



Cornell Cooperative Extension | Saratoga County

NEWSLETTER

October 6, 2025

Volume 6 Issue 21

4-H 4K Walkathon Fundraiser a Big Success!



On Saturday, September 27th, nearly 100 community members came together at the 4-H Training Center for a fun-filled Walkathon fundraiser. With beautiful fall weather and high spirits, participants walked to raise money in support of the center's ongoing programs and improvements.

The event featured not only the walk itself but also a variety of engaging activities for all ages—games, contests, and refreshments added to the festive atmosphere. Thanks to the generosity of donors and the energy of volunteers, the fundraiser was a resounding success.

We're grateful to everyone who participated and helped make the day so special. Your support helps ensure that the 4-H Training Center continues to be a place where youth grow, learn, and thrive.



Many Thanks to our sponsors:

Adirondack Landscape Supply, Ballston Spa Elks Lodge 2619, Fred's Tents and Canopies Inc., Daisy Dry Goods, Agway True Value of Ballston Spa, Morris Ford in Burnt Hills, Michael's Automotive, Saratoga Springs NY Lions Club, Saratoga County Farm Bureau, Schrader and Company Construction Services, Capital Tractor, Inc., Cudney's Launderers & Dry Cleaners, Curtis Lumber Company, 4-H Teen Council, 4-H Shooting Sports Committee, Saratoga Spa Realty, Carda LLC, Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, McDonalds of Ballston Spa, Just Cats Veterinary Clinic, P.C., Franklin Masonic Lodge No. 22, Hannaford Supermarkets in Milton, Ginsberg's Foods, Saratoga Apple, King Brothers Dairy, DeCrescente Distributing Company, and E.B.I. (Eddy's Beverage Center).

ROBOTICS

Robovines is one of two Saratoga County 4-H FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) robotics teams. FTC, short for *FIRST Tech Challenge*, is a global robotics program that emphasizes teamwork, innovation, and engineering. Robovines competes across New York State and has qualified twice for the **FIRST World Championship** in Houston.

The team is made up of 13 youth, ages 14 to 18, who design and build a competition robot within an 18-by-18-inch size limit. They manufacture many of their own parts and are also required to present on their teamwork and collaboration as part of the competition. Community outreach is an important aspect of FTC, so you'll often see Robovines supporting local 4-H events and STEM initiatives.

In addition to competing, Robovines leads the **Saratoga County 4-H Robotics Program** for younger youth ages 6 to 13. Participants in this program use LEGO SPIKE kits to build and program robots that complete various missions. From October through May, the youth iterate on their designs and code, following a model similar to the *FIRST LEGO League (FLL)*. The program is experiencing record enrollment this year and currently has a waitlist due to high demand.

Saratoga County 4-H also supports other robotics teams, including **three FLL teams** and **another FTC team**. The FLL teams began meeting in August and will compete in January, while FTC teams participate from September through March.

For more information about any of these programs, visit robovines.org or email team@robovines.org.



Elizabeth



Team Role: Documentation (Media Team)

Years on the Team: 0 Years

Favorite Season? Centerstage

What are you most excited for this year?
I am most excited to be on the team, my brother has been on the team for many years and I have been going to the competitions to support him and I am excited to see how the team works.

What made you want to join Robovines?
As I said before my brother has been on the team for many years, that made me think that I could also do robotics and this year I decided to try it out.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Our Youth Robotics Challenge Program (ages 8-12) is full. If you would like to reserve a spot on our waitlist, please visit robovines.org/youthrobotics/waitlist

CAR SEAT CHECK

CCE Saratoga is hosting their next **FREE** car seat fitting station!

Tuesday, October 7 | 4 pm—8 pm
New Country Toyota of Clifton Park
 202 Rte 146, Mechanicville, NY 12118

Call Cindy at (518) 885-8995 to schedule your appointment

Please bring the following to your scheduled appointment:

- Your child(ren)
- Car seat owner's manual
- Vehicle owner's manual

We ask that your car is free of all debris so car seat technicians can get inside your vehicle.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

You are cordially invited to **Cornell Cooperative Extension** | Saratoga County's

2025 ANNUAL DINNER BUSINESS MEETING & ELECTIONS

Please Join Us in Celebrating Our Achievements in Enhancing the Quality of Life for the Residents of Saratoga County and the Surrounding Communities.

The 2025 Annual Meeting will include a Joint Session with the Saratoga County Farm Bureau, the Saratoga County Agricultural Society, and special guests from the Saratoga County Soil and Water Conservation District. Together, these four organizations represent the leading voices supporting Saratoga County's #1 Industry—agriculture.

Thursday, October 23, 2025 | 6 PM
Saratoga-Wilton Elks Lodge 161
 1 Elks Lane, Saratoga Springs

Please register by October 17th
WLM8@Cornell.edu



COST: \$25 per person

Retirement Accounts for Farmers

Most farmers don't have retirement savings outside the farm. That makes it tough to retire and even harder to pass the farm on. This webinar will show you why retirement accounts matter, how even small contributions make a difference, and which accounts fit your situation. We'll also bust some common retirement planning myths.

Attendees will learn:

- Which retirement plans work best for farm businesses
- How tax credits can offset startup and employer costs
- How to use different investment types for long-term security

[Click here to register for this free webinar.](#)

Disclaimer. *This webinar is intended to provide general information only. Every person has unique, individual facts and circumstances related to their family business, and financial situation. Always consult with licensed professionals before making legal or financial decisions.*

Event Details

Date

October 8, 2025

Time

1pm - 2pm EST

Location

Zoom

Host

NY FarmNet

Michael Robertson
1-800-547-3276

If I'm Not Here Tomorrow: Estate Planning for Young Farm Families with Children

Estate planning sounds complex and expensive—but it doesn't have to be. A few simple steps now can save your family a world of stress later. In this webinar, we'll cover planning essentials related to wills & trusts, powers of attorney, guardianship plans, and business continuity documents. We'll also talk about planning for a variety of situations so that if the worst happens, you'll know your family and business are taken care of. You'll also learn what to think about if you've got teenagers, and how to prepare for aging parents.

- A clear list of documents every farm family needs (and what they do)
- Simple steps to name guardians and how to set aside money for their care
- Ideas or sharing your values—not just your assets—with the next generation

[Click here to register for this free webinar.](#)

Disclaimer. *This webinar is intended to provide general information only. Every person has unique, individual facts and circumstances related to their family business, and financial situation. Always consult with licensed professionals before making legal or financial decisions.*

Event Details

Date

November 5, 2025

Time

1pm - 2pm EST

Location

Zoom

Host

NY FarmNet

Michael Robertson
1-800-547-3276

Cover Crop Field Meeting

Thinking about upping your farm's cover cropping game? New technology for seeding and crop tracking research-driven recommendations for high tunnel cover cropping, cold tolerant varieties for North Country climates, and farmer expertise will be shared at this field event.

Light refreshments will be served. In the event of strong winds or heavy rain on the 21st, we will hold the event on the 22nd in order to conduct a drone seeding demonstration.

This event will be held outdoors with some walking required on uneven terrain. Please reach out to Elisabeth Hodgdon (eh528@cornell.edu) or 518-650-5323 with questions and requests for accommodations. Requests for accommodations must be received no later than Oct. 14.

[Register for this event.](#)

Event Details

Cover Crop Field Meeting

Date

October 21, 2025

Time

3pm - 5:30pm

Location

Cornell Willsboro Research Farm
48 Sayward Lane
Willsboro, NY 12996

Cost

Pre-Registration : \$10.00

Host

Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture



Ag Energy NY: A CCE program for Farm Energy Efficiency

Would you like to save on your farm energy bills? There are many opportunities to reduce energy use through efficiency improvements that save money, labor, and maintenance costs. Energy efficiency also has co-benefits, buffering farms from high costs in energy market fluctuations and making it easier to transition to electric power and renewable energy.

Ag Energy NY is a program by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, offering a mobile-friendly website and factsheets describing farm energy efficiency technologies, techniques, and incentives. Ag Energy NY focuses on the following farm sectors: crops and vegetables, beef, swine, poultry, grain drying, maple, orchards, berries, and vineyards. This is part of a broader NYSERDA program, [Energy Best Practices in Agriculture](#), which also provides support for dairies and greenhouses.

After reviewing energy efficiency measures online, you can reach out to the Ag Energy NY team with questions and to connect with a NYSERDA FlexTech Consultant for farm-specific advising. NYSERDA offers no-cost, no-commitment energy assessment to help farmers prioritize areas for improvement and identify incentives to help with implementation. For more information, visit www.agenergyny.org.





Farmland Conservation Workshop

Learn how agricultural conservation easements work, why landowners choose to protect their land, and what the process involves.

Presenter: Tori Roberts
Conservation Director at Saratoga PLAN

Guest Speaker: Dustin Lewis
Saratoga County Soil and Water

Location: Saratoga County 4-H Training Center
556 Middleline Rd, Ballston Spa OR Zoom

**Thursday
Oct. 16th
7pm**

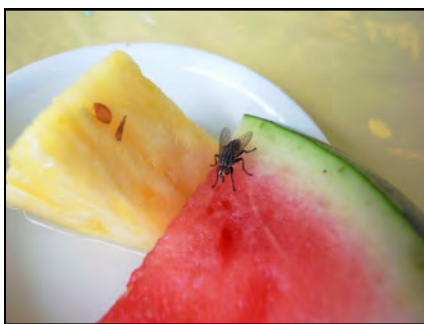
Register:



Email samh@saratogaplan.org
Call 518.587.5554 x 132
OR Scan QR code

Funded by the State of New York and the American Farmland Trust

'Tis the Season for Fruit Fly Control



Macro view of a fruit-fly sitting on watermelon. Note the red

As the garden produce has come into the kitchen, so have the fruit flies, a kind of gnat. Fruit flies are those pesky tiny insects harboring around the kitchen with reddish eyes and are attracted to anything fruit or vegetable in the area.

Beyond being a nuisance, they can also

carry harmful bacteria. They multiply rapidly so if not controlled quickly, a small problem becomes a big problem.

In addition to hitch-hiking into the home, adult fruit flies are small enough to get through window screens or around the gaps of exterior doors if they sense a food source inside.

One of the best ways to control fruit flies in the home is to practice excellent sanitation, eliminate rotting fruits and vegetables and keep as much food in the refrigerator and closed containers as possible. Keep counters, sinks, and drains clean at all times—even the dishwasher. Trash should be kept tied and taken out frequently, and compost scraps should not be allowed to pile up on the counter. Cracked or damaged portions of fruits and vegetables should be cut off and discarded immediately to prevent infestation. Other breeding areas include empty bottles and cans, garbage disposals, mops, and wet sponges or dishcloths.

Chemical control is not recommended; however, you can make your own DIY traps using attractants commonly found in the kitchen such as cider vinegar, wine or even a small piece of fruit. Put a small amount of the attractant in a glass or jar, add a drop of dishwashing detergent, cover with a plastic wrap that fits tightly to the glass, and poke very small holes in the plastic. Fruit flies will enter the glass but find themselves trapped. The University of

Nebraska offered another simple [trap using yeast and sugar](#). Commercial products such as traps and liquid attractants, sticky strips, zappers, and UV light insect traps are other considerations to help with gnat control. Drains can also be a haven for gnats. Flushing the drain regularly with boiling water will kill eggs and larvae and break down organic matter which helps them to survive. This will also help get rid of any excess food and bacteria build-up. For a more thorough cleaning, use a combination of half a cup of baking soda followed by a cup of vinegar, allowing it to sit overnight before flushing with boiling water.

Once you've done the work to kill or trap fruit flies, keep them from coming back with these preventative measures:

1. Keep the counter clean. Fruit flies don't just like to eat fruit; they also like spilled food, crumbs, spilled juice — just about anything. Wipe your counters frequently throughout the day and dry thoroughly.

2. Wash any produce coming into the home. Fruit flies piggyback their way into our homes on fruits and vegetables. By washing fruit and vegetables, you get rid of any eggs that may have been laid on the produce.

3. Keep produce covered or in the refrigerator. If produce must sit on the counter, be sure that it is fully contained and covered.

4. Check onions and potatoes regularly. A rotting potato or onion stored in a cabinet or closet is a great food source.

5. Remove odors immediately. If something smells, chances are it will attract fruit flies, too. Clean drains, garbage cans, pet bedding, litter boxes and similar things.

Female fruit flies lay 100 or more eggs per day. With the possibility of new eggs hatching, a couple of weeks of diligence will be necessary. Continue using traps, depriving them of food and water, and stepping up sanitary procedures to keep them from breeding and eventually eliminating them from the home.



NYS IPM Program

What's Bugging You?

Not all things that buzz, crawl or slither are pests. Figuring out WHAT is bugging you is the first step.

NOVEMBER 7: Understanding indoor cockroaches | Invasive tawney field cockroach

Several cockroach species are found in homes, and each one tells a story of why it's there. Learn to distinguish indoor cockroaches, and stick around to hear about the newest cockroach invader in the Northeast.

[Register Here!](#)



Fall Recipes

Check out these fall recipes from NC State Extension, Haywood County Center.

Apple Crisp

Ingredients

- 4 cups sliced apples (about 4 or 5 apples)
- 2 tablespoons margarine
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup rolled oats (uncooked)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup whole-wheat flour or white whole-wheat flour
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- Non-stick cooking spray



Directions

- Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat 9"x13" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.
- Melt margarine in a small bowl in the microwave.
- In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients except apples
- Stir until well blended.
- Place apples in baking dish and spread oat mixture on top.
- Bake 45 minutes to 1 hour until desired crispness.

Pumpkin Soup

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons olive oil or canola oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1-14.5 oz. can low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- 1-15 oz. can pumpkin puree
- 1-12 oz can low-fat evaporated milk
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. cinnamon
- Salt & pepper, to taste



Directions

1. Combine oil, onion, and garlic in a saucepan over medium-high heat for 1-2 minutes, or until soft.
2. Add broth and water.
3. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally.
4. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Stir in pumpkin, evaporated milk, and cinnamon. Simmer for another 5 minutes.
6. Remove from heat and enjoy!

Try out this easy, healthy recipe that has all the colors and flavors of fall farm harvests. This Autumn Sausage, Veggie, and Apple Sheet Pan Dinner, from CCE Seneca County is a one dish meal the whole family will love.

Autumn Sausage, Veggie, and Apple Sheet Pan Dinner

Ingredients

- 12 ozs—1 lb. sausage, cut into $\frac{1}{3}$ " thick pieces
- 1 lb. sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped into $\frac{3}{4}$ " cubes
- 2 apples, cut into 1" chunks
- 1 lb. Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- $\frac{1}{2}$ onion, chopped into chunks
- 3 cloves, garlic, peeled and minced
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil
- 1 tsp. each rosemary, sage, thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and get out a large sheet pan.
2. Add sausage, sweet potatoes, apples, Brussels sprouts, and onion to the pan.
3. Mince garlic and sprinkle over the veggies and apples.
4. Drizzle everything with olive oil, sprinkle with thyme, sage and rosemary, then season with salt and pepper to taste and toss to coat.
5. Roast for 15 minutes then remove and toss. Return to oven and continue to roast until veggies and apples are tender, about 15 more minutes.
6. Make sure sausage is cooked thoroughly.

Recipe adapted from: www.cookingclassy.com



Tips for Success with DIY Caramel Apples



There is no substitute for the thrill and challenge of eating a caramel apple—biting through the sweet, sticky caramel into a tart crisp apple while sweet, sticky juice runs down your chin. Oh, the memories!

While the memories are sweet, the potential for a foodborne illness from caramel apples is

real. Caramel apples should either be eaten freshly made or refrigerated. Once punctured with a stick, caramel apples can become a breeding ground for *Listeria monocytogenes*, a harmful bacteria, if left at room temperature for prolonged time. When the stick is inserted into the apple, a bit of apple juice tends to leak out and that moisture, trapped under the caramel layer, creates an environment that aids the growth of *Listeria* which is naturally present on the apple's surface. If caramel apples are purchased at the store, farmer's market, carnivals, or even presented at a party, make sure that they have been refrigerated.

The best way to safely enjoy caramel apples is to make them fresh. While DIY caramel apples may be intimidating, it really is quite easy and a fun family or party activity.

Tips to craft your very own caramel apples

Choose Apples. Any apple variety will work as long as it is crisp. Smaller apples give a better ratio of caramel to apple. Apples should have a flat bottom so that they sit upright.

Do All Prep Work in Advance. Have apples and all needed equipment ready and at hand. If you are going to decorate the apple with candy, nuts, sprinkles or anything else, make sure all is ready to go before you dip.

Remove Wax. Wax must be removed from the surface of the apple skin to allow the caramel to adhere to the apple. This can be done by dipping in boiling water for 3-5 seconds and wiping with a paper towel or scrubbing the apple with vinegar (white or apple cider) or lemon juice and baking soda. In addition to removing wax, vinegar also help remove pesticides and bacteria. Another option is to wash the apple and lightly sand with fine sandpaper. Whichever method is used, be sure not to puncture the skin.

Thoroughly Dry and Chill the Apples. Any moisture on the skin will cause the caramel to bubble and stick poorly to the apple. Chilling the apples for about 30 minutes will help the caramel set quicker and keep it from running off.

Insert Sticks. Use candy or popsicle sticks and insert them directly through the center (stem end) of the apple straight down about half to two-thirds way into the apple. Be sure to dab away any juice that may seep out when inserting the sticks. The presence of moisture will keep the caramel from adhering to the apple.

Use a Good Recipe. Recipes can be as simple as two or three ingredients added to a bag of purchased wrapped caramels or a recipe made with all pantry ingredients from a trusted source. Regardless, follow the recipe carefully. If making from scratch, be sure to use a deep and thick saucepan with straight sides and a good candy thermometer.

Carefully Prepare Caramel. The temperature of the caramel is really important. Whether making caramel from a recipe or melting caramels, you will want to cool the caramel to about 190 degrees before dipping. If you dip the apples as soon as the caramel is made, it will slide off or form a thin layer instead of a nice, thick caramel layer. The caramel will be the right temperature to set up properly on the apple if you maintain your caramel temperature in the 180°-190° range, stirring sparingly to minimize air bubbles. Some like to put the melted caramel mixture in a slow cooker on the low setting to maintain this temperature. Caramel that gets too hot will lose the proper consistency, becoming too firm and crunchy to dip.

Dip – Scoop, Twist, Drip, Flip. Set your apple in the caramel, scoop the caramel up onto the apple twisting the apple slowly with the stick while continuing to scoop the caramel onto the apple. Raise the apple and let the excess drip off. Scrape the bottom, flip the apple over and count to 20. Set the apple on a parchment paper lined baking sheet and let cool. If you get a caramel foot, fold it under the apple or cut it off. Sliding the apples into the refrigerator after dipping will help set the caramel and prevent the caramel from sliding off.

Decorate (if desired). Roll, sprinkle or drizzle the caramel apples with any desired decorations once the caramel has cooled but is still tacky. If the decorations will not stick, the caramel may have set up too quickly. By carefully holding the coated apple over a saucepan of boiling water, the steam will soften the caramel enough so the toppings will stick. After decorating, return the apple to the parchment paper to continue cooling. Dipping the caramel coated apples in chocolate is another option. Be creative. [Taste of Home](#) has some fun ideas if you want to go beyond chopped peanuts and sprinkles. Be careful not to overload the apples with too many toppings as the caramel may become too heavy and slide off. For gift giving, wrap the apples in a cellophane or plastic bag.

Enjoy and/or Store Safely. To enjoy immediately, let the caramel set about 45 minutes. If the treats are not consumed right away, they should be refrigerated. This will prolong freshness, slow oxidation, and slow the growth of bacteria. If the apples are refrigerated, remove them from the fridge about 45 minutes before eating to allow the caramel to soften. The coated apples will keep 2 weeks in the refrigerator.

After creating your very own caramel apple personalized with assorted decorations or not, waiting for the caramel to set is the hard part. Maybe, there will be no need to refrigerate!

Potted Mums...Are they Perennials or should they be treated as Annuals

Original source: Better Homes & Gardens By Andy Wilcox Updated in January 2025

Edited for our Capital District Region by Dave Jennings, Master Gardener Volunteer for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County

A pot of big-blooming mums to decorate your porch or deck can be pricey but they don't need to be. You may be wondering, are mums perennials that come back year to year or do you have to buy new ones every autumn?



The answer: It depends on how you treat them. Most mums sold in fall at Garden Centers and Big Box Stores, are really what should be called "Florist Mums." The are intended to be treated as annuals and tossed when done flowering. With the right care, however these Mums can be brought back to flower in the fall year after year. The other types of mums, known as Garden Mums or "Hardy Mums," which you'll find in better Garden Centers and Nurseries in the spring, are more hardy tender perennials for our area. Here are the best tips for getting either type of mum to flower year after year.

What's a Florist Mum?

The potted mums sold in the fall are known as florist mums that have been carefully calibrated for fall glory. The grower has already grown the plant in a greenhouse or cultivated in the field to take them from small cuttings to full-grown, bushy, blooming plants and timed it for our region give you some lasting fall color right up until a killing frost in our area.

How to Grow Mums as Perennials

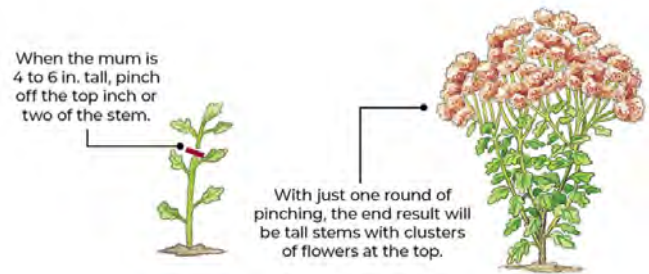


Many garden mums are perennial in most of the U.S. but they typically die over winter in our region. Why is that so...fall purchased mums have used most of their energy for flowering, and they are planted too late in the growing season to establish enough of a root system before going dormant. To encourage perennial mums to return year after year, here are the keys to success:

- Plant mums in spring or summer, giving them time to establish.
- Place mums in a location with full sun and good drainage.
- In our area 4-6 inches of mulch will help protect their shallow root systems.
- Don't cut back the old growth until spring. The old growth helps to hold the mulch in place over the winter so the mums will be more likely to survive.

Timing is everything. If you plant mums in a flowerbed when leaves are falling, they likely won't make it through the winter since the leaves will smother and rot the tender plants.

To keep your mums from becoming too tall and leggy, several pinches during the growing season are needed.



How to Pinch Perennial Mums



Potted mums purchased in the fall have been lightly trimmed (or pinched) multiple times throughout the growing season, shaping and training them to be branchy and mounded for display in autumn. If you grow them as perennials, you must do some of that yourself. Don't worry; it's pretty easy to do.

In garden terms pinching is removing the growing tip of a shoot. The plant replaces the one lost tip with two or more new ones, creating a branching, bushier shape.

The following are "Must Do Growing" requirements (and easy fixes for each one):

1. Start when the new vegetation is 4-6 inches tall.
2. Pinch off the growing top between your finger and thumb (or use scissors).
3. Remove about an inch of growth.
4. When the new shoots that result from pinching are only a few inches tall, pinch them again.
5. Keep going, pinching two or three more times, creating a rounded or spherical shape when you pinch after each 2-3 inches of new growth.
6. Pinch every two to four week. **It's important though to stop pinching about the Fourth of July to give them time to set buds for fall flowering.**

Don't skip the pinching! It encourages the mums to produce many new shoots, which eventually grow buds and flowers. Unpinched mums often look leggy and spindly and don't have many flowers in comparison.

Article is continued on next page.

Frequently Asked Questions



Select pots that are just starting to show color.



These pots look great now but won't last long.

- **How long do mums bloom?**

Most potted mums continue to flower for about four to six weeks. When selecting mums be sure to pick out ones that are just beginning to show color in their buds for the longest season of bloom. If they are stressed from not receiving enough sun or water, the bloom period will be at the shorter end of that window.

- **What's the difference between early and late-blooming mums?**

Mums bloom is based on day length, not plant maturity. Different varieties are bred to flower earlier in the season (shorter nights) or later in the season (longer nights). You can often find this information on the tag. Early-blooming mums are best for colder climates because they deliver color before frost. Gardeners in warmer parts of the Capital Region can use early and late-blooming mums for an extended season of color

- **Do deer eat mums?**

Deer might snack on the mums as they wander through your yard, even though mums are not one of their favorite foods. Deer repellents will help to protect your plants if used according to labeled instructions.

NEME'S KITCHEN

Common Mistakes to Avoid When Baking Gluten-Free

Baking gluten-free can feel tricky at first, but knowing what to avoid makes a big difference. If your gluten-free baked goods aren't turning out as planned, here are some common mistakes to watch out for:

1. **Skipping the Binder**

Gluten-free flours don't have the natural binding ability of wheat flour. Without a binder like xanthan gum or psyllium husk, your baked goods may crumble or fall apart. Always check if your recipe includes a binder, or your final result might lack structure.

2. **Adding Too Much Liquid**

Gluten-free flours absorb more moisture than regular wheat flour. If you're not careful, adding too much liquid can make your batter too thin, leading to dense or gummy results.

3. **Not Letting the Batter Rest**

Resting your batter for 20-30 minutes is an important step. It allows the flours to absorb the liquid fully, reducing any gritty texture. Skipping this step can affect the final taste and feel of your baked goods.

4. **Treating Gluten-Free Batter Like Regular Batter**

Gluten-free batters behave differently. They often need more mixing to create structure and longer baking times to cook through properly. Relying on the same habits you use with regular baking can lead to undercooked or flat results.



If you can avoid these mistakes, you'll have a much better chance of getting the texture, flavor, and structure you want in your gluten-free bake goods.



Homesteading



NYS DEC

Hunting Season Highlights for 2025-2026

New Hunting Regulations

DEC has announced new hunting rules, letting hunters use smartphones for licenses and tags. The agency now has electronic options for deer, bears, and turkeys through the HuntFishNY mobile app on Android or from the App Store.

- **E-Licenses, E-Tags, & Harvest Reporting:** DEC now allows hunters and trappers to possess only an e-license while hunting or trapping and use e-tags for deer, bear, or turkey. An e-license is the electronic record of your hunting, fishing, and trapping license privileges. In DEC's HuntFishNY mobile app. E-tags are electronic records of your unreported and reported carcass tags for deer, bear, and turkey in the HuntFishNY app. The app works even without immediate cell service, as it stores the harvest report and transmits it to DEC upon reconnection to cell service. Paper licenses and paper tags will still be available.

Printing and Mailing Fee

DEC has transitioned from special license stock (valeron) to printing all sporting licenses, carcass tags, and other items on plain paper. License Issuing Agents (LIAs) are now supplying their own paper, printers, and ink, and license buyers purchasing their paper licenses and tags at LIAs may be charged a \$1 printing fee to cover costs. Additionally, DEC's license fulfillment vendor may levy a \$2 fee when the customer requests the license be printed and mailed to them. All customers who purchase online, by phone, or at an LIA can avoid the printing fee by choosing to receive their licenses and tags by email for printing at home.

Changes to Crossbow Hunting Now in Effect

New for fall 2025, hunters in New York State may use a crossbow in the same seasons, places, and manner as a vertical bow for hunting deer and bear. To hunt deer and bear with a crossbow during the bowhunting seasons, a hunter must have a hunting license and bowhunting privilege. To be eligible to purchase a bowhunting privilege, a hunter must have bowhunter certification which is available through the [online or in-person course](#). Crossbows may be used wherever and whenever bowhunting occurs, including the archery only portions of Albany and Monroe counties and in Westchester and Suffolk counties. The minimum setback distance for discharge is 500' in Westchester

and Suffolk counties and 250' in all other areas. Crossbows must have a working trigger safety and a minimum peak draw of 100 pounds. There is no minimum limb width, no minimum length, and no maximum draw weight. Additional answers to commonly asked questions are available: [Crossbow Q & A](#) (PDF)

Backtags No Longer Required

As a result of law change, backtags are no longer required while hunting anywhere in New York State.

Legislation - Rifles in Niagara County

Legislation adopted in 2024 allows use of rifles for big game hunting in Niagara County except within the cities of Niagara Falls, Lockport, and North Tonawanda.

HuntFishNY Events - Mentored Hunt Opportunities and More!

HuntFishNY is your one-stop resource for events offered by DEC and a network of partners and instructors. Events are hands-on and designed to teach you the basics about hunting, fishing, trapping, outdoor safety, wildlife, and other outdoor hunts, mentored hunts, target shoots, hunting seminars, social events, and more. Events are designed for all ability levels. See DEC's Learn to Hunt Opportunities in New York page (<https://on.ny.gov/learntohunt>) for information about HuntFishNY Events, the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) program, sponsored pheasant hunts, and mentored hunts. These programs help new hunters develop the skills they will need to be safe and successful.

Non-lead Ammunition Rebate Program - Continuing Statewide

DEC has partnered with researchers to implement a multi-year study to determine the reduction in eagle deaths resulting from use of non-lead ammunition for deer hunting. Researchers are offering a rebate of up to \$60 to hunter for purchase of certified non-lead ammunition.

New York HUNTING & TRAPPING

[2025-2026 Official Guide to Laws & Regulations](#)



Pheasant Hunting

Pheasant hunting in New York has a long history and is highly valued by hunters throughout the state. The first hunting season for pheasants was designated in 1908 and DEC remains committed to providing recreational opportunity for hunters. Today, the wild pheasant population is at an all-time low attributed to habitat loss and land use changes. More information can be found in the [2010 Pheasant Management Plan](#) (PDF).

Despite the decline in wild pheasant abundance, hunters can still enjoy days afield pursuing state-stocked pheasants that have been raised at the Richard E. Reynolds game farm in Ithaca. Annually, over 30,000 adult pheasants are released just prior to and during the fall pheasant hunting season with plans to release up to 50,000 pheasants in fall of 2024.

The goal of the pheasant propagation program is not to restore wild pheasant populations, but to provide upland game bird hunting opportunity. Releases occur across the state on over 200 public lands and private lands that are open to public pheasant hunting. We strive to maintain pheasant hunting opportunity in all regions of the state.

[Follow this link](#) to see a table detailing the stocking schedule and other property-specific information for stocked pheasant properties across the New York State.

[Follow this link to see an interactive map and a table](#) detailing public and private land release sites and other property-specific information for stocked pheasant properties across New York State.

DEC's pheasant propagation program is able to provide opportunity throughout the state thanks to the willingness of many private land-owners and other state, county, and towns that allow hunters to access their lands. Please respect the land and any special rules on public and private pheasant release sites. For additional information on stocking sites please contact your [regional wildlife office](#) or by e-mailing wildlife@dec.ny.gov subject line Pheasant Release Sites.

Where to Find Pheasants

- Most pheasant hunting takes place in open agricultural fields associated with grain farming or on abandoned farmland covered in aster, goldenrod, and other early successional plants.
- Abandoned farmlands make great release sites for stocking game farm-reared pheasants.
- Pheasants are not a woodland species. They prefer to roost, and forage in grassland areas among rows of corn, wheat, oats, and an occasional cattail marsh used for winter cover.

Helpful Tips

- You must possess a hunting license to hunt pheasants. Thoroughly read the Department's [Hunting and Trapping Regulations Guide](#) to become familiar with pheasant hunting regulations.

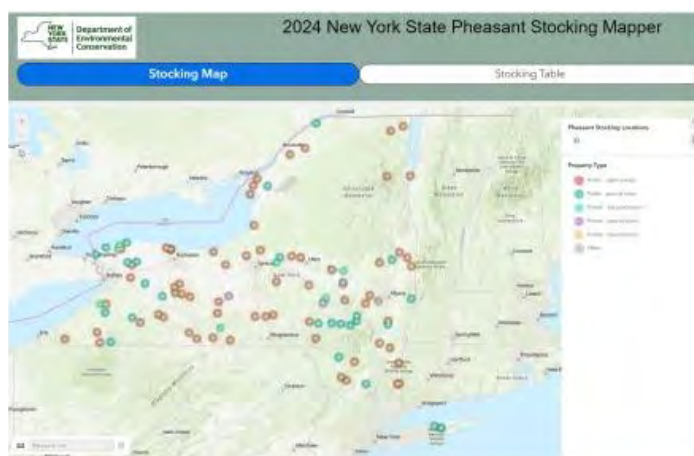
Pheasant Hunting

Hunting Hours: Sunrise to sunset

- Cocks only
- Cocks & hens
- Cocks only east of Shinnecock Canal & Inlet



Pheasant Hunting Season Dates and Bag Limits



[View an interactive map showing pheasant stocking locations in New York State.](#)

- Do your pre-season scouting and planning. Don't wait until opening day to decide where you want to hunt. Review the list of areas stocked with state-reared pheasants.
- Ask permission from landowners to hunt. Common courtesy and respecting the land will ensure you have a place to hunt next year.
- Successful hunters employ trained bird dogs to help them locate pheasants and retrieve downed game.
- Get yourself and your dog in good physical condition for a safe and enjoyable hunting season.
- Respect other hunters' space. Don't crowd. Share the hunting areas and the opportunity to harvest a bird.



CCE SARATOGA

Become a Master Gardener

Do you love gardening and want to deepen your knowledge?

Here's your opportunity to become a lifelong learner, a dedicated volunteer, and a positive force in your community!

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County invites you to apply for the **2026 Master Gardener Volunteer Program**.

This dynamic program is a vital part of our outreach efforts, providing research-based horticultural education to a wide range of audiences - including home gardeners, youth in after-school programs, individuals with physical and developmental disabilities, community gardeners, and consumer of horticultural products.

The Master Gardener Program trains volunteers to support public education and outreach. Participants are required to contribute 50 volunteer hours during their first year, and 30 hours annually thereafter to maintain active status.

Course topics include:

- Ornamental and landscape plants
- Turf management
- Vegetable and organic gardening
- Basic entomology
- Weeds and plant diseases

Training will take place two evenings per week (5:00 pm - 8:00 pm), from mid-January through May 2026. Space is limited. **Applications are due by November 21, 2025.**

To learn more or request an application, please contact:

Jessica Luse

Community Horticulture & General Agriculture Manager

jmh452@cornell.edu | 518-885-8995



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AND OUTREACH

Can I Eat Apples with Black Spots on the Skin?

The black spots are probably sooty blotch or flyspeck. Sooty blotch and flyspeck are two different fungal diseases that often occur together on apples. Sooty blotch appears as dark brown to black, ½ inch or larger smudges on the surface of the apple. Flyspeck produces clusters of shiny, round, black dots. Individual dots are about the size of a pinhead. Environmental conditions that favor disease development are moderate temperatures and extended wet periods in late summer/early fall.

Sooty blotch and flyspeck live on the surface of the fruit. Damage is mainly cosmetic. The skins on the apples can be eaten, they just don't look very appetizing.

Cultural practices and fungicides can help control sooty blotch and flyspeck. Proper pruning of apple trees and thinning of fruit promote drying and help reduce disease severity. Fungicides may also be necessary.

Learn more in this article: [Sooty Blotch and Flyspeck on Apple](#)



Sooty Blotch and Flyspeck on apple.

photo by FotoHeim/AdobeStock



NDSU

EXTENSION



CANKDESKA CIKANA
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Spirit Lake Dakota Nation

FOOD PRESERVATION 101 **FREE online course!**



Preservation 101 is an online educational course featuring safe food preservation methods for freezing, water-bath canning, pressure canning, drying and fermenting.

Plus new Wojapi, Jerky and Foraging Topics coming this fall!



Register: ndsuhq.org/fp101

NDSU Extension and Cankdeska Cikana Community College have partnered to bring you five educational modules on food preservation!

About the Course

- Take this FREE course completely online, at your own pace and from your own home.
- Lessons are pre-recorded.
- Course topics include **Drying, Fermenting, Water Bath Canning, Pressure Canning and Freezing.**
- To access the course, participants must register to receive an enrollment code. Once participants have the code, they can enroll in the course on the Extension Foundation website.
- Participants will receive certificates of completion for completing modules.

To REGISTER: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdwn62ZPkWdMmI9WcQCUpGgiSKprC5Wou-FncsfrD_nhcuVQ/viewform?usp=sf_link



These courses were originally created in the late 1990s, and the information is as relevant today as ever before. We hope you enjoy learning about gardening through this rich resource.

Since 1971 the National Gardening Association has been dedicated to helping home gardeners get the most from their gardens. We've expanded our mission by providing gardeners with the opportunity to dig a little deeper into the world of plants. Experience has shown us that gardeners love to learn. By launching the Learning Garden, we hope to make the science of botany and horticulture accessible and affordable for all gardeners.

Here at NGA, we believe that plants and gardens have vital importance to the quality of life on planet Earth. Whether you are a long time friend of NGA or just getting to know us, we hope you will enjoy your experience in the Learning Garden.



Our Online Courses:

- [Exploring the Garden, Part 1](#)
- [Exploring the Garden, Part 2](#)
- [Vegetables and Annual Flowers](#)
- [Perennials](#)
- [From Seed to Seed: Plant Science for K-8 Educators](#)

Herb B.'s Monthly Advice for OCTOBER



From the Garden & Hearth: October Reflections

By Herb

A Season of Lasts and Firsts

Even after months of picking beans, I still miss a pass through that late-planted row—soon to be claimed by the first killing frost. I've tried covering the tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants, but frost always wins in the end.

Our dining room table is now covered in green and pink tomatoes waiting to ripen. The dry summer led to more blossom end rot—caused by uneven watering that blocks calcium from reaching the fruit—but all in all, we had a good harvest.

The Warmth of Wood

I usually wait until November to light a fire in our zero-clearance fireplace, which keeps the whole house warm down to about 20°F. Any colder than that, and we switch to the whole-house wood furnace I added to our oil system back in 1982. That furnace has saved us thousands and kept us warm down to 35 below.

They say wood heats you more than once—cutting, splitting, stacking, hauling, and finally burning. You come to know the scent of different woods and can often tell what's in the fire just by the smoke. I've used woodstoves before, but I don't miss the blast of heat to the face while your back stays cold. That's why you see people spinning in place in front of them—trying to even out the BTUs. A whole-house system may use more wood, but I think it's worth it.

Weather Watching

I remember a year in the '90s when we had heavy snow the first week of October. Luckily, our trees had already dropped their leaves, so we avoided major power outages. Not so for folks to the south—some were without power for over a week.

This year, fall seems slow to arrive. We're still seeing daytime temps in the 70s, and the nights haven't dipped below the 50s. But we know what's coming.

Raspberry Gold

Since July, we've been picking 4 to 5 quarts of raspberries every other day. Over time, we've invited friends and family to come help—it benefits them, and it certainly helps us. Picking the ripe and nearly ripe berries keeps the harvest going. And the jam and desserts that follow? Always worth it.

Falling Leaves, Feeding Tree

Our maples are steadily blanketing the lawn with leaves. I've found that mowing in two directions every so often saves me from dragging out the rake. The leaves break down in place and feed the trees. No waste. Nature knows what it's doing.

And Then, Halloween

At month's end comes Halloween. We used to take the kids to a nearby townhouse development where the doors were close and the candy plentiful. Out here, it's been years since a trick-or-treater has come by. That's how it goes in the country.

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

Click the photos to be navigated to each of our Facebook accounts:



CCE Saratoga



4-H



CCE Equine



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Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities