

Have a Safe 4th of July

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Summer holidays are the best! Sunshine, friends and family, picnics, pot lucks, beverages and activities all help to make great memories. It takes one accident to bring about not-so-good memories of these holidays, however. Fireworks come with warnings, and there are also some things we can practice to keep everybody safe from food poisoning.

The high temperatures of summer can be beneficial for bacterial growth on our food, so it's especially important to keep our hot foods hot and our cold foods cold. [MSU Extension](#) advises you use these tips to keep you safe this holiday:

Keep your cold foods cold. When transporting salads, desserts or other cold foods, place them in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs. If possible, have two coolers – one for cold beverages and the other for your perishable foods. Never use the ice that has kept foods cold for an addition to drinks as they can contaminate your beverage. Keep your cooler closed until ready to use the food or beverage.

Keep cold foods on ice when serving, and put them back into a cooler within two hours – one hour if the outdoor temperatures are above 90°F.

Clean any produce. Rinse your vegetables and fruits in clean running water. Don't let them soak in a sink of water, as any contaminate can spread to the rest. After cutting any produce, keep it under refrigeration or in your cooler.

Watch for cross-contamination. Use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw and ready-to-eat foods. If the juices of raw meat touch vegetables and fruits, bacteria will spread to them and food borne illness can result. Keep cleaning cloths at the ready to take care of accidents, and have a food-grade sanitizer available.

Cook foods to their required minimum temperatures. Be aware that the plate you use to bring your raw meats to the grill is contaminated and should not be used again for the cooked meat unless it has been cleaned and sanitized. It is easier to use a different plate. Also, do not use any marinade you used for the meat as a dipping sauce unless it has been cooked – it too may contaminate the cooked meat.

Practice good personal hygiene. Remember to wash your hands often and make sure others do as well. Hands are an easy way to transmit pathogens.

Keep your hot foods hot. After grilling, put away any hot foods not eaten as soon as possible. They should be cooled and not left to sit at outdoor temperatures.

Keeping your family and friends safe from food borne illness can be quite easy if you follow these steps. As far as keeping them safe from fireworks? Leave those to the professionals.

Source: https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/have_a_safe_4th_of_july

Gorizia rosemary, aka Barbecue Skewers, newest Texas Superstar

Gorizia rosemary, nicknamed Barbecue Skewers rosemary by [Texas A&M AgriLife](#) horticulturists, has been named the newest [Texas Superstar](#) selection for its edible and ornamental characteristics and ability to perform well across the state. Gorizia rosemary is a selected variety from the northeastern Italian town of the same name.

David Rodriguez, [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#) horticulturist, San Antonio, said Gorizia rosemary can be utilized as an herbaceous woody ornamental plant, as a culinary herb and as an effective pollinator plant in containers or in landscapes.

“Rosemary has been a very popular dual-function plant for many years,” he said. “Gorizia rosemary is a beautiful plant that is aromatic around the house. Pollinators like bees and other beneficial insects love them, and they present tons of culinary possibilities – from marinades and dried herbs to using the stems as skewers for shish kabobs on the grill.”



Gorizia rosemary is fast growing with a vigorous upright growth habit. Its needle-like foliage is double the size of other varieties and has incredible flavor and fragrance, Rodriguez said. Its robust, straight stems are complemented with profuse sky-blue flowers that are magnets for bees and other beneficial insects.

Rodriguez said plants take well to pruning and are perfect for hedging, screens and specialty topiaries or simply as standalone plants. The variety is an ideal plant for any Texan who likes to garden, cook and use dry herbs. The plant is especially good for cooking on a grill since the woody stem makes an excellent skewer.

To be designated a Texas Superstar, a plant must perform well for growers throughout the state. Texas Superstars must also be easy to propagate, ensuring the plants are widely available and reasonably priced.

For best grilling skewers

Thicker woody stems make the best barbeque skewers. Strip off the leaves for use in the marinade or later for other culinary needs and soak the skewers in water for about 20 minutes. Soaking helps release the aromatics while cooking and minimizes any burning wood.

Texas Superstar is a registered trademark owned by [Texas A&M AgriLife Research](#), a state agency that is part of the [Texas A&M University System](#). Plants are designated Texas Superstars by the Texas Superstar executive board, which is made up of nine horticulturists from AgriLife Research, AgriLife Extension and [Texas Tech University](#).

For more information on Gorizia Rosemary read the rest of the article at:

<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2021/06/03/gorizia-rosemary-aka-barbecue-skewers-newest-texas-superstar/>

Keep kids safe in water this summer

With temperatures hitting triple digits and more children anxious to be outside, swimming pools, lakes, beaches and water parks will be seeing more activity as water-related recreational opportunities again become more available.

[Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#) experts say people need to remember the importance of water safety, especially for younger children.



Children depend on adults for protection, instruction

According to Safe Kids Worldwide, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional and preventable death in children ages 1-4. Children in this age range are more likely to drown in a pool, while children 5 years old and older are more likely to drown in open water, such as a lake, creek or river. The risk of drowning in open water increases with age.

Brad Urbanczyk, assistant director of environmental health and safety supporting [Texas A&M AgriLife](#), College Station, said whether it's a backyard pool or the ocean, parents can help ensure their children are protected by following some basic safety tips:

1. **Always keep children within an arm's reach.** Pay close attention to a child's whereabouts if near water and avoid any personal distractions. "It's difficult not to be distracted, but when there's a child around water, especially a toddler, bad things can happen in a matter of seconds," Urbanczyk said. "It's important to avoid any distractions, especially since a small child can drown in as little as an inch of water."
2. **Give children swimming lessons as soon as they are ready.** This is dependent on age, physical development and the frequency with which the child is expected to be in or around water. "Parents can begin introducing their children to water as early as 6 months old," he said.
3. **Teach children essential survival skills,** such as floating to treading water, staying close to the shore, being able to return to the surface after getting in water over their head, turning in circles to find an exit, and how to properly exit the water. Urbanczyk said it is especially important to teach children to swim with an adult, whether in a pool or open water.
"From the first time you teach your children to swim, make sure they know to never go near water unless an adult is with them," he said. "Even older, more experienced swimmers should still swim with a partner to help ensure their safety, especially in open water."

Young people who plan to swim in open water need to be taught about sharp or uneven surfaces, marine life, riptides, currents, undertow and other possible dangers that may cause drowning, he said.

Source: <https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2020/07/10/keep-kids-water-safe-this-summer/>

Peach and Blackberry Salad

Ingredients:

Dressing

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lemon zest, and juiced
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil minced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Nutrition Facts	
6 servings per container	
Serving size 3/4 cup (113g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	160
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 13g	17%
Saturated Fat 2g	10%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 330mg	14%
Total Carbohydrate 8g	3%
Dietary Fiber 3g	11%
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 4g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 63mg	4%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 245mg	6%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Source: <https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/>

Salad

- 6 ounces baby spinach and spring mix
- 1/4 cup reduced fat feta cheese crumbled
- 1/4 cup almonds sliced
- 1/2 pint fresh blackberries halved
- 2 medium peaches sliced

Directions:

1. Wash your hands and clean your food preparation area.
2. Wash all produce and fruit before preparing salad.
3. Using a canning jar, pour in olive oil, zest, and juice of 1 lemon, minced fresh basil, and salt. Cover the jar with lid and shake till blended well, let sit.
4. Toss spinach and spring mix in a large bowl. Top greens with feta cheese, walnut pieces, blackberries, and sliced peaches.
5. Pour dressing over salad and gently toss.



County News

Have a SAFE and



Courtney Redman, CEA/FCH
113 W. Beaugard
San Angelo, Texas 76903
325-659-6527
cjbarbee@ag.tamu.edu

County Website:

<http://tomgreen.agrilife.org/fch/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/TomGreenCount-yFCH/>

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