

On the Home Front

July/August 2008



Improving Family,
Resources & Health

CLOSE TO HOME

by Jana Darrington, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent

Fireworks Safety: Don't Blow It!

During the summer, we have many opportunities to celebrate. Independence Day, especially, offers a lot of fun and excitement for families as they watch fireworks blossom against the night-time sky. However, fireworks can turn a joyful celebration into a painful memory if adults or children are injured while setting off their own fireworks. Here are some simple tips that will help keep you and your family safe.

- * Never allow young children to play with fireworks.
Children cannot fully understand the danger involved and cannot act appropriately in case of emergency.
- * Sparklers burn at temperatures hot enough to melt some metals. Use with caution and carefully supervise children while using sparklers.
- * Make sure fireworks are legal in your area before buying or using them.
- * Light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from houses, dry leaves or grass, and flammable materials.
- * Light one item at a time, and then move back quickly. Never have any portion of your body directly over a firework.
- * Never try to re-light or pick up fireworks that have not fully functioned. Douse with water and throw away.
- * Never point or throw fireworks at another person.
- * Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire or other mishaps. Observe local laws.
- * Don't experiment with homemade fireworks.

Sources:

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. *The Safety Review: Be Savvy Year Round. June 2008 Edition.*

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. *Fireworks, Publication #12.*

Driving Smarter

With gas prices continuing to rise on an almost daily basis, many are concerned with the cost of travel this summer. Whether you are traveling to and from work, driving around town, planning a family vacation or business trip, here are some suggestions to help you save gas and drive more efficiently.

- Drive Sensibly. Aggressive driving (speeding, rapid acceleration, and hard braking) wastes gas. It can lower your highway gas mileage by 33% and city mileage by 5%. Sensible driving is also safer!
- Observe the Speed Limit. Avoid high speeds. Above 60 mph, gas mileage drops rapidly. As a rule of thumb, you can assume that each 5 mph you drive over 60 mph is like paying an additional \$0.20 per gallon for gas.
- Remove Excess Weight. Avoid keeping unnecessary items in your vehicle, especially heavy ones. An extra 100 pounds in your vehicle could reduce your MPG by up to 2%.
- Avoid Excessive Idling. Idling gets you 0 miles per gallon. The best way to warm up a vehicle is to drive it. No more than 30 seconds of idling is needed. Anything more simply wastes fuel and increases emissions.
- Use Cruise Control. Using cruise control on the highway helps you maintain a constant speed and in most cases, will save gas.
- Use Overdrive Gears. When you use overdrive gearing, your car's engine speed goes down. This saves gas and reduces engine wear.
- Carpool. Check into telecommuting, carpooling, and public transit to cut mileage and car maintenance costs.

Sources: *Driving More Efficiently.* Retrieved June 10, 2008 from <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/driveHabits.shtml>

U.S. Department of Energy - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) Energy Savers. *Driving and Car Maintenance.* Retrieved 6/10/08 from www1.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/driving.html

Food and Nutrition

Grilling: Safety Tips and Recipes

Summertime is finally here, and so is the season of outdoor cooking! More than any other time of the year, families are dusting off the grill and finding ways to make fun family memories at the park, playground or pool. Whether you have a neighborhood barbecue planned, or you are just grilling for yourself and your family, here are some safety tips and guidelines to follow.

From Store to Home At the grocery store, purchase cold foods like meat and poultry right before check-out. To avoid cross-contamination, separate raw meat from other foods in your cart, and/or put meat packages into plastic bags. Plan to drive directly home from the grocery store, place meat and poultry in the refrigerator immediately.

Thaw Safely Use the refrigerator to safely and completely thaw your meat and poultry before grilling so it cooks more evenly. Sealed packages may be thawed in cold water, or you can use your microwave defroster if the food will be placed immediately on the grill.

Guidelines for Marinating Always marinate in your refrigerator, not on the counter at room temperature.

- ❖ Allow ¼ to ½ cup of marinade for each 1 to 2 pounds of meat.
- ❖ Marinate from 15 minutes to overnight.
- ❖ Reserve any marinade being used as a sauce before putting raw meat in it.
- ❖ Discard leftover marinades that have been in contact with raw meat.

Transporting If you are carrying your meat to be barbecued to another location, pack it in an insulated cooler right from the fridge before leaving home. Use ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40° or below.

Precooking Precooking food partially in the microwave, oven or stove is a great way of reducing grilling time. Just be sure the food goes directly on the preheated grill to complete cooking.

Cook Thoroughly Cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Meats and poultry on the grill often brown very fast on the outside. Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature. NEVER partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later.

Keep Hot Food Hot After cooking meat and poultry on the

grill, keep it hot until served - at 140° or warmer. You can do this by setting them to the side of the grill rack, not directly over the coals where they could overcook. At home, cooked meat can be kept hot in an oven set at approximately 200°F in a chafing dish or slow cooker or on a warming tray.

Serving the Food To avoid cross-contamination, always place cooked meats on a clean serving plate or carving board. Don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry. In hot weather (above 90°) food should never sit out for more than one hour.

Leftovers Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in shallow containers. Discard any food left out more than two hours.

Sources: USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service. *Fact Sheet: Barbecue and Food Safety.*

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service. *Brochure: Use a Food Thermometer*

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service. *Is it done yet?* www.IsItDoneYet.gov

Tips for Safe Grilling

- Partially cook meat in microwave, then immediately grill to finish cooking. This reduces the amount of time your food is exposed to high heat and smoke.
- Trim away excess fat to avoid flare-ups.
- Use smaller pieces so foods cook more quickly.
- Flip foods frequently.
- Use medium & low temperature.
- Cut away charred & burned pieces before serving.

IS IT "DONE" YET?

Most people think they know when food is "done" just by "eyeballing" it.

Did you know that one out of four hamburgers turns brown in the middle before it has reached a safe internal temperature?

Using a food thermometer is the only sure way of knowing if your food has reached a high enough temperature to destroy food-borne bacteria.

USDA RECOMMENDED INTERNAL TEMPERATURES

Steaks and Roasts	
Medium rare	145°
Medium	160°
Fish	145°
All cuts of pork	160°
Ground Beef/Hamburgers	160°
Chicken/Turkey Breasts	170°
Whole Poultry	180°

VEGETABLE GRILLING GUIDE

Grilled vegetables make an easy and yummy side dish. Before grilling, brush cleaned veggies lightly with olive or vegetable oil. For variety, the oil may be seasoned with garlic and/or herbs. Grill over medium coals until tender, turning occasionally. Season with salt, as desired.

Bell peppers Cut peppers lengthwise in half; remove seeds. Grill 12 to 15 minutes.

Corn Put husked and cleaned corn cobs on individual sheets of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Brush with a mixture of ½ cup softened butter, 1 T seasoned salt, and ½ tsp. Black pepper. Wrap tightly. Cook on grill 20 minutes, turning occasionally.

Eggplant Cut small eggplant (3 to 4 ounces each) lengthwise in half. Grill 10 to 12 minutes.

Green Onions Grill whole onions about 5 minutes.

Mushrooms Grill whole mushrooms (1 ½ inch diameter or larger) 12 to 14 minutes.

Onions Cut onions crosswise into ½ inch thick slices. Grill 15 to 20 minutes.

Potatoes Pre-cook small potatoes (3 to 4 ounces each) until barely tender when fork-tested. Rinse in cold water to stop cooking; drain well. Thread onto skewers. Grill 10 to 15 minutes.

Squash Cut small squash (3 to 4 ounces) lengthwise in half. Grill 8 to 12 minutes.

Tomatoes Cut tomatoes into ½ to ¾ inch thick slices. Grill 3 to 5 minutes, or until heated through.

Recipes



Chinese Marinade

½ cup soy sauce
½ cup salad oil
1 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp dry mustard
1 T. sugar or molasses
3 cloves garlic, minced

Combine all ingredients and pour over beef or pork roast in a plastic sack. Allow to marinate for up to 1 hour in the refrigerator. Baste food during grilling with additional marinade if desired. Discard any leftover marinade.

Pineapple-Soy Glazed Steaks

Total preparation and cooking time: 25 minutes
2 well-trimmed beef ribeye steaks, cut 1" thick (approx. 1 pound)

Glaze:

¼ cup pineapple juice
¼ cup soy sauce
2 T packed brown sugar
1 tsp. cornstarch



In a 1-cup glass measuring cup, combine glaze ingredients; mix well. Microwave on HIGH 2 ½ to 3 minutes or until thickened; set aside.

Place beef steaks on grill over medium ash-covered coals. Grill uncovered 12 to 14 minutes for medium rare to medium doneness, turning steaks occasionally and brushing both sides with some of the glaze during the last 5 minutes of grilling. Carve steaks crosswise into thick slices; drizzle with remaining glaze. Serve with grilled pineapple, if desired.

Makes 4 servings (239 calories; 10g fat per serving)

Honey Mustard Grilled Chicken

Total preparation and cooking time: 35 minutes

¼ cup Dijon mustard
¼ cup honey
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 teaspoon steak sauce
4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves



1. Preheat the grill for medium heat.
2. In a shallow bowl, mix the mustard, honey, mayonnaise, and steak sauce. Set aside a small amount of the honey mustard sauce for basting, and dip the chicken into the remaining sauce to coat.
3. Lightly oil the grill grate. Grill chicken over indirect heat for 18 to 20 minutes, turning occasionally, or until juices run clear. Baste occasionally with the reserved sauce during the last 10 minutes. Watch carefully to prevent burning!

Makes 4 servings (270 calories; 10g fat per serving)



Hinton Around the Yard & Garden

HORTICULTURE NEWSLETTER
by Adrian C. Hinton,
USU Extension

GREETINGS FROM YOUR COUNTY AGENT



What a nice season we've had thus far. It's nice to be back to almost normal with our weather conditions. Right now the gardens across the county and state are looking very good and we hope that each of you have one of your very best growing seasons.

The next Master Gardener class will be starting in September, so be sure and tell your green-thumb friends. Registration information will be mailed out soon.

All the Master Gardeners should plan on bringing your very best produce to the Utah County Fair and enter them in the Open Class division (see page 6 for specifics). The County Commissioners are counting on our support this year for an excellent turnout at the new location.

We're excited about our new newsletter format that Trish has been working on. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let Trish know at 801-851-8463.

Adrian C. Hinton

Timely Tips for July and August

by Pat Fugal

1. Save your best produce and fruit for the Utah County Fair, August 13 – 16, at the Spanish Fork Fair Grounds. (www.utahcountyfair.com)
2. Check your insect control schedule. Check stone fruits for borers. Continue codling moth control. Be sure to regularly scout all of your plants, fields, or trees to keep on top of pest control.
3. Touch up and sharpen mower blades.
4. Keep garden weeds from going to seed. Hand pull or hoe them. This will help you have a cleaner garden next year.
5. Deadhead roses and other flowers as they complete their flowering period.
6. Give potatoes a side dressing of nitrogen in mid-July.
7. Watch for squash bugs and spray early (get them while they are little with Sevin liquid).
8. Water wisely. Over watering kills more lawns and plants than under watering.
9. If you would like to receive via email the Fruit Tree, Landscape, and/or the Small Fruits & Vegetables Advisories, please email marion.murray@usu.edu and ask to be put on the subscriber list for these publications.
10. At the end of July or early August begin planting cool season crops again for fall harvest.
11. As vegetables sprout, thin those that are too close and add the cuttings to your salad bowl.
12. Anthony and Cleopatra - of all the famous couples, no one was as successful as basil and tomatoes. Plant basil next to your tomatoes and enjoy eating them together.



Growing Heirloom Tomatoes



Heirloom vegetables are varieties that have been available for 50 years or more, are open-pollinated, and grow “true to type” from seed saved from fruit each year. Jeanine Davis (North Carolina State University) notes that heirloom tomatoes have an indeterminate growth habit, little disease resistance and the fruits are thin-skinned, soft and tend to crack. Consumers are attracted to heirloom tomatoes because they are very flavorful, colorful, come in many unusual sizes and shapes and have interesting names.

For growers, heirloom tomatoes are challenging to produce and difficult to ship, but they can bring high prices on the local market. Most heirloom tomatoes are indeterminate and must be grown on a tall, strong trellis to provide support for their long vines. A trellis should be constructed of three inch or larger diameter posts set ten to fifteen feet apart within the row with twelve gauge wires across the tops of the posts. Pieces of twine, long enough to reach the ground, should be tied to the top wire above each plant. The twine can be anchored with a loop to each plant or to a bottom line of twine that is strung about six inches off the ground and secured to the posts. Some growers use the standard string and weave staked culture system for heirloom tomatoes, but they use six foot long stakes instead of the normal four foot long stakes. Other growers establish the field with the standard four foot long stakes; then later in the season, they set a six foot long post right next to the four foot long post, at every other post.

There are hundreds of varieties of heirloom tomatoes available. Some of the more popular ones that have performed well in field trials in North Carolina and in consumer test tastes include:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| Amish Paste | German Johnson |
| Mortgage Lifter | Arkansas Traveler |
| Mr. Stripey | German Red Strawberry |
| Brandywine, Pink | Brandywine Red |
| Green Zebra | Noir de Crimee |
| Persimmon | Cherokee Purple |

PEST ALERT

Onion Thrips and Cucumber Beetle

With each new growing season, growers need to plan ahead to manage two serious pests in onions or cucumbers. USU Extension entomologist Diane Alston recently published new fact sheets on onion thrips and cucumber beetle management for Utah vegetable growers.

Onion thrips have continued to be a big problem and due to the recent outbreaks of Iris Yellow Spot Virus, growers need to be vigilant in monitoring for this insect and controlling it in onion fields.

Here are a few reminders about keeping a step ahead of this perennial pest problem.

What You Should Know

- Onions thrips are the most injurious insect pest to onions in Utah.
- Immature and adult thrips prefer to feed on young leaves in the inner neck of plants.
- Moderate to severe thrips feeding causes reduced bulb size.
- Insecticides are a major tool for their control, but thrips are prone to develop resistance.
- Long-term, sustainable management of thrips includes crop cultural practices, onion varietal resistance, biological control and insecticide resistance management.



Yellow Summer Squash Casserole

Joyce Matthews

- 2 pounds yellow squash (6 cups sliced) ½ cup butter
- 1 cup shredded or chopped carrots
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- 1 8 oz. package stuffing mix
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 cup sour cream

Cook vegetables until almost tender. Sprinkle with salt and drain. Combine soup and sour cream and add vegetables. Make dressing according to instructions. Spray casserole with Pam. Put half of stuffing in pan. Add vegetables and top with remaining stuffing. Bake at 350°F 25-30 minutes.

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expiration date is
July or August 2008

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The Master Gardeners Corner

Hello Master Gardeners!

The Summer Social this year was a great success. Special thanks goes to Richard Hayes who provided the games for the kids. The pinatas he made were a big hit as well as his watercolor class. Thanks Richard!

We also need to thank those who donated the door prizes:
IFA of Provo and Spanish Fork
Hyde Park Nursery
Carol Williams

We also want to thank Julie Clifford and her family as well as Roger Dixon for their willingness to do all the cooking for us.

But most of all we wanted to thank all of you for coming out, sharing your food and making it the wonderful event that it was.



Reminder! Utah County Fair Entries

The Utah County Fair is August 13 - 16. Entries for the Horticulture/Floriculture Open Class division are due on Monday, Aug.11, 11 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Entry forms are available online at:

www.utahcountyonline.org

Exhibit Handbooks are also available online or by calling Belva Parr at 380-7282 or 785-0419.

Volunteers Needed for County Fair

Come help and have a great time:
August 11, 10:30 – 6:30 Set-up and entering entries
August 12, 8:30 – unknown, depending on amount of entries
August 18, 11:00 – 1:00 and 2:30 – 6:30 to check out entries

If you only have a few hours to donate that would be a big help. Call Belva Parr at 380-7282 or 785-0419 or the Extension office at 851-8479.