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GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR FRESH-CUT CHRISTMAS TREE

By Michael Kuhns, USU Extension Forestry Specialist

- Be sure tree limbs are strong enough to support lights and ornaments. Limbs should also be well placed to give the tree a pleasing shape. Minor defects in the tree can often be turned toward a wall and can also lower the purchase price.
- Once a fresh tree is brought home, re-cut a thin section from the butt end and place the tree in a pail of water until you are ready to decorate it. Keep the tree outside and away from sun and wind so it does not become dry. When you are ready to bring the tree in, cut the butt end again if it has been stored more than three or four days. This cut section can be hung with a ribbon and made into an ornament by marking the rings with significant years in your family's history. Most sections will have seven to 10 growth rings.
- Once inside, the tree should be placed in a sturdy stand that holds at least one gallon of water. A fresh tree can lose this much or more water a day. Place the tree away from heaters, furnace vents, televisions and other heat sources.
- Lights on the tree should be UL-approved and protected by an inline fuse. Small pinpoint lights work well because they stay cool. Don't be sentimental about old Christmas tree lights. Old lights with cracked insulation or loose sockets should be discarded. Turn lights off when the tree is unattended. Flammable decorations should not be used on a Christmas tree with electric lights. Candles should never be used to light a Christmas tree or wreath.
- A fresh tree that is watered daily can stay moist and safe for several weeks. If a tree is displayed in a public building, it should be kept no longer than 15 days and should be treated with a retardant solution.
- Christmas trees can be useful even after they are taken down. Trees can be placed in the yard as greenery and act as a bird haven until spring. They can also be used for firewood or chopped mulch. Many communities have programs to gather trees after Christmas to be chipped as mulch or used for other purposes.
- Choose-and-cut trees are available from Christmas tree growers throughout Utah. Use the same selection tips to buy a choose-and-cut tree as you would a pre-cut tree. Some growers will cut the tree for you, and others will have you cut your own. For the locations of local growers, contact your county Extension office.



Keep the good stuff growing!



KATHY'S CORNER

Extension
UtahStateUniversity®



November / December 2022 EDITION

EXTENSION.USU.EDU

USU EXTENSION - IRON COUNTY - 585 N MAIN ST. SUITE 4 - CEDAR CITY UTAH

JUST A QUICK NOTE

We've already had a test-run of winter weather in our region. There was barely enough time to clean out the garden, turn off drip irrigation taps and outside sprinklers. Some of us may still have some unfinished work along those lines.

Before winter decides to arrive once and for all, please remember to check your home, inside and out, for drafts, evidence of pests, problems with the furnace and exposed or under-insulated water pipes. It's much more time- and cost-effective to be prepared and prevent costly damage to your home before winter sets in with a vengeance.

Sincerely,

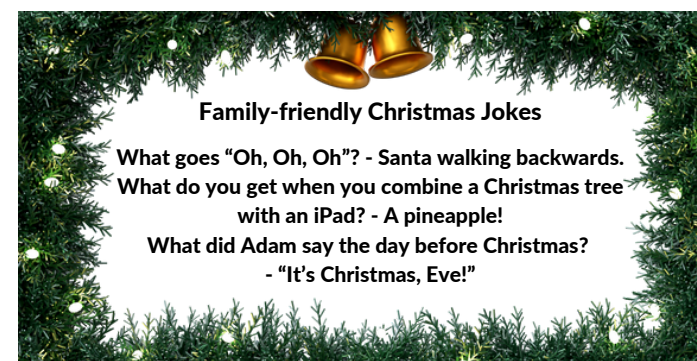
Kathleen (Kathy) Riggs, Professor
USU Extension, Iron County
Family and Consumer Sciences/4-H Youth



✓ CHECK IT OUT

FREE USU Extension 2023 Calendars

The Extension Office just received a shipment of 2023 calendars. These useful calendars include tips related to finance, emergency preparedness, relationships, yard & garden, along with recipes of the month from the Create Better Health program. A bonus page of The Gardener's Almanac is also included.
PICK UP YOUR FREE CALENDAR TODAY
- NOTE: Limit of 4 Copies per customer.



OTHER GREAT READS INSIDE:

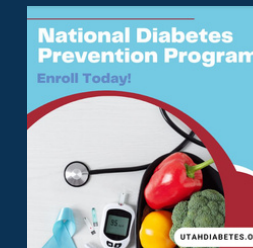
- PG 2: TOP GADGETS ON TEENS' WISH LISTS (ALL FOR \$25 AND UNDER!)
- PG 2: DISCOVER 4-H THIS HOLIDAY SEASON
- PG 2: FOOD SAFETY --DONATING OR RECEIVING FOOD THIS HOLIDAY SEASON
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- PG 3: PRESERVING PUMPKINS/WINTER SQUASH
- PG 3: FAMILY TRADITION(S): IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, CONSIDER STARTING ONE

LOOK WHAT'S COMING

Diabetes prevention month.

November is Diabetes prevention month! Whether you have pre-diabetes, want to prepare healthier meals, take a class, or make a lifestyle change.

Check out www.UtahDiabetes.org to learn more.



Surviving Holiday Spending - Sign up to participate in a special holiday themed live panel discussion "Surviving Holiday Spending for Women"!



The USU, Iron County Extension Office
Will be closed:
November 24-25, 2022, for the
Thanksgiving Holiday & December 26, 2022
FYI, many of our staff will be on
Christmas Break
December 27-30, 2022

TOP GADGETS ON TEENS' WISH LISTS (All for \$25 and under!)

- ESPN Trivia Night game- Comes with 1000 questions
- Zodiac Ring- Slim rings are very popular
- Fast Charging Pad- For phone or ear pods
- Smart phone bike mount for handlebars
- Bronx Cloud slippers- Choice of 15 colors
- Photo Snow Globe- Just add a favorite pic
- Letters of Gratitude
- Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza- Card game
- Bombas Snowflake ankle socks
- Harry Potter key chains

More ideas and links to those above are found here:
<https://growandflown.com/holiday-gift-guide-under-25-dollars-college-students/>

DISCOVER 4-H THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

How do you want your kids to spend their time during the holiday season? If you are hoping to spend some quality time exploring, discovering, or practicing some skills together, you are invited to look at the Utah 4-H Discover curricula, download one or more topic guides, and go through up to six lessons and activities which range from Archaeology to Crime & Spy Science, and from Duct Tape crafts to Theater Arts. See: <https://extension.usu.edu/utah4h/discover>



Create Better Health is a program that is geared toward helping people eat healthier while living with a limited budget. We educate the public on nutrition principles, how to be more physically active, and how to cook easy meals. Classes are held throughout Iron County, and when there's enough interest, we can bring the classes to an interested group.

CREATE SNAP-ED
BETTER HEALTH

*If interested email:
 Channele Richards-
chanelle.richards@usu.edu (English)

Dominique Parke-
dominique.parke@usu.edu (English or Spanish)

FOOD SAFETY --DONATING OR RECEIVING FOOD THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

During the holidays, you may be offering food for a gathering or attending an event where food has been prepared by others. So, how can you be confident no one will become the victim of food poisoning?

<https://www.southernliving.com/holidays-occasions/christmas/clean-christmas-fabric-decorations>

When preparing food for others-

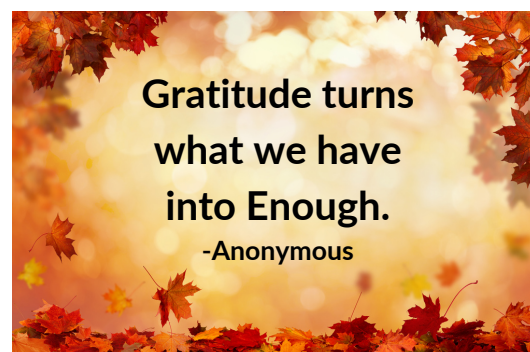
- Start with the basics: Wash your hands before preparing foods and after handling any raw meat or poultry. When in doubt, wash your hands by wetting with water, adding soap and lathering by scrubbing together for 20 seconds.
- Time and Temperature: If foods are to be delivered or served hot, keep them at 140°F or above. Keep refrigerated foods and foods served cold at 40°F or below. Never let foods sit in the bacteria danger zone (40°F-140°F) for more than two hours.



When eating at a gathering or receiving leftovers-

- Safe Travels: If foods are received cold, keep them cold by placing in small, shallow containers and refrigerating. If you need to travel with an entire turkey, it is best to break the whole turkey into smaller pieces and then travel with it in a cooler. This will help the meat stay below 40°F for as long as possible.
- Reheat Properly: For maximum safety, leftover food should be reheated to 165°F. Certain individuals, such as children under 5 years of age, people with cancer and adults over 65 years of age, are at an increased risk of foodborne illness and should always reheat leftover food to 165°F.

Source: Food Safety and Inspection Service:
<http://fsis.usda.gov/> (Click "Topics", then "Food Safety Education")



CLEANING & DEPILLING SWEATERS

Pilling occurs when fabric fibers break down, separate, and then clump together in little balls. It tends to form on wool, cotton, cashmere, even polyester garments, usually at a point where two fabrics rub together. Making sure this doesn't happen to your sweater is very easy.



Start by making sure you're laundering garments like a pro. Turn the sweater inside out and set the machine to gentle cycle. Be sure to use a detergent that rinses clean and does not contain any dyes. After washing, lay the sweater flat onto an absorbent towel to avoid stretching. Roll up the towel and sweater from the closest edge, like a jellyroll. This squeezes out any excess water.

As the sweater is lying flat pilling balls can be removed with a razor, scissors, or even a battery-powered fabric shaver available online, at grocery stores, or big-box chain stores.

Source: <https://www.southernliving.com/holidays-occasions/christmas/clean-christmas-fabric-decorations>

PRESERVING PUMPKINS/WINTER SQUASH

Quantity: An average of 16 pounds is needed for a canner load of 7 quarts.



Quality: Pumpkins and squash should have a hard rind and string-less, mature pulp. Small size pumpkins (sugar or pie varieties) make better canned products.

Procedure: Wash, remove seeds, cut into 1-inch-wide slices, and peel. Cut flesh into 1-inch cubes. Boil 2 minutes in water. Caution: Do not mash or purée. Fill hot jars with cubes and cooking liquid, leaving 1-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel. Adjust lids; process.

For making pies, drain jars and strain or sieve the cubes at preparation time.

Processing: Hot pack only. Altitudes 4,000-6,000 ft.
 Dial Gauge- Pints 13 lbs. pressure 55 min.
 Quarts 13 lbs. pressure 90 min.
 Weighted Gauge- Same time as above but use 15 lbs. weight.

Source: USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning

FAMILY TRADITION(S): IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, CONSIDER STARTING ONE

Most people can remember at least one family tradition they had growing up. Maybe it was Sunday dinner as a family or an annual trek to a favorite vacation spot. Regardless of the nature of a tradition, there are at least 5 reasons to create or observe family traditions.

1. Family traditions create good feelings and special moments to remember.
2. Family traditions give every member of the family a stronger sense of belonging.
3. Family traditions help youth with his/her identity.
4. Family traditions help parents impart the family's values to their children.
5. Family traditions offer youth a sense of security.

However, if the thought of family traditions seems overwhelming, or there isn't time in the family's schedule, consider:

- You can decide how complicated, time-consuming, or expensive a tradition may be—you can keep it simple!
- There are no restrictions on what a tradition can or ought to be.
- Traditions are family-specific; no need to compare your tradition against what another family chooses to do.
- Traditions can change. If the tradition begins getting too large and all-time consuming, adapt or simplify.

Here are a few ideas that may get you excited to move forward with something similar (or not!) this holiday season:

- Making and serving Wassail when the first snowstorm of the season arrives.
- Singing Christmas Carols on Christmas Eve to those who do not get out much.
- Provide gifts for individuals whose information hangs on a community Angel Tree.
- Pull out a jigsaw puzzle for kids and adults to work on together.
- Host a potluck dinner for the neighborhood that includes new families or those you don't know very well.
- Watch a favorite holiday movie together.
- Drive around the community to enjoy the lights on homes, at parks and along Main Street.



Source:
https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/family_traditions_start_one_today