own fresh fruits or vegetables, and people who eat diets high in whole foods like fruits and vegetables are up to 35% less likely to develop depression than people who eat less of these foods, according to Mental Health America.

Not only can the quality of your food improve when you're growing it yourself, but it can also be a money saver. Instead of buying a bag or head of lettuce for a dollar or two, you can buy a tray of six plants or a pack of 200 seeds for two dollars.

So get out there and garden!

Gardening at home or in the community can improve both your physical and mental health. When you're stressed or tired, being outside tending to your plants may be the best medicine. Need a workout? Skip the gym and pick up a shovel. If you're looking for fresh food, go out and pick it yourself. And don't forget to share with your neighbors.

Author: Dave Monico, MPH



Green Tomatoes

Did you know that during warm weather you should harvest your tomatoes once they develop color but do not turn fully red? The red color in tomato fruit does not form when temperatures are above 86°F. Fruits allowed to ripen on the vine may be yellowish orange in extreme summer heat. For this reason, it is advisable to pick tomatoes in the pink stage and allow them to ripen indoors for optimum color development. About 70°F is ideal to ripen tomatoes.

See OSU fact sheet HLA 6012 "Growing Tomatoes in the Home Garden" at osufacts.okstate.edu for more information.

An illustration of a young boy with brown hair, wearing a purple t-shirt and blue pants, standing next to a black charcoal grill. The grill has a red lid and is cooking a skewer of vegetables. Above the grill, there are icons for various grilling tools and ingredients: a spatula, a knife, a fork, a brush, a sausage, and three bottles of sauce. The background shows a green lawn, a brown picket fence, and a blue sky.

Make grilling a family affair and get kids involved at your side with these activities:

- Young Children | Season beef cuts or prepare steak marinade
- Pre-teens | Check for doneness with thermometer
- Teenagers | Work the grill and cook beef to desired degree of doneness

KIDS IN THE outdoor KITCHEN

PATH TO THE PLATE

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Path to Better Living...Knowledge

People in the US have reported receiving packages marked as jewelry that actually contain mysterious seeds from China



You may have heard about reports that several people across the US have received packages marked as jewelry that actually contain mysterious seeds from China. There have been numerous such incidences occurring in Texas.

Dr. Kevin Ong serves as Professor & Associate Department Head for Extension Program in the Department of Plant Pathology & Microbiology. Additionally he serves as the Director of the Texas Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (TPDDL).

Should anyone receive unexpected seeds in the mail from China, Dr. Ong recommends the following:

Report incidence to USDA-APHIS via email. Email should be sent to:

Carol Motloch USDA-APHIS-PPQ State Operations Coordinator

carol.m.motloch@usda.gov

Email should include:

Client Contact:

- Email and Phone Number
- Also, description of package and photo of the label and material.



Volunteer

If you are interested in serving on the **Family and Community Health Program Area Committee** or becoming a trained Master Wellness Volunteer, contact Kelli Lehman @ 806.468.5543 or klehman@ag.tamu.edu



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Page offers program information and daily educational resources

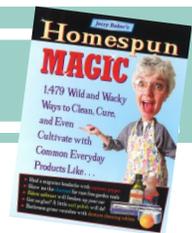


Find us on the web at

<https://randall.agrilife.org/>

Path to County

The First Fast Food



John Montagu (a.k.a., the Fourth Earl of Sandwich), an English lord and well-known gamesman in the 1700's, is credited with inventing the popular repast that shared his title: the sandwich.



Legend has it that he had his cook place slices of beef between pieces of toast so he could play cards and eat at the same time.



Tuesday, August 4--Intro & Equipment
Thursday, August 6-- Water Bath Basics
Tuesday, August 11--Pressure Canning Basics

All Classes Held online	\$15 for all 3 Classes <small>*eventbrite has a \$2.55 additional fee total \$17.55</small> 6:30-7:30pm	Pre-Register thru Eventbrite
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<https://preservingyourharvestonline.eventbrite.com>

for additional information please contact Texas A&M AgriLife Castro County 806-647-4115

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Link to register

<https://preservingyourharvestonline.eventbrite.com>

Once the participant is registered they will get a link for the event each day. Sessions will be recorded.

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

Panhandle Path to Healthy Living is a Family and Community Health information resource for area families in the Texas Panhandle Counties. The newsletter is published monthly. Readers are encouraged to read the newsletter and then pass it on. Any information may be reproduced for education purposes in any form and credit cited appropriately.



Kelli D. Lehman

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<http://randall.agrilife.org/>

806.468.5543

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE
Randall County
Herbert F. & Jeanine Kuhlmann Extension Center
200 N. Brown Road
Canyon, Texas 79015

Return Service Requested

Path to Plate.....

Beef Fajitas

- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 pound Flank Steak
- 8 tortillas
- 2 medium sliced Bell peppers
- 1 medium sliced white onion
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon pepper

Wash your hands and clean your cooking area.

Wash all produce under cool running water with a soft vegetable brush.

Start by mixing together the chili powder, paprika, onion powder, garlic powder, cumin, cayenne pepper, salt. Add in the lime juice and mix well to create a runny paste.

Place flank steak in a seal-able plastic bag and place the spice paste in the bag thoroughly coating the steak.

Cook the beef over a medium high heat on the grill until it reaches at least 145 degrees (for 8 to 10 minutes on each side).

Slice the onion, and bell pepper and coat with olive oil and pepper.

Cook the onion and pepper over medium heat on the grill (recommend using a grill basket) until the vegetables soften.

Assemble the beef and vegetables on 8 tortillas.

Serve with your favorite fajitas sides! Our lemon rice goes well with this recipe and can be made ahead.



Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 2 fajitas		Servings Per Container 4	
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 220	Calories from Fat 60		
		% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 6g	9%		
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%		
Trans Fat 0g			
Cholesterol 35mg	12%		
Sodium 370mg	15%		
Total Carbohydrate 26g	9%		
Dietary Fiber 5g	20%		
Sugars 4g			
Protein 16g			
Vitamin A 15%	Vitamin C 110%		
Calcium 6%	Iron 10%		
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:			
	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
Calories per gram:			
	Fat	9	Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4