

Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Clinton County

North Country Gardening

JAN/FEB 2016

You might think that at this time of year things are slow at the Extension office but just the opposite is true! We are putting together our spring programs and class offerings for you. Check out the notices in this newsletter and if you don't see something that interests you, let us know. Our goal is to meet the needs of our community!.....Jolene



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Cold Weather Foods

There are some foods that I especially enjoy cooking during the winter as they 'stick to your ribs' and warm you up just smelling them simmering on the stove. Two of my favorites are chili and turkey and dumplings. A third, is soup of any kind. Our nutrition educator, Jordy Kivett, shares her suggestions for making your own vegetable stock. Thanks Jordy!

You can certainly buy vegetable stock at the store, but you can make a vegetable stock for a fraction of the cost and little effort.

Use your food waste!

One of the neatest things about making your own vegetable stocks is that you can use the parts of the vegetable that we would typically not eat. Since you will be boiling and straining the stock, you can use things like onion peels or the ends of carrots. You can also use vegetables that you may have overlooked that got a bit wilted.



Things to include: peels, ends, and leaves from most produce. You can use the greens that come on some vegetables, like beets, leeks or carrots. You can use peels you may otherwise discard, like parsnips or potatoes. You can use the ends of vegetables like green beans, tomatoes or summer squash. You can also use vegetables or herbs that are wilted, like parsley, cilantro, mushrooms, chard or dill.

Things to exclude would be strong flavored or colored vegetables or rotten vegetables. You should avoid broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage (the cruciferous vegetables) because they have such a strong flavor. If you are

Continued on page 9....

Cornell Cooperative Extension - Clinton County

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Amy's Tips for January and February

By Amy Ivy

Here are a couple of books that you might consider reading this winter from the comfort of a cozy chair as you wait for spring to come.

Anyone interested in growing any kind of plant should be glad to receive "How Plants Work, the science behind the amazing things plants do" by Linda Chalker-Scott, a professor of horticulture at Washington State University. This is not a how to garden book but instead a book to help you understand and appreciate how plants grow. The author has a very readable writing style and explains the why's of many gardening practices and plant functions. She also debunks several garden myths about nutrient supplements and management practices. Every serious gardener should read this book this winter!

"Building Soils for Better Crops, sustainable soil management" by Fred Magdoff and Harold van Es is a very thorough book that avid gardeners will find fascinating. It is written for growers and farmers rather than home gardeners but the information is excellent and applies to home situations as well.

There are many, many more gardening books from which to choose. You might want to start a winter book group with your gardening friends so you can share your favorite books and ideas.

Seed Catalogs

One of my favorite things to leaf through in the winter are the seed catalogs. Some are better than others and have lots of good information in them.

Others are only out to sell you more. If they make big claims I would watch out. If they include lots of growing information and helpful charts to compare varieties or products, I would give them a closer look. Talk to your friends about which catalogs and companies they like and consider putting in a group order with them to save on shipping and ordering way more than you need. Catalogs are especially helpful if you're looking for a particular variety of vegetable or flower, and not all catalogs carry the same selection. Luckily we have a nice long winter to give you plenty of time for winter study!

Houseplants

Most of the common houseplants grown in the northeast have one thing in common - they tend to like the same growing conditions as humans – and that's what makes them successful growing in our homes. There are exceptions of course, but most houseplants like filtered light, moderate temperatures and adequate water. These conditions translate into a roof to block direct sun, central heat to keep temperatures in the 60's during winter, and a watering can; a humidifier would be a welcome addition as well.

Most houseplants are tropical, meaning they are used to the above conditions. Think about this as you decide where to locate your indoor plants in winter. Observe where the sun comes through the windows on sunny days. With the sun lower in the sky in winter, it can penetrate much farther into your house than in mid-summer. A shade tree blocks the summer sun, but in winter the same room can actually be significantly brighter with the leaves off the tree. The days are shorter of course, but we mostly want our plants to produce leaves, and those are not particular about day length.

An important consideration is drafts. Your



Tips continued...



Pothos

upholstered arm chair may be nice and cozy for you in winter, but the windowsill next to it, where your plant may be located, is a very different micro-

climate. Windowsills are usually great for sunlight but terrible for cold, drafty air. Consider the location of any forced air heat ducts that can feel like a hair dryer to tropical-loving plants. Fireplace mantels are a terrible place to locate your plants, even though they look so nice up there. Woodstoves create extremely dry air which all but desert cacti will find challenging, so try to set up a humidifier and both you and your plants will be happier.



Chinese Evergreen



Dieffenbachia

Pictured are some of the more durable houseplants in case you're looking for ideas for difficult sites indoors: dieffenbachia, pothos, Chinese evergreen, Peace Lily, and one that is new to me called ZZ plant which I hear is virtually indestructible.



Peace Lily flower

ZZ Plant



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ROB DUPREY

Food from the Farm: Eating Local in the North Country

Saturday March 5, 2016

2:00 to 5:00 pm

Plattsburgh City Gym

52 U.S. Oval



Meet the farmers and sample tasty dishes

*New this year: 4 local restaurant chefs will be preparing samples
Latitude 44 Bistro, Blue Collar Bistro, The Hungry Trout, The Pepper*



Admission price is all inclusive:

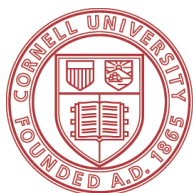
- . Lots to sample, even more food this year
- . Door prizes
- . Meet your farmers
- . Farm products for sale, CSA sign-ups
- . Information on gardening and nutrition
- . Family friendly fun, kid's table
- . Recipes for cooking with local products
- . Mingle with local food enthusiasts

Admission: \$5/adult, ages 5 & under free, \$20 maximum per family

Tickets available in advance on-line, at our office, or at the door

https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/FoodFarm16_209

For more information contact Cornell Cooperative Extension
561-7450 or email Amy Ivy at adi2@cornell.edu



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension!
Clinton County



Gardeners March Madness



Cornell Cooperative Extension
Master Gardener Volunteers present
Gardeners March Madness



When: Saturday, March 19th— 9:00am to 2:00pm

Where: Plattsburgh Town Hall, 151 Banker Road

What: Four hour-long classes:

- Edible Flowers—for salads, syrups, and decor
- Attracting and Protecting our Pollinators
- Love your Lawn—eco-friendly care to
- control weeds, grubs, and have a healthy lawn
- Fact or Fiction—dispelling garden myths



All classes taught by Master Gardener volunteers and include break-out sessions. Pre-registration is required and space is limited. Your \$15 fee includes all materials, handouts, and light refreshments. Bring a bagged lunch. For more information or to register call 561-7450 or contact Jolene at jmw442@cornell.edu



Cornell University
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Eastern Cottontails

By Jolene Wallace

There are a few Eastern cottontail rabbits that hang around our house year-round, munching grass and entertaining us by hopping about most of the year. Yes, we are easily entertained! Last winter I tried to keep an eye on them to see how they were faring the brutal cold. Sometimes I would see them but most of the time I would see their tracks in the snow.

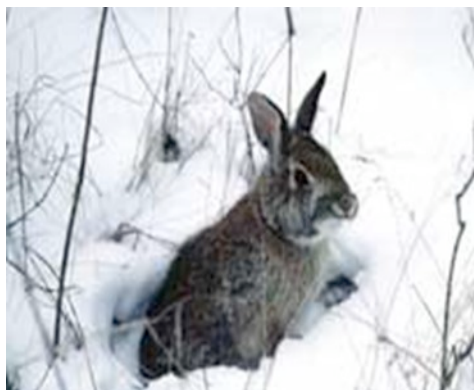
Eastern cottontail rabbits have five toes on each of its front feet but only four toes on its hind feet. When rabbits are running, the prints of the hind feet are side by side in front of the prints from the front feet, which are diagonal to each other. Since the hind feet are more than two times the length of the front feet it appears that they are traveling in the opposite direction than they actually are.

←←←←← Direction of travel

Eastern cottontails are the most common rabbit in North America. Their habitats in the North Country include farmland, edges of woods, and places where there are shrubby areas in which to take cover. They are crepuscular, which means they are most active at twilight and at dawn. They spend most of their day in a form, which is a secure, well-camouflaged space. From a form the rabbit can see if danger lurks but is not easily visible. You might think that rabbits would burrow, but the Eastern cottontail avoids putting itself in a position where it can be trapped. In the most brutal cold it may take shelter in a burrow abandoned by another animal, but stays close to the entrance. If they feel threatened they bound



away in a zigzag pattern, which breaks up the scent trail they leave behind. Eastern cottontails can reach speeds of up to 18 miles per hour. Known predators include hawks, owls, coyotes, foxes, weasels, dogs and humans.



We have the sections of our dock angled against a fence in our backyard. Last winter there was a cottontail that huddled in the form created in the narrow space between the fence and dock section. I looked for it every time I went out to shovel off the steps leading out of our back doors. More times than not it was there during the day, protected from predators and the bitter winds of winter. If possible, leave some brush piles and other natural areas for these rabbits to use for shelter. Birds and other wildlife with appreciate them as well.



Under the Ice...Aquatic Species in Winter

By Jim Cayea, Master Gardener Volunteer

The North Country's aquatic insects (including stoneflies, mayflies, caddisflies, and dragonflies) deploy many different strategies to live in winter-cold water and beneath the ice. Firstly, all these insects must control ice crystal formation inside their bodies. Secondly, these insects must develop a way to continuing living. What they do is amazing.

On the cellular level, aquatic insects must stop ice crystals from forming inside their cells so the cells do not rupture and kill the insect. They use the following strategies in order to survive:

(1) Allow ice to grow outside of the cells and prevent ice inside the cells. Approximately 65% of the insect's body water freezes. The remainder of the ice inside the body cells will stay liquid!

(2) Control the speed of ice formation to prevent the insect from injury or death. Freeze-tolerant aquatic insects use nucleators to freeze their bodies somewhere between 32°F to 14°F, or let their bodies contact external environmental ice, or produce special proteins (called ice nucleating proteins) that trigger ice formation. Water requires a particle such as dust in order to crystallize. Water can cool to a temperature -43°F if no source of nucleation exists.

(3) Produce antifreeze proteins to prevent a process called recrystallization in which small ice crystals reform themselves into large and larger crystals that are large enough to cause tissue damage of the frozen animal.

(4) Use glycerol or other cryoprotectants to protect the cells interior water and keep the cells from shrinking. Other protective molecules strengthen the cell membranes so the membranes do not break when frozen cells shrink or swell again when thawed.

(5) Aquatic insects evolved to survive without oxygen, and by using the existing fuels in individual cell when they are in a frozen state.

Aquatic insects have developed cellular processes that allow them to live in our region during winter. We know that some of these aquatic insects will migrate to warmer water by varying water depth, bury themselves in the mud, and others live active lives during this time. We learned dragonfly and caddisfly nymphs actively hunt and feed during the winter because researchers have studied them through clear ice. Other than these facts, we really do not know much what happens to aquatic insects under the ice.





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Salt Dough Decor

By Chelsea Baxter, Youth Development / Health & Wellness Educator

The holiday season has come and gone in a blink of the eye. Over the holiday break my 5 year old niece and I were searching for something fun to do and I came across a recipe for easy to make salt dough ornaments. The second best part of this experiment (the first being the fun we had making them) was that all the supplies we needed we already had in our pantry

What you'll need:

- 2 cups of white flour
- 1 cup of table salt
- 1 cup of water
- Measuring cup
- 1 large mixing bowl
- 1 straw (or something with a circular tip to create holes for the ornaments to hang)
- String or ribbon
- Oven
- Non-stick baking sheet
- Cookie cutters & assorted paints & paint brushes (optional)



The Experiment:

- Measure out 2 cups of flour and add it to your large mixing bowl
- Measure out 1 cup of salt and add to the flour
- Mix the flour and salt together
- Measure out 1 cup of water and slowly add it to the flour and salt mixture. This step is easier when you have one person who can knead the dough and another person to pour the water in slowly.
- Knead the mixture until it becomes similar to pizza or cookie dough

*As you knead, if you find the mixture is too dry and is not mixing together add a little more water until it becomes dough like.

*If you find that your dough is TOO sticky, add more flour to the mixture slowly until you find the right consistency. Apply a small amount of flour to a hard surface and roll out your dough (make sure you do not roll your dough out too thin, you want at least ½ - 1 full inch of dough to make your imprints on

Cookie cutters are useful or you can get creative and make any shape you would like.

You can make imprints of your child's hands and/or feet. If you have a specific design in mind for the end (some people like to do circular ornaments and make snowmen in the center) you'll want to make sure you put that design in the dough before baking.

Make sure you create a hole all the way through the dough so you can hang your ornaments later

Place your shapes on a non-stick baking sheet (we lined ours with aluminum foil) and bake in the oven with heat 250 degrees until hard.

Once you remove them from the oven let them cool. After they have fully cooled down you can add string or ribbon to hang them and even decorate them as you'd like with paints or markers.

This newsletter is also available on our website:

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceclintoncounty/> under Gardening: News

Cold weather foods continued....

concerned about having pink broth, avoid beets. Avoiding rotten food sounds obvious but anything that is moldy or slimy should be left out. If you have vegetables that are wilted, but you think may begin to rot soon, freeze them for later stock making.

You do not need to have all of these scraps at once. Freeze these scraps (a large freezer bag works well) as you create them and use them to make broth when it is convenient for you.

Easy steps:

1. In a little oil of your choice, sauté some of your scraps (onions, garlic, carrots, etc.) until they brown a little.
2. Add remaining scraps, you should have about 2 cups for 4 cups of water, and water.
3. Simmer for about an hour. Unlike meat based broths, vegetable stock does not benefit from really long simmering times, but you can simmer it longer if it's convenient.
4. Scoop out large pieces of vegetable with a slotted spoon. You can compost these.
5. Strain the stock (allow to cool a bit for safety) in a cheesecloth lined strainer over a large pot.
6. Optional: Return stock to hard boil to reduce it. This is great for storage, you can add water when you are using the stock to reconstitute it.
7. Use the stock within one week or store in in the freezer. Tip: you can freeze the stock in convenient portions, once they are frozen you can transfer smaller portions to one large freeze bag or storage container.

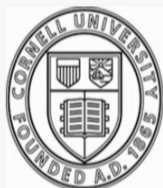


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Workshop Series



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Clinton County

Workshop Information

Workshop	Date/Time
Introduction to Business Planning	Thursday, January 28th 7-9pm
Introduction to Livestock Production	Tuesday, February 2nd 7-9pm
Introduction to Maple Production	Thursday, February 4th 7-9pm
Introduction to Small Berries and Vegetables	Tuesday, February 9th 7-9pm
Introduction to Soil Health and Maintenance	Thursday, February 25th 7-9pm
Introduction to Poultry Production	Thursday, March 3rd 7-9pm

Workshops Will be
Offered for **Beginning
and/or Diversifying
Farmers!**

Cornell Cooperative Extension Clinton County is excited to be offering these classes in the office meeting room on the dates listed above. If you would like to attend any or all of these classes, please register online at https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/BeginningFarmerSeries_209. The cost is \$25 for one class, and any additional class attended will be \$5 each (to be paid at the door). There is a \$5 cost per additional family member per class. Registration is encouraged; the class will be canceled if less than five registrations are submitted. The registration will include a beginning farmer packet, "Farming Alternatives, A guide to evaluating the feasibility of new farm based enterprises," and other resource material.

If you have questions or for more information, contact **Sara Bull**, agriculture educator for Cornell Cooperative Extension Clinton County, at 561-7450 or slk95@cornell.edu.



North Country Gardening

Events



Mark Your Calendars

We have scheduled several events for March—a busy month for our Extension Office. Please plan to join us for some or all of these events.

Saturday, March 5

Local Food From the Farm event at the Rec Center on the Oval. We expect this to be our best event yet! See page 4 for details and join us for the fun!



Saturday, March 19

Gardeners March Madness—a daylong series of presentations and workshops put on by the Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Volunteers. This event, held every other year, will take place at the Plattsburgh Town Hall. **Space is limited.** Registration details on page 5.



Workshop Series

Sara Bull, our Agriculture Educator, is holding a series of workshops designed for those of you who are thinking of farming, or would like information on some topics of interest. Check out the schedule on the preceding page. The small berries and vegetable workshop, introduction to maple, and soil health would be of interest to many of our callers. If you haven't met Sara yet, this is your chance!



Buckets anyone?

Each year our Master Gardener Volunteers work with children throughout Clinton County to plant vegetables in 5-gallon buckets. We provide them with the buckets, planting mix, cherry tomato plants, marigolds, and onions or herbs and work with them to do the planting. This is a very popular and successful program to provide many children with a garden that they and their families can tend to and benefit from the produce it provides. Last year we were able to secure buckets from various businesses as well as a donation of buckets from Ace Hardware in Champlain. We are seeking approximately 500 buckets again this year. If you have access to new or used food-grade buckets that you are willing to donate for this program please contact Jolene at jmw442@cornell.edu or 561-7450. .



Our office, located at 6064 State Route 22, Suite 5, is open from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. 561-7450.

We will be closed February 15 in observance of President's Day



North Country Gardening

Jan/Feb 2016

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