



Dear Homemakers,

Spring??? I guess the calendar says it is! What wonderful moisture we have been receiving. Hopefully the snow is behind us and we will just be getting sunshine & slow, soft rains from now on.

As we move into the Spring season, I'm sure that all of you are very busy with spring cleaning and garden plans—along with all of the other duties that we all have. I hope that you will find something of interest and value to you and your family in our newsletter.

The Willard Homemakers have a wonderful day planned for us at the Spring Council Meeting. They are encouraging us all to bring a friend or two—wouldn't it be fun to have a room full?! Hope to see you there.

*To laugh often and much,  
To win the respect of intelligent people,  
And the affection of children,  
To earn the appreciation of honest critics,  
And endure the betrayal of false friends;  
To appreciate beauty;  
To find the best in others;  
To leave the world a bit better,  
Whether by a healthy child, a garden patch,  
Or a redeemed social condition;  
To know even one life has breathed easier  
Because you lived,  
THIS is to have succeeded.*  
*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Lana Buerkle  
Program Assistant

Nico Cantalupo  
Fallon/Carter County Extension Agent



**In This Issue:**

- Gardening Montguides
- Chocolate Anyone?
- Operation Clean-up
- Get a Better Night's Sleep
- Stress Busting Ideas
- Pruning Lilacs
- Cheap Family Dates

**Contact Us**

MSU Extension,  
Fallon/Carter County  
P.O. Box 850  
Baker, MT 59313

(406) 778-7110

[falloncarter1@montana.edu](mailto:falloncarter1@montana.edu)

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

[www.msuextension.org](http://www.msuextension.org)

[www.montana4h.org](http://www.montana4h.org)

**Since we've just passed Mother's Day, I thought I would include these 'Being a Mother' sayings:**

Somebody said it takes about six weeks to get back to normal after you've had a baby...

*That somebody doesn't know that once you're a mother, "Normal," is history.*

Somebody said being a mother is boring...

*That somebody never rode in a car driven by a teenager with a driver's permit.*

Somebody said "good" mothers never raise their voices...

*That somebody never came out the back door just in time to see her child hit a golf ball through the neighbor's window.*

Somebody said you can't love the fifth child as much as you love the first...

*That somebody doesn't have five children.*

Somebody said a mother can find all the answers to her child-rearing questions in the books...

*That somebody never had a child stuff beans up his nose or in his ears.*

Somebody said the hardest part of being a mother is labor and delivery...

*That somebody never watched her "baby" get on the bus for the first day of kindergarten or on a plane headed for military "boot camp".*

Somebody said a mother can stop worrying after her child gets married...

*That somebody doesn't know that marriage adds a new son or daughter-in-law to a mother's heart strings.*

Somebody said a mother's job is done when her last child leaves home...

*That somebody never had grandchildren.*

Somebody said your mother knows you love her, so you don't need to tell her...

*That somebody isn't a mother.*

*Hope you had a wonderful Mother's Day!*



**Gardening MontGuides available**

**Free at our Extension Office:**

Choosing Biennials and Perennials for MT Gardens

Growing Annual Flowers

Growing Lilacs in Montana

Growing Shrub Roses in Montana

Asparagus in the Home Garden

Can I Grow That Here

Growing Garlic in Montana

Growing Tomatoes in Montana

Growing Rhubarb in Montana

Harvesting and Saving Garden Seeds

Herbs for Montana

Hotbeds and Coldframes

Planting a Successful Home Vegetable Garden

Strawberries in the Home Garden

Pruning Fruit Trees

Pruning Deciduous Trees

**Cowgirl-isms**

Worry is like riding a rockin' horse. It's something to do, but it won't get you anywhere.

If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging.

Life isn't about holding a good hand; it's about playing a poor one well.

Folks who always ride in a high lope miss the fun along the trail.

No matter how hard the winter, spring always comes.

If you don't have time to do it right, you'd better have time to do it over.

If you always tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.

If the shoe fits, buy a pair in every color.

Opportunities always look bigger going than coming.

Once you get over the hill, you begin picking up speed.

# HOMEMAKER'S SPRING COUNCIL MEETING



All Clubs please  
bring a Door Prize

## “PRESERVATION”



BRING A  
FRIEND OR 2!!

TUESDAY, MAY 25th, 2010

BAKER SENIOR CENTER

REGISTRATION—9:30 AM

Fallon County Clubs—please bring 2 dozen cookies to share at registration

## REMEMBER YOUR SILENT AUCTION ITEMS!!

Willard Homemaker's are providing our noon meal at no charge.

## LETTER OF LAST INSTRUCTIONS

While thinking about dying isn't something any of us really want to dwell on...it's a fact...all of us are going to die someday. Knowing that it is a question of “when” rather than “if” means we can plan ahead and make “things” easier for our survivors. By writing a letter of last instructions we can provide essential information needed to relieve our survivors needless hours of frustration and anguish as they search for needed important documents during a time of sadness and grief over our passing.

MSU Extension has a MontGuide publication to help you through this process. Subtitles on this guide are: Location of Important Documents, Death Notification, Funeral Arrangements, Death Certificates, Personal Papers, Automobiles, Leases, Safe Deposit Box, Post Office Box, Computer, Credit Cards/Loans, Debt Owed to You, Homeowners Records, Household Contents, Insurance, Financial Accounts,

Magazine Subscriptions, Personal Effects, Survivors Benefits, Taxes, Trusts, and Wills.

The purpose of a *letter of last instructions* is to provide your personal representative and/or specific family members the information they need to notify the appropriate individuals about your death, to honor your funeral arrangements and to locate your important financial records for probate (if necessary) so your estate can be settled. Give a copy of the letter to your personal representative and keep the original and copies in a safe place. Be sure to sign and date it. Your family will be forever grateful to you for compiling a letter of last instructions.

*Please stop by our office  
or give us a call (406)778-7110  
if you are interested in receiving  
this important MSU Montguide.*

# CHOCOLATE ANYONE?

*Eat Right Montana*

Oh chocolate—loved and feared so much that some people refer to themselves as chocoholics! Whether you enjoy chocolate for its fabulous flavors and mouth feel or for its health benefits, it is important to realize that more isn't necessarily better. Keep these tips in mind to get the most out of any chocolate experience.

## 1. Go to the dark side of the chocolate aisle.

It's all about the flavonoids, antioxidant compounds that can help your heart in several ways, including lowering blood pressure and improving cholesterol levels. There are more flavonoids in dark and baking chocolate than in milk or Dutch chocolate. Some products now list the amount of cacao on the package. Higher percentages are better.

## 2. Enjoy chocolate after a balanced meal.

While the health benefits of flavonoids are real, no chocolate product is nutrient-rich. Chocolate is not a good protein source like lean meats nor is it packed with vitamins and minerals like fruits, veggies, whole grains, and low-fat dairy foods. Your best bet is to enjoy chocolate after a meal that includes something from each of those food groups.

## 3. Be size-wise about chocolate servings.

Many studies have concluded that a piece of dark chocolate a day—a very small piece—can help keep the doctor away. No matter how dark the chocolate, a king-size candy bar is not a smart choice, because it is high in calories, fat, and sugar. Look for small, individual portions (about 1/4 oz. each) or divide a large bar into very small pieces.

## 4. Combine chocolate with fruit and nuts.

Here's a heart-smart way to have your chocolate and multiply your health benefits too! Enjoy the rich, creamy flavors of dark chocolate with nutrient-rich fruits (blueberries, strawberries, or pears, for example) and nuts (like almonds or peanuts). Create these combos in desserts or make a snack mix with dried fruit, nuts, and dark chocolate bits.

## 5. Savor every chocolate bite completely.

When we slow down and truly savor our meals and snacks, we can be satisfied with smaller quantities. When it comes to eating, enjoyment involves several senses: smelling aromas, feeling textures, and tasting the wide variety of flavors. When we give chocolate the attention it deserves, that very small piece can be just the right size!

## Bonus Brownies

- ~ 1 box brownie mix, enough for a 9 x 13 pan
- ~ 1 (15 oz.) can black beans, rinsed under cold running water and drained
- ~ 1 cup water

Seriously, we're not kidding about the beans! The beans replace the oil and the eggs, which lowers calories and total fat. The beans add moisture and flavor, as well as a little bit of fiber and protein. No need to tell your guests. Just smile and say thanks to the compliments! YIELD: 20 brownies

### Instructions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- 2) Lightly oil a 9 x 13 inch baking pan with cooking spray or liquid oil.
- 3) Puree beans and water together in a blender or food processor until smooth.
- 4) Pour dry brownie mix in a medium bowl. Stir bean-water mixture into brownie mix until combined. (No need to add eggs or oil!)
- 5) Pour the mixture into prepared pan.
- 6) Bake for 28 to 32 minutes or until a toothpick inserted 2 inches from the side of the pan comes out clean.
- 7) Cool completely on a wire rack and cut into squares.

### Additions:

- Choose one of the new brownie mixes with dark chocolate
- Use 1 (15oz.) can of pumpkin puree in place of the black beans and the water.
- Use 1 cup vanilla yogurt with one box brownie mix to replace eggs and oil (still add the water)
- Serve with vanilla yogurt, low-fat frozen
- Before baking, sprinkle the top of the mix in the pan with a few dark chocolate or raspberry chocolate chips.

### Nutrition Analysis: 1 brownie

Calories: 129	Total Carb: 25 g
Total Fat: 3.0 g	Dietary Fiber: 1 g
Calories from Fat: 21%	Sodium: 68 mg
Saturated Fat: 1.0 g	Protein: 2.3 g
Trans Fat: 0.0 g	Calcium: 11.6 mg
Iron: 0.3 mg	

*Recipe Source: Tara Andrews, MSU Extension Custer County*



# **OPERATION CLEAN-UP**

*Christine Hofmann-Bourque bhg.com*



Where to start, what you need, and tips to make the job easier.

## **Be Prepared**

Don't waste time by starting a chore only to realize that you have to run downstairs—or to the store—for the right cleaning product. Use this list to assemble all your supplies ahead of time, then cart them with you from room to room.

Buckets	Sponges	Vacuum cleaner	Broom
Garbage bags	Paper towels	Dusting cloths	Old toothbrush
Latex gloves to protect your hands		All-purpose cleaner, floor cleaner, and window cleaner	

## **Scour Power**

Always read labels to be sure the solution is right for your rooms' surfaces. And before you dive into a cleaning project with a special product, try good old-fashioned dishwashing soap and water, which works much of the time. When the job is too big for soap and water, here are some of our experts' secrets:

**Bar Keeper's Friend:** This mild cleanser, which is recommended by manufactures of All-Clad, Cal phalon, Delta Faucets is a must-have for every kitchen. It's safe for everyday cleaning of everything from porcelain sinks to stainless-steel cookware to Formica countertops. It leaves a nice gleam, removes rust, and doesn't scratch.

**WD-40:** To easily remove crayon marks from painted walls, spray the surface with a small amount of WD-40 and wipe clean with a soft cloth. WD-40 also works to strip tape and stickers from surfaces without damaging the paint. It also removes gum from carpet.

**Undiluted Lemon Juice:** This is great for bleaching stains on Formica counters.

## **Map a Cleaning Route**

Start with a room at the top corner of your home or a corner room and work inward and downward. Clean rooms from the top down. Clean each room completely before moving on to the next to save walking back and forth. Begin cleaning at the top of the room (dusting cobwebs out of the corners) and finish at the bottom (sweeping the floor).

Think about your own time and energy level, help from family members, and the state of your house before you start a cleaning marathon. Instead of spending an entire day or weekend cleaning, clean half the house, or one story, on one day or afternoon; clean the other half or other story on another afternoon. Reserve a block of time for the attic, basement, or garage.

## **Operation Clean-up Tidbits**

- Declutter the house before you start cleaning. Carry a laundry basket from room to room, loading up on the things that don't belong in that room and returning them to their proper place as you go.
- Put on some upbeat music to get your energy going.
- Dust before you vacuum.
- Use two buckets when cleaning. Fill one with cleaning solution and the other with plain water. Wet your sponges and mops in one and rinse them in the other, keeping the soapy water clean.
- Stash a spray bottle with all-in-one window and surface cleaner and an extra roll of paper towels under each sink for surface cleanups.
- For the microwave: steam-clean by adding 4 tablespoons of lemon juice to a cup of water in a large microwave-safe bowl. Boil for five minutes, then wipe away the moisture that condenses.
- If you can't pull out your refrigerator to vacuum the coils, try a sock on a yard-stick. Clean the inside with 3 tablespoons of baking soda in a quart of warm water.
- A simple cloth carpenter's apron is a handy place to hold cleaning & dusting supplies.
- Take dusty plants outside and spray with fine mist from the hose.
- Don't use bleach on rust stains. Instead, scrub with salt and lemon juice or try one of the cleaners designed to remove rust.
- Spray foams are good on fiber-glass shower surrounds because the foams don't run.
- Polish faucets with a used dryer sheet.
- For windows wash on a cloudy but dry day. Add a cup each of ammonia and white vinegar to a bucket of warm water. Add two tablespoons of rubbing alcohol. Fill another bucket with clean water. Wipe with solution, then wipe with clear water. Squeegee the window, drying the squeegee with a rag after each pass.

## ENJOY A BETTER NIGHT'S SLEEP

*Eat Right Montana*



Sleep is one of the most important—but too often neglected—aspects of a healthy lifestyle. When Shakespeare's Macbeth called sleep “Chief nourisher of life's feast,” he was certainly providing some sound advice. Many surveys indicate that Americans are not getting enough sleep, which may contribute to a number of problems. Too little sleep has been linked to overeating and overweight, increased risk of diabetes and heart problems, decreased attention span, poorer grades in school, and more depression. For overall health and well-being, as well as success at work and school, a good night's sleep (7 to 8 hours for adults, more for children) is essential for good health.

### Create a sleep-friendly space.

A bedroom should be conducive to restful sleep—cool, dark, comfortable, uncluttered, and free of interruptions. Blackout curtains, eye shades, ear plugs, humidifiers, fans and other “white noise” devices can all help make your sleep space as quiet as possible. You can help by putting televisions and computers into another room. Mattresses and pillows should be comfortable and supportive. If yours are more than 9 to 10 years old, they have probably exceeded their life expectancy.

### Maintain a regular schedule.

If you want to fall asleep easily and wake up refreshed, it is important to keep your bedtimes and wake-times as regular as possible, even on weekends. This helps to set your internal “circadian” clock or sleep-wake cycle. Regular physical activity can also help you sleep well. For most people, it is better to be active during the day—like in the late afternoon, rather than right before bedtime. Meal time is critical too. It is usually best to finish eating 2 to 3 hours before going to bed.

### Rethink your daily drinks.

Alcoholic beverages, and those with caffeine, can seriously affect sleep patterns and nighttime wakefulness. Although we often think of alcohol as a sedative (something to make us sleepy), it actually disrupts sleep. Since drinking alcohol leads to less restful sleep, avoid alcohol close to bedtime. Caffeine is a strong stimulant—increasing alertness and disrupting deep sleep. For a better night's sleep, avoid caffeine for 6 to 8 hours before bedtime.

### Get into a relaxing bedtime routine.

Smart parents know that a regular bedtime routine—warm bath, reading a story, and cuddling a favorite toy—is the best way to get children settled down and ready to sleep through the night. The same concept works equally well for adults—a relaxing, soothing routine that lets your body and brain know that it is time for sleep. Turn the lights down low and enjoy a soak in the bath. Listen to some soothing music and read something light and enjoyable.

## THE BEST OF BEDDING

We spend nearly one-third of our lives sleeping, so it pays to know all the options and choose which types of pillows, sheets, and comforters are right for you.

### THE PILLOW TEST

Stop punching pillows in the store. Instead use these easy indicators to check a pillow's quality.

- ~ Down or feather-filled: Fold pillow in half on the floor or a flat surface. Squeeze out the air and release. It should return to its original shape.
- ~ Synthetic: Fold pillow in half on the floor or a flat surface and place a tennis shoe on top; release. The pillow should pop out from under the shoe and return to its original shape.



### THREAD COUNT

Thread count is the number of threads woven into one square inch of fabric. A higher number equals softer linens. Take care of your bed linens by laundering them once a week in warm water.

### FEATHER AND DOWN

Down comforters (also called duvets) are usually the top layer of bedding. Inexpensive duvet covers can quickly change the look of your bed.

- ~ Goose down is fluffier than duck.
- ~ Fluff down comforters by hand frequently. Feather comforters should occasionally be put in a dryer on the highest heat setting to battle dust mites.
- ~ If you dry-clean down comforters once or twice yearly, they should last 8 to 10 years.



## HAVE YOU ANY WOOL?

Brochures and entry forms are available at our office for the Montana Make It With Wool District Contest to be held in September 2010, and the Wool Quilt/ Afghan Contest to be held in November 2010. We will be informed of exact dates and locations when they are finalized.

These competitions are open to anyone that sews with wool fabric or knits/crochets with wool yarn. All winners at the district competition in the Junior, Senior, Adult and Made for Others categories advance to the state competition held during the Montana Wool Growers convention held on December 3rd and 4th, 2010 in Billings.

*Time to get your creative juices flowing!  
Please call our office (778-7110)  
or stop by for more information.*

## 50 Stress Busting Ideas for Your Well-being

We all have a variety of stressors in our lives. How we handle—or don't handle—these stressful situations goes a long ways toward defining our quality of life. MSU has a MontGuide entitled '50 Stress Busting Ideas For Your Well-Being' that gives ideas of activities that will help you manage the stress in your life, before it manages you!

See the Humor	Find Peace	Say No
Journal	Learn to Adapt	Be Patient
Rest	Sweet Nothings	Be A Kid
Stretch	Think Positive	Get Help
Analyze Your Stress	Celebrate Your Talents	
Enjoy the Journey	What Works For You?	
Nourish Your Body	Stand Your Ground	
Breath Deeply	Enjoy a Diversion	
Exercise and Burn Calories		
Honest Positive Appraisals		
Find Meaning In Life		
Be Your Own Best Friend		
Help a Worthy Cause		
Use Time Efficiently		
Enjoy Natural Beauties		
Take Mental Vacations		
Re-label Your Experiences		
Don't Forget the Funnies		
Use the Massage Buddy System		
Do Some Emotional Gardening		

## QUICK & EASY IDEAS TO FRESHEN YOUR HOME

1. Play with a variety of fabrics in pillows, cushions, and draperies. Make sure the fabrics share at least one common color to hold the look together.
2. Just because a piece of furniture is old and worn doesn't mean it's past its prime. If it's still sound and has nice lines, use paint to transform it into an accent piece you'll be proud to use and display.
3. Dress a wall with pieces you love. Combine interesting groupings of objects, such as round plates over a square sofa or thin vertical objects for a hallway.
4. "Shop" at home and pull pieces from one room into another for a fresh look.
5. Punch up a room with an accent wall in a dramatic paint or wallpaper color.
6. Paint the inside of a frequently used closet for a refreshing burst of color.
7. Fall in love with a favorite fabric or pillow, then find its dominant color and play it up throughout the room.
8. If you're uncertain how much each dose of color should be, use a 60-30-10 formula as a foolproof guide. According to the formula, a predominant color should cover approximately 60 percent of the room (usually the painted walls). A secondary color should cover 30 percent (window treatments, upholstery, and rugs), while the accent colors account for the remaining 10 percent (artwork, accent tiles, and accessories).
9. Run a thick horizontal stripe of a color around the perimeter of the room, two-thirds up the wall. Then set off the color with thin stripes of white paint or chair rails above and below the stripe.
10. Install picture molding just below ceiling height to extend the look of crown molding.
11. Mat and frame special black-and-white photographs. Then arrange them in a grouping at eye level.
12. Stencil a favorite quote in a font style that suits your décor.
13. Install a chair rail in the dining room.
14. Line the backs of bookshelves with wallpaper.
15. Add texture by installing beaded paneling horizontally so the lines follow the perimeter of the room.

## WHEN SHOULD I PRUNE MY LILACS?

Dr. Bob Gough, MSU Extension Horticulturist



Lilacs are probably the most popular flowering shrub in our area. Those fragrant purple or white flowers of the common lilac remind us just how wonderful spring is. And the colorful magenta, red, pink, single and double flowers of the hybrid lilacs suggest that the beauty of this plant is boundless.

But if not tended properly, the lilac bush soon degenerates into mostly unproductive wood with fewer, smaller flowers.

You can keep your lilac shrub healthy with the help of a good pruning tool. Prune lilacs for the first time when they are head-high. The best time of year to prune is right after the lilac flowers. Deadheading (removing spent flower heads) is useful on young plants but is seldom worth the time and effort on mature specimens.

Remove all dead and diseased wood, broken branches and pest-infested canes. Maintain about 12 healthy canes per bush. These should be from six to eight years old. Older wood is relatively unproductive and may flower only at the top of the plant.

Once the bush is established, remove the oldest one-sixth to one-eighth of the canes each year and select the same number of suckers to replace them. Remove all other suckers or the plant can quickly become choked and overgrown.

If you prefer to use your bush as a screen rather than for best flower production, maintain the canes at the desired height and allow the bush to fill in. It will make a fine screen but will produce fewer flowers.

To rejuvenate an overgrown bush, remove the oldest canes over a three-to-four year period and cut back the replacement canes to the appropriate height. Cutting the plants to the ground is a fast way to rejuvenate, but can unduly stress the plant. Do this only on vigorous, healthy plants.

## 'GREEN' GARDEN HINTS

- \* Cut a piece of garden hose and use it to cover the blade of an axe or an ice skate.
- \* Add more holes to a leaking hose with a flat nail, then use the hose to soak the lawn or garden.
- \* Store your flower bulbs over the winter in old pantyhose or plastic mesh bags hung in a dry, dark place. Use twist ties to section off the bulbs by plant type and color.
- \* Find out if your local garden center can reuse your flower trays, pots, and containers.
- \* Share plant cuttings/seeds with friends.
- \* Rent or share with a neighbor any garden tools used only occasionally (such as a rototiller, or aerator).

## CHEAP FAMILY DATES

*Ideas to entertain the children/grandchildren at home when the budget's gotten a wee bit tighter:*

1. **Camp out at home.** Grab some marshmallows and sit around the fire pit or grill for an evening of s'mores and spooky stories. When it's bedtime, head back in for some "tent-making," using card tables or large boxes as the frame for a bedsheet tent. Throw in some sleeping bags, along with a few flashlights, and you have a do-it-yourself campout.
2. **Kick it, old school.** With the popularity of *Dancing With the Stars*, why not plan an old-school dance-off? Fire up the turntable and teach the kids the Bunny Hop or the Electric Slide. The kids can haul out their MP3players and show you how it works for a great evening of fitness and laughs.
3. **Rediscover old family movies and VHS films.** If you're like many families, you probably have a treasure trove of home movies that the kids may not have seen. They'll love watching videos of their own parents as kids.
4. **Get your hands dirty.** Gardens are not only about planting and weeding—they're also a place for exploring the creepy-crawly life beyond your back door. If your child/grandchild isn't squeamish, take a flashlight and scoop up handfuls of soil for closer examination. You might be surprised at what you'll find. Get them their own garden tools/bug collecting kits for added fun.
5. **Finger paint with shaving cream.** No need to buy expensive art supplies. Shaving cream makes for a great finger-painting medium. Spray a dollop on a moisture-proof surface and let the kids dig in.
6. **Have the children/grandchildren teach you.** Learn about their video games while you wait for home-baked cookies to come out of the oven. Oftentimes, this is a key way to connect with the younger, tech-savvy generation.

## SPRING ROAD

*There is a road that holds the breath of spring—  
Pale apple-blossoms for remembering,  
A bluebird's vivid wings against the sky,  
A thin small wind through lilac bloom, a sigh  
As subtle as the touch of tender lips  
Whispering secrets through the trees' tall tips.  
Gay dew-drenched morning glories, blue and white,  
Lifting their small round faces to the light.  
And always down this road remembering  
I walk with you—glad for another spring.*

*Sheila Stinson*

