



SPRING/SUMMER

Dear Homemakers,

Hope you are all staying dry in this rainy spring season! The countryside will certainly be green this year. Lots of hay but concern for those who need to get their crops in...

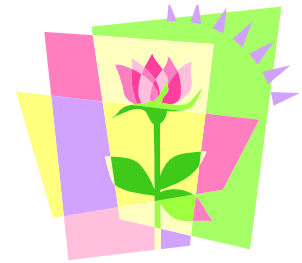
We are excited to have Elin Westover as our new County Agent. Elin's first day in the office is Monday, May 23rd. She is a delightful young woman and will be an asset to our Extension Program. Welcome Elin!

We have temporarily been relocated to the basement of the Fallon County Library while remodeling is being done. Our temporary phone number is (406)778-7153. We should be in our usual office and phone number by May 30th.

I hope you will all find something of interest in this newsletter. As always, if we can be of assistance for anything, don't hesitate to give us a call or stop by to meet Elin! Hope to see many of you at the Spring Council Meeting on June 7th—looks to be a wonderful, fun-filled day!



Lana Buerkle
Program Assistant



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extensiondw/index.html](http://www.falloncounty.net/extensiondw/index.html)

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www.montana4h.org

THIS & THAT

When putting those summer buds in a vase: Use room-temperature water to fill the vase and add cut-flower food; strip off leaves that fall below the water line to prevent rotting. A finished arrangement should be approximately 1½ times the height of your vase.

Before juicing a lemon, press and roll it on a counter-top with the palm of your hand. This breaks up the membranes in the fruit and makes it easier to extract the juice.

Think Outside the Rows: Just for fun plant part of your garden in different shapes this summer. How about a lettuce smiley face, or a flower star? Fun to watch come up.

Say goodbye to ticks by removing them with a pair of tweezers as soon as you notice them. Ticks removed within 24-48 hours are less likely to transmit diseases like Lyme disease. Be sure to pull a tick out from the head, which is closest to your skin, to ensure that you remove the whole thing. Pull very slowly and clean the site with soap and water, and treat with an antiseptic or antibiotic cream to avoid infection. Do not try to burn a tick off, as the flame only agitates the insect, causing it to burrow deeper into your skin.

Revive the incredible Shrinking Sweater you accidentally machine-washed by soaking it in a sink full of cool water and 1/4 cup hair conditioner for 30 minutes. The conditioner will usually relax and soften the wool or cashmere fibers, returning the sweater to its original size. After soaking, gently rinse the sweater, roll it in a clean towel to absorb extra moisture (never wring), then lay it flat to dry.

Shaving cream is a nontoxic solvent and cleaner, perfect for use on plastic patio furniture. Spray furniture liberally and let the cream set a few minutes before scrubbing it off with an old toothbrush.

Having an outdoor dinner party? If your gathering will last into the evening, add a little romance with lighting. Strands of small, clear lights look wonderful woven through trees, shrubs and fences and they are available in lots of different shapes and styles.

Deadhead spring bulbs like tulips and daffodils as the flowers go past prime. Be sure not to cut off foliage before it has a chance to feed the underlying bulb and then wither on its own. In the North this may take until as late as early July with some varieties; be patient.



To ensure even coloring and wear, spin your lampshades today. You'll be surprised by how much the sun fades the window-facing side. And don't forget to give the shades—and the bulbs—a thorough but delicate dusting.

Paint drip-free: Time for a touchup? Don't forget the coffee filter. Cut a small slit in the bottom and poke the paintbrush handle through (make the slit large enough to fit the handle, but small enough so the brush head won't slide through). The filter will catch stray drips before they land on your clean floor.

Boost your brainpower: Another reason to put on your walking shoes this weekend: New research from the University of Pittsburgh suggest that walking at least 6 miles each week may prevent brain shrinkage and, in turn, preserve memory. Brain scans of 299 participants showed that those who walked about 6 to 9 miles per week, had more gray matter (less can indicate memory problems) and cut their risk of developing cognitive issues in half. "Though we're not sure why exercise increases the growth and survival rate of neurons," says author Kirk Erickson, PhD.

Interested in Home Composting? We have a Mont-Guide in the office that explains it all.

*The Carter County Fair will be August 11—14 and the Fallon County Fair will be August 17—21.
Time to start planning what you will enter!*

MAKE IT WITH WOOL CONTEST

District Make It With Wool Contest will be held sometime from September through November 2011. A date has not yet been set. Please call Christine Keltner at (406) 486-5690 for more information.



MAKE IT WITH WOOL QUILT/AFGHAN CONTEST

Entry fee of \$10.00 per entry is due November 1st 2011. Finished Quilts/Afghan must be mailed by November 15, 2011. A flyer with more information is available at the Extension Office.

Where flowers bloom so does hope ~ Lady Bird Johnson

SPRING COUNCIL MEETING



COFFEE BREAK

TUESDAY, JUNE 7th
BAKER SENIOR CENTER
10:00 REGISTRATION

Afternoon Program will be a potter from the Custer County Art & Heritage Center demonstrating on his potter's wheel. Pottery will be available for sale.

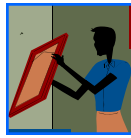
All Fallon County Clubs please bring 2 dozen cookies.

All Clubs please bring a nice item for the Silent Auction
to benefit our Scholarship Fund.
Centerpieces & Doorprizes will already be provided.

Lunch—\$8.00

DECORATING YOUR WALLS

bhg.com



Hanging Height

The center of the image should be at eye level. In living rooms, people are usually sitting, so artwork should be lower. A good way to ensure you're placing artwork at the right height is to hang it one hand width above the sofa.

In Scale

A common problem when hanging artwork above a sofa or sideboard is that it's not in scale. Hanging pieces that are too small or too large will make the whole arrangement look strange. Artwork should be at least two-thirds the size of the sofa or sideboard. For example, a 9-foot-long sofa should have a 6-foot-wide expanse of art above it.

The Perfect Arrangement

Save yourself the frustration—and your walls the trauma—of hanging, and rehanging, and rehanging a grouping of art. Instead, trace each piece on kraft paper, label the tracing, and cut it out. If you're hanging portraits, draw arrows on the paper to indicate which way the subject is looking. Use painter's tape to try out placements and arrangements without covering your wall with holes.

Add Visual Balance

When you hang multiple pieces in a group, visual balance is very important. In a group arrangement, keep heavy pieces to the bottom and left. It balances the weight of the items because the eye starts on the left. If you have an even arrangement, put the heaviest piece in the middle.

Find the Middle

When creating a grouping, choose an odd number of items. With odd numbers, there's a middle and a mirror image on both sides.

Consider Size

When deciding where to hang images in your home, consider the wall space available and the arrangement of the room. Use small pieces between windows and doors. If small items are in a space too large, the pieces look lost. With larger pieces, allow room for people to step back and admire the work.

Hang in Style

Make sure your arrangement matches your decorating style. Symmetrical arrangements are more traditional or formal. Asymmetrical is modern. For cottage-style rooms, stick with vintage images or botanicals. In modern rooms, choose large and abstract pieces.

A FACT ABOUT FAMILY MEALS

Mealtime Solutions/Eat Right Montana

A relaxed family dinner offers real benefits for adults and children. Leisurely eating leads to feeling fuller with less food. When families eat five or more meals together per week, young people tend to have healthier weights, more success in school, fewer eating problems, lower substance abuse rates, and less depression.

♥ Give your family meals the time and attention they deserve: It takes approximately 20 minutes from the time you start eating for your brain to send out signals of fullness. Whether you are eating around your kitchen table or dining out, allowing plenty of time to enjoy the meal will give everyone the chance to refuel and recharge in the midst of a hectic schedule.

♥ Get the whole family involved in dinner—from start to finish: The evening meal doesn't have to be one person's responsibility. Assign age-appropriate jobs, like choosing the fruit for dessert, mixing pre-cut vegetables into a salad, or setting or clearing the table.



♥ Create a pleasant, distraction-free zone at the dinner table: Turn off all electronics. The goal is to provide a relatively quiet time to enjoy food and being together. A low stress environment helps to control overeating and to improve digestion after eating.

♥ Make family conversations the centerpiece of your time together: Pleasant conversations make good meals even better. They help young children expand vocabulary and adults learn what is really going on in the lives of young people.



SILENCE BUSTERS

Family conversations help everyone feel more secure and connected in a confusing and often overwhelming world. Try the following new ideas on what to talk about at the table.

What is the most interesting thing that you read today? Why?

What are your favorite foods in the meals that we make at home?

What would be the best birthday party that you could imagine?

What I like best about our family is...



Keep it on the light side, leaving serious discussion for another time.

To plant a garden is to believe in the future. ~ Anonymous



READY, SET...TIDY!



“My house was clean yesterday—sorry you missed it!”
Sound familiar? Here are a few ideas to try for a neat and organized home.

One-Minute Tidy

Call your family together and explain that you will be setting a timer for one minute. (If a room is in truly terrible shape, agree to work for three or five minutes.) Give assignments—“I will pick up toys, he will put away shoes, you will vacuum” - to keep kids on track. Work this speed-cleaning magic on the living room, family room, dining room, kitchen, and bathroom. When it comes to the last, a whole family can’t scramble around in such a small space. Instead, give each person a specific job and a one-minute shift in which to do it.

Commercial Scramble

Sometimes, during an advertising break in one of your family’s favorite TV shows, call out “Pick up STUFF!” Each person runs to a different room, picks up anything out of place, and puts it away. At the next commercial shout, “Couch!” Pull off the cushions, collect any lost items lurking below, vacuum, and put the whole thing together again.

How about a Ten-Second Car Tidy?

Pull over to a dumpster and declare a Ten-Second Car Tidy.

Sheet Smarts

To corral your child’s or grandchild’s Legos or blocks spread out a sheet as a playmat. When it's time to clean up, gather the edges of the sheet and deposit it in a plastic storage bin. All the pieces stay tucked inside for the next time. Much quicker way to pick up all of those little pieces!

Stash a laundry basket in the living room

Whenever you come across a stray item, simply toss it inside. Your children's job? To take turns putting away all that stuff each week. A big unexpected payoff: the kids begin encouraging one another to be neater, since no one wants to pick up after a messy sibling. And they learn that they each have to put away their own toys if they expected their brother or sister to do the same.

A CD of energizing music

Assign each child to a room and let them pick mini chores (dusting the blinds, polishing a mirror) from a master list for that area. Then set a timer for 10 minutes and blast energizing music while everyone works. The music gets the adrenaline flowing and dramatically affects moods. When the timer goes off, the kids race to report in and then switch to another room for another 10 minutes. The fact that no chore lasts for long heads off boredom, bickering, and dawdling. And the completion of those kid-size tasks soon adds up to a very clean house.

Kid of the Week

For seven days, the chosen one receives coveted privileges -- selecting television programs, videos, and deserts -- but also household jobs. Like the perks, the tasks remain constant: such as loading and unloading the dishwasher, feeding the dog, collecting garbage, and helping with the laundry. If it's their week, they just know the chores come with the perks.

Every once in a while give out treats as a reward for participating. The element of surprise keeps enthusiasm levels high. We all like having a home that’s neater and less chaotic. The best part: now that you have become so fast at cleaning up, you will have more time to slow down and enjoy one another!

**** Spray Day will be held on WEDNESDAY, May 25th, 2011 ****

Carter County All-Event Center—8:00am—12:00pm

Baker Senior Center—2:00pm—6:00pm

Each session is worth 3 Private Applicator Points—Each applicator will need 6 points by December 31, 2011.

The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies. ~ Gertrude Jekyll

WEED MANAGEMENT FOR LAWNS

Fabian Menalled, MSU Crop Weed Specialist

Many times, a weed-free lawn can seem like something that only occurs in televised golf tournaments. I don't know about you, but every spring I struggle to keep dandelions and quackgrass from taking over my lawn.

While herbicides can help manage weeds in lawns, no single product will work against all weeds. For example, products that contain 2,4-D are designed for broadleaf weeds and won't work for grasses. Unless care is taken, herbicides can be dangerous to lawns, flowers, pets, and people. A successful weed management program takes advantage of many approaches including cultural practices, mowing, and, if necessary, herbicides.

The key to managing weeds is to outcompete them with a dense and vigorous lawn. Most weeds have very little chance of establishing if thick grass blocks sunlight, captures moisture and takes advantage of available nutrients.

A good fertilization program can help grow a dense and competitive lawn. Be aware that too much fertilizer, while helping to nurture a lawn, will also feed the weeds. Also, too little fertilizer can lead to a sparse and uncompetitive lawn. In Montana, one or two applications of fertilizer per year are usually enough. When purchasing fertilizer, choose one with a high percentage of controlled-release nitrogen to provide a slow, steady nutrient supply. Consider having soil tested as well, so you know how much fertilizer is needed.



Mowing can help manage weeds, but it can also hurt your lawn. Frequent mowing weakens grass by reducing its ability to capture enough sunlight and produce food. Moreover, a short lawn allows too much sunlight to reach the soil surface, helping weed seeds sprout and grow. Mowing at the highest possible level—usually between 2 and 4 inches—will help manage unwanted weeds.

Frequency and timing of watering are also crucial to healthy lawns. Usually, lawns need about one inch of water per week. As a general rule, the best approach is to water lawns infrequently and deeply. Providing a lawn with infrequent, deep soakings helps grow deep-rooted grasses and prevents the germination and growth of shallow-rooted weeds.



Identifying weeds is also essential to reduce their spread and abundance. Grass and broadleaf weeds that are found in lawns fall into two main groups: annuals and perennials. An annual is a plant that dies at the end of each growing season and new plants are produced each year from seeds. Annual weeds, such as crabgrass and shepherd's-purse, are not that difficult to control. Preventing seed production in annual weeds by mowing or other means is often effective.

A perennial plant, on the other hand, lives for more than one year and grows back from the roots each year. Perennials also produce seeds, which can give rise to new plants. To effectively control deep-rooted perennials, such as Canada thistle or bindweed, concentrate efforts on managing their roots. Roots of perennials often have vegetative buds, growing deep in the soil. These buds can give rise to new, independent plants. Certain herbicides, such as those containing glyphosate, can move within the plant, down into the root system. A fall application is usually recommended to maximize herbicide translocation to the root system.

If you are not sure of the identity of a weed, take a sample to your County Extension agent or county weed office. They will also help design a weed management program that integrates as many practices as possible.

Believe it or not, hand-pulling is still one of the best defenses against weeds. Pulling annual weeds before they flower and seed is the simplest way to prevent them from spreading. Hand-pulling is easier when soil is moist. A sharp spade or digger can help do the job.

When using a herbicide, choose one that is labeled for the type of lawn you have and is effective against the weeds you have. Before spraying any herbicide, read the label and follow directions carefully. Some herbicides work within a certain temperature range; others need to be applied at a specific time of year. When used incorrectly, herbicides can injure or kill turf and other desirable plants.

If your efforts to get a weed-free manicured lawn don't work, relax and enjoy the summer anyway. I don't know about you, but I'm learning to live with my dandelions.

A garden is a friend you can visit any time. ~ Anonymous

FOIL FEAST

These custom-made grilled dinners let everyone in the family be a chef!

As much an activity as a meal, the foil feast here includes a variety of fresh ingredients. Prep as many—or as few—as you like, then have everyone customize a packet. Your kids will love being the boss of their own dinners, and you'll appreciate the no-fuss cleanup.

1. PREPARE THE FOIL

Cut 18-inch-square sheets of heavy-duty foil. You'll use these in step 5 to assemble your meal.

2. CHOOSE YOUR MEAT

Chicken—cut boneless, skinless breasts or thighs into 1/2-inch-wide strips, then season them with salt & pepper. Use up to eight strips per serving.

Shrimp—Shell the shrimp, then season them with salt & pepper. Use up to 14 shrimp per serving.

Kielbasa—Cut the kielbasa or other cooked, smoked sausage into 4-inch-long pieces, then halve each lengthwise. Use up to four pieces per serving.

Hamburger—Make 4-inch-wide patties, then season with salt & pepper. Or before dividing up the meat, mix in this flavor booster per 1 pound of meat: 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce ~ 2 tablespoons mayonnaise ~ 2 teaspoons Montreal steak seasoning ~ 1/2 teaspoon salt ~ 1/2 teaspoon pepper

3. TOSS IN SOME EXTRAS

Beans, vegetables, fruit, nuts, and cheese all make great additions. You can offer an array or just a few—it's up to you. Allow as much as 2 cups per serving; bite-size pieces work best.

4. ADD A LITTLE ZIP WITH FLAVOR BOOSTERS

Combine the ingredients for each flavor booster in a small bowl

Herb Mixes: Sprinkle about 2 teaspoons per packet

Parsley Pump-Up—2 Tbs. Minced parsley ~ Zest of 1 lemon ~ 1 clove garlic, minced

Asian Fusion—2 Tbs. minced cilantro ~ Zest of 1 orange (about 2 Tbs.) ~ 1½ tsp. grated peeled ginger ~ 1 tsp. sliced green onion tops or chives

Tex-Mex—3 Tbs. minced cilantro ~ 2 Tbs. minced chipotle chile in adobo ~ 1 Tbs. sliced green onion ~ 1 clove garlic, minced

Sauces: Drizzle about 1 ½ tablespoons per packet

Vinegar Splash—2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar ~ 1 clove garlic, minced ~ ¼ cup olive oil ~ Pinch of salt & pepper

Mustard Madness—1½ tsp. Dijon mustard ~ 2 Tbs. lemon or lime juice ~ 3 Tbs. vegetable oil ~ pinch of salt & pepper

5. SEAL, LABEL, AND GRILL THE PACKETS

Make a charcoal fire or heat a gas grill to high (400°). Have each family member select a mix of ingredients and place them on one side of a piece of foil. Fold over the foil & roll up the edges to seal in juices. For quick cooking, roll the foil as close to the food as possible. Use a permanent marker to label the packets.

Lay the packets on the grill, close the lid, and cook until the meat is cooked through. The chicken, kielbasa, and hamburger will need about 15 minutes; the shrimp about 10 minutes.

HERE ARE SOME YUMMY COMBINATIONS:

SOUTH OF THE BORDER

Hamburger • black beans • red onion
zucchini • grape tomatoes • corn • Pepper Jack cheese • Tex-Mex

MEDITERRANEAN COAST

Chicken breast • red potato • broccoli
red onion • feta • Vinegar Splash • Parsley Pump-Up

OFF TO ASIA

Shrimp • red bell pepper • asparagus
pineapple • sliced almonds • Asian Fusion • Soy Sauce

OKTOBERFEST

Kielbasa • butter beans • carrots •
summer squash • Mustard Madness

COOKING HINTS:

The seeds and white veins running down the inside of the chile peppers, such as jalapenos, contain most of the heat. Use a melon baller to remove the seeds and veins before chopping and adding to a dish. And wear gloves, because the peppers can burn skin and eyes, too.

No buttermilk? Simply place 1 tablespoon lemon juice or white vinegar in a liquid measuring cup. Fill to the 1-cup mark with milk and let stand for about 5 minutes.

Out of balsamic vinegar? You can use 1 Tbs. cider or red wine vinegar plus 1/2 teaspoon sugar as a substitute for a tablespoon of balsamic vinegar.

When making a casserole to freeze, line the dish with foil, allowing 3 inches of foil to hang over each side. Assemble the casserole as directed; cover and freeze. When frozen, use the foil to lift the casserole out of the dish. Peel off the foil, wrap the casserole in freezer paper and return to the freezer. When ready to bake, unwrap and place the casserole back in the pan.

GRILL TIME

Direct or Indirect

Can't decide whether to use a direct or indirect method? If the food takes less than 20 minutes to cook, use direct heat; if it takes longer, use indirect heat.

Picture Perfect Burgers

Burgers can puff up in the middle as they cook, making the tops rounded and awkward for piling on the toppings. To avoid this, press a little indentation into the top of each raw patty with the back of a spoon. Then, when the center pushes up, the top of each burger will be relatively level.

Prep Smart

To avoid soaking bamboo skewers each time you need them, soak a big batch once for an hour or so, drain, then freeze them in a plastic bag. When it's time to grill, pull out as many skewers as you need. Kabob ingredients, such as chicken pieces, will stay juicier longer if they are touching one another (but not rammed) on skewers.

Great Grilled Veggies

Lightly coat veggies in olive oil before grilling to help prevent sticking and drying out. Vegetables such as asparagus, bell peppers, sliced squash, and onion slices are best grilled by direct method.

Season Gently

Be delicate when applying rubs. If you rub seasonings hard into the food, you can damage the meat fibers and texture of the food and run the risk of over-seasoning it.

Go Low and Slow with Ribs

For tender ribs, maintain a low temperature for several hours. Spikes and valleys of heat will tighten and dry out meat, but consistently low temps will produce soft and succulent meat.

Know When to Sauce

Be careful not to sauce ribs too early, especially if you are using a sweet sauce, as the sugars will burn and threaten your ribs. Sauce them during the final 30 minutes of cooking.

Build Your Marinade

When building a marinade, start with the basics. That means a little acid, like lemon juice or vinegar, a little oil, and a whole bunch of good flavors. Start with a 1:3 ratio of acidity to oil. The acidity tenderizes the food and contributes tanginess, while the oil provides moisture and richness.

Boneless vs. Bone-In

Boneless chicken pieces do well grilled quickly over direct heat, but bone-in pieces take longer and direct heat alone would burn them. Use indirect heat for bone-in pieces.

Sear Steaks to Perfection

After you marinate your steaks, pat them dry on both sides. Wet steaks don't sear; they steam. Resist the temptation to lift the lid and turn the steaks over and over. You develop the richest flavors in steaks when you leave them alone as much as possible, turning them just once or twice.

Let It Rest

Giving cooked food time to rest is the key to juicy, perfectly cooked meat. The resting process allows the juices to redistribute themselves through out the meat. Let the meat rest uncovered, because the covering causes the food to steam and can make the golden brown crust or skin soggy.

*My green thumb came only as a result of the mistakes I made while learning to see things
from the plant's point of view. ~ H. Fred Dale*

*There can be no other occupation like gardening in which, if you were to creep up behind someone
at their work, you would find them smiling. ~ Mirabel Osler*