Canning Workshops This Summer

Canning Green Beans Safely!
One of the most popular foods to can is green beans, but they can also be one of the most risky to eat if not canned safely. Come, can green beans together with us and learn the latest recommendations for canning your beans to use later in those wintertime casseroles. This class will cover using weighted and gauge pressure canners as well as discuss the importance of adjusting time for canning at higher altitudes.

Date and Time: Wednesday, July 28, 2010 - 9am to 3pm

Putting Tomatoes By!
One of the best foods for learning how to can is tomatoes. In this hands-on class we cover canning tomatoes with a water bath canner and a pressure canner. Because we cover both methods of canning, this class allows you to experience both techniques. We will also discuss freezing and dehydrating tomatoes as other options for preserving them for future use.

Date and Time: Wednesday, August 11, 2010 - 9am to 2pm

Canning and Preserving Made Easy—in Madison County
If you missed this class in April, we are teaching it again in Madison County. Learn more about canning or just brush up on the newest information on food preservation from Canning to Freezing to Drying. This program will be an introduction to canning, pickling, making jams and jellies, freezing, drying and storage. There is a $10 cost. Call Madison County to register (828) 649-2411.

Date and Time: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 - 1pm to 4:30pm Madison County

July 2010 Basic Home Maintenance Course
Are there repairs around your home that need to be done, but you lack the knowledge and skill to do them yourself? The Basic Home Maintenance Course will give you those skills. This series of five, two hour classes will be held evenings from 5:30pm – 7:30pm, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, July 13, 15, 20, 22 and 27, 2010. Some of the topics to be covered are: saving on your heating and cooling bills, basic plumbing repairs, interior and exterior maintenance, landscaping and lawn care, indoor air quality, common household pests, etc. Please register by calling the NC Cooperative at 828-255-5522.

Preregistration is required, and the fee of $20 includes all materials.
Saving Money with a Ceiling Fan

As the summer temperatures begin to heat up so will the inside of our homes. Most of us look forward to any kind of breeze, either inside or out. One means of getting our inside breeze is with a ceiling fan. Ceiling fans not only provide relief from the heat, but can also help homeowners save money and energy all year long. To get the most out of your ceiling fan:

- Make sure that it is installed properly. The UL-listed metal box in the ceiling should be labeled “For use with ceiling fans.”
- Ensure that the blades are properly balanced. (A balancing kit may have been included in the original packaging or may be available from the manufacturer without charge.)
- Turn off the fan when not in the room. A ceiling fan does not cool a room; it only gives a “wind chill” effect to individuals.
- Use the fan to move cool air in the summer (blades rotate counter-clockwise) and warm air in the winter (reverse the motor so that the blades rotate clockwise). In the summer, the fan creates a “wind-chill” effect, making you feel cooler by 2-4 degrees. This allows you to turn the thermostat up 2-4 degrees. In the winter, the rotation of the blades creates a slight updraft, which moves the warmer air at the ceiling downward to warm the room.

Make sure to purchase the proper size fan for the room you are furnishing. A 36 or 44 inch diameter fan will cool rooms up to 225 square feet, while a fan with a diameter of 52 inches or greater should be used in a larger room. Multiple fans work best in rooms longer than 18 feet. Small and medium sized fans will provide efficient cooling in a 4 to 6 foot diameter area, while larger fans are effective up to 10 feet. Ceiling fans are appropriate for rooms with 8-foot ceilings or higher. Ideally, the blades would be 7-9 feet above the floor and 10-12 inches below the ceiling. Fans should be installed so that blades are 18 inches from the walls.

Sealing Ducts

If you have memories of last winter with the thermostat cranked up and still feeling cold, it may be your ducts are not sealed and some of the heated air is escaping prior to getting to the intended room. In houses with forced-air heating and cooling systems, ducts are used to distribute conditioned air throughout the house. In a typical house, however, about 20 percent of the air that moves through the duct system is lost due to leaks and poorly-sealed connections. The result is higher utility bills and difficulty keeping the house comfortable, no matter how the thermostat is set.

Because some ducts are concealed in walls and between floors, repairing them can be difficult. However, exposed ducts in attics, basements, crawlspaces, and garages can be repaired by sealing the leaks with duct sealant (also called duct mastic). In addition, insulating ducts that run through spaces that get hot in summer or cold in winter (like attics, garages, or crawlspaces) can save significant energy.

Additionally, if you are replacing your forced-air heating and cooling equipment, make sure your contractor installs the new system according to Energy Star quality installation guidelines. A quality installation will include a thorough inspection of your duct system, including proper sealing and balancing of ductwork, to help ensure that your new system delivers the most comfort and efficiency. Partial information source: http://www.energystar.gov
Special Considerations when Canning

Canning at Higher Altitudes

In the Asheville area we need to adjust our canning process because water boils at a different temperature than at sea level. Most of the times and pressure recommendations on recipes for canning are based on canning at sea level. If you are using a water bath or a pressure canner you need to adjust your process here in the mountains based on your altitude. You also need to adjust boiling times when sterilizing your jars. Increase the time to 15 minutes for altitudes between 1,000 and 5,000 feet.

- Dial-gauge processing changes
  0-2000 feet = 11 pounds pressure
  2001-4000 feet = 12 pounds pressure
  4001-6000 feet = 13 pounds pressure

- Weighted gauge adjustments
  0-1000 feet = 10 pounds pressure
  At altitudes above 1000 feet, process at 15 pounds pressure.

- Boiling water canner adjustments. The processing time will usually increase.
  Per Ball Blue Book for:
  1,000 to 3,000 feet increase the time by 5 minutes
  3,001 to 6,000 feet increase the time by 10 minutes

Low sugar or no sugar added canning

In canning regular fruits without sugar, it is very important to select fully ripe but firm fruits of the best quality. Prepare these as described for hot-packs in researched tested recipes, but use water or regular unsweetened fruit juices instead of sugar syrup. Juice made from the fruit being canned is best. Blends of unsweetened apple, pineapple, and white grape juice are also good for filling over solid fruit pieces. Follow the processing recommendations given for regular fruits. You can add sugar substitutes when serving.

A variety of fruit spreads may be made that have good flavor, yet are lower in sugars and calories than regular jams and jellies. Look for tested recipes to ensure a quality product. Gelatin may be used as a thickening agent. When gelatin is used in the recipe or you follow other recipes using sugar substitutes, the jars of spread should not be processed. They should be refrigerated and used within 4 weeks. Some may be kept in the freezer for longer storage, but check recipe directions.

Low sodium or canning without salt

With the exception of fermented pickles and cured or smoked foods, home-canned vegetables do not require salt for safe processing. Here are some pointers on processing salt-free foods. Salt has no effect on the natural color and texture of canned foods, except for pickles and cured or smoked foods. Follow USDA approved directions, just omit the salt. The main reason for using salt in canning is to enhance flavor, but there are other ways to do this. Try adding one tablespoon of lemon or orange juice to each pint of carrots, beets, or asparagus. For green beans and peas, add one-half teaspoon of mace, nutmeg, or curry powder per pint. Do not use salt substitutes in canning. They may cause the color or the flavor of the food to change. Also, they may give foods a cloudy appearance. If you are making fermented pickles or cured or smoked foods, always add the amount of canning salt called for in the recipe. Salt is necessary for the safe preservation of these foods. Be sure to use normal processing methods and times to can salt-free foods.
Mosquito Repellents
In addition to the personnel protection repellents used against mosquito attacks, there are other repellents that are often used. Some are effective and others may waste your money.

Mosquito Repellents - What Doesn't Work

- Electrocutor traps ("bug zappers") placed out of doors are not effective in reducing or eliminating mosquito populations. Studies have shown that less than ¼ of 1% of the insects "zapped" in such devices were actually biting insects. The majority of the insects killed in electrocutor traps are actually beneficial in some form. Electronic mosquito repellents that emit high frequency sound to "repel" mosquitoes have not been shown to be effective either.
- Several types of mosquito traps that use radiant heat and/or chemicals such as carbon dioxide or octenol to attract mosquitoes are now being marketed in the U.S. To date, there are no scientifically-based studies that prove that these traps are able to provide control of local mosquito populations. Some mosquito species such as Asian tiger mosquito are not attracted to these particular chemical cues.
- Similarly, claims that certain plants placed around a porch or deck will repel mosquitoes are not supported by any scientifically-based test results.

Non-chemical Control Measures

- Installing and maintaining tight fitting screens on doors and windows will help keep mosquitoes out of the home.
- Bats and birds, such as Purple Martins, may consume mosquitoes as part of their diet. You can install nesting boxes around your property to attract these natural predators to the area. However, bear in mind that the feeding activity of insect-eating bats and birds may not be sufficiently selective to cause noticeable reductions in mosquito populations. Also, many of our major mosquito problems occur when some predators are inactive (or less active). For example, the Asian tiger mosquito is most active between 10:00am and 3:00pm when bats are normally roosting.
- Candles containing oil of citronella are often used outdoors to repel mosquitoes from around decks and picnic tables. These products work best when there is relatively little air movement to disperse the chemical too quickly. Avoid splashing water on lit citronella candles.

Chemical Control Measures

Chemical control of mosquitoes primarily targets the adult mosquito. Outdoor foggers will keep mosquitoes away for several hours; but once the chemical dissipates, mosquitoes may return to the area. Spraying thickets or shrubs along the perimeter of your yard helps reduce the population of mosquitoes that rest in these areas. Call the Extension office for more information on selecting appropriate pesticides for use against mosquitoes.

Homeowners wanting to treat small areas, such as bird baths, garden pools, etc, might want to try bacterial insecticides that are available at many retail stores, garden centers and on-line garden suppliers. There are several products formulated as "donuts" ("dunks") or as granules that contain the bacterium Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis or "Bti". This bacterium kills mosquitoes, but does not harm fish, birds or other wildlife. The "dunk" versions are well-suited for small breeding sites (100 sq. ft. or less) and will control mosquito larvae for about 30 days. Before using Bti products, you need information on the life cycle and habitat requirements of mosquitoes in your area. Simply treating all areas of standing water without knowing if they are actually sources of the problem is a waste of time and money.

Modifying or eliminating breeding sites is the only long-term solution to severe mosquito problems.

Recommendations for the use of chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact an agent of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension.
Summertime Food Safety

The risk for food borne illness increases in the summer months. This is due to the warmer and more humid weather which supports bacteria growth as well as the increase in outdoor activities and eating outdoors. It can be harder to keep things, clean, cooked properly and held at the correct temperatures when preparing and serving food outside. Here are some tips to decrease your risk for getting sick during your picnics, barbecues and other outdoor eating.

Clean: Wash Hands and Surfaces Often.
- Wash your hands with warm, soapy, potable water (safe for drinking) before handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets. If water is not potable, bring water for preparation and cleaning. Or pack clean, wet, disposable washcloths or moist towelettes and paper towels for cleaning hands and surfaces.

Separate: Don’t Cross Contaminate.
- Do not cross contaminate raw foods with foods that are ready-to-eat. If transporting raw meats or other foods to cook, make sure that you have a separate cooler for those foods and don’t mix with salads, fruits or other ready-to-eat foods and drinks.

Cook: Cook to Proper Temperatures.
- Take along a food thermometer that reads from 0°F to 220°F. Meat and poultry cooked on a grill often browns very fast on the outside, so be sure that meats are cooked thoroughly.
- Cook beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops to a safe minimum internal temperature of 145°F. Cook steaks and roasts that have been tenderized, boned, rolled, etc., to an internal temperature of 160°F.
- Cook all cuts of pork to an internal temperature of 160°F.
- Cook ground beef, veal and lamb to an internal temperature of 160°F.
- All poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F throughout the product.
- Cook meat and poultry completely at the picnic site. Partial cooking of food ahead of time allows bacteria to survive and multiply to the point that subsequent cooking cannot destroy them.

Chill: Refrigerate Promptly.
- Cold refrigerated perishable food like luncheon meats, cooked meats, chicken, and potato or pasta salads should be kept in an insulated cooler packed with several inches of ice, ice packs, or containers of frozen water.
- Consider packing canned beverages in one cooler and perishable food in another cooler because the beverage cooler will probably be opened frequently.
- Keep coolers in the shade or shelter, out of the sun, whenever possible and replenish melting ice.
- If a cooler chest is not an option, consider taking non perishable foods like fruits, vegetables, hard cheeses, canned or dried meats, dried cereal, bread, peanut butter, crackers, and a bottle of refreshing beverage.

Leaving foods out and dealing with leftovers
- Perishable food left out of refrigeration for more than 1 hour, when it is 90°F or higher, may not be safe to eat. You also need to keep hot foods at 140°F or higher to ensure their safety. Play it safe; don’t leave food out too long and put leftovers back on ice once you finish eating so they do not spoil or become unsafe to eat.

If you have any doubts, throw it out.
It’s Summer... There May Be Mold
Although mold can be a problem all year long, it seems to be more prevalent in many Buncombe County homes during our warmer summer months.

Ten Things You Should Know About Mold
1. Potential health effects and symptoms associated with mold exposures include allergic reactions, asthma, and other respiratory complaints.
2. There is no practical way to eliminate all mold and mold spores in the indoor environment; the way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture.
3. If mold is a problem in your home, you must clean up the mold and eliminate sources of moisture.
4. Fix the source of the water problem or leak to prevent mold growth.
5. Reduce indoor humidity (to 30-60%) to decrease mold growth by: venting bathrooms, dryers, and other moisture-generating sources to the outside; using air conditioners and de-humidifiers; increasing ventilation; and using exhaust fans whenever cooking, dishwashing, and cleaning.
6. Clean and dry any damp or wet building materials and furnishings within 24 - 48 hours to prevent mold growth.
7. Clean mold off hard surfaces with water and detergent, rinse and dry completely. Absorbent materials such as ceiling tiles, that are moldy, may need to be replaced.
8. Prevent condensation: Reduce the potential for condensation on cold surfaces (i.e., windows, piping, exterior walls, roof, or floors) by adding insulation.
9. In areas where there is a perpetual moisture problem, do not install carpeting (i.e., bathrooms and kitchens, or on concrete floors with leaks or frequent condensation).
10. Molds can be found almost anywhere; they can grow on virtually any substance, providing moisture is present. There are molds that can grow on wood, paper, carpet, and foods.

Summer Vacation Stress Reduction
Do you remember the times as a kid when you could hardly wait for summertime and summer vacations? Do you find as an adult with a family, work and other responsibilities, you long for that summer vacation freedom you had as a kid? Do you find that you dread the summer and the family vacation? If you answer yes to these questions, you need to find some free time for yourself this summer. Many times we expect our summer vacation to do that for us, when in reality it may be more stressful than our regular routines of work, home and everyday family responsibilities. You can relieve some of the summer vacation stress. Try these tips and relax more this summer.

- Plan ahead. Take the time now to plan that vacation time and be sure to include some of the fun things you like to do.
- Include time before and after the vacation to be home to gear up for the trip or relax and get moved back home at the end of the trip.
- Delegate some of the responsibilities. Give other family members the responsibility of finding the hotel or other arrangements during the trip.
- Take along some of the relaxing things you like to do, like good books to read, needle point, knitting or other craft projects.
- If visiting family, plan some down time during the visit where you have free time and are not rushing to see others.
- Pick places to visit which allow for down time or quiet time.
- Plan to have time other than your vacation for relaxing activities this summer. You can use the longer days to give you time in the garden, to read outside with a cup of coffee in the morning, take an evening walk or star gaze at night.

Remember, even a five minute relaxation break can lead to better health and more energy to do the things you need to do at work and at home.
WATER: HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU DRINK EVERY DAY?

GOOD DRINKING WATER IS NEEDED TO MAINTAIN GOOD HEALTH! Good water is the beverage your body needs most. Sometimes we forget how important it is for us to drink enough water.

Water:

- Regulates body temperatures
- Carries nutrients and waste throughout the body
- Adds moisture to the air we breathe so lungs can use it
- Helps protect our organs
- Helps our joints stay healthy

Water is your body’s principal chemical component and makes up about 60 percent of your body weight. As you can see, every system of your body needs water. Lack of water can lead to dehydration. Dehydration occurs when you don’t have enough water in your body to maintain body processes. Mild dehydration can drain your energy and make you tired.

How much water do I need to drink per day? The general rule is six to eight, 8-ounce glasses a day. Your activity level, the climate in which you live and your health status can also affect the amount of water you need.

20% of your water will come from the foods you eat. The rest should come from the beverages you choose. Water is the best beverage choice you can make. You don’t need the fancy, expensive water to get the great health benefits of water. If the weather is very warm, you need to drink more. If you are physically active, you need to drink more.

FOLLOW THESE TIPS FOR STAYING HYDRATED:

- Drink a glass of water with each meal and in between.
- Hydrate before, during and after exercise.
- Buy an inexpensive BPA free or metal bottle, fill with tap water, and take it with you for the day. Add a squeeze of lemon, lime, or orange and drink water before, during and after physical activity.
- Choose water when eating away from home. It also saves you money.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 (6 ounce) can frozen orange juice concentrate
- 1 1/2 cups milk, skim
- 1/2 cup sugar or artificial sweetener
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 10 ice cubes

DIRECTIONS:

In a blender, combine orange juice concentrate, milk, sugar, vanilla and ice cubes. Blend until smooth. Pour into glasses and serve.

GOLDEN FREEZE

Source: Cooking with EFNEP Recipes for Eating Smart and Moving More Cook Book.
**Summer Tea**

**Ingredients:**
- 1 cup white sugar (substitute artificial sweetener)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup hot water
- 6 cups brewed tea, cold
- 2 cups orange juice
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 1 orange, sliced into rounds
- 1 lemon, sliced into rounds
- 1 lime, sliced into rounds

**Directions:**
In a large pitcher, combine sugar, salt and hot water. Stir until completely dissolved. Stir in the tea, orange juice and lemon juice. Serve in tall glasses with ice and slices of citrus fruit.

*This recipe can be sweetened to taste.*

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**Contributors Areas of Responsibility and Expertise**

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