



Family Living IDEAS

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October 2008

Greetings all!

Fall is here! I am still getting food preservation questions. Key reminders for your fall food preservation efforts:

1. Vegetables are low acid foods and must be canned in a pressure canner, frozen, pickled, or dried.
2. Do not combine vegetables to can unless you have a WSU or USDA tested recipe. This includes salsa, soups, or other combination foods. Several variables make combining foods risky if you "do your own thing" in the canning process.
3. Do not use vegetables that have been frosted or vegetables from vines that have been frosted. This can also change the pH levels within a vegetable and adversely affect the canning process.
4. If you have questions please call me in the Extension Office at 509-754-2011, or 800-572-0119, ext. 412; or call our statewide food preservation hotline at 866-986-4865. This service is staffed by trained WSU Master Food Preserver volunteers. They will be able to assist you with most any food preservation question.

As we finish up the fall food preservation and garden clean-up, the holidays are just around the corner. It is never too early to be planning your holiday meals and activities. Next month I will focus on specific Thanksgiving plans, but for now consider these "plan-ahead" ideas:

- Make a list of the activities you really want to do.
- Plan holiday meals that will satisfy guests and still stay within healthy limits.
- Stay active, even as the weather gets colder.
- Always keep food safety at the top of your list!

Enjoy fall! Enjoy family and friends!

Sincerely,

M. Christine Price
County Director,
Family and Consumer Sciences Educator

Apple Health for kids

Apple Health for Kids is a new Washington State initiative aimed at streamlining applications for children's medical. Up to 75,000 Washington children are still uninsured. Many of these families are eligible – but they just don't know it. Don't make that mistake. Health coverage doesn't just work when your children are sick. It also includes preventive care like immunizations or physical exams. If your children need coverage, check it out today at fortress.wa.gov/dshs/maa/applehealth/ or call 1-877-543-7669.

Diabetes briefing

Prevent eye problems

What kind of eye problems am I at risk of?

Uncontrolled or poorly controlled diabetes can damage the small blood vessels of the retina (called retinopathy). The retina is the part of the eye that's sensitive to light and sends messages to your brain about what you see. When the blood vessels of your retina are damaged, fluid can leak from them and cause swelling in your macula. The macula is the part of your eye that gives you sharp, clear vision.

If the retinopathy worsens, your eye may begin to form new blood vessels over the retina. These vessels are fragile and can break easily and bleed. Scar tissue may form, which can cause the retina to break away from the back of the eye. If it's not treated, retinopathy can cause blindness.

How should I take care of my eyes?

The main thing is to have your eyes checked yearly. You won't notice the early signs of problems because the changes in your eyes can only be seen through special equipment.

Call your doctor if you:

- Have blurred vision for more than two days.
- Suddenly lose vision in one or both eyes.
- See black spots, cobwebs or flashing lights that aren't really there.

American Academy of Family Physicians.
Diabetes and your body. Familydoctor.org.

Communicating with young children

Communicating with children involves the exchange of words, ideas, and feelings. We communicate with looks – scowls and smiles, with actions – slaps and hugs, with silence – warm or cold, as well as with words – kind and unkind. Communication includes the content – what is communicated, as well as the method – how it is communicated.

Adults usually do not have any difficulty communicating with children when it simply involves giving directions on how to use scissors or explaining the danger of cars, but they do have difficulty communicating when feelings are involved – either the child's or their own.

Good communication leads to warm relationships, cooperation, and feelings of worth. Poor communication leads to kids who "turn off" adults, conflicts and bickering, and feelings of worthlessness.

LISTEN ATTENTIVELY

At times adults may need to stop whatever they are doing and listen to the child. It is difficult to run the vacuum cleaner, cook dinner, or read the paper and at the same time pay close attention to what the child is saying.

Caution: Do not pretend that you are listening when you aren't. If you are busy – talking on the telephone or entertaining guests – tell the child, "I'm busy now, but let's talk about that later," and be specific about when. Then be sure to follow through.

USE "YOU-MESSAGES"

"You-messages" describe your perceptions of the child's feelings and will often encourage the expression of troublesome feelings. Use them to reflect the child's ideas and feelings. For example:

"I think you are upset because your dog died." "Are you upset because you didn't win the game?" "I feel that you are angry because Jenny wouldn't let you play with her new doll baby."

When children are allowed to express bad feelings freely, those feelings will often disappear like magic. Hiding bad feelings is self-destructive. They do not disappear; they can lead to self-hate, headaches, ulcers, and violent actions.

Remember: Feelings are for real, and their existence, whether negative or positive, must be recognized. Feelings honestly expressed can then be handled effectively.

Kenneth E. Barber. *Communicating with young children*. WSU Extension. EB 1348.

Self control

A frazzled mother with a fussy child caught the eye of a grocery store manager. He overheard her say, "Lily, you can do this. We just have to get a few things."

Moments later, when the child became more upset, the mother said calmly, "It's okay, Lily. We're almost done."

When the child became hysterical in the checkout line, the mom took a deep breath and said, "Lily, just hold it together for a few more minutes."

As she was leaving, the store manager stopped her. "I just wanted to compliment you on how remarkably calm and patient you were with little Lily."

The mother laughed. "Well, thank you, but my baby's name is Lisa. I'm Lily. I was just holding it together for myself."

Self-control is a virtue that doesn't come easily. This mother had to work on it, talking herself through each challenge. According to Dr. Daniel Goleman, controlling impulses like frustration and anger is a crucial aspect of character that he calls "emotional intelligence." In fact, he says, "Those who are at the mercy of impulse – who lack self-control – suffer a moral deficiency."

The good news is, this deficiency in self-control can be cured by continuous efforts to identify and overcome negative emotions with rational thought. Although most of us experience negative emotions, inducing us to express anger, give in to frustration, or surrender to temptation, self-control is well within our power. We may not be able to suppress all our emotions and reactions, but we can dictate what we say and do. And whether we'll allow negative feelings to dominate us.

It's hard work to harness powerful impulses and redirect our thoughts toward positive attitudes, but those who do live happier lives in a happier world.

This is Michael Josephson reminding you that character counts.

Self Control. Michael Josephson. Josephson Institute of Ethics. October 2008.

The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge, but imagination.

Freezing fruits

Freezing is one of the simplest and least time consuming methods of food preservation. For best quality, it is important to follow directions carefully. Color, flavor, and nutritive value can be affected by freshness of the produce selected, method of preparation and packaging, and conditions of freezing.

Select fully ripe fruit that is not soft or mushy. Most fruit has the best flavor, color, and food value if it has ripened on the tree or vine. Carefully wash and sort fruit. Trim and discard parts that are green or bruised. Peel, trim, and slice fruit as directed. Prepare fruit by packing with or without sugar (or syrup). Use ascorbic acid to retard browning of light-color fruit. Pack prepared fruit in suitable containers to prevent freezer burn. To serve, thaw fruit at room temperature or in the refrigerator. Serve while a few ice crystals remain.

Any fruit can be frozen without sugar. However, the texture may be softer than that of fruit frozen with sugar. Some fruits such as berries, cherries, and grapes may be frozen in a single layer on cookie sheets before packing in containers. This prevents them from sticking together. Serve them frozen as snacks or thaw and use as a topping for salads or desserts. If desired, a water pack (without sugar) can be used for fruit such as peaches. Fruit juice (either extracted from the fruit or purchased) can be used. Orange and berry juices are suitable.

SYRUP PACK

Fruits that will be served uncooked are often packed in syrup. The syrup may be prepared from either cane or beet sugar. If desired, part of the sugar may be replaced by corn syrup or honey. Select the strength of syrup that will give the desired flavor. (This will depend on the sweetness of the fruit, personal preference, and intended use.) Allow about 2/3 cup of syrup for each pint of fruit; 1 1/3 cups for each quart of fruit. Dissolve sugar in hot or cold water. If hot, cool before using.

SUGAR PACK

Juicy fruits and those that will be used for pies or other cooked products are often packed in sugar. Use about 1 cup of sugar for each 2 to 3 pounds of fruit. Sugar and fruit should be gently but thoroughly mixed until the sugar has dissolved in the juice.

RETARDING BROWNING

For syrup or liquid packs, add 1/2 teaspoon powdered or crushed ascorbic acid in 3 tablespoons cold water and sprinkle over 4 cups of fruit just before adding sugar. Follow the manufacturer's directions when using a commercial antidarkening mixture.

Freezing fruits and vegetables. Sept 2007. PNW Extension. PNW 214.

Gardening in October

By fall, most gardeners are tiring of garden chores, especially when there isn't much left to harvest or many flowers to pick. But garden clean-up is essential both for the health of the soil and for an early start on next year's garden. You'll be able to get into the garden sooner and with more pleasure if you tend to some of the important details now.

Clean-up involves removing corn stalks, vines, dry raspberry canes, garden stakes, and row markers. Healthy plant material can be added to the compost pile. Discard diseased plant material and seedy weeds. Do a final weeding because weeds left in the garden will go to seed, producing hundreds of new weeds next year.

Rake leaves, remove dead stems, and dispose of any diseased leaves, stems, or dropped fruit from lawns and garden beds. This will reduce disease carryover during the winter. Good sanitation practices reduce re-infestation of insects and diseases the following season. Rake and remove leaves from under your rose bushes. This will eliminate a prime breeding ground for insect pests and fungal diseases like powdery mildew.

Leaves from landscape trees can be shredded with the lawn mower and spread over the vegetable garden and flower garden as organic mulch. This gives the material several months to decompose before spring planting.

Deciduous trees and shrubs (including Roses) should not be pruned during this time of year. Pruning stimulates growth, which will winter-kill with a hard frost. Pruning can be done in the early spring: February to April when the temperature is above 40°F so the branches do not shatter because they are brittle. Birch and walnut trees are an exception to this rule. If pruning is absolutely necessary, summer is the best time to prune Birch and Walnut trees. Birch trees do not take well to pruning at all. Don't top trees, do selective pruning. For shrubs it is best to wait until early spring to prune, except for the spring-blooming shrubs.

Prepare your water feature for winter temperatures. If it's a small water garden, you may want to empty out the water now, so it doesn't freeze solid. This also is a good time to clean the water garden for repair of any small cracks. Move aquatic plants indoors to ensure their survival. Choose a cool, above freezing, indoor location, placing the pots of aquatic plants in a tub with some water to keep them moist. They don't need to be as deeply covered as outdoors.

Mona Kaiser, WSU Grant/Adams Area Master Gardener. *Gardening in October.* Oct. 2005.

Composting

There are many good ways to compost! By composting food and yard waste we are returning to the soil material we have “borrowed” for our use and enjoyment – and save landfill space for the trash that truly belongs there. By composting, we: *Give the earth a break – Put back as much as we take!*

COMPOSTING FOOD WASTE

Compost vegetable wastes only, no fat or meat or bones. 1) Bury it: cover buried garbage with at least eight inches of soil to keep pests out. Try burying it where you will be planting next year’s garden, or outside the dripline of landscape plants. 2) Blend and pour it: blend kitchen vegetable waste with water: pour it around your flowers and vegetables. 3) Feed your worms with it: If you’re interested in building a worm box, see plans available at the County Extension Office.

COMPOSTING YARD WASTE

1) Leave it where it falls: Grass clippings and leaves will enrich your soil. 2) Pile it up: Mounds of chopped clippings and prunnings will become compost in a year or so. 3) Build a holding unit: Make it at least three feet in diameter. Alternate nitrogen and carbohydrate material (“green stuff” and “brown stuff”). Be sure that air can circulate and that the material is moist but not soggy. 4) Building a turning unit: Fill #1: turn contents into #2 to continue rotting. When partially rotted, turn into #3 to finish. Cover with plastic to prevent leaching of nutrients. Takes one to six months.

HOW DO I USE MY COMPOST?

1) As a mulch: Spread compost around plants. This will help the plants by smothering weeds, by holding moisture, and by keeping the soil cooler in summer and warmer in winter. 2) As a soil amendment: Dig the compost into the soil before planting. Compost is amazing; it makes clay soil drain better, and helps sandy soil retain water. Unlike commercial fertilizers, it will not “burn” plants. 3) In potting mix: Compost mixed with vermiculite, perlite, or sand makes excellent potting soil. Use one part compost to two parts of the other ingredient.

Composting Bulletin. May 1998. WSU Grant/Adams Area Extension. 98-09-01.



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Layout and design provided by Jenelle Kerner, a member of the WSU Grant/Adams Extension team.

World Class. Face to Face.

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