



Improving Family,
Resources & Health

CLOSE TO HOME

by Judy Harris, USU Extension Agent in Utah County

How much allowance is not enough and how much is too much?

Plan your child’s allowance to include S.O.S.:

Savings: Some portion of the allowance needs to be allotted for both short-term savings, like for a special toy or outing, and long-term savings, such as for a bicycle or college fund.

Offerings: This is a small amount of money set aside for donations to charity or the less fortunate. However small the sum, it is a valuable way for a parent to teach personal values through money by showing the child how to share her good fortune.

Spending: Depending on the budget you develop with your child, part of her spending money may go to cover specific expenses. It can range from special treats for young ones to total management of a year’s clothing budget for more sophisticated teenagers.

At any age, however, there needs to be some money that is the child’s discretionary fund to spend as he wishes (with whatever limitations you set, for example, no drugs, no candy, etc.)

Some parents use the allowance-equals-age formula. Another way to come up with a figure for the allowance would be to figure what money you already dole out to your kids each week, add birthday gifts to friends; milk money, movies, a special item at the store, etc.

Source: *How to Raise Financially Responsible Children*

Credits Can Boost Income

Someone you know may be eligible for one or more government credits. So tell others even if this doesn’t apply to you! Eligibility rules for the EIC (Earned Income Credit) are different from the CTC (Child Tax Credit), but many workers can receive both.

The Earned Income Credit

! If you lived with one child in 2002 and your family earned less than \$29,201 (\$30,201 married), you can get up to \$2,506.

! If you lived with two or more children in 2002 and your family earned less than \$33,178 (\$34,178 married) you can up to \$4,140.

! If you had no children living with you in 2002 and you earned less than \$11,060 AND you were between the ages of 25 and 64, you can get up to \$376.

! Attach Schedule EIC to your 1040 or 1040A.

! The Earned Income Credit (EIC) does not affect benefits such as Food Stamps, SSI, Medicaid, or public housing. In most cases, the EIC does not affect cash assistance (“welfare”) eligibility, but these rules are set by each state.

Child Tax Credit

A single or married worker must have taxable earned income above \$10,350 and be able to claim an exemption for a dependent child under age 17 on his or her tax return. Even if you don’t owe income tax you may be able to get a CTC refund. File form 1040 or 1040A (but not 1040EZ) and attach Form 8812.

Free help in filling out tax forms is available from VITA sites around the county. Call for hours:

- # Provo Library—852-6650
- # BYU, Room 316 Tanner Building—378-1211
- # UVSC, BU 124B—863-8526

Corned Beef

Why Eat Corned Beef on St. Patrick's Day?

Originally, “corned beef and cabbage” was a traditional dish served for Easter Sunday dinner in rural Ireland. The beef, which was salted or brined during the winter to preserve it, could then be eaten after the long, meatless Lenten fast.



Corning is a form of curing; it has nothing to do with corn. The name comes from Anglo-Saxon times before refrigeration. In those days, the meat was dry-cured in coarse “corns” of salt. Pellets of salt, some the size of kernels of corn, were rubbed into the beef to keep it from spoiling and to preserve it.

Today brining—the use of salt water—has replaced the dry salt cure, but the name “corned beef” is still used, rather than “brined” or “pickled” beef. Commonly used spices that give corned beef its distinctive flavor are peppercorns and bay leaf. Of course, these spices may vary regionally.

Package Dating and Storage Times

Uncooked corned beef in a pouch with pickling juices which has a “sell-by” date or no date may be stored 5 to 7 days in the refrigerator, unopened. Products with a “use-by” date can be stored unopened in the refrigerator until that date.

Drained and well wrapped, an uncooked corned beef brisket may be frozen for one month for best quality. The flavor and texture will diminish with prolonged freezing but the product is still safe. After cooking, corned beef may be refrigerated for about 3 to 4 days and frozen for about 2 to 3 months.

For additional food safety information about meat, poultry or eggs, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. It's staffed by home economists from 10 am to 4 pm Eastern Standard Time year round. Food safety recordings can be heard 24 hours a day using a touch-tone phone.

Preparation

Corned beef is made from one of several less-tender cuts of beef like the brisket, rump or round. Therefore, it requires long, moist cooking. Keep food safety in mind when preparing the corned beef. It can be cooked on top of the range or in the oven, microwave, or slow cooker.

“Fork-tender” is a good indication of doneness, but use a meat thermometer to be sure. Cook until the internal temperature has reached at least 160°F.

Corned beef may still be pink in color after cooking. This does not mean it is not done. Nitrite is used in the curing process; this fixes pigment in the meat and affects the color. Allow the brisket to stand for about ten minutes after removing from the heat. This will make it easier to slice, and it's best sliced diagonally across the grain of the meat.

Cooking Times

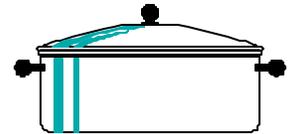
The USDA does not recommend one particular cooking method as best. Following are methods from various sources. The cooking times are based on corned beef that is not frozen at the time of cooking. Whichever method you choose, be sure the beef reaches an internal temperature of at least 160°F to ensure it is safely cooked.

Oven: Set the oven for 350°F or no lower than 325°F. Place brisket fat-side up. Barely cover the meat with water—about one inch—and keep the container covered throughout the cooking time. Allow about one hour per pound.

Stove Top: Place brisket fat-side up in a large pot and cover it with water. Bring the water to a boil; then reduce the heat and simmer, allowing about one hour per pound. Vegetables may be added during the last 20 to 30 minutes of cooking. Cook to desired doneness.

Slow Cooker: If using root vegetables, put them in the bottom of slow cooker. Cut brisket into pieces of like size to ensure thorough cooking. Place brisket on top of vegetables (if using) or in bottom of cooker. Add about 1 - ½ cups of water or enough to cover meat. Cover and cook on high setting for the first hour of cooking. Then cook for 10 to 12 hours on the low setting or 5 to 6 hours on high. Cabbage wedges may be added on top of the brisket during the last three hours of cooking.

Microwave: Calculate cooking time at 20 to 30 minutes per pound. Place brisket in a large casserole dish and add 1 - ½ cups of water. Cover with lid or vented plastic wrap and microwave on medium-low (30 percent power) for half the estimated time. Turn meat over and rotate dish. Microwave on high for remainder of time or until fork tender. Vegetables may be added during the final 30 minutes of cooking.



Cooking Ahead

Some consumers prefer to cook corned beef ahead of time. It's easier to cut uniform slices when corned beef is cold. Cooking ahead also makes it easier to reheat and serve later.

After cooking a whole corned beef, cut it into several pieces for faster cooling—or slice it, if you like. Place the beef in small, shallow containers and cool it in the refrigerator quickly.

Leftovers

Any corned beef left over from a meal should be refrigerated promptly—within two hours of cooking or reheating. Use cooked-ahead or leftover corned beef within 3 to 4 days or freeze up to 2 months.

Easter Egg Cookies You Can Paint

Make a batch of your favorite sugar cookie dough.

Cut the dough with an egg-shaped cookie cutter. (If you only have a round one, bend it slightly into an oval.)

Beat together 1 egg yolk with 1/4 teaspoon of water and 2 or 3 drops of food coloring in a small bowl. Do this for each color you wish to use as paint. Using a clean paintbrush or Q-tip, paint designs onto your Easter egg cookies.

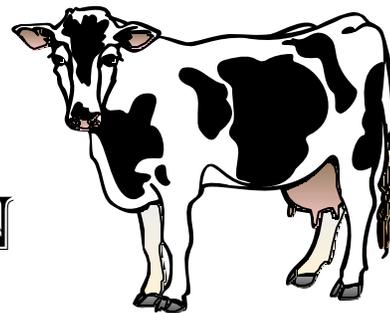
Bake according to recipe instructions.



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THERE'S A COW IN THE KITCHEN



Break the cycle of buying powdered milk, dumping old powdered milk, buying more powdered milk, again and again. Learn to use and enjoy the powdered milk you buy!

Learn easy ways to enjoy powdered milk, including 5-minute cheesecake, Mexican day cheese, cottage cheese, Allemande sauce, smoothies, breakfast drinks, pudding and pies, whipped "cream" topping, mock sour cream, mock cream cheese, yogurt, and chowder. Sampling the foods will show you the tasty possibilities!

The presenter will be Darlene Carlisle (a student of Virginia D. Nelson who authored the book, *There's a Cow in the Kitchen: A Guide to Cooking with Powdered Milk*).

For those who want an excellent printed reference, copies of the book will be available for \$7 each.

Class is Tuesday, April 1 at 10:00 a.m. Since class size is limited to 40, *please* contact Judy at 370-8460 x2 if you need to cancel your registration so someone on the waiting list can attend. No refunds after March 28, the Friday before the class.

Registration—*There's a Cow in the Kitchen*—April 1, 2003

Name(s): _____

Daytime phone or email address: _____

Address: _____

Enclose check (\$3 per person) payable to Utah State University and mail to:

USU Extension, 51 South University Avenue, Room 206, Provo, Utah 84601

If paying at the door the cost is \$4 per person (but only if space is available).

SAFETY IN STORE

As we fight the ongoing battle against germs, it's important to remember that household cleaning products should be used—and stored—with care. Avoiding accidental exposure must be a primary concern for anyone using these products, especially with children around.



Accidental exposure happens most often with children under age 5. The most common age for accidental exposure is age 1, followed by age 2—as you know, these are the ages when children are actively exploring their surroundings. In about half the cases, accidents occur while the product is in use.



Typically, accidental exposure occurs during busy periods: in the home—often between 4:00 and 8:00 p.m., when there is maximum activity, confusion and distractions.

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR ACCIDENT PREVENTION

DO store cleaning products in a locked closet or cabinet, away from food, and not accessible to kids.

DO store products in their original containers and never remove product labels.

Product instructions, precautions and first aid instructions vary according to their ingredients. It can be dangerous to use a product incorrectly or to follow the wrong emergency treatment guidelines.

DO schedule routine cleaning of surfaces and dishwashing when there is a lull in activities, such as nap time, or when children are not in the room.

DO put the product away immediately after removing the amount needed for the cleaning job at hand.

DO rinse measuring cups after each use to avoid accidentally mixing products.



DO be aware that some cleaning products—like oven or drain cleaners—present a significant potential hazard.

Usually they are packaged in child-resistant packaging as required by law, but accidents can still occur if the container cap is not properly closed and if the product is not stored out of reach. Use these products with great care.

DO dispose of empty cleaning containers carefully.

Use up all of the product. Follow label instructions for disposal of disinfectants. Replace the cap to protect children, pets and garbage handlers. Discard containers in a trash can (or recycling bin, if applicable) that has a secured lid.

DON'T mix cleaning products. Products which are safe when used alone can sometimes become dangerous if mixed with other products.

DON'T ever mix chlorine bleach or any product containing chlorine bleach (some tub and tile cleaners, mildew removers, all-purpose cleaners, automatic dishwashing detergents) with:

ammonia, or products which include ammonia or ammonia-containing compounds (e.g., some hand dishwashing detergents or window cleaners) or **acidic** products (e.g., toilet bowl cleaners, rust removers.)

Dangerous gases can be released.

DON'T allow distractions or interruptions when an adult is cleaning.

DON'T leave cleaning buckets containing even small amounts of liquid unattended. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission warns that young children can drown in very small amounts of liquid. Toddlers are “top heavy” and if they topple into a bucket, it may not tip over and they could drown. Five-gallon industrial containers are especially dangerous. These containers are often brought home for use in household chores. They are sturdy and do not tip over easily.

SOURCE & add more of the article?



Horton Around the Yard & Garden

HORTICULTURE
NEWSLETTER
by Adrian C. Hinton,
USU - Utah County

GREETINGS FROM THE COUNTY AGENT



March and April are always a precarious time of year. Many tasks and activities that we do or don't do make a tremendous difference in the producing outcome for the season. And then there are things that we have less control over that happen in early spring that also have a big impact on our success in the garden and landscape, i.e., weather (especially this year since we are in the fifth year of a below normal rainfall cycle), insects, diseases, weeds and others.

With the early spring tendencies that are in effect so far we are in a very similar climate pattern as last year. Much of the fruit "popped out" two to three weeks early last year and then on May 7 and 8 much of Utah County got hit with a killer frost. As much as 85% of the apples, pears and other fruit in the commercial belt in this area was killed by the cold snap.

We always hope and prepare for a good growing season each year. Check out the timely tips and other articles in this newsletter to help you be more productive this year.

TIMELY TIPS FOR MARCH-APRIL

March 1:

1. Now is the time to fertilize fruit trees (at least 6 weeks prior to bloom.)
2. Don't forget to apply dormant oil *before* bud break.
3. Spray quaking aspen for leaf spot **at** bud break (Daconil or fixed copper sprays will do the job).
4. If dry enough, start to prepare garden beds.
5. Good time to plant strawberries and raspberries.
6. Plant bare root trees and roses.

April 1:

7. Begin watering lawns—one time a week only.
8. Good time to core aerate lawns.
9. April 1-April 15 use pre-emergents on lawns with first fertilizer application.
10. Stop by our office in early March to get your copy of the "Vegetable Garden Planting Chart."
11. Check with your city Water Department to see if or when water restrictions are coming.
12. Mulch around trees and shrubs to conserve moisture and help prevent insect and disease problems.

More timely tips on page 8.



*By Paul Wilkey, USU Master Gardener and Horticulturist &
Adrian C. Hinton, USU -Ut. County Horticulture Agent*

Take Care of Slugs with a "Slug-O-Matic"

One of the most elusive and hard to control garden pests (and probably the ugliest) can literally ruin a vegetable or flower garden overnight. It's called the slug and for those of you who have had problems with these in the past, you know just how devastating they can be.



They can live for several years, overwintering in the soil and surfacing in early spring. During the day they hide in dark, moist places—often under boards, rocks, and other garden debris. They come out at night to feed. By morning, plants can be so hole-ridden or even completely chewed away that it leaves vegetables inedible and ornamental plants munched to smithereens.

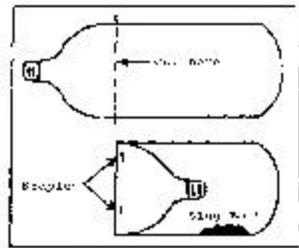
Unfortunately, a well watered and carefully mulched garden is especially attractive to slugs, making control even more difficult.

Gardeners, birds (especially robins and ducks), grand beetles and snakes are virtually the only natural enemies of slugs. So, for other control methods we have to become more resourceful and creative.

One creative gardener is a gentleman named Helmut Brodka from Renton, Washington. He has created the ultimate weapon against slugs. He calls it the "Slug-O-Matic."

This trapping method is not messy, easy to make and is virtually cost free. You just need an empty 2-litre soft drink bottle (preferably green for camouflage purposes), some stapes and some commercial slug bait from a garden shop. To build one for yourself, follow these directions while viewing the diagram as shown in this article.

1. Cut the top third off the empty bottle.
2. Place a spoonful of slug bait in the bottom of the bottle.
3. Push the top portion into the body of the bottle as illustrated.
4. Put enough stapes (3 or 4) around the rim to hold the parts together.



This design will also help keep the poison bait away from children and pets.

You can use the same trap for several weeks, then just throw it away and make a new one. According to Helmut, "It's clean, safe, simple and cheap, and it works."

FYI:

During the winter months, if the temperatures are warm and mild, it is recommended that you water your trees (both deciduous and evergreens) at least once a month to a depth of 15-20".



Guthion to be Phased Out on 30 Crops

Bayer CropScience has voluntarily agreed to phase-out the labeled uses of the insecticide Guthion (azinphos-methyl) on 30 crops, as part of the EPA's implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act. The move could impact fruit, vegetable, treenut, alfalfa, and nursery stock growers. For the crops on which use will be stopped or phased out, growers must now turn to new chemistries that target pests more specifically.

Details of the EPA agreement include:

Time-limited registration: (cancelled 12/31/05 unless submitted data indicate registration should be continued) almonds, apples, blueberries, brussel sprouts, cherries, nursery stock, parsley, pears, pistachios, and walnuts.

Phased-out: (cancelled as of 8/31/05 and cannot be used after 12/31/05) cotton, cranberries, nectarines, peaches, potatoes, southern pine seed orchards, and caneberries.

Cancelled: alfalfa, beans, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, citrus, celery, clover, cucumbers, eggplant, filberts, grapes, melons, onions, pecans, peppers, plums, quince, spinach, strawberries and tomatoes.

Howard M. Deer, Extension Pesticide Specialist

Mini-Greenhouse Idea

Is this warm weather giving you spring fever? Are you aching to get your hands in the soil and plant some seeds?

Right now plastic storage bins are on sale in many stores. If you buy one whose lid measures a bit larger than 10"x22"x17", you can place the lid outside, upside down, place a seeded flat on it and use the bottom as the greenhouse lid. Of course you would buy a bin whose bottom (to become the top) is opaque so light will penetrate it. On a warm day, prop the lid up with a brick, etc., to allow air circulation.

SLOW THE FLOW WATER-WISE TIPS:

Tip 1: Check for leaks.

Dripping faucets or leaky toilets account for a large portion of home water waste. Check all faucets, pipes and toilets periodically for leaks. You can place food coloring in your toilet tank. If color appears in the bowl without flushing, you have a leak.

Tip 2: Install water-saving appliances.

When it comes time for new appliances, replace them with water efficient models. You can install water-saving showerheads, toilets, dishwashers and clothes washers.

Tip 3: Reduce flushing water.

Toilets are big water guzzlers. Fill a plastic bottle with some sand or water and place in the toilet tank to reduce the fill amount. Or better yet, install a low-flush toilet. Don't use your toilet as a wastebasket.

Great Garden Websites:

- <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC7403.html>
- <http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/soil.html>
- <http://www.extension.usu.edu/publica/gardpub2.htm>
- <http://www.waterwiseplants.utah.gov>

DON'T TOP TREES!

The sight of topped trees is all too common in the state of Utah. As more is learned about the long-term effects of topping the more senseless this practice has become. Topping is the most hazardous pruning method available.

One of the most critical needs of a tree in an urban setting is proper pruning. Whether you are pruning for public safety, tree health, aesthetics, or for power line clearance, it's critical that the tree is pruned properly.

Proper pruning will help ensure that the tree's full life span is reached and that all of the benefits that trees offer are received.

Some of the benefits of proper pruning include: shade, aesthetic beauty, oxygen regeneration, air purification, wildlife habitat, and privacy, to name a few.

For more information about how to properly prune trees, energy conservation, trees around power lines or basic tree care call Provo's City Forestry Program at 852-6920.

8 Good Reasons NOT to "TOP"

1. Starvation: When topping, more of the canopy is removed than should be. This upsets the root to crown ratio and temporarily cuts off the tree's food making ability. Proper pruning removes no more than 1/4 to 1/3 of the canopy. A properly pruned tree does not really change the shape or look of the tree.

2. Shock: Topping removes so much of the canopy that hot, direct sun rays can scald the exposed bark. This can stress the tree, leading to more problems, possibly death. **3. Insects and Disease:** Topping leaves large branch stubs. The tree cannot utilize its chemically based natural defense system to form the callus material that typically protects properly cut branches. This leaves the tree highly vulnerable to insect invasion and disease.

4. Weak Limbs: The wood and attachments of the water sprouts (suckers) produced after topping, are more weakly attached than a limb that develops normally.

5. Rapid New Growth: The goal of topping is typically to control the height and spread of a tree. Actually, topping has the opposite effect. The new sprouts created are more numerous, grow faster, longer, and are weaker.

6. Tree Death: Some trees cannot react to radical topping procedures and produce enough regrowth so they can generate enough food. This typically leads to the death of the tree.



7. Ugliness: Topping disfigures the natural shape and growth of a tree. Even with regrowth it never regains the grace and character of its original species and form.

8. Cost: Topping might seem easier than properly pruning a tree. However, the true costs include: reduced property value, expense of removal upon death, change in climate for all plants around the tree, increased liability risk from weakly attached and weakened branches, and increased future maintenance.

Fruit Tree Pruning Demonstrations



March 10, Monday

2:00 - 4:00

Ron & Trish Cutler, 2236 West 300 North **Provo**, (Off of Geneva Rd.)
801-377-4575

March 12, Wednesday

2:00 - 4:00

Keith & Jeri Beeston, 371 East 1890 North, **Orem**
801-226-6375

March 13, Thursday

2:00 - 4:00

Lloyd Wilkey, 7949 South 3310 West, **Spanish Fork**
801-798-6512

March 19, Wednesday

5:00 - 7:00, USU Extension

160 North Main, **Nephi**

435-623-3452

March 20, Thursday - For Master Gardeners & Public

6:00 - 8:00

Thanksgiving Point Gardens, **Lehi**

801-768-7443

March 20, Thursday - For Master Gardeners & Public

2:00 - 4:00, USU Extension

51 South University, Room 211, **Provo**

801-370-8463

March 24, Monday

2:00 - 4:00

Charlene Johnson, 100 Johnson Mill Road, **Midway**

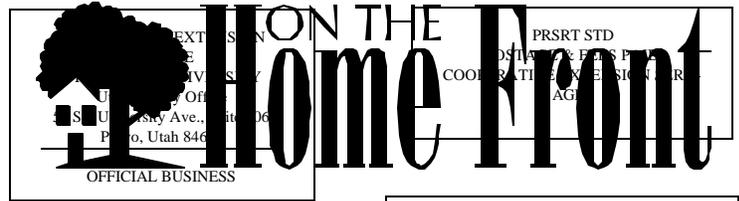
801-654-4333

Upcoming Program to Attend:

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It's time to renew if your expiration date is 03/2003 or 04/2003

Mention or display of a trademark, proprietary product, or firm in text or figures does not constitute an endorsement and does not imply approval to the exclusion of other suitable products or firms.

More Timely Tips

- 13. When the weather warms up and tree buds start to pop, water trees 20" deep, shrubs 12-15" and lawns 9-10" deep to encourage the roots to go deeper early in the season.
- 14. Spray all fruit and ornamental trees and shrubs before buds break. Get spray guide at USU, Utah County Extension office.
- 15. There's a Fruit Grower's Meeting March 17, 9-12 at our office-51 So. University, Provo, Rm. 306 for commercial fruit growers statewide.
- 16. Attend one of the Fruit Tree Pruning Classes in your area. See schedule on Page 7 of this newsletter.
- 17. Get emergency preparedness material from our office.
- 18. Start all transplants 4-6 weeks before set-out date.
- 19. Have great family fun and a successful year.

office of Utah State University Extension, 51 So. University Ave., Room 206, Provo, UT 84601.

The phone for USU Extension is 370-8460. If you do not have a touch tone phone, stay on the line and the receptionist will help you. With a touch tone phone, at the greeting press the number of the desired subject:

- 5) garden, yard, trees, insects
- 2) food, finances, clothing, housing
- 3) pastures, field crops, dairies
- 4) 4-H and youth

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New Deer Info

If you're having trouble with deer dining on your landscape, you want to give this nursery a try:

**Deer-Resistant Landscape Nursery
3200 Sunstone Ct., Clare, MI 48617 (\$3.00 catalog)**