

Penn State **EXTENSION**

AGRICULTURE | COMMUNITY & FAMILY | ENVIRONMENT

Extension Times. . . *Helpful Hints for Living and Growing*

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Monroe County Cooperative Extension

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Five Pleasant Valley High School seniors completed a nine week internship with various Monroe County offices. While working, interns completed a project benefiting their sponsoring office. The Government Intern Program provides Pleasant Valley High School seniors the opportunity to experience local government and explore career opportunities.

In March 2009, the Collection Connection 4-H club held their "Go for the Greens" themed meeting. Wearing green, the members brought healthy and nutritious green food to share. They made spinach and mushroom pizza and creamy spinach penne pasta using recipes from the NRGbalance website. Other foods that were eaten were: cabbage, salad, cream of asparagus soup, broccoli, peas, green beans, green apples, kiwi, green grapes, and pickles. They also collected "green" canned vegetables which were donated to a local food pantry.



- ❁ 300 county and regional green industry employees attended Commercial Horticulture programs held in February and March and learned about plant culture, pests, and integrated pest management controls.
- ❁ 20 local professionals participated in the national teleconference sponsored by Hospice Foundation of America to examine how diversity influences end-of-life decision making and the impact that culture has at the time of death and during bereavement.
- ❁ Over 100 children and adults participated in the third annual kite event .
- ❁ The Monroe County Farmer's Market (Saturday AM) and Dansbury Farmers Market (Wednesday AM) opened in May. A couple growers attended regional training on Keeping Fresh Produce Safe GAP Practices.
- ❁ 1605 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade representing 7 public and private schools learned about Tobacco education from our Smoke Free Town; No Tobacco, No Kidding Carnival; and "Mr. Hound Finds Smoke" puppet shows.
- ❁ 5 English as a Second Language students at Carriage Square, Tobyhanna and 4 Mount Pocono Head Start Parents completed all the required lessons to graduate from the Penn State Nutrition Links program. In addition, PSNL was featured on two local radio stations, WSBG and WESS (ESU).

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SUMMER

Wazzup, Grandma?

Grandparents often complain that their teenage grandchildren no longer appear to be interested in them. They seem bored when they come to visit, and they do not delight in the little pleasures they shared just a year or two ago. While a small part of this is true, fear not! You have not become a bore, and the grandkids have not outgrown you. What you are seeing happen is your grandchild gradually becoming an adult. In order for this to happen, they have to pass through the stage of adolescence. This period of life is characterized by incredible, sweeping changes in their physical growth as well as their emotional, social and moral development.



Grandparents ponder, “Why do they seem like they don’t want to be here when mom and dad bring them for a visit?” The job of adolescence is independence. Young people are busy trying to figure out who they are, what is important, and what values they want to embrace. In order to do that, they spend a lot of time thinking, processing, reflecting and what looks like to adults—daydreaming. They also are gathering information, so teens spend a lot of time in contact with their friends and peers. Today that can include talking on cell phones, sending text messages, and shooting instant messages via the computer. It looks pretty recreational to grownups, but really, it is important work to kids! When adults interrupt this process, kids often react with a variety of emotions ranging from mild irritation to angry outbursts. These moods and over-reactions are also typical behaviors seen in adolescents. So, what is a grandparent to do? First of all, realize that it is not you that is causing that scowl on your grandson’s or granddaughter’s face. Understand that this period of life is fraught with immense changes. Second, show appreciation for them coming to visit even if they don’t look thrilled to be there. Thank them for stopping by. Have a special treat on hand that they like. Another thing you can do is show interest in their lives. Teens have tendency to not want to talk much with adults, preferring their peers as confidantes. However, you can open the door for communication by simply asking “open-ended questions.” These questions elicit more than a single word answer. “Tell me about your classes this year” is more likely to start a conversation than, “So, how is school?” or “Do you like school this year?” However, understanding what is going on during the teen years does not mean that young people should not be held accountable for their behavior. Much to the contrary, this is a time when young people need the guidance of adults more than ever. Do not tolerate disrespect, and be sure to tell your grandchildren what their boundaries are during

visits. This may include your expectations around the language they use and how they speak to adults. You may even ask that they limit the use of their electronic devices for a short period of time so you could spend time together. Grandparents are very special in the lives of young people. Although they may not always show it, young people really do appreciate the influence and presence of elders. Research supports the significance of grandparents in making a difference in youth. Do not underestimate your role in helping your grandchild manage the journey to adulthood! For more information and ideas, visit www.aarp.org/family/grandparenting.

The Penn State University Cooperative Extension **Better Kid Care Program** has information on children’s issues for early childhood educators, child care providers, and parents on the Better Kid Care web site at www.betterkidcare.psu.edu

Talking Times and Listening Times

It’s good to spend time talking with your child. Focus on talking with your child and not just talking to your child. It’s just as important to listen to what your child has to say as it is for you to do the talking. Here are some important things to remember:

- Show you are interested in what your child is saying.
- Make sure to look at your child when she is talking to you.
- Avoid outside distractions. Turn off the television, radios, videos, etc.
- Ask open-ended questions, which require more than a one-word answer.
- It’s normal for a child to take longer to say something, so be patient and allow lots of time. Do not cut your child off before she is finished telling you about something.
- Notice your child’s mood and body language. This allows you to sense the importance of what your child is trying to tell you.
- Value your child’s ideas. Show that you think her opinions are important.
- Use reflective listening with your child. This means repeating what your child said to make sure you understand. This shows you are really listening.
- Avoid getting too wordy when you are talking.
- Know when to end a conversation about an important matter when it has been talked about long enough.
- Remember you are your child’s most important teacher.
- What you teach your child will affect how she communicates with others.

Source: <http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/FTWT/>

Doing Things as a Family with Less

Family budgets may be tight this summer, and the annual trip to the beach may be put on hold for a later date. There are plenty of other things that families can do that bring them together, break the routine, and do not have to cost a lot. Here are some ideas for summer fun:



- ⊗ Visit a local park or community festival as a family. Pack a picnic lunch to eat along the way so you can spend less money on food or eating out.
- ⊗ Go for a hike, a bike ride, or a stroll around the park.
- ⊗ Instead of visiting resort beaches, take in lakes or state parks closer to home.
- ⊗ Tap into free community resources such as concerts in the park, museums or community recreation programs.
- ⊗ Hold a family game or movie night.
- ⊗ Bake together or cook out as a family.
- ⊗ Take up a hobby as a family such as star watching or gardening. Go to the library to get free resources on your subject.
- ⊗ Do a family project that everyone can contribute to such as refinishing some furniture or growing vegetables.
- ⊗ Read books and have a family book club around a fire—complete with roasted marshmallows!

The purpose of family vacations is to get away and do something different. That does not necessarily mean having to spend lots of money. With a little creativity, we can get that same sense of togetherness and out of the rut—for pennies!

For more information on managing money in tough times, visit www.eXtension.org.

Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why Children Need to Play in School, a report from the Alliance for Childhood - The importance of play to young children's healthy development and learning has been documented beyond question by research. Yet play is rapidly disappearing from kindergarten and early education as a whole. This report is meant to bring broad public attention to the crisis in our kindergartens and to spur collective action to reverse the damage now being done. View the report at http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/sites/allianceforchildhood.org/files/file/Kindergarten_8-page_summary.pdf

States Expand Newborn Screening for Life-Threatening Disorders - Regardless of where they

are born in the United States, nearly all newborns now receive mandated screening for many life-threatening disorders, a remarkable public health advance of the last four years, according to a new report issued by the March of Dimes. Find more information at http://www.marchofdimes.com/aboutus/22684_51920.asp

AARP Databases on Aging

AgeSource Worldwide identifies several hundred clearinghouses, libraries, databases, training modules, major reports, Web metasites, and other informational resources in some 25 countries. *AgeStats Worldwide* provides access to comparative statistical data that compare the situation of older adults across countries or regions around a variety of issues areas. These databases were produced and are maintained by AARP. *AgeSource* and *AgeStats Worldwide* databases are now available at: <http://www.aarpinternational.org/database/>

MoneyWi\$e

In uncertain times, Pennsylvanians need information they can rely on. Trust Penn State Extension, with its state-wide network of educators, to provide you and your family with strategies to live well in any circumstances. Go to : <http://extension.psu.edu/moneywise/>

Financial Literacy: Your Money and Your Life Workshop (Primary audience teachers). Monday, August 17 from 10 to 2:30 at the Monroe CES Office. Cost \$20

How is SNAP Implemented in Pennsylvania?

Representatives from WIC, and the Departments of Education, Health, Agriculture, Welfare and Aging, as well as Cooperative Extension enjoined to create nutrition education materials for coordinated use in Agency activities and use by all interested Pennsylvania nutrition and health educators. Twelve vegetables are highlighted with purchasing information, recipes, worksheets for children, bookmarks and more. Interesting site. Go to: <http://panen.psu.edu/SNAP/index.html>

Hike for Health

What could be more fun than going for a hike in a park, on a mountain trail, or a walk through your neighborhood? The fun of exploring a new place looking for animals, insects and flowers will make your hike or walk very enjoyable. Before you start your hike, plan to take a tasty snack with you. You will probably get a little bit hungry on your hike.



The simple recipes in the Hike for Health series were designed for young people to make ahead of time. Most recipes will only take you 10 to 20 minutes to prepare. Follow the step-by-step directions and you will have a healthy snack to enjoy during your hike. Making food yourself with a little help from an adult is a great way to learn about food and meal preparation. We have plenty of recipes for you to try--from pizza to smoothies!

Recipes are at: <http://hikeforhealth.extension.psu.edu/>

Growing Your Own Food resources:

http://extension.psu.edu/living_better/grow_food.html

Finding and using local farm foods this

summer: the new 2009 Monroe County Farm Market guide is available at our office or can also be found on our website: <http://monroe.extension.psu.edu> Just click on the "Program, Opportunities and Newsletters" link.

Food Preservation Resources

Classes: Six classes have been scheduled for the summer months.

Topics include: The Basics of Home Canning (beans, tomatoes); Preserving Food-Freeze in Freshness; Making Jams and Pie Fillings; and Quick Process Pickles. The brochure with information about the classes, cost and registration is available on our website, <http://monroe.extension.psu.edu/NewslettersRegistrations/newsletters-registrations.htm>



or call the extension office and request a copy.

Reference: *So Easy To Preserve* This beautiful book contains the latest U.S. Department of Agriculture recommendations for safe food preservation. *So Easy To Preserve* is now a 375-page book with over 185 tested recipes, along with step by step instructions and in-depth information for both the new and experienced food preserver. Chapters include *Preserving Food, Canning, Pickled Products, Jellied Fruit Products, Freezing and Drying*. This 5th edition has 35 new tested recipes and processes, in addition to a new section with recommended procedures for home-canned salsas. Copies available for purchase at the Monroe County Cooperative Extension Office, Stroudsburg at a cost of \$18.

Recommended Websites

National Center for Home Food Preservation: <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/index.html>

Penn State Food Preservation Website: <http://foodsafety.psu.edu/preserve.html>

Food Storage Fact Sheet

<http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/storeitchart.pdf>

A food may still be safe, but no longer taste like something you want to eat if it's stored too long -- learn more about optimal storage times.

Food Recalls: Although the salmonella contamination of peanut products may be over, there will probably be situations in the future where you may want more information. One place to get information about the FDA product recalls is their website: <http://www.fda.gov/opacom/7alerts.html>. You can also check the product package for a phone number. You may be able to call to see if the food is involved or ask a question related to the product safety, date codes, storage.

Salmonella Risk with Cantaloupes

The FDA recommends taking the steps below to reduce the risk of contracting Salmonella from cantaloupes:

- ⊛ Choose only cantaloupes that are not bruised or damaged.
- ⊛ Keep cut cantaloupe below 41°F through refrigeration or surrounded by ice.
- ⊛ Wash hands with warm, soapy water before and after handling fresh cantaloupes.
- ⊛ Scrub whole cantaloupes by using a clean produce brush and cool tap water immediately before eating.
- ⊛ Use clean cutting surfaces and utensils when cutting cantaloupes.
- ⊛ Cut away bruised or damaged areas before eating it.
- ⊛ Discard cut cantaloupe if it is left at room temperature for more than two hours.
- ⊛ Use a cooler with ice when transporting or storing cut cantaloupes outdoors.

Source—www.fda.gov

Attention Food Service Workers:

Notice to those who need safe food handling certification or recertification: There are two training opportunities in June (Stroudsburg or Hawley locations) as well as an internet option. See our website upcoming opportunities for the flyer/registration. <http://monroe.extension.psu.edu/>

Cooking for Crowds – for volunteer groups using food for fund raising. If your group has 20 or more members interested in this training, call the Extension Office for details on how to schedule training for your group.

Healthful Food Choices and Update on Fats, Current Issues in Nutrition and Physical Activity for Youth Workshop August 18th, Monroe CES Office, 8:30AM to 3:30 PM. Cost: \$28. Intended for teachers.

AGRICULTURE & COMMUNITY ISSUES

Farmers at Increase Risk of Skin Cancer

Do you know the warning signs of MELANOMA?

Early Detection Needed Pennsylvania ranks fourth in the nation for the number of melanoma cases. Recent studies prove a link between sunburn and increased risk for melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. The good news is that melanoma is highly curable if detected on the skin at an early stage.

Men are more at risk Men are more likely to die from melanoma most likely due to late detection. Common locations where melanoma can develop include the back, arms, neck and shoulders. Women get more melanomas on their legs. Farmers with years of outdoor sun exposure are more likely to develop a form of melanoma that occurs more commonly on the head and neck region. *If there are any changes in the size, color, shape or texture of a mole, the development of a new mole, or any other unusual changes in the skin, see your primary care physician or a dermatologist as soon as possible.*

Wear light-colored clothing Wearing tightly woven lightweight and light-colored fabric can actually keep the body cooler in the sun and will protect against cancer-causing rays.



Choose waterproof sunscreen—even on a cloudy day You should apply sunscreen every day to exposed skin. Don't reserve the use of sunscreen only for sunny days. Even on a cloudy day, up to 80 percent of the sun's ultra-violet rays

can pass through the clouds. Sunscreen should be applied to dry skin 15-30 minutes BEFORE going outdoors. Be sure to toss outdated sunscreen, as it will have lost its effectiveness. Reapply sunscreen frequently during the day.

There are so many types of sunscreen that selecting the right one can be confusing. Sunscreens are available in many forms, including ointments, creams, gels, lotions, sprays, and wax sticks. The type of sunscreen you choose is a matter of personal choice. Creams are best for individuals with dry skin, but gels are preferable in hairy areas, such as the scalp or male chest. Sticks are good around the eyes. Creams typically yield a thicker application than lotions and are best for the face.

Ideally, sunscreens should be water-resistant, so they cannot be easily removed by sweating or swimming, and should have an SPF of 15 or higher that provides broad-spectrum coverage against both UVA and UVB light.

Work outdoors when the sun is less intense, before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. if feasible.

For more information:

Melanoma International Foundation,
www.melanomaintl.org

Pennsylvania Academy of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery, www.padermatology.com.

Source: *Agricultural Safety and Health News*, May/June 2009



How Can You Reduce Your Trash Output?

- ⊗ Buy products in bulk rather than multiple small containers.
- ⊗ Use a sponge rather than disposable towels to clean around the house.
- ⊗ Buy products that are refillable and/or concentrated to avoid excessive packaging.
- ⊗ Buy fresh fruits and vegetables without packaging.
- ⊗ *Repair, rather than replace, broken items.*
- ⊗ *Donate unwanted materials to charity.* Your trash is someone's treasure.
- ⊗ And of course, ***Recycle, Recycle, Recycle!***

Trash Facts

- 1) The number of glass bottles and jars used in America in one year is enough to fill up a building **220** stories high.
- 2) Each year, Americans dispose of enough plastic bottles to circle the Earth **4** times.
- 3) Currently, in the United States, around **26** percent of the waste generated is recycled or composted, **8** percent is burned at incinerators, and the remaining **66** percent is disposed of in landfills.

Source: *PEEC Winter Solstice 2008 Newsletter* (information provided by PA Cleanways, www.pacleanways.org)

Ag Website Resources

Gas Leasing FAQs: www.naturalgas.psu.edu

Agricultural Law Resource & Reference Center, Penn State: www.dsl.psu.edu/centers/aglaw/gas.cfm

Agricultural Safety and Health Website: www.agsafety.psu.edu

Pesticide Education: www.pested.psu.edu

H1N1 (Swine Flu): <http://agsci.psu.edu/news/spotlight/swine-flu>

On-Lot Septic System Seminar

Perhaps where you lived in the past, your house was connected to a central sewer system and you didn't have to worry where the water went after you flushed your toilet. If your house is not one of many hooked to a central sewer, the water your family uses flows literally into your own backyard! If you are interested in learning how to properly maintain and identify potential problems with your septic system, you should plan to attend an On-lot Septic System Seminar on Saturday, June 20, 9:00 – 11:00 AM, at the Promised Land Fire Hall, 1058 Route 390, in the village of Promised Land.

Are you properly managing your system? Learn how to maintain and identify problems with your septic system. Bruce Fox will discuss topics related to on-lot septic systems.

Bruce is a certified Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO), a principle owner with Allstate Septic Systems, and a professional on everything from designing a septic system to pumping out your septic tank. Topics include: an overview of systems – what they are and how they work; system maintenance requirements; and how to address potential system failures. There is a registration fee of \$7.00 to cover refreshments and informational material; pre-registration is required



Managing Your Private Water Supply

Over 3 million rural Pennsylvanian's, including those in Pike County, rely on a private well, spring or cistern for their water supply. Proper management of these water supplies,

including proper location, construction, testing and treatment, is the voluntary responsibility of the homeowner. A new video DVD, *Managing Your Private Water Supply*, illustrates how to properly manage a well, spring or cistern to ensure a safe and adequate drinking water supply. The DVD is approximately 27 minutes in length and discusses Water Supply & Conservation, Well, Spring and Cistern Construction and Maintenance, Water Supply Protection, Testing and Interpretation and Solving Water Problems. The DVD can be ordered for \$10 per copy from the Publications Distribution Center at Penn State University. They can be reached at 814-865-6713 or by e-mail at AgPubsDist@psu.edu. Credit card orders can be placed by calling 877-345-0691.

Layman's lab: Drinking water tests simplified by Extension tool

Unless you are a chemist, arsenic and trihalomethanes are probably of little consequence to you, or so you might think. But what if these are in your water supply? The Water Resource Extension Group in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences worked with several partners to develop a new Drinking Water Interpretation Tool Web page that can help homeowners understand the significance of chemicals found in laboratory water test results of their well, spring or cistern.

There are no statewide regulations to monitor the location, construction or testing of private water supplies, leaving homeowners to properly manage their water alone. "As a result, we see lots of wellhead problems with inadequate well caps, wells that lack a seal around the well casing and improper land use nearby that can cause water pollution," Bryan Swistock, extension water resources specialist explained.

The Penn State Water Resources Extension Group, along with its Master Well Owners Network and the Penn State Institutes of Energy and the Environment, has adapted the Drinking Water Interpretation Tool, which was developed at Colorado State University, for use in Pennsylvania. Users can enter results from any commercial water-test report and the Web tool will "decode" the results. The site addresses bacterial and chemical contaminants; aesthetic issues such as turbidity, color units and odor; and levels of corrosivity, providing a full interpretation of water quality.

The "results" page breaks down the laboratory test figures into a table of information, with links to additional information for any water test results that do not meet drinking-water standards.

Perhaps the most helpful aspect of the results page is a short paragraph answering the question, "Does the sample meet water-safety standards?" This section details each parameter, outlining the nature of the pollutant (bacteria, liquid or industrial solvent, to name a few), its origins, how it enters a private water supply and the associated threats posed when levels exceed acceptable standards. The section also provides information on how to remove or treat contaminants.

Find the Drinking Water Interpretation Tool at <http://www.psiee.psu.edu/water/dwit.asp>.

For more information concerning drinking water and wells, visit Water Resources Extension online at <http://water.cas.psu.edu> or the Pennsylvania Master Well Owners Network at <http://mwon.cas.psu.edu>.

Access eNonProfit Announced

The Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development is pleased to announce the release of its new tutorial website, Access eNonProfit. This program is intended to help nonprofits make the most of their Internet connection and web presence. Its primary goal is to help smaller nonprofits with limited budgets make smart business choices. The curriculum explores all aspects of planning, designing, creating, maintaining and promoting a website and is divided into these major sections.

- eNonprofit Basics
- Learn to Use the Net
- Plan Your Website
- Design for Users
- Implement and Test
- Maintain and Promote
- Follow your BizPlan

This new, expanded section of the NERCRD website can be found at: <http://www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/eNFP/index.cfm>



List of Stimulus Programs

The Economic Stimulus Package creates an opportunity for investment in Pennsylvania's future. The program's components include the following listed and additional information can be accessed at <http://www.newpa.com/find-and-apply-for-funding/economic-stimulus-plan/list-of-stimulus-programs/index.aspx>

- " Pennsylvania Base Development Committee
- " Building PA
- " Business in Our Sites
- " Core Industries (.pdf)
- " Elm Street
- " Enterprise Zones
- " First Industries Fund
- " Home Ownership Choice Program
- " Housing Redevelopment Assistance
- " Infrastructure Facilities Improvement Program
- " Keystone Innovation Zones
- " Main Street
- " NewPA Venture Capital Investment Program
- " NewPA Venture Guarantee Program
- " PennWorks - Water Supply and Wastewater Infrastructure Program
- " Research and Development Tax Credit
- " Second Stage Loan Program
- " Section 108 HUD Loan Pool
- " Tax Increment Financing Guarantee Program

Ag Progress Days (APD)

Pennsylvania's largest outdoor agricultural exposition, will return for its annual three-day run, Aug. 18-20. Sponsored by Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, the event is held at the Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center at Rock Springs, nine miles southwest of State College on Pa. Route 45.

Hours are:

9:00 am to 5:00 pm on Tuesday, August 18

9:00 am to 8:00 pm on Wednesday, August 19

9:00 am to 4:00 pm on Thursday, August 20

Free Admission and Parking

Free APD shuttle service from/to downtown State College PA

More than 400 commercial exhibitors will display the latest goods and services. Interactive educational exhibits, guided tours and workshops will show how agricultural researchers and educators are addressing important issues, safeguarding and improving our food supply and the environment, and helping to enhance the efficiency and profitability of agriculture and related industries.



2009 West End Fair, Gilbert PA

August 23—29, 2009

Fair Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

All Gates open 12 noon

Wednesday, Saturday

All Gates open 10 a.m.

Senior Citizens' Day—Wednesday (65+)

Children's Day—Thursday

Go to the webpage for more information:

<http://www.westendfairgilbertpa.com>

Lawn and Garden Questions

Master Gardeners are available Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:00 am to 12 noon to help answer your questions. Stop by the Extension Office or call 570-421-6430.

Backyard Table Grape Growing

There is an undeniable satisfaction to having your own grape vine, a combination of the beauty of the vine, the aroma of ripening grapes, the delicious fruit. It's almost as though we are genetically hard-wired to feel once we have our "own vineyard" that we have arrived and our house is our home and our heritage. A well-adapted grapevine can produce fruit for 50 or more years.

To the uninitiated, grape growing can sound intimidating, but it can be made easier by following several steps: First, make sure you have a site with plenty of sunlight, higher temperatures (southern exposure) and good air circulation. The vines need well-drained soils. While many older wine grapes are not very cold hardy, American grapes such as Concord and Niagara are very hardy. Second, select varieties for your purpose and site conditions. Grapes can be used for fresh eating, juice, jelly or wine, but the same variety is not generally best for all these purposes. The probability of certain grape diseases also needs to be considered, with black rot being a particularly difficult and common one. Note that there are both seeded and seedless grapes; many people prefer seedless grapes for eating fresh.

Some hardy grapes include Canadice, Einset, Mars, Reliance, Vanessa, and seeded Concord, Monticello and Niagara. The most black rot resistant varieties are Kay Gray, Mars and Seneca, with Marquis, Steuben and Yates moderately resistant. There is a wide range of characteristics to consider as examples:

Vanessa is moderately vigorous and one of the hardiest seedless grapes with a mild, fruity flavor and firm berries.

Mars is a vigorous, blue seedless grape with a mild labrusca flavor and a tough skin with pulpy flesh.

Use only healthy plants with strong root systems, plant in early spring as soon as soil can be worked. Remove all canes, except the most vigorous one and trim off any broken or very long roots. Set the vines 6 to 8 feet apart. Dig a large hole for each so that all the roots can spread out, plant at the same depth as they were previously planted. After planting shorten the remaining cane to the two strongest buds, each of these will become a new cane.

Once the new canes are produced, train the strongest (over 3 feet long) to a 5-6 ft. tall stake. Fertilize two weeks after planting with 10-6-4 at the rate of one pound per plant. Reapply in early spring, just before growth starts. Apply four to six inches of mulch to help control weeds and retain soil moisture.



Start planning your vineyard, even if it's only one vine, for early next year. Meanwhile, enjoy the fresh grapes from your local produce supplier or farmer's market. To select the grape variety best for you, or for more information, go to:

Table Grape Varieties for Cool Climates <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/faculty/reisch/bulletin/table/>

Growing Grapes for Home Use, <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG1103.html>

Fruit Production for the Home Gardener <http://ssfruit.cas.psu.edu/>

Hydrangeas- Easygoing and Beautiful

Hydrangeas (*Hydrangea sp.*) come in a wide variety of types and many cultivars, but they all tend to be easygoing and beautiful. When considering adding one to your landscape, you have to select those that best match your needs and site characteristics.

SPECIES & CULTIVARS TO SELECT

H. anomala subsp. *petiolaris* – climbing hydrangea – one of the best flowering vines, it creates structure by having branches arch out from the vertical. Flowers in June and July on new wood, four season plant, but unlike most hydrangeas this is slow to root and establish.

H. arborescens 'Annabelle', new cv. Incrediball® – smooth hydrangea is a very tough plant. It flowers in late June through September on new wood.

H. macrophylla – bigleaf hydrangea are available as hortensias (all-sterile flowers) such as 'Endless Summer', 'Forever Pink', 'Nikko Blue'; and as lacecaps such as 'Blue Wave'. These flower July and August on old wood. The lacecaps have center fertile flowers that are not showy, surrounded by sterile showy flowers.

H. paniculata 'Grandiflora', 'Pee Gee' - called the snowball bush, with many flowers fertile yellow-white and not showy and some white showy. This flowers July to frost on new wood. It tends to be overplanted in

snowball bush, with many flowers fertile yellow-white and not showy and some white showy. This flowers July to frost on new wood. It tends to be overplanted in landscapes, but is much favored. It will look its best if supported around the edges of the shrub as these may fall down due to the weight of the flowers.

H. quercifolia 'Brido' Snow Flake – oakleaf hydrangea – flowers in June and July on old wood, but plants are coarse in texture and not hardy below -10F. The new 'Brido' is especially attractive with double florets.

PLANTING & CULTURE

Plant them 3-4' apart in moist soil under dappled shade. They need some sun to flower well, and may not flower in a northern exposure or under dense tree canopies. The tree canopy can be thinned out to allow for more light. Fertilize once a month during the growing season, stopping in August to reduce winter-damage. Over fertilization with a high nitrogen fertilizer can result in all foliage and few or no flowers. Apply aluminum sulfate if needed to maintain a blue flower color, estimate about one tablespoon of aluminum sulfate per gallon of water per plant annually. Mulch well in the fall, just as the ground freezes, and then remove most of the mulch in April. You can use dried grass clippings, clean straw, tree leaves, pine straw, or bark mulch. If blooms are too heavy for young plants, you can stake them with a hoop support.

GIFT PLANTS

Many people give hydrangea plants as gifts for holidays, these can continue to grow indoors, but many are not hardy in the north. These florist hydrangeas prefer cool temperatures, moist soil (don't allow the soil to dry out), and bright indirect light. After they flower, you can repot them, fertilize, and have more blooms during the summer. When the plants start to rest in the fall, reduce watering for about 6 weeks, then resume in early February, with increased watering and renewed fertilizer applications.

PRUNING

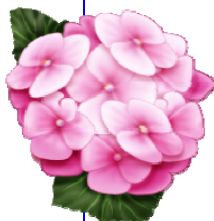
When to prune is an issue for some hydrangeas, as some flower on new wood, others on old wood, and some on both. Generally, summer flowering cultivars can be pruned after flowering in the fall, or very early next spring before budbreak. Those that flower on old wood should be pruned in late July, immediately after flowering, as they set flower buds for the next year soon after. The florist hydrangea that you receive as a gift will often flower on old wood, while the new cultivar 'Endless Summer' flowers on both old and new wood.

Sometimes the plants can become overgrown and need to be rejuvenated. Hydrangeas are one of the shrubs that

can withstand a hard rejuvenation pruning. This means using a chain saw or long-handled loppers to cut the entire plant back to 4-6" tall in early spring.

PROPAGATION

The hydrangea is one of the easiest plants to propagate, especially during May and June. Take a 4-5" cutting from a non-flowering branch, remove the lower leaves from the bottom two leaf nodes, cut the largest leaves to ½ their original size. Place these in a damp sterile media, such as sand: peat (50:50), vermiculite or sand and water through. The media much be kept moist, but not soggy. Cover the cuttings with plastic, using props to keep the plastic off the leaves. Place the cuttings out of direct sun, and you can have rooted cuttings in about 6 weeks.



If you decide to take cuttings in July and August, semi-hardwood cuttings will need some rooting hormones applied to the cut end prior to sticking in the media.

CUT FLOWERS

As a true multi-purpose plant, the hydrangea is notable for its beautiful cut flowers, and is frequently used as a cut flower in arrangements. With the large flowers, they produce high impact from just a few stems. You can use your landscape hydrangea to yield some cut flowers by cutting so that some foliage remains on the stem after each cut. Take the long stems and strip off the lower leaves, placing the stem bottoms under lukewarm water and recutting to ensure water uptake. Misting the flower heads with water also helps maintain higher quality.

You can increase the vase-life by acidifying the water with an unbuffered aspirin, or use a floral preservative. If you want to change the flower color, a dye can be added to the water prior to making the arrangement. Some florists may fog hair spray over the head of the flowers to increase their vase life.

These are also good as dried flowers. Pick only fully mature flowers for drying, either around dawn or after sunset. Put them in a vase and let them dry out naturally. This should take about 2-3 weeks.

STRESS

Yes, like all of us, hydrangeas are also subject to stress. These stresses are largely preventable or can be corrected. Salt burn can be eliminated or reduced by planting in an area not exposed to salt, or by using alternative de-icing compounds. Drought stress can be reduced by proper mulching and providing an inch of water each week either from rainfall or by supplemental watering. Soil compaction can be reduced by core-aeration, which will also benefit other plants, including your lawn.

Squash, Pumpkins, Cucumbers and Melons – Bountiful Production

Part of gardening is in knowing what is normal for a plant, and for these plants the male flowers are usually the first ones to be produced. If you have only male flowers you cannot have fruit. Ironically, squash flowers are sometimes the desired produce, as for ‘Butter Blossom’ which was developed to use for stuffed squash blossoms.

While a few vegetables can grow alright in part sun, these thrive and need full sunlight. Few plants will do well without good drainage, which is the case for these large fruits as well. Supplemental watering from drip irrigation or hand-watering so that leaves are not wet, is best to avoid plant diseases.

BEST FLAVOR

Keep cucumbers well-watered, maintain post-harvest temperature within 15F range, and avoid storage with other produce that produces ethylene. Any dry periods can adversely affect fruit flavor, with bitterness a common response for cucumbers allowed to dry for even a week during maturation. You can also have bitterness develop in storage for cucumbers if there is more than a 20F temperature variation or if they are exposed to ethylene from other produce.

Keep melons properly fertilized (especially potassium, magnesium and boron) and adequately spaced apart, with light mulch placed below fruits once they develop. The best flavor develops in warm and dry to average weather.

BIG FRUITS

Sometimes “big” is good, sometimes it’s not in reference to these plants. BIG cucumbers and squash, including zucchini, can approach the size of baseball bats and be largely unusable for food. BIG pumpkins may be desirable if you are in a contest to grow the biggest. BIG melons may be useful to feed a crowd, but may lack the flavor of smaller ones. There are many “recipes” for growing big fruits, but the easiest two are: only use seed from the biggest and most vigorous plants in the marketplace, the second is to remove all competing fruits or flowers on the vine, channeling the plant’s energy into that one prizewinner.

DISORDERS

The lack of fruit production can result from many different causes - fertilizer (too much or too little), temperature (too hot or too cool), few or no pollinators, inconsistent rainfall/irrigation, too shady. These can be resolved by adjusting the amount of fertilizer to what the plants need, mulching the plants to maintain the temperature, attracting pollinators with a pollinator-friendly garden, regular water application, thinning out



some overhanging plants or move the garden location to a sunnier spot (at least 8 hours a day).

Bees and other pollinators are critically important to produce the fruits, without them no amount of flowers will yield produce (except for parthenocarpic cucumber varieties). Lack of pollination is a likely cause when 1-2” “fruits” shrivel on otherwise healthy plants.

Blossom-end rot (also common on tomatoes and peppers) is due to an imbalance of water and calcium, and generally corrects itself later in the season.

PESTS & DISEASES

Verticillium and Fusarium are soil-borne fungal diseases that will kill or severely injure many plants. They can be easily avoided by only planting varieties that have VF resistance. Some common symptoms are a runner yellowing and wilting then moving on to the entire plant .

Mildew is also a common disease and can be controlled by keeping garden weeds that serve as hosts for the fungus removed.

Squash beetles are common and can be controlled with Bioneem, insecticidal soap, or homemade garlic-pepper sprays, as well as a number of insecticides. Read all labels and follow harvest time limits.

HARVEST, PRE-HARVEST & POST-HARVEST

For maximum harvest on these, you must keep the fruits harvested when ripe or production may slow or stop.

The harvest size for cucumbers varies for each variety; pickling types are usually around 3-4”, while slicing types are around 8-10”.

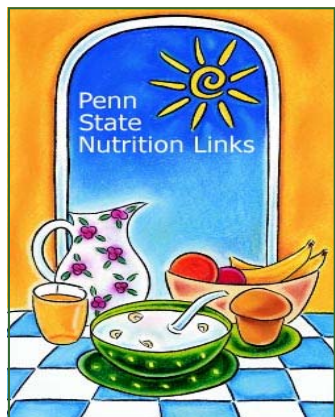
In general summer squash and zucchini should be picked when small – about 4-6” long. Winter squash can be harvested after the first frost kills the vine. Pumpkins are also harvested when colored and the rind is hard.

If you are harvesting squash blossoms, use a sharp knife at mid-day to separate the blooms, allowing about one inch of stem with each. These are rinsed carefully in cool water and stored in ice water until ready for use within 2 days of harvest.

Melons vary in harvest timing with cantaloupes slipping readily from vines when ripe and other melons coloring and “knocking hollow” when thumped.

Pumpkins and squash need to be cured for about 10-14 days in warm and humid conditions prior to storage.

Seeds are easy to harvest from these plants, air-dry the seed by spreading it on paper towels after thoroughly rinsing them off. If you want to harvest seeds for planting, be aware that squash – summer, winter and pumpkin will intercross and you may have a very different plant grow from seeds that develop from these. The melons and cucumbers will not cross with the squash.



Rub a dub, dub. Let's give all give our hands a good scrub.

That may be a unique take on a child's nursery rhyme, but it is so important, so very important, that we make washing our hands an everyday part of our kitchen habits as well our all-day lifestyles.

You may ask "Why?" but the majority of us know the battle cry is "because of germs, viruses, bacteria," and so on.

Whether it is the swine flu, a child's cold, or anything else, washing one's hands is one of the most important one can do to prevent those "bugs" from traveling from others to us and to those beyond us.

In our Penn State Extension classes we teach our clients to wash for 20 seconds with soap and warm water, making them aware, however, that once they establish a job, whether in a food service or medical situation, they must probably abide by other rules and mandates. Our instructions are for in home, in family situations.

Besides washing hands, we remind all that the fresh vegetables and fruits should be washed with tepid water and that tops of canned food should be rinsed off. Why?

We do not know whose hands might have touched that waiting-to-bake yam or that ready to eat banana or where and how it was grown, or by what conveyance it came to us.

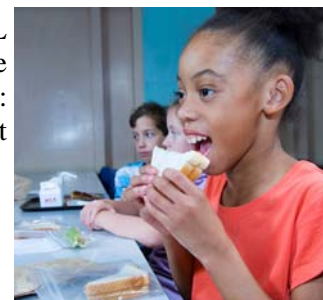
"But, I'm not eating the peel," one might think and still wonder "Why?" Ah, but what is (could be) on the peel could be carried by those hands to the fruit if one breaks the fruit into pieces or just holds the banana to eat it out of hand.

And the watermelon, apple, cucumber or ? When cut by a knife, anything on the peel or skin could be, would be, dragged into the flesh of the item, so...

As for the tops of cans? Where have they been stored? What may have settled on them as they waited for you to buy and use them?

Cleanliness come into play with all food preparation, whether fruits, vegetables, canned items or fresh meat. We'll focus on that next time.

A recipe from the 2009 PSNL calendar that is simple, a little different and very delicious is: Grilled Cheese and Fruit Sandwich.



Grilled Cheese and Fruit Sandwich *(Yield: 4 servings)*

Recipe

Ingredients:

- 8 slices cinnamon raisin or whole wheat bread
- 2 tablespoons soft margarine spread
- 4 slices processed American cheese food
- 2 small apples, pears, bananas, mango or peaches, thinly sliced

Directions:

- 1) WASH hands.
- 2) SPREAD one side of each bread slice lightly with margarine
- 3) PLACE four slices of bread, margarine side down, and top each one with cheese slice.
- 4) ARRANGE fruit slices over the cheese
- 5) PLACE sandwiches on a griddle or skillet over medium heat. Cook 2 to 3 minutes, turn and cook 2 to 3 minutes more or until golden brown and cheese is melted.

NUTRITION FACTS: *Serving size 1 item 197.05 g, Servings per container, Amount per serving*
 Calories 400; Calories from fat 140; Total Fat 16 g, 25%. (Saturated fat 4.5 g, 23%; Trans fat, 1 g); Cholesterol, 15 mg, 5%; Sodium 910 mg, 38%; Total carbohydrate 57g (dietary fiber 36%; 9 g; sugars, 16 g); Protein, 12 g; Vitamin A, 10%; Vitamin C, 6%, Calcium 25%, Iron 15%
 Percent daily values based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Recipe courtesy of the Penn State Cooperative Extension Nutrition Links program.

CURRENT RESIDENT

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