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What's Growin' On?: Cultivation Inspiration

-Ashley Tullis, USU-Iron County Staff Assistant & USU Extension Master Gardener

Gardeners start your engines, it's time to get growing!

It's time to kick-off the growing season. Here are some helpful tips from the USU gardening pros along with some "cultivation inspiration" to help you get a jump on your yard and garden-

March Checklist:

- Fertilize spring-flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, fritillaria, and crocus.
- Apply horticulture oils at bud break (delayed dormant) in fruit trees to control overwintering insect pests.
- Apply pre-emergent herbicides in late March to mid-April to control annual weeds such as crabgrass and spurge in your lawn.
- Prune berries and fruit trees such as apples, pears, peaches, cherries, plums, and apricots.
- Explore more gardening tips on Extension's newly designed [yard and garden website](#).

Want to try something new? Like the idea of raising a garden but lack the time and/or space to do so? Consider trying your hand at Container Gardening; this method allows you to grow big flavor in small spaces, which makes for an efficient and exciting way to grow your favorite produce. Once you have determined the correct pot size, water requirement, and nutrient needs, it's time to have some fun. Let those creative juices flow by experimenting with different plant combinations and culinary-themed pots. Keeping the "**thrill, fill, and spill**" concept in mind will help create a container garden that is sure to please the palate and the eyes.



Keep the good stuff growing! 

KATHY'S CORNER

EXTENSION 
UtahStateUniversity

MARCH/APRIL 2021 EDITION

EXTENSION.USU.EDU

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JUST A QUICK NOTE

You may be familiar with the phrase, "Here today; gone tomorrow." The phrase refers to something that lasts only a short time and may be tied to the need to make use of current opportunities in life or even your paycheck!

Well, could the phrase also refer to our fickle spring weather? I believe so! The sun may be shining with temperatures in the 50's today but tomorrow it may snow in the morning and only warm up into the 30's.

I guess the word to the wise just might be not putting away your winter clothes just yet and you might want to keep the snow scraper in the back seat.

Happy Spring!


Kathleen (Kathy) Riggs, Professor
USU Extension, Iron County
Family and Consumer Sciences/4-H Youth

✓ CHECK IT OUT

APRIL IS FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH-

When was the last time you evaluated your finances? Are you making ends meet? Are you able to make your housing and utility payments each month and on time? Are you adding to a savings account regularly?

Whether you believe you really could use some help or simply want to brush up on a few financial topics, consider enrolling in one of USU Extension's free webinars happening over the next few weeks.

Visit: <https://extension.usu.edu/finance/empowering-financial-wellness/> Next, click on Classes and Webinars.

Some upcoming topics and dates for 2021 include:

March 18: Credit Tricks
March 25: Organization Tricks
April 5: Get Organized
April 12: Eliminate Debt
April 19: Clean up your Credit
April 26: Clean up your Budget

Feel free to explore other offerings throughout this amazing website and if you have questions, just click on Contact Us!

OTHER GREAT READS INSIDE:

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LOOK WHAT'S COMING

LIVE ZOOM CLASS

FOOD STORAGE UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL-

Date: Tuesday, March 23, 2021

Time: 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Instructor: Kathy Riggs

Details: Explore the best methods for preparing for the next food shortage or family emergency.

Registration: The class is free of charge but you must register to participate.

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://usu-edu.zoom.us/j/84411111111>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

If you are receiving a hardcopy of this newsletter, you may go to <https://extension.usu.edu/iron/> select the Home, Family, and Food tab then click Register Here!

FOOD PRESERVATION VIDEOS AVAILABLE

Click the titles below to start watching

- [How to Preserve Food at Home Safely](#)
- [Avoiding 10 Canning Mistakes](#)
- [Avoiding 4 Minor Canning Mistakes](#)

Search... 

You can also see USU Extension Youtube Channel and in the search bar, type "Food Preservation".

FABRIC SOFTENER TUTORIAL— DID YOU KNOW?

Fabric softener helps keep clothes soft and smelling great. Plus, it can help protect against fading, pilling, and stretching. How does it work?

Like hair conditioner, fabric softener contains fatty acids which are used to change how a material feels. In a classic case of opposites attracting, the positively charged fatty acids are drawn to the negatively charged fabrics in the wash, lubricating the fabric fibers. This makes the fibers feel softer and protects them from damage, especially during the laundry process, when clothes can be thrashed 3,000 times and as fast as 50 miles per hour.



Fabric softeners come in a variety of forms to suit your needs. Liquids are usually added to the washing machine and dispensed during the rinse cycle. Beads can be added directly to the washing machine drum before clothes and other items are added. Dryer sheets are activated by the heat, moisture, and tumbling action of the dryer.

It's important to read the garment's care label instructions to make sure the product is safe to use on the fabric. Here are some things to look out for:

- Do not use fabric softener on children's sleepwear or other flame-resistant clothes, as it may reduce flame resistance.

- Do not use fabric softener on garments made with fluffier fabrics, like velour, chenille, terry cloth, and fleece. You can, however, use fabric softener on fluffy towels.

- In some situations, fabric softener can inhibit the moisture-wicking properties of performance fabrics. Consider using a fabric softener designed for active-wear, which provides odor elimination and anti-static benefits without affecting wicking.

Source: <https://cleanandhappynest.org/wpd/what-is-fabric-softener-and-how-is-it-used/>

CUPS OF CONNECTION TO YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Filling the Relationship "Pool"

- Fill your relationship pool one cup at a time.
- Fill it using kindness, gratitude, and affection.
- You will lose water if cups aren't constantly being added.

Ways Water is Lost

- Evaporation: not doing anything for your relationship.
- Dipping and Splashing: sarcastic comments, using unkind words.
- Loyalty Leaks- breaking trust or not being honest.
- If there are cracks in the pool, use resources such as counseling or relationship education courses.



Visit upliftfamilies.org and relationships.usu.edu for more information.

UTAH MONEY MOMS RESOURCES

If you haven't taken the time to check out <https://www.utahmoneymoms.com/> you are missing out on numerous resources available at no cost to you (unless you print the worksheets, handouts, etc.).

Maybe you are looking for tips for teaching your children money management skills or are you learning to live on a reduced income due to loss of employment, retirement, or divorce? Is it possible you are looking for some help getting your important financial papers in order?



There are other "tabs" located on the home page of this blog and the featured article this month features "Why It Pays to File Early"- the article explains how devious thieves go after your tax returns by using your social security number. For 2019, this resulted in 60,000 denied tax returns by the genuine filer/taxpayer.

For more information, check out the blog today!

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BRAIN!

Especially following a year of disrupted routines and limited contact with friends and loved ones, all of us, including older adults, may begin questioning their mental wellness and overall brain fitness.

Assuming going into 2020, your brain had a reserve of healthy cells ready to assist in making decisions, researchers at USU Extension promote maintaining connections between these cells and even growing a reserve to lean on during challenging times.

An excerpt from a fact sheet titled, "A Healthy Brain: Use It or Lose It!" states:

"If it [the brain] is trying to send a signal from one area to another, and for some reason there is a problem sending that message the typical way, a well-connected brain (one with high cognitive reserve) will have lots of other routes (what scientists call neural pathways) available to take, and the signal can still reach its destination.



A well-connected brain has more 'resilience' against damage – it can handle more damage than a brain with fewer alternate routes around the damaged areas."

The fact sheet then provides a list of possible activities to help in this process- from playing a new board game, to learning words/phrases in other languages. Check it out here:

https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2797&context=extension_curall

WHAT IS ARBOR DAY AND WHY IS IT CELEBRATED?

The last Friday in April is traditionally identified as National Arbor Day. According to <https://www.arborday.org/celebrate/history.cfm> the focus of this holiday is on the future. Arbor Day encourages planting a tree that will provide shade, a habitat for wildlife, clean air and natural beauty.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY CORNED BEEF AND CABBAGE TRADITION UNRAVELED

Eating corned beef and cabbage has long been associated with Irish tradition- especially for St. Patrick's Day. However, this practice wasn't a tradition in Ireland at all but came from the English who brought beef cattle to the conquered country and the U.S. when immigrants found cabbage to be inexpensive in this country following their emigration. Fortunately, both foods have nutritional benefits except for the caution of sodium intake from the cured brisket which is aged in brine with spices to create corned beef.



PURCHASING HOME CANNING LIDS AND JARS-2021

The manufacturers of Ball and Kerr canning jars and two-piece lids were adversely affected by the COVID-19 business lockdowns last year. Production of these products came to a standstill and created an opportunity for overseas companies to market "knock-off" brand supplies that when purchased online quickly became identified as sub-par.

Approved supplies became impossible to secure and even now, as some store shelves occasionally hold the true name-brand products, prices have sky-rocketed. One website offers a box of 12 canning lids for just under \$25!

For all who are awaiting the arrival of trusted lids and jars once again, there is some light at the end of the tunnel. Mainly, large box stores (i.e. Walmart, IFA, Kroger/Smith's) will be given first priority to order limited supplies beginning the end of March and then throughout the summer. The hope is for production lines to become fully functional in time for fall canning making reducing the scarcity.

In the meantime:

- Consider other methods of food preservation (even if only to delay actual canning);
- DO NOT re-use canning lids;
- If you have purchased non-standard jars or lids, they may still seal but remove the metal rings and check the seal regularly with fingernail—The lids may buckle but if you achieve a seal after proper preparation and processing time, they will be safe to consume.