



Family and Consumer Sciences News and Information

From the Editor

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I hope this newsletter finds everyone in good health and great spirits. It won't be long before we will be pulling out the winter clothing and warming up with hot bowls of soup. Which means that the holiday season will be here shortly. So in thinking about the upcoming holidays I have filled this newsletter with helpfully information for the holiday season. Including information on cooking a turkey, controlling holiday costs, and tips on Christmas tree safety. I hope this information will help you and your families have a safe and happy holiday season.

As a final note please remember if your group or organization is looking for a speaker to please let me know.

Even if October has past I wanted to included some information about Breast Screenings. I want to encourage women to get the facts, talk to their doctor and get screened. It's the best way to find breast cancer and early detection is the key in treating breast cancer.

I want to wish everyone a happy holiday season and safe travels as you come and go to your various holiday gatherings.

Happy Holidays

from Texas A&M AgriLife
 Extension Service
 Wheeler County



Your Best Defense



The best way to find breast cancer early is to get screened. Talk with your health care provider about which screening tests are right for you. A mammogram is an X-ray image of the breast. It is the best screening tool used

today to find breast cancer early. A mammogram can find cancer before a lump can be felt. Women age 40 and older should have a mammogram every year. If you are younger than 40 with a family history of breast cancer or other concerns, talk with your health care provider about what screening tests are right for you. A clinical

breast exam is done by a health care provider who checks your breasts and underarm areas for any lumps or changes. Women should have this test at least every 3 years between the ages of 20 and 39 and every year starting at age 40. Many women have a clinical breast exam when they get their Pap test.

Source: Susan G Komen—Breast Cancer Facts

Plan Now to Help Control Holiday Costs



The first thing to do is actually make a budget. If you don't know how much you want to spend, you'll have no idea how you're doing. Make a list of the gifts you plan to buy and all the extra expenses -- for special dinners and parties, holiday baking and decorating, postage for sending gifts or cards, and travel, entertainment or charitable giving, and estimate how much you want to budget for those items.

Then take a look at your savings or assets -- the money you have set aside for holiday spending, and any cash gifts or bonuses you are certain you'll be getting. If your assets don't match your anticipated expenses, you'll either have to cut back on spending, go into debt, or both. If you do plan to spend more than you have on hand, be sure the amount is something you can pay off in one or two months.

Reducing spending might be easier than you think. Instead of buying gifts for everyone in your family, consider drawing names instead. For holiday meals and parties, have a potluck instead of preparing everything yourself.

When you're ready to start shopping, be sure to do so wisely. Here are a few tips:

- The "envelope method" works well for many people. For each person, family, or event, place the amount of money you plan to spend for that expense in an envelope. When the money is gone, you've finished shopping for that particular category.
- Be sure to do comparison shopping. Before you buy, get three different prices at different stores or over the Internet. You may be surprised at how much you'll save.

Track credit card spending closely. It might help to keep a sticky note on the card and jot down the amount every time you charge something. Tally up the expenses every evening to make sure you're staying on track.

When you're out and about, be cautious about signing up for store credit cards in order to get a discount. Signing up for too many will negatively affect your credit score. Even if you never use the card again, you could be seen as a credit risk because you have lots of available credit and could pick up a lot of debt quickly.



Source: Writer: Martha Filipic – OSU Extension Family and Consumer Sciences, Family Fundamentals - Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center <http://extension.osu.edu/news-releases/5454>

Financial Planning for Generation X & Y Women



Wi\$eUp is a financial education program designed for Generation X & Y women. It promotes financial security through online education. The course has 8 components and is free upon registration. The Wi\$eUp program was developed by the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau. The Wi\$eUp curriculum was developed by Texas AgriLife Extension Service under contract with the Women's Bureau, and is offered online at wiseupwomen.org. With Wi\$eUp you'll learn how to identify and overcome your financial challenges areas and construct a workable plan to meet present and future goals; how to invest wi\$ely, deal with unexpected expenses, choose the right types of insurance and retirement and much more. To start taking these courses for FREE logon to

www.wiseupwomen.org

Safety Tips for Enjoying Your Christmas Tree

We all enjoy the pleasant fragrance and genuine beauty of a live Christmas tree. The following tips can help you get the maximum enjoyment from your live Christmas tree.

Choosing a Precut Tree

Grasp a branch between your thumb and forefinger and pull toward you. Very few needles will come off if the tree is fresh. Very few needles will come off if the tree is fresh. Next, take a few needles and bend them. If they spring back, the tree is fresh. Now, bump the trunk of the tree on the ground. If green needles fall off the tree, it is not fresh. You can expect a few brown needles to fall from the tree. Choose another tree if many brown needles fall off.

The length of time a tree has been cut affects tree freshness. Trees that have dropped to below 75 percent foliar moisture content will continue to dry out even when placed in water. Select trees that have been cut for a short period of time.

Choosing a Field-Grown Tree

Trees still connected to their roots will be fresh and full of water. Select a tree that will fit your stand. Then gently shake the tree to see if any green needles fall. After that, break a few needles and check for fragrance.

Pines and Leyland cypress will stay fresh longer than other trees. Cedars and cultivars of Arizona cypress stay fresh for a shorter period of time.

Before Bringing the Tree Inside

If your tree has been cut for more than one hour, recut at least one inch from the trunk and place the tree in plain water immediately. If you are not going to take the tree inside until later, store the tree out of the wind and sun in an unheated sheltered area such as a garage or porch. Do not expose the tree to freezing temperature at any time. Make certain the container has sufficient capacity to keep the trunk in water all the time. A fresh tree may use more than a gallon of water a day.

Because your tree is a natural product, you can expect to find some dead needles, small limbs and grasses in the tree. Clean the dead materials from the tree before you bring it inside. This step may not be necessary if you purchase the tree from someone who shakes the tree when you buy it.

If the tree is stored outside in water for several days, recut a half inch from the stem just before you take it inside.

Once Your Tree is Inside

Once your tree is inside, you can care for it by placing it in a stable container that will hold at least 1, and preferably 2, gallons of water. Check the water level each day. Keep the tree away from heat sources such as hot air ducts, radiators, fireplaces and televisions sets. Remember, heat will dry your tree out. Follow these additional fire safety tips:

- Use only UL-approved lighting accessories.
- Avoid combustible decorations.
- Keep metal foil and tinsel away from electrical sockets.
- Always turn off your decorations before going to bed or leaving home.
- Make sure your smoke detector is in good working order.
- Make sure your fire extinguisher is in good working order.
- Never place candles or other open flame sources on or near your tree.
- Test your light cords before you put them on your tree. They should be in good working order and in good condition.

After the Christmas Season

After the Christmas season, check your decorations and dispose of any electrical items that are showing wear. Pack your decorations carefully and store them in a cool dry place. Storing decorations in a hot attic may cause electrical components to develop problems.

Source: Clemson Cooperative Extension Service, HGIC 1752, *Safety Tips for Enjoying your Christmas Tree*



Top 5 New Year's Resolutions

Believe or not a new year is just a few months away. As we start this New Year, we all begin with things that we are going to change, eliminate or improve on. Some people call them resolutions, and these are formed with good intentions; but somewhere down the line they get aborted, abbreviated or lost in the shuffle.

The following are some good ideas for resolutions that we all can use:

- **Resolve to stay optimistic** – Look for an opportunity in every difficulty and anticipate a favorable or positive outcome for every situation. “We live in a sausage grave world; however, occasionally there will come a few lumps in it.” We should get past the lumps and be proud of the gravy.
- **Resolve to identify the most powerful benefit you have to offer people around you and then deliver it** – “The purpose of life is to have a life,” thus stated by George Bernard Shaw. We all have one and everyone influences someone’s life, so it behooves us to try to live as though we know who that person is each day.
- **Resolve to refrain from verbal attacks** – Approach confrontational encounters with the diplomacy of a “super salesman” instead of with the attitude of a “bull in a china closet.”
- **Resolve to be open to the cultures and influences of other** – There is a direct correlation between personal well-being and openness to other peoples’ ideas and cultures.
- **Resolve to take control of your own destiny** – Don’t get so busy trying to make a living that you forget to make a life.

Source: 10 Great New Year's Resolutions – Ted Gordon – MSU-ES

Count Down to Thanksgiving - What You Need to Know

As Thanksgiving approaches, cooking the traditional turkey dinner gives rise to anxieties and questions. What kind of turkey should I buy? Should I buy a frozen turkey or a fresh one? How do I store my turkey? A few simple steps will not only ease your holiday fears, but will ensure a delicious and a safe meal for you, your family, and your friends. The following information may help you prepare your special Thanksgiving meal and help you countdown to the holiday.

Plan Ahead

Plan your menu several weeks before the holiday. Shopping early will ease the countdown tension for your Thanksgiving meal. Ask these questions to help plan your meal. Do you want a fresh or frozen turkey? Do you have enough space to store a frozen bird if purchased in advance; if not, when should you purchase a turkey? What size bird do you need to buy?

Fresh or Frozen

If you choose to buy a frozen bird you may do so at any time, but make sure you have adequate storage space in your freezer. If you buy a fresh turkey, be sure you purchase it only 1-2 days before cooking. Do not buy a prestuffed fresh turkey.

Use the following chart as a helpful guide:

What Size Turkey to Purchase	
Type of Turkey	Pounds to Buy
Whole bird	1 pound per person
Boneless breast of turkey	1/2 pound per person
Breast of turkey	3/4 pound per person
Prestuffed frozen turkey	1 1/4 pounds per person – keep frozen until ready to cook



Thawing

In the refrigerator

Place frozen bird in original wrapper in the refrigerator (40 °F or below). Allow approximately 24 hours per 4 to 5 pounds of turkey. A thawed turkey can remain in the refrigerator for 1-2 days.

Thawing Time in the Refrigerator	
Size of Turkey	Number of Days
4 to 12 pounds	1 to 3 days
12 to 16 pounds	3 to 4 days
16 to 20 pounds	4 to 5 days
20 to 24 pounds	5 to 6 days



In cold water

If you forget to thaw the turkey or don't have room in the refrigerator for thawing, don't panic. You can submerge the turkey in cold water and change the water every 30 minutes. Allow about 30 minutes defrosting time per pound of turkey. The following times are suggested for thawing turkey in water. Cook immediately after thawing.

Thawing Time in Cold Water	
Size of Turkey	Hours to Defrost
4 to 12 pounds	2 to 6 hours
12 to 16 pounds	6 to 8 hours
16 to 20 pounds	8 to 10 hours
20 to 24 pounds	10 to 12 hours

In the microwave

Microwave thawing is safe if the turkey is not too large. Check the manufacturer's instructions for the size turkey that will fit into your oven, the minutes per pound, and the power level to use for thawing. Cook immediately after thawing.

Preparation**The day before Thanksgiving**

Make sure you have all the ingredients you need to prepare your holiday meal. Check to make sure you have all the equipment you will need, including a roasting pan large enough to hold your turkey and a food thermometer. Wet and dry stuffing ingredients can be prepared ahead of time and refrigerated separately. This may also be done on Thanksgiving Day. Mix ingredients just before placing the stuffing inside the turkey cavity or into a casserole dish.

Thanksgiving Day

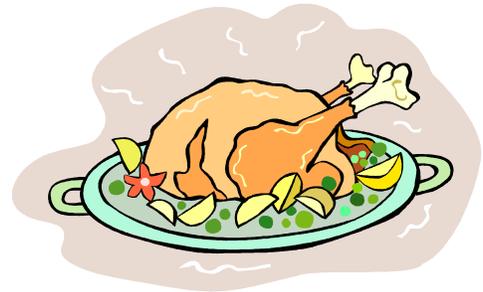
If you choose to stuff your turkey, stuff loosely. The stuffing should be moist, not dry, since heat destroys bacteria more rapidly in a moist environment. Place stuffed turkey in oven immediately. You may also cook the stuffing outside the bird in a casserole. Judging cooking time for your turkey will be easier if the following chart is used. The times listed are for a fresh or thawed turkey in an oven at 325 °F. These times are approximate.

Timetables for Turkey Roasting

(325 °F oven temperature)

Cooking Time — Unstuffed	
Size of Turkey	Hours to Prepare
8 to 12 pounds	2 3/4 to 3 hours
12 to 14 pounds	3 to 3 3/4 hours
14 to 18 pounds	3 3/4 to 4 1/4 hours
18 to 20 pounds	4 1/4 to 4 1/2 hours
20 to 24 pounds	4 1/2 to 5 hours

Cooking Time — Stuffed	
Size of Turkey	Hours to Prepare
8 to 12 pounds	3 to 3 1/2 hours
12 to 14 pounds	3 1/2 to 4 hours
14 to 18 pounds	4 to 4 1/4 hours
18 to 20 pounds	4 1/4 to 4 3/4 hours
20 to 24 pounds	4 3/4 to 5 1/4 hours

**Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the turkey.**

A whole turkey is safe cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165 °F throughout the bird. Check the internal temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast. All turkey meat, including any that remains pink, is safe to eat as soon as all parts reach at least 165 °F. The stuffing should reach 165 °F, whether cooked inside the bird or in a separate dish.

When turkey is removed from the oven, let it stand 20 minutes. Remove stuffing and carve turkey.

Storing Leftovers

Cut the turkey into small pieces; refrigerate stuffing and turkey separately in shallow containers within 2 hours of cooking. Use leftover turkey and stuffing within 3-4 days or freeze these foods. Reheat thoroughly to a temperature of 165 °F or until hot and steaming.

Pumkin Pancakes with Orange Syrup

Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
1 1/2 cups milk
1 cup canned pumpkin
2 eggs, beaten
2 tablespoons cooking oil
Nonstick cooking spray



Directions

In a medium bowl stir together flour, brown sugar, baking powder, salt, and pumpkin pie spice. Make a well in the center of flour mixture. In another medium bowl combine milk, pumpkin, eggs, and oil. Add the milk mixture all at once to flour mixture. Stir just until moistened. Lightly coat an unheated nonstick griddle or heavy skillet with cooking spray. Preheat over medium heat. For each pancake, pour about 1/4 cup of the batter onto the hot griddle or skillet. Cook over medium heat about 4 minutes or until pancakes are golden brown, turning to second sides when pancakes have bubbly surfaces and edges are slightly dry. Serve warm with orange syrup.

Orange Syrup: in a small saucepan stir together 1 cup orange juice, 2 tablespoons honey, 2 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch, and 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir for 2 minutes more. Serve warm.



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Improving Lives, Improving Texas

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