



Dear Homemakers,

It's starting to feel a lot like Fall! And that means the holidays are around the corner. It's early, but since we will not have a newsletter until January, I thought I would include a few holiday ideas. Hope there will be something of interest to you.

The Diligent Doers have planned a great Fall Council. It will be NEXT TUESDAY in Ekalaka—so make your plans now to attend. It's always such a fun 'girls day away' - please consider coming to enjoy it with us!

Happy Fall!!

*Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting
and autumn a mosaic of them all.*

Stanley Horowitz

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WALKING IN THE MOMENT

Mayo Clinic

“OK, time for my daily walk. Here I go. Now, what do I need to pick up at the store for dinner tonight? Let’s see, the deadline for that big project is Thursday, I have to order tickets today for the play ...”

While you walk, is your mind racing through a never-ending to-do list or a chronicle of worries? There’s a better strategy. It’s called “mindful walking,” and it can turn your daily stroll into a way to relax and re-energize. As you walk, you can focus your attention on the moment-to-moment experience of walking.

Any type of walking can help you manage your weight, decrease your risk of heart disease and diabetes, and increase your aerobic fitness. Mindful walking can also:

- Help you relax. By focusing on your walk, you give your mind a break from processing dozens of thoughts at once.
- Teach you to begin to approach life with a more mindful attitude. You can learn to carry this kind of focused thinking into the rest of your day.

Try these ideas to make your next walk a new mood-enhancing experience.

1. Start with a moment of stillness. Before you take even one step, set the goal of taking a focused walk. Give your mind a moment to slow down.
2. Connect your mind and body. As you walk, consciously feel the motion of the weight transferring from the heel to the ball of the foot. Feel the muscles in your calves and thighs working. Bend your arms and take on a gently swinging motion. Aim for a fluid, consistent stride and enjoy its rhythm.
3. Breathe. Follow each breath in and out. Focusing on your breathing can help you stay in the moment.
4. Experience your surroundings. Perhaps you smell the bloom of lilacs, feel a gentle breeze on your forehead or hear children playing nearby. Recognize each experience.
5. Mind your thoughts. If an unwanted thought pops into your head, recognize it and then let it float away. Don’t react to or judge the thought. Simply refocus your attention on your body’s motion, your surroundings and your breathing.

Enjoy your walk!



THIS & THAT

A family of four could live ten years off the bread produced by one acre of wheat.

Store long-handled tools upright in a metal garbage can. Loop S-hooks over the edge to hold smaller tools.

To prevent falls, make sure there are working nightlights at the top and bottom of stairs.

Handy holder for screwdrivers: Nail plastic berry baskets to the wall and slip blades through mesh openings.

Put bird feeders in areas that provide nearby cover for birds. Black oil sunflower is the most desired all-around seed.

Keep purses neat and free from tangles and scratches by storing them upright in a standing plate rack on a closet shelf.

Use your fridge’s vegetable crisper or meat keeper to store and keep safe a fragile cake or pie.

Freeze a pie shell before baking to minimize shrinkage.

Call 911 if you have any of these warning signs of a stroke: ~ Your face feels numb ~ Your arm or leg gets weak or numb ~ You lose part or all of your sight in one or both eyes ~ You have a hard time talking and/or understanding other people ~ You get a very bad headache for no reason ~ You get dizzy or fall all of a sudden

MONTANA WOMEN FROM THE 100 YEAR RANCHES

FALL COUNCIL MEETING

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2010

ST. JOAN OF ARC PARISH, EKALAKA

9:30 REGISTRATION

Carter County Clubs—please bring 2 dozen cookies to share at Registration

All Clubs please bring a Door Prize

REMEMBER YOUR SILENT AUCTION ITEMS!!

Noon Meal—\$5.00

Carpooling from Fallon County Courthouse—8:30 am
Please call 778-7110 if interested.



DINNER FOR TWELVE, SERVICE FOR SIX

Most of us have several kinds of dishes and glasses—from everyday stuff to the “good dishes”.

How do you set a table with that motley mix?

One way to create harmony is to put like with like. For example, pair up your fine white wedding china with plain white plates from the garage sale. (Both are white.) Or mix blue speckled enamelware with chunky pottery-type plates. (Both are casual.) Another way to create a cohesive look is to remember that opposites attract. (Bright + muted: sunny, yellow Fiesta ware dinner plates with subdued, yellow floral salad plates). Other ideas include:

Set several tables of matching place settings, each with a different mood.

Alternate place settings so every other place matches.

Serve buffet style.

Tie the table together visually with one solid tablecloth and matching napkins.

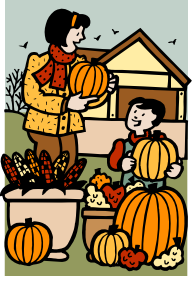
For smaller children, use salad plates and forks instead of dinner plates and forks.



One of the easiest ways to pull a table of disparate items together is to start with a blank canvas. If your linen supply is in the same shape as your dish collection, clean, flat sheets can work—crisped up with lots of spray starch. Put a flannel sheet down first to make the table cushy. Another option—one that is kid-friendly—is the bistro look: cover the entire table with white butcher paper. Just as interesting are make-it-yourself tablecloths. Simply buy a few yards of a good-quality cotton-blend fabric that’s 54 or 60 inches wide. To determine how much you need, measure the top of the table and add two extra feet to allow for drape and hems. You don’t have to finish the selvage edges. Just turn them over and seal them with heat-sensitive iron-on tape.

FAMILY RITUALS ARE LIKE CHILDREN: CHERISH THEM, BUT BE FLEXIBLE

The holiday season is a great time of year to connect with family traditions, and perhaps start some new rituals, says Sandy Bailey, Montana State University Extension Family & Human Development Specialist.



A ritual needn't be lavish, exhausting or expensive, says Bailey. Maybe you always have Sunday dinner at your grandparents' house, or go huckleberry picking every summer, for example. A family ritual can be as simple as piling into the car to look at Christmas lights, watching the rose parade on television, cooking pancakes together, going sledding or even walking the dog. Family traditions and rituals are not just routines, says Bailey. "We may brush our teeth every day, and do the laundry once a week, but those aren't family rituals." Rituals and traditions have a special meaning and happen with other family members.

One important thing to consider as you approach holiday traditions, says Bailey, is that traditions may need to transform over the years to accommodate the changing needs of family members. In one case, a grandfather, who was seen as the head of the family, could no longer carve the Thanksgiving turkey, so the family modified

their ritual—the cook presented the turkey to the grandfather, then another family member did the carving. In another case, making a big dinner was getting to be too much work for Grandma, so the family started a Christmas potluck.

As children grow and mature, they may want to take a different part in traditions, or leave behind old ones altogether. Maybe they would rather hide an Easter egg than seek one. But remember, said Bailey, that there is nothing wrong with holding on to old traditions that you all love. Many a grown child still hangs up his or her stocking in anticipation of wonderful surprises. If it's still fun, why not?

As young adults marry or need to include other people in their lives, family gatherings may need to evolve to accommodate their new obligations. If Christmas is too busy a time for everyone to get together, some families have their big get-together in the summer, or at some other time of year.

Some people find that they are stressed out by having too many traditions to keep up with during the holidays. If you feel overwhelmed, save some of your plans for another time. Traditions should *not* feel like obligations, but something to look forward to.

PROTECT TREES NOW TO PREVENT SEVERE WINTER DAMAGE

Toby Day, MSU Extension Horticulture Specialist

Throughout Montana, many trees including ash, cottonwood, maple, willow and even Colorado blue spruce have suffered moderate to severe winter damage due to the early and prolonged October freeze that we encountered last year. Some species, such as ash, have all but died, leaving just suckers growing from the base. In the case of Colorado blue spruce, many have just one or two branches that have died with more showing effects each month.

The extent of damage is somewhat determined by the species or variety of tree, while much of the damage can be traced to trees that weren't able to harden off, a term that describes a tree's tolerance in response to colder temperatures and shorter days. While sudden cold snaps like the one last October will always create some fall freeze damage to trees, we can help trees prepare for the cold with a few simple tips.

Withholding water and fertilizer and limiting heavy pruning in the fall will encourage trees to harden off properly. This includes evergreens, such as pine, fir and spruce. Heavy pruning and late fertilizer treatments encourage growth rather than hardening off, so restrain from fertilizing and pruning trees until spring. Throughout the month of September and into October, reduce and even stop watering trees unless they show signs of wilting. Once leaves turn color on deciduous trees and fall off, the trees (including evergreens) are in a dormant state. Once dormant, the trees will not respond to watering. However, after leaves have fallen, it is important to resume watering to saturate soil so that the trees have a water reserve for coming out of dormancy, which could be as early as the first week in January. Following leaf drop, water deeply once a week until the ground freezes.

Protecting newly planted trees from winter desiccation is important. Construct sun barriers for newly planted evergreens on the windward and south side of trees or shrubs to protect them from drying winds and intense reflective winter sun. Tying burlap between fence posts or even propping a wooden pallet on end usually does the trick. Deciduous trees with smooth and dark bark should have trunks wrapped with a tree wrap to reflect the sun, reducing sunscald to the bark.





HAVE YOUR CHEESE & ENJOY IT TOO

Eat Right Montana

Cheese is one of the most delicious, versatile foods enjoyed around the world. More and more cheese varieties are produced in the U.S. and available at reasonable prices. Here are a few tips to help you enjoy any cheese experience—from Asiago or Baby Swiss to a vintage Cheddar or yogurt cheese.

1. Choose cheese wisely.

A variety of natural cheeses are now available in the dairy, deli, and specialty sections of many grocery stores. Check “sell by” date and look for packaging that is tightly sealed and clean. Lower-fat cheese may work well for cooking and part-skim mozzarella is always perfect for pizza. Savor the rich, full flavors of regular cheese in moderation.

2. Store cheese properly.

Keep cheese in the coldest part of the fridge, not in the door. Grated cheese can be frozen for up to 4 months; most other cheese does not retain its proper texture after freezing. Use soft cheese (cream, cottage, ricotta, etc.) within 2 weeks. Hard cheese may keep 4 to 8 weeks when tightly wrapped; if mold grows, cut 1/2 inch off the moldy side and use within 1 week.

3. Cut cheese carefully.

Cheese will cut most easily when it is first removed from the refrigerator. Use a clean, sharp knife and only cut as much as you plan to use at one time. Repeated warming and cooling degrades the texture of the cheese. Cutting for a cheese plate can be done earlier, so long as the cheese is tightly covered and returned to the fridge until 30 minutes before serving.

4. Serve cheese sensibly.

Hard cheeses taste best at room temperature. Take from fridge (whole or sliced) and let sit, covered, for 30 minutes. Treat fresh cheeses like milk and serve cold. Precutting cheese into sensible 1 to 1 1/2 oz. servings, about the size of 4 stacked dice, 2 dominos, or a cheese stick. Cheese, wheat crackers, and fruit make a tasty snack for a day hike or family outing.

5. Pair cheese properly.

Different cheeses go better with different foods. To see what tastes best with almost any cheese you can imagine, go to www.eatwisconsincheese.com/pairings/default.aspx.



Although there are no set rules for pairing your favorite cheeses, here are some guidelines for combining certain flavors, textures and colors that will please both the senses and the appetite.

Soft/Fresh Cheeses

Mild, rich and creamy, soft/fresh cheeses like mascarpone, Ricotta and Feta are great for using as a spread or dip. Pairing them with sweet treats like honey and maple syrup is a delicious contrast for these salty cheeses.

Soft-Ripened Cheeses

Soft-ripened cheeses are snowy-white and delicious at room temperature or served warm out of the oven. These cheeses, including Brie and Camembert, have an earthy, creamy flavor that pairs well with fruits like melon and berries as well as sun-dried tomatoes.

Blue-Veined Cheeses

Blue and Gorgonzola, two well-loved Blue-veined cheeses, are known for their crumbly texture and distinct flavor. Sweet and nutty accompaniment such as fruit, almonds, and spices such as ginger help balance the saltiness of these cheeses.

Semi-Soft Cheeses

Semi-soft cheeses are a smorgasbord of flavor—ranging from mild and buttery to earthy and pungent. Favorites such as Fontina, Havarti, Muenster and Monterey Jack pair well with roasted vegetables like mushrooms and asparagus as well as with sweets that include poached fruit and sugared hazelnuts.



Hispanic-Style Cheeses

Hispanic-style cheeses such as Asadero and Queso Quesadilla are rapidly gaining popularity. Their creamy texture and tangy flavor go well with sweet accompaniments like clementines and toasted almonds as well as savory delights like spicy salsas and olives.

Semi-Hard Cheeses

With a wide variety of flavor profiles, Semi-Hard Cheeses are often a favorite. Cheddar, a Wisconsin classic, is rich and nutty, making it perfectly suited for foods such as fruits, including cranberries and apples. Swiss and Gruyere, two favorite Alpine-style cheeses, taste delicious with spicy nuts and peppers.

Hard Cheeses

Hard cheeses like Asiago, Parmesan and Romano are best matched with foods that pack an intense flavor punch. Spiced nuts, grilled vegetables, tangy vinegars and cured meats all bring out the sweet, nutty and buttery flavors of these cheeses.

Tucking the Garden Soil in for Winter

You have picked the last zucchini, dug the last potatoes, put away the hoses and are looking forward to winter activities. But remember, “a little effort now will help your garden soil overwinter and can improve soil quality and fertility for next season,” said Clain Jones, Extension soil fertility specialist in the Department of Land Resources and Environmental Sciences at Montana State University.

Fall is an excellent time to assess your garden soil’s needs for the next growing season. Soil samples can be easily taken in the fall and sent to a lab for testing. With that information, the gardener can plan where to plant the beans and peas next year to increase soil nitrogen, and which beds can have the heavy feeders such as spinach and corn. Also, fertilizer and amendments can be added to the soil now so it is ready in the spring.

Many gardeners use organic matter such as garden compost or composted manure to add nutrients, enhance aeration and increase water-holding capacity. “Make sure the compost is from a reputable source and free of residual herbicide to reduce the risk of herbicide damage to the garden crop,” said Toby Day, Extension horticulture specialist at MSU. Organic matter should be incorporated in the fall to give the material time to decompose.

“Remove, rather than incorporate, plant material that had insect and/or disease problems to avoid overwintering pests and diseases,” said Day. Minimize dry, coarse materials such as corn stalks, straw or sawdust because they take a long time to decompose and will tie up nitrogen, making it less available for next year’s crop.

Fall tillage or turning is better than spring turning because the soil is generally not as wet. Working wet soil leads to compaction. Also, the important worm population usually moves lower into the soil in the fall for winter hibernation and is less damaged by fall cultivation.

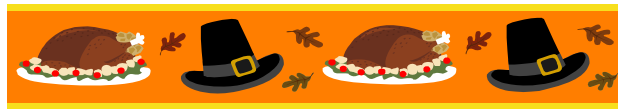
Fertilizers that can be certified as organic, such as rock phosphate, green sand, and gypsum, can be used to correct specific nutrient deficiencies such as phosphorus, potassium and sulfur. According to Jones, these should be applied and incorporated in the fall, as they take time to become available to the plants. In contrast, says Jones, nitrogen-containing synthetic fertilizers are best applied in the spring, before or early in the plants’ growth. If left on or in the soil well before being taken up by the plants, nitrogen fertilizers are susceptible to leaching or loss to the air, which not only doesn’t feed the plants, but can cause negative environmental and health effects.

In our clay soils, adding more organic matter can help prevent clumping and cracking. However, sometimes a garden soil can have too much of a good thing. Yearly addition of compost may create garden soil with too much organic matter and excessive levels of some nutrients. “This can actually cause deficiencies in other nutrients,” said Jones. “If nutrients and organic matter are too high, you may need to incorporate sand to increase soil quality and plant growth.”

Finally, tuck your garden plots in for the winter with a mulch layer of leaves and/or straw. This will reduce wind erosion, nitrogen loss to the air, and the intensity of freeze/thaw cycles, which are not good for the beneficial critters living in the soil or fall planted crops such as garlic. You may need to cover the mulch with something like old wire fence to keep wind-blown material from mulching the neighbor’s yard. If the garden soil is in a wet area and susceptible to leaching loss or you plan to leave an area unplanted next season, then consider planting a cover crop such as dry pea or rye in the fall to hold the nutrients in place.



MSU Extension has many publications to help gardeners in our region. The Home Garden Soil Testing and Fertilizer Guideline can help you gain a better understanding of garden soil fertility and how to amend your garden soil to optimize plant growth and reduce fertilizer costs. Please give us a call at (406)778-7110 or stop by the office if you are interested in one of these MontGuides.



Stuffing, Roasting & Carving

1. Allow 1 to 1½ pounds of turkey per person to ensure generous leftovers.
2. For safety, thaw frozen turkeys in the refrigerator, allowing 1 day for each 4 pounds of turkey plus 1 additional day (5 days for a 15 lb. turkey). The turkey is ready for roasting when no ice crystals remain in the body cavity.
3. Combine stuffing ingredients as recipe directs. Do not stuff turkey until you're ready to place it in the oven. Spoon the stuffing loosely into the neck cavity.
4. Pull neck skin over stuffing to the back of turkey and secure with a skewer. Tuck wing tips under body to avoid overbrowning while roasting.
5. Loosely spoon stuffing into the body cavity. Tie drumsticks together with kitchen string.
6. Place turkey breast side up on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. Brush with oil. Insert an oven-safe meat thermometer into thick portion of inner thigh area, not touching bone. Or use an instant-read thermometer toward end of roasting time.
7. Roast turkey as recipe directs. Baste with pan juices if desired.
8. When breast area has browned, loosely cover with foil to avoid excess browning. Continue roasting until the thermometer reads 180° and internal temperature in the center of stuffing is 165°.
9. Remove turkey from the oven and cover loosely with foil. Let stand 20 minutes to allow juices to reabsorb into meat and to make slicing easier.
10. Place bird on a carving board and remove any stuffing. Holding the end of the drumstick, pull the leg away from the body and cut between the thigh joint and body to remove the entire leg. Repeat with other leg.
11. To separate the drumstick and thigh, cut through the connecting joint.
12. Holding the drumstick by the end, slice meat into 1/4 in. slices.
13. Hold the bird with a meat fork and make a deep cut into the breast meat just above the wing area.
14. Slice down from the top of the breast into the cut made in Step 13. Slice meat 1/4 in. thick. Repeat Steps 13 and 14 on other side of bird.
15. To remove wings, cut through the connecting joints by the wing bones and backbone.

Making Pan Gravy

Roasted meat drippings
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
Chicken broth or water
Salt, pepper and browning sauce, optional



1. Pour pan drippings into a measuring cup. Loosen the browned bits from the roasting pan and add to drippings. Skim fat. (For lower fat, pour drippings into a heavy-duty plastic bag. Place it standing up in a measuring cup for about 10 min., to allow the fat to separate and rise. Snip a quarter-inch hole from one bottom corner of the bag. Drain drippings and discard bag & fat.)
2. Reserve 1/4 cup fat (or use broth) and transfer to a saucepan; whisk in flour until smooth.
3. Add enough broth or water to pan drippings to measure 2 cups. Gradually stir into flour mixture in saucepan. Cook and stir over medium-high heat until mixture comes to a boil. Cook and stir 2 minutes longer or until thickened. Season with salt, pepper and browning sauce if desired.

TABLE GARLAND

Bhg.com



Decorate a buffet table with this simple garland. Use heavy-gauge, gold wire to attach pinecones to rope. Tie a bow made from coarsely woven hemp or cotton ribbon around the rope at the top of each pinecone to hide the wire. (Optional: Add a little glitter to the pinecones before assembling the garland to catch the light.)
Tip: Reuse this garland for Christmas by swapping out the neutral bows for red or green ones.

HARVEST COASTERS



Protect your furniture with these festive fall coasters, perfect for guests to use while enjoying Thanksgiving with you. Tear yellow tissue paper into small pieces and adhere them to a plain ceramic tile using decoupage medium. Let the glue dry slightly before adding border, leaf, and acorn stickers. When the glue is completely dry, coat the piece with acrylic glaze. Add adhesive felt circles to the bottom of the tile to prevent it from scratching surfaces.

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them. ~ John Fitzgerald Kennedy

TIS A GIFT TO BE SIMPLE

Do you long for a simpler holiday celebration, one that harkens back to yesteryear when the least expensive gift could also be the most meaningful?



- Give “gifts of time.” Do special activities with a significant other: a candlelit dinner, massage, or outdoor activity; or a monthly lunch date or weekly letter written.
- Give a gift of instruction. If you are good at a specific activity, you can take your gift to the next level by helping someone improve their skills. Give the gift of a few lessons on dancing, skiing, skating, tennis, handwork, cooking, crafts, music lessons or whatever activity you would love to share with someone you love. A gift of instruction is a special treasure for children.
- Give a gift of memories. Digital cameras have made it easy to share photo and video memories. Extend the gift of a hike or a canoe trip by creating a gift of the memories for your companions. Create a photo or an album (hard copy or digital) of a special event of the time you spent together. Take a video of their progress in learning a new sport and create your own “funniest home video.”
- Buy gifts that are durable, energy efficient (“wind up” or use rechargeable batteries), or recycled (like antiques). Avoid products with excessive packaging.
- Start a family re-gifting tradition. If you’d like to reduce the expense and over-consumption that traditionally goes with family gift exchanges, consider a silly sweater or tacky tie party. Everyone agrees to forego the usual gifts and to bring an ugly sweater or tie for a re-gifting exchange. Draw numbers or names—and then encourage everyone to wear their ‘new’ item for lots of laughs at the party.
- If you are mailing gifts, use newspaper, shredded junk mail or real popcorn instead of plastic foam peanuts for cushioning.
- Wrap presents with old maps, the comics section of a newspaper, or children’s artwork. Or use a scarf, attractive dish towel, bandana, or some other useful cloth item. If every family wrapped just three gifts this way it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields.
- Use energy-saving mini-lights to decorate. A string of 100 mini lights draws 35 watts while a corresponding string of the larger holiday lights draws 620 watts. Another energy-efficient way to light your tree or home is with LED holiday lights. These use 90 percent less energy than conventional holiday lights. You can also save energy by running your outdoor lights on a timer pre-set for three to five hours.

POMANDERS

Clove studded oranges are easy to make, and their tangy, spicy aroma lasts throughout the season. (They dry beautifully, too!)

You will need:

Push pin or darning needle
Medium-size, thin-skinned oranges
Good-quality whole cloves (about 3 oz. per orange)
Ribbon



Press the push pin into the orange rind to make holes for the cloves. You can cover the entire orange with cloves, or make a spiral, stripe, or other pattern of choice. Pile the pomanders in a basket, or tie a ribbon around each one and hang on the tree. To dry the pomanders after Christmas, place on a baking rack for several weeks until completely hard and dry. They will retain their scent; hang in a closet or keep in a basket anywhere in the house.

Autumn, the year’s last, loveliest smile.

William Cullen Bryant

THE TROUBLES TREE

Author Unknown



The carpenter I hired to help me restore an old farmhouse had just finished a rough first day on the job. A flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw quit, and now his ancient truck refused to start.

While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands.

After opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation. His tanned face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss.

Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the best of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

“Oh, that’s my troubles tree,” he replied. “I know I can’t help having troubles on the job, but one thing for sure, troubles don’t belong in the house with my wife and children. So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again.”

“Funny thing is,” he smiled, “when I come out in the morning to pick ‘em up, there ain’t nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.”