



NEWSLETTER



The Power of Collaborations in Natural Resources

Field efforts have included early detection and control of invasive species on public lands, including the 3,400-acre City of Glens Falls

The collaboration between Warren County SWCD and Capital Region PRISM demonstrates how shared expertise and resources can produce meaningful conservation outcomes that protect natural resources and benefit local communities.



2026 CCE Cut Flower Webinar Series

Tuesdays, January 6, 13, 20, 27 & February 3, 2026



All sessions are provided via Zoom links. Advanced registration is required to obtain the Zoom links. Webinars will be recorded and all the recordings will be sent to registrants for future review.

Session 1: January 6, 2026

- A. Updates on the Cut Flower Cost Calculator
- B. Great Woody Cuts: From Field to Vase

Session 2: January 13, 2025

- A. So, You Want to Grow Some Perennials as Cuts? - A few comments that you won't find on the Internet or Chat GPT from a scarred veteran of cut flower foibles.
- B. Industry Trends from a Regional Wholesaler's Perspective

Session 3: January 20, 2026

- A. Anaerobic Soil Disinfestation: A Sustainable Path to Disease-Free Cut Flowers
- B. Biochar Use in Cut Flower Production: Practical Insights

Session 4: January 27, 2026

- A. Bugs in My Blooms? Using beneficial Insects in Cut Flower High Tunnels*
- B. Propagation Techniques for Plants that are Used for Cut Flowers

Session 5: February 3, 2026

- A. Managing Powdery Mildew, Leaf Spots and Root Rot on Cut Flowers*
- B. Managing Pests in (and Out of) Cut Flower Production*
- C. Market Trends and New Cut Flower Varieties for 2026

**NYSDEC pesticide application credits will be provided.*

For more information and registration link, [click here](#).

2026 Winter Greenhouse Growers School

January 21, 2026 | 8:00 am—4:45 pm

CCE Albany County

24 Martin Road, Voorheesville, NY 12186

This event is in-person but the speakers in the morning session will present virtually. The cost to attend this event is \$60 per person. \$10 discount for members of New York State Flower Industries.

A discount of 50% will be given to additional attendees from the same greenhouse / farm. Lunch is included.

Pre-registration is required. Walk-ins will NOT be allowed. For more information and to register (by January 16, 2026) [click here](#).

For program questions, contact: Jingjing Yin
jj578@cornell.edu | 518-429-8608

CAR SEAT CHECK

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

Tuesday, January 6 | 4 pm—8 pm

New Country Toyota of Clifton Park

202 Route 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 access the inside of your vehicle.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The next Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for **January 21, 2025 | 7 pm** at the Extension Office.

CCE Saratoga's Board of Directors

John Mancini - *President*

Liz Newsom - *Vice President*

Mark Preissler - *Secretary*

Jim Pettis, Jr. — *Treasurer*

Tom Venditti

Alex Guilmette

Nancy Wade Leary

Kevin Veitch—*Board of Supervisors Representative*

Danielle Hautaniemi - *Cornell Representative*





Party For A Cause

Sponsored by Harmony Veterinary Clinic

Saturday, January 17th

6-10pm

at The Hideaway

35 Grace Moore Rd., Saratoga Springs

Live Music

*

Raffles

*

Silent Auction

\$20 Advance Tickets

5 raffle tickets, Light Appetizers (veggies, cheese, crackers, pepperoni) with each paid admission.

***Cash Bar and**

Limited Menu

Available for purchase

Music by:



Featuring: Leland Bunting

Order tickets at:

sc4h.org/party

or call 518-885-8995

Houseplant Pests and How to Deal With Them

You may get a break from dealing with outdoor pests in most parts of the country during the cold months of winter, but in the warmth of your heated home, houseplant pests can still be a problem. Often these troublemakers have hitchhiked in on plants that spent the summer outdoors. But they can also come in on newly purchased plants. At this time of year, when many of us are purchasing plants for holiday decorating or receiving them as gifts, it's easy to bring in some unwanted visitors as well.



Left to right: aphids, mealybugs, and scale

It is always a good idea to give any plant coming indoors a thorough going over before it takes up residence with your other houseplants. Check under the leaves and along the stems of plants that summered outside before you bring them back indoors. You may even want to give them a couple of precautionary sprays with a mild insecticide like insecticidal soap just to be on the safe side. And if you can give them a spot at least ten feet apart from your other plants for a couple of weeks, you may keep a beginning pest problem confined and easier to treat.

When you buy new plants, give them a similar look-over before you bring them home. Pass over any with signs of insect infestation. And what should you be looking for? Some of the most common houseplant pests are spider mites, mealybugs, aphids, fungus gnats, and scales.

Spider Mites

Spider mites, which are spider relatives, not true insects, thrive in the hot, dry air of our heated homes. Although they're tiny, the feeding of these sucking pests on the undersides of leaves can cause a lot of damage to plants. Look for leaves that are stippled with yellow and, when the infestation is severe, leaves encased in fine webbing. Hold an infested leaf over a piece of white paper and tap it sharply; if you see tiny, moving, dark dots on the paper, this will confirm your identification.

If you catch a spider mite infestation early, you may be able to bring it under control by spraying all leaf surfaces with water from the kitchen sink sprayer every few days. For larger infestations, control mites with sprays of insecticidal soap or horticultural oil. Repeat treatment at least twice at five day intervals to make sure you mop up mites newly hatched from eggs. It's probably best to discard severely infested plants.

To help reduce the chances of problems with spider mites, keep the humidity high around your plants. Line a waterproof tray with pebbles and fill with enough water to come up about half the depth of the pebbles. Then set your plant pots on the pebbles. The

evaporating water will raise the humidity level around the plants, but the pots won't be sitting in water.

Aphids are pear-shaped, soft-bodied insects that feed by sucking, usually on the newest growth, and are often found in large numbers. Sometimes you'll notice the sticky "honeydew" they excrete, which turns a dark sooty color when mold grows in. Because aphids are generally found clustered on the tender new growth of plants, start by pinching off and destroying these heavily infested parts of the plant. The kitchen sink sprayer will often take care of a mild infestation. Insecticidal soap sprays are effective for bigger pest populations.

Mealybugs look like flattened, oval, cottony masses on the undersides of leaves or tucked into the crevices where leaf stalks meet stems. They are covered with a white, powdery wax that looks like finely ground meal; hence their name. This waxy material may extend out from their bodies in lacy filaments. Mealybugs feed by sucking, weakening plants and causing yellowing leaves, distorted growth and dropping foliage. Like aphids, they may also secrete sticky "honeydew." As many as 600 eggs are laid in a mass of cottony wax, so it's easy to see how a population explosion can happen quickly. While the adult insects may appear immobile, they crawl slowly and can spread from plant to plant, especially when leaves touch. Eggs hatch out onto mobile crawlers. This is the stage that is most vulnerable to insecticide sprays, because the newly hatched crawlers lack a protective waxy coating.

Use a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol to remove individual insects and egg masses, repeating weekly until all of the pests are gone. Or you can dislodge mealybugs by washing plants with a soft brush or cloth dipped in a solution of two teaspoons mild dish detergent in a gallon of warm water. If your plant is heavily infested, you can spray insecticidal soap or a mixture of one part rubbing alcohol to nine parts water directly on the mealybugs. Be sure to test these treatments on a small section of the plant before treating the entire plant since the foliage of some plants may be sensitive to them. You'll need to make repeat applications according to label instructions to catch insects at a susceptible stage in their life cycle. It's probably best to discard severely infested plants.

Fungus Gnats

Just about anyone who grows houseplants has probably encountered fungus gnats, sooner or later. A cloud of tiny, dark, delicate-bodied flies rises up from a plant when you disturb its leaves. While fungus gnats generally don't do much damage to plants, they are a nuisance as they flit about.

Female flies lay their eggs in the potting medium of your plants. They are especially attracted to mixes high in peat moss, a characteristic of many mixes used for indoor plants. The tiny, white, worm-like larvae that hatch out feed on algae, fungi and organic matter in the top couple of inches of potting mix, as well as on the

Article continued on next page

Houseplant Pests continued

roots of plants. In small numbers, they don't usually cause much damage, but when their population is high or plants are at the vulnerable young seedling stage, plants may be harmed.

To bring a burgeoning infestation under control, allow the top couple of inches of potting soil to dry out between waterings. Fungus gnat larvae need moisture to survive; keeping the growing mix drier will decrease survival and make the mix less attractive to egg-laying females. Covering the surface of the growing mix with a thin layer of sand will also make it less enticing to females as a place to lay eggs.

Adult flies are attracted to the color yellow. Cut plywood into a 4 x 6 inch rectangle and spray it with bright yellow paint. Coat one side of the wood with a sticky substance such as Tanglefoot (available at garden stores) or petroleum jelly. Place the wood, sticky side up, horizontally on top of the soil. Flies landing on the yellow wood will be trapped. When the traps become covered with insects, scrape them off and re-coat the wood.

Scale insects look like small brown bumps on the stems and leaves; under each shell or "bump" is a sucking insect dining on the plant. Leaves of infested plants may be yellowing, limp, and covered with sticky "honeydew." Scales are most vulnerable to sprays at the crawler stage of their life cycle, when the tiny, newly hatched young are moving over the plant looking for a place to settle down and feed.

If you catch an infestation early enough, you may be able to bring

it under control by diligently removing the scales by hand with a toothpick or tweezers, a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol, or by dabbing at them with a soft cloth dipped in a mild dish detergent solution as recommended for mealybugs. This technique is also useful to bring down the pest population before spraying.

For bigger infestations, make several applications of an insecticide labeled for use against scales on houseplants, such as insecticidal soap or horticultural oil sprays, repeating at ten day intervals. To be most effective, examine your plant carefully and time your sprays when the colorless to yellowish crawlers are active. Unless you pick them off, dead scales can remain on the plant for several months or longer. If scales are still alive, they will exude some liquid when crushed.

Use Pesticides with Care

Make sure that any product you use is labeled for use indoors and lists the target pest as well as the plant you plan to treat. Even when using such low-toxicity products as insecticidal soap or horticultural oil, it's important to always read and follow all label instructions and precautions. The foliage of some houseplants may be sensitive to injury from certain products - many ferns, palms, orchids, African violets, and begonias, for example, can be damaged by pesticides, even insecticidal soap - so check the label for information on plants to avoid treating with a particular product.

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.

Each month at New York State Integrated Pest Management's "What's Bugging You? First Friday" events, experts share practical information and answer questions on using integrated pest management (IPM) to avoid pest problems and promote a health environment where you live, work, learn and play. We end with an IPM Minutes, and cover a specific action you can take in the next few days to help you avoid pest problems. **Events take place online from 12:00 pm to 12:30 pm.**



JANUARY 2: Stratifying native perennial wildflower seeds | 2025 Year in Review

Learn how to prepare perennial wildflower seeds to germinate inside. Plus, revisit all of the IPM we learned in 2025 with our annual Year in Review video. [Register here.](#)

FEBRUARY 6: The value of insects | Feeding Friendly Insects: cut stems

Insects have a profound impact on our planet, from ecological benefits to intrinsic value. Learn how you can help insects including a technique to use in your garden.

MARCH 6: Here come the Joro spiders! | Lookout for termite swarms

Should you be worried about a Joro spider invasion? (spoiler alert: no) Learn the facts about this new-to-NY spider and relevant IPM strategies. And learn about appropriate IPM responses if you see winged termites inside this spring.

APRIL 3: Mole control | Feeding Friendly Insects: delay garden cleanup

Learn how the professionals manage moles, and stay tuned to hear about creating habitat for beneficial insects in the garden.

Perennials with Winter Interest



An attractive landscape requires careful planning for seasonal interest throughout the year. Since the *New York* landscape is dormant for about four months of the year, extending the attractiveness of the landscape and garden into the winter can help make the season a little

more bearable. Winter gardening doesn't use the flowers and fragrances of summer gardening. Instead, various plants are used to add shape, color, and texture to create, eye-catching displays. Many herbaceous perennials can be used to create interesting landscapes, even in winter!

Colorful Foliage

Many herbaceous perennials have interesting winter appeal. Not all perennials die to the ground. Perennials with evergreen or semi-evergreen foliage can add color to an otherwise brown or white landscape. Pig squeak, or *Bergenia*, turns maroon with the onset of cold temperatures. The foliage of grape hyacinth emerges late in the season and persists through winter. Perennials like *Achillea* overwinter with a rosette of foliage close to the ground. Lavender, thyme, and other herbs hold their foliage late in the season. *Yucca* plants possess a unique character, especially after a snowfall.

Persistent Seedheads

Other perennials are grown for their attractive seedheads in winter. Many ornamental grasses, like switchgrass, miscanthus, and northern sea oats, hold on to their interesting plumes much of the winter, providing height and movement in the wind. Other perennials hold onto colorful and large seedpods. The large black pea-like pod of false indigo, or baptisia, rattles in the wind. The dried flowerheads and stems of perennials like coneflower, Joe Pye weed, upright sedum, yarrow, Culver's root, bee balm, and rattlesnake master also stand out in winter.

Interesting Forms

Other perennials stand tall through the winter, and their forms and outlines add height and interest to the otherwise star and flat winter landscape. Many also provide protection and food for birds and other wildlife. Ornamental grasses like feather-reed grass, giant miscanthus, and switchgrass stand tall even through heavy snow.

Winter Blooms

A few perennials will even flower in winter. Most notably, lenten roses, or hellebores, open colorful flowers in pinks, purples, whites, and greens in February and March. Other early spring-blooming bulbs like winter aconite and snowdrops often open even with snow on the ground. Make sure to position these perennials near the sidewalk or door so they can be appreciated without venturing deep into the garden.

Perennials with Winter Interest

Following is a list of perennials that have notable interest during the winter. Consider adding these perennials to the garden for interest year-round.

Colorful Evergreen or Semi-Evergreen Foliage

bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*) | European wild ginger (*Asarum europaeum*) | pig squeak (*Bergenia* spp.) | barrenwort (*Epimedium* spp.) | sea thrift (*Armeria maritima*) | basket-of-gold (*Aurinia saxatilis*) | snow-in-summit (*Cerastium tomentosum*) | coral bells (*Heuchera* spp.) | candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*) | moss phlox (*Phlox subulata*) | lungwort (*Pulmonaria* spp.) | lamb's ear (*Stachys byzantina*) | foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) | marginal shield fern (*Dryopteris marginalis*) | Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) | ebony spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron*) | yarrow (*Achillea* spp.) | thyme (*Thymus* spp.) | lavender (*Lavendula angustifolia*) | English ivy (*Hedera helix*) | periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) | Japanese spurge (*Pachysandra terminalis*) | Adam's needle (*Yucca filamentosa*) | hen and chicks (*Sempervivum* spp.) | stonecrop (*Sedum* spp.) | pinks (*Dianthus* spp.) | rock cress (*Arabis caucasica*) | dwarf blue fescue (*Festuca* spp.) | Shasta daisy (*Leucanthemum × superbum*) | globe thistle (*Echinops* spp.)

Persistent Seedheads or Pods

false indigo (*Baptisia* spp.) | purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) | feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis × acutiflora*) | northern sea oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*) | Japanese silvergrass (*Miscanthus sinensis*) | Korean feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis brachytricha*) | wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) | peony (*Paeonia* spp.) | iris (*Iris* spp.) | bee balm (*Monarda* spp.) | coneflowers (*Rudbeckia* spp.) | rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) | Joe Pye weed (*Eutrochium* spp.) | upright sedum (*Hylotelephium* spp.) | Culver's root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*) | Carolina lupine (*Thermopsis villosa*)

Interesting Forms

little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) | Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*) | prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*) | giant miscanthus (*Miscanthus 'Giganteus'*) | switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) | blue oatgrass (*Helictotrichon sempervirens*) | purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*) | side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) | tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) | purple love grass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*) | Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra 'Aureola'*) | Ravenna grass (*Saccharum ravennae*, syn. *Erianthus ravennae*)

Winter Blooms

lenten rose (*Helleborus* spp.) | snowdrops (*Galanthus* spp.) | spring crocuses (*Crocus* spp.) | winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*)

Trees and Shrubs for the Winter Landscape

Don't forget, the winter garden isn't complete without woody plants. Evergreen trees and shrubs with various shades of greens and blues and interesting shapes are staples of many winter landscapes. Deciduous trees with interesting bark characteristics, like paperbark maple, or unusual branching habits, like pagoda dogwood, can also aid in providing winter charm. Many trees and shrubs have persistent fruit that looks attractive in winter and attracts birds and other wildlife.

Bald Eagle

Quick Facts:

- In 1976 there were only one pair of bald eagles nesting in New York. Conservation efforts have increased that number to 389 territories in 2015.
- Bald eagles mate for life—which can be over 30 years.
- Nests are reused and added to each year, growing to over six feet across, eight feet deep, and weighing hundreds of pounds.
- An eagle's 2-inch long talons can exert 1,000 pounds of pressure per square inch.

What to Watch for

Size: 30 inches tall with a wingspan of six to seven feet.

Appearance: Adults have a brown body, white head and tail, and bright yellow bill and feet. Females and males look the same, except the female is one-third larger and heavier, typical of birds of prey. Immature eagles are mostly chocolate brown and lack the white head and tail.

Other Signs to Watch for: Eagles hold their wings straight out from their bodies when gliding. The feathers at the tips of the wings are widely separated. The turkey vulture, another large bird of prey, glides with its wings in a V-shape.

Where to Watch

Scan the tree-tops for eagles perched there or watch the sky. Eagles like heavily wooded areas near water with tall trees for nesting and perching. They eat a lot of fish so check ice flows or river islands for eagles enjoying a meal. In the winter, look for areas of open water often found near power plant discharges or where tributaries enter a river.

When to Watch

Winter is the best time to watch. Wintering eagles arrive in December with concentration peaking in January and February. Eagles are most active between 7 am to 9 am and 4 pm to 5 pm.



More Information about Bald Eagles

[Viewing bald eagles in New York State](#)
[National Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey](#)
[Bald Eagle Fact Sheet](#)
[Bald Eagle Restoration in New York](#)
[The Eagle Institute](#)

The Best Places to See Bald Eagles

Along the Hudson River

[Margaret Lewis Norrie Point State Park](#)
[Constitution Island from North Dock, West Point](#)
Route 6/202 overlook above [Iona Island State Park](#)
Riverfront Park, Peekskill
Charles Point/China Pier, Peekskill
Verplanck waterfront
[George's Island Park parking area](#), Montrose

The Upper Delaware River watershed

[Mongaup Valley Wildlife Management Area](#)
[Mongaup Falls Reservoir](#)[Rio Reservoir](#)

Upper reaches of the St. Lawrence River

[Wellesley Island State Park](#) (early winter)
Brockville Narrows
Kingston, Ontario, and Cape Vincent, New York on the south;
Cornwall, Ontario and Massena, New York to the north.

Central New York

Onondaga Lake

How to Get Bed Bugs Out of Your Belongings



The holiday season is a time when bed bugs can spread more easily due to increased travel and family gatherings. Learn how to get rid of them incase you picked up some hitchhikers during your travels.

The common bed bug has returned as a significant pest across the United States. First recognized in the tourism industry in the late 1990's, bed bug infestations are now common in homes. People dealing with infestations can spread bed bugs to the homes of

family and friends, to public places and to their work place. From here, bugs can hitchhike on personal belongings to new places. To stop the spread of bed bugs people can take action to remove bed bugs from their personal belongings and reduce the number of bugs in their home. This [document](#) provides non-pesticide treatment recommendations for household items, which are often overlooked or not treated by professional bed bug control services.

Blessing for the New Year

The New Year offers us an opportunity to make a clean start on developing new life habits and even leave some behind us. Be sure to start your new year with an extra boost of good fortune by enjoying a meal sure to promise good blessings. The traditional foods in the South relating to good fortune are beans, greens and pork.

Greens, any greens, including cabbage, collards, kale, and chard, - their green leaves look like folded money, and are thus symbolic of economic fortune.

Beans, any legumes including beans, peas, and lentils are also symbolic of money. Their small, seed-like appearance resembles coins that swell when cooked so they are consumed with financial rewards in mind.

Pork, the custom of eating pork on New Year's Day is based on the idea that pigs symbolize progress. The animal pushes forward, rooting itself in the ground before moving.

Corn, the golden yellow color of corn resembles gold nuggets and invites good fortune!

Grapes, in Spanish culture, eating 12 grapes at midnight will predict the year ahead, if all of the grapes are sweet and not sour, all your months will be sweet, if there are some sour ones, those months could not be so sweet.

Pomegranates, in Turkey at New Year's Eve, these fruit are considered eaten because the round shape of the sweet seeds resembles coins and therefore prosperity. Secondly, the red color of the fruit is believed to symbolize a healthy heart as well as the promise of fertility for the person eating it.

Be sure to ring in the New Year with much bounty and progress by including these foods in your New Year's Day menu!

Crock Pot Collard Greens and Black-eyed Peas

Ingredients

- 1 lb. dried black-eyed peas, sorted and rinsed
- 2 lbs. collard greens
- 8 oz. bacon or ham, diced
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 3 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 2 Tbsp. cider vinegar
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- Kosher salt and black pepper to taste



Directions

1. Fill the sink with cold water. Wash the collard greens in 3 to 4

changes of water, until there is absolutely no grit on the bottom of the sink. Cut thick stems out of the greens and chop the leaves or cut them crosswise into strips.

2. If using bacon, cook it until cooked but not crisp in a large skillet. Remove the bacon to paper towels to drain. Add the chopped onion to the skillet and cook until soft.
3. Combine the beans, bacon, onions, garlic, chicken stock, tomato paste, vinegar, and red pepper flakes in the slow cooker. The liquid should cover the top of the beans.
4. Cover the crockpot and cook on low for 6 to 7 hours on high for 3 hours.
5. Open the lid and add the greens. Return the lid and cook for one more hour.
6. Taste and adjust seasonings with salt and freshly ground black pepper, as needed.

Serves 6, each serving contains: Calories 369, Fat 17g, Carbohydrates 31g, Protein 27g.

Skillet Cheesy Cornbread

Ingredients

- ¼ cup butter
- 1 cup corn meal
- 1 cup flour
- ¼ cup white sugar
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 egg
- 1 cup milk (regular or buttermilk)
- ¼ cup oil
- 1 cup whole kernel corn (frozen or canned)
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F.
2. Place ¼ cup butter in cast iron skillet and heat on medium until the butter is melted and starting to bubble.
3. In a bowl, whisk together the corn meal, flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Mix in the egg, milk and oil until well combined. (I use a whisk while mixing the wet ingredients into the dry.) Fold in the corn kernels and grated cheese.
4. Pour the batter into the hot iron skillet with the melted butter. Spread the batter evenly on the pan.
5. Place in the oven and bake for about 25 minutes. Stick a toothpick in the center to ensure it comes out clean.

Serves 8.

More recipes continued on next page.

Recipes continued

Sweet Grape Salad

Ingredients

- 2 lbs. white seedless grapes
- 2 lbs. red seedless grapes
- 8 oz. sour cream
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 cup chopped pecans



Directions

1. Wash and stem grapes. Set aside.
2. Mix sour cream, cream cheese, white sugar and vanilla by hand until blended.
3. Stir grapes into mixture, and pour in large serving bowl.
4. For topping: Combine brown sugar, and crush pecans. Sprinkle over top of grapes to cover completely.
5. Chill overnight.

Simple Dark Chocolate Pomegranate Bites

Ingredients

- 2½ cups pomegranate seeds
- 5½ oz. high quality dark chocolate, melted
- 1 Tbsp. sea salt



Directions

1. Across 12 muffin cups, sprinkle a single layer of pomegranate seeds.
2. Add the melted dark chocolate to a piping bag or plastic bag. Snip off the end, so a small stream of chocolate can come out. Pipe a crisscross pattern of chocolate across the pomegranate seeds.
3. Add another layer of pomegranate seeds, then more chocolate, and then the last layer of pomegranate seeds.
4. Finish with a pinch of sea salt on each of the pomegranate chocolate bites.
5. Refrigerate for at least one hour before serving. After removing from the fridge, serve immediately.

Serves 12, each serving contains: Calories 92, Fat 5g, Carbohydrates 13g, Protein 1g.

Hot Black-eyed Pea Dip

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1 small onion, diced
- ½-1 Tbsp. finely chopped pickled jalapenos

- ¼ tsp. ground cumin
- 4 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1/3 cup sour cream
- 1 (10 oz) can Rotel diced tomatoes and green chilies, drained
- 1 (15 oz.) can seasoned black-eyed peas, drained
- Salt and pepper
- ½ cup shredded Mexican cheese or cheddar

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Melt butter in a pan and add onion. Cook until soft.
2. Add remaining ingredients to pan EXCEPT shredded cheese. Stir to evenly mix and remove from heat. Check for seasoning and add salt and pepper to taste.
3. Transfer dip to a greased cast iron skillet or baking dish. Sprinkle shredded cheese on top.
4. Place in oven and bake for 20 minutes or until warm and cheese is melted. Serve with tortilla chips.

Southern Collard Green Dip

(Adapted from a Biscuits and Burlap recipe)

Ingredients

- 15 oz. frozen, chopped collard greens
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- ¼ cup onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- ½ cup sour cream
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 8 oz. Monterey Jack cheese, grated
- 1 tsp. flour
- ½ can Rotel tomatoes, drained
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 1 tsp. pepper sauce or other hot sauce (optional)



Directions

1. Cooked collard greens in salted water for about 15 minutes. Drain and press between paper towels to dry, removing any stems.
2. Sauté shallot and garlic in olive oil over medium heat for 2-3 minutes.
3. Stir remaining ingredients together, adding the shallots and garlic and reserving about ¼ of the Monterey Jack cheese.
4. Place in 8 inch iron skillet or small ovenproof baking dish and top with remaining cheese.
5. Bake at 350°F for 25-30 minutes. If desired, top brown under broiler, watching carefully.

Questions about how much ham to buy and how to prepare it?

Is ham on the menu? Ham is the cured leg of pork available in various options—fresh, cook before-eating, cooked, picnic, or country. Because there are different types of ham, it can be confusing to understand storage times, cooking times, and the recommended amount of ham per person. Here are some tips from the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for preparing ham.

Definition

Hams may be fresh, cured or cured-and-smoked. Ham is the cured leg of pork. Fresh ham is an uncured leg of pork. Fresh ham will bear the term “fresh” as part of the product name and is an indication that the product is not cured. “Turkey” ham is a ready-to-eat product made from cured thigh meat of turkey. The term “turkey ham” is always followed by the statement “cured turkey thigh meat.”

The usual color for cured ham is deep rose or pink; fresh ham (which is not cured) has the pale pink or beige color of a fresh pork roast; country ham and prosciutto (which are dry cured) range from pink to a mahogany color.

Hams are either ready-to-eat or not. Ready-to-eat hams include prosciutto and cooked hams; they can be eaten right out of the package. Fresh hams and hams that are only treated to destroy trichinae (which may include heating, freezing or curing in the processing plant) must be cooked by the consumer before eating. Hams that must be cooked will bear cooking instructions and safe handling instructions.

Hams that are not ready-to-eat, but have the appearance of ready-to-eat products, will bear a prominent statement on the principal display panel (label) indicating the product needs cooking, e.g., “cook thoroughly.” In addition, the label must bear cooking directions.

Quality to Buy

When buying a ham, estimate the size needed according to the number of servings the type of ham should yield:

- 1/4—1/3 lb. per serving of boneless ham
- 1/3—1/2 lb. of meat per serving of bone-in-ham

Cooking or Reheating Hams

Both whole or half, cooked, vacuum-packaged hams packaged in federally inspected plants and canned hams can be eaten cold, right out of the package.

However, if you want to reheat these cooked hams, set the oven to no lower than 325°F and heat to an internal temperature of 140°F as measured with a food thermometer.

Unpackaged, cooked ham is potentially contaminated with pathogens. For cooked hams that have been repackaged in any other location outside the processing plant or for leftover cooked ham,



heat to 165°F.

Spiral-cut cooked hams are also safe to eat cold. The unique slicing method, invented in 1957, reduce carving problems. These hams are best served cold because heating slide whole or half hams can dry out the meat and cause the glaze to melt and run off the meat. If reheating is desired, hams that were packaged in processing plants under USDA inspection must be heated to 140°F as measured with a food thermometer. Leftover spiral-cut hams or ham that has been repackaged in any other location outside the plant, must be heated 165°F. To reheat a spiral-sliced ham in a conventional oven, cover the entire ham or portion with a heavy aluminum foil and heat at 325°F for about 10 minutes per pound. Individual slices may also be warmed in a skillet or microwave.

Cook before-eating hams or fresh hams must reach 145°F, with a 3-minute rest time, to be safely cooked before serving. Cook in an oven set no lower than 325°F. Hams can also be safely cooked in a microwave oven, other countertop appliances and on the stove. Consult a cookbook for specific methods and timing.

Country hams can be soaked 4 to 12 hours or longer in the refrigerator to reduce the salt content before cooking. Then they can be cooked by boiling or baking. Follow the manufacturer’s cooking instructions.

For more information on Curing Solutions, Smoking and Smoke Flavoring, and Foodborne Pathogens of Ham, along with a Timetable for Cooking Ham, Ham Storage Chart, and a Ham Glossary [click here](#).

National Bacon Day—December 30

Get ready, bacon lovers—because a day of pure, unfiltered crispy joy is almost here! National Bacon Day, celebrated every year on December 30, is the ultimate excuse to indulge in the smoky, savory goodness we all adore. Whether you prefer it perfectly crisp, irresistibly chewy, or woven into your favorite recipes, this unofficial holiday is all about celebrating the magic of bacon. So fire up the skillet, pre-heat the oven, or start planning your next bacon-filled feast. It's a day to honor bold flavor, timeless tradition, and the simple happiness that only a sizzling strip of bacon can bring. Join the celebration and let your bacon pride shine!

BACON-WRAPPED BRUSSELS SPROUTS

A recipe with 3-ingredients that is super easy and full of fall flavors.

- 12 slices of raw bacon, cut in half
- 24 Brussels sprouts
- Honey mustard or barbecue sauce



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Wash Brussels sprouts and trim ends.
3. Brush a light layer of maple syrup on the bacon.
4. Roll bacon around the Brussels sprouts.
5. Place on a baking sheet with bacon seam-side down.
6. Bake at 400°F for 25 minutes or until the bacon is fully cooked and crisp.

Serve with a honey mustard and or barbecue sauce.

Recipe from Clemson Cooperative Extension Home & Garden Information Center.

BACON AND CHIVE QUICHE

- 7 eggs, divided
- 1—16 oz. can chick peas (Garbanzo Beans)
- ¼ lb. bacon, cooked and crumbled
- ½ cup shredded reduced fat cheese, cheddar or Swiss
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup chives, diced
- ¼ tsp. white pepper
- Dash of nutmeg



Directions

To make crust, drain chick peas, and mash by hand or puree in food processor with one egg white. Press into pie plate. Sprinkle cooked, crumbled bacon and cheese into pie crust. In a medium bowl beat together 6 eggs, milk, chives, white pepper and nutmeg. Pour into pie crust. Bake in preheated 375°F oven until knife inserted near center comes out clean, about 30 to 40 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Serve with corn bread. *Recipe from Diane Whitten, CCE Saratoga County*

THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE, By Brigette Williamson, Dietetic Intern, Alex Gayton & Kate Yerxa

Fad or Fabulous? Unpacking the Latest Diet Trends

Fad diets often promise rapid weight loss or health benefits, but they typically lack scientific backing and are not sustainable in the long term. Keep reading to learn how to spot a fad diet and embrace eating habits that will last.

To identify a fad diet, look for:

- Promises of rapid weight loss (more than 2 pounds per week).
- Elimination of entire food groups.
- Rigid rules and restrictions.
- Lack of scientific evidence.
- Prioritizes one nutrient over another, like protein over carbohydrates.
- It may require you to buy expensive supplements.

If a diet seems too good to be true, it is. Fad diets are often appealing because they promise quick results, but they typically do not promote lasting health or well-being. By focusing on extreme restrictions or trendy claims rather than a variety of healthful food choices, fad diets create unrealistic expectations and can lead to

frustration or an unhealthy relationship with food. Instead of supporting gradual, sustainable changes, fad diets encourage short-term fixes that are difficult to maintain, leaving individuals without a reliable framework for long-term wellness. The allure of instant results comes at the expense of overall health, making fad diets a risky choice for anyone seeking lasting benefits. Instead of a quick fix, start a healthy lifestyle by:

- Consuming a variety of nutrient-dense foods,
- Staying hydrated with water,
- Engaging in regular [physical activity](#), and
- Prioritizing sleep and stress management.

When it comes to making changes in your diet, slow and steady wins the race. By focusing on nutrient-rich eating patterns and making informed choices, you can achieve lasting health benefits and foster a positive relationship with food. The USDA's [MyPlate](#) is a great free resource where you can find information on your energy and food group needs. MyPlate also has cooking tips and an app to help create and maintain sustainable eating habits.



NDSU | EXTENSION



Nourish

HEALTHY LIVING FOR YOUR BRAIN AND BODY

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Jan. 22: Healthy Living **12pm**

Jan. 29: Special Diets **12pm**

Feb. 5: Medications **12pm**

Feb. 12: Immune Health **12pm**

Feb. 19: Cooking **12pm**

Feb. 26: Muscles **12pm**

March 5: Accurate Information **12pm**

March 12: Well-Being **12pm**

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This project is supported by funding through the
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Join us for our live Nourish webinars!

As we age, we may not be as active as we used to be. Maybe we have put on a few extra pounds, or we've developed health issues such as high blood pressure or diabetes. Making a few changes can reduce our risk for developing Alzheimer's or another dementia. The Nourish program provides adults with information and strategies about nutrition free of charge. You will learn how to eat more nutritiously and be more physically active to promote health and well-being.



Homesteading



CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION—NASSAU COUNTY

Gardening Month by Month—January

- Buy some graph paper and begin plans for this year's vegetable garden, flower beds and new landscaping.
- Turn houseplants every few days to keep them from turning toward the light.
- Learn about xeric (drought tolerant) plants. For more information, see a [fact sheet](#) on this topic.
- Plan a new ornamental garden now. Be careful not to over plant. Allow room for growth.
- Reread last season's garden diary and inventory leftover seed before you order new seeds.
- Look into taking gardening classes at Planting Fields Arboretum, Brooklyn Botanical Garden, Clark Garden and horticulture classes at SUNY Farmingdale.
- Look for bargains on amaryllis and paperwhites that didn't sell at Christmas. Pot them up and enjoy. For more information, see our [fact sheet](#) on this topic.



- Watch out for leaves on houseplants that bend down and curl. This may be due to low temperatures or improper watering practices. For more information, see our [fact sheet](#) for common houseplant troubles and our [fact sheet](#) for a symptoms chart.
- Take inventory of garden equipment and tools, noting any replacements or new materials needed.
- You may want to prune damaged or diseased branches now. For more information, see our [fact sheet](#).
- Stay off frozen turf as much as possible.
- Check out garden catalogs. There are dozens to look through. When ordering make sure the company uses the Latin name to avoid any misunderstandings.
- Keep your bird feeder well stocked and provide fresh water frequently to prevent freezing. Insect-eaters like Chickadees prefer suet. Seed-eaters like cardinals and sparrows like mixtures containing sunflower seed, finely cracked corn and white millet. Bread should not be used because it becomes moldy and may make the birds sick.

MILTON GRANGE & CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF SARATOGA COUNTY

Beginner Maple Syrup Course

Have you ever wanted to make your own maple syrup? Join the Milton Grange and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County on **January 24, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** at the **4-H Training Center, 556 Middleline Road, Ballston Spa.**

This hands-on, beginner-friendly class will teach the basics of making maple syrup on a small scale. Topics include identifying trees to tap, how and when to tap, setting up a simple at-home system, and understanding syrup grades and maple products. The class will also include a taste test.

Class size is limited, so early registration is encouraged. The cost is **\$30 per person** or **\$45 for two people**, which includes a pancake lunch with your choice of meat and beverage, plus a sample-size bottle of maple syrup to take home.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



Contact Jessica Luse at jmh452@cornell.edu for more information or questions.
Registration is due on January 16th.



How to Build a Buck Rub Post

There is nothing more beautiful in my eyes than watching a buck attack a homemade, handmade buck rub post. Here on my land in central Wisconsin, I won't harvest a buck unless it's bigger than the ones I've had mounted, so I haven't shot a buck on this property in many years. Instead, my passion is following them year after year, and one way I do this is by installing a buck rub post and wildlife cameras.

I will place a new rub post around the beginning of September when the boys lose their velvet and start traveling to areas that they haven't been to since last fall. Here's how you can make your own buck rub post.

Building the Rub Post

Start with a 3- to 4-inch diameter green popple (aspen) sapling about 8 feet long, preferably smooth, and trim off any existing branches. In the upper one foot of the post, drill $\frac{3}{4}$ - to 1-inch holes through the sapling to receive the cross pieces. Then cut a couple of 5- to 6-foot branches of oak (tougher wood) to become the licking/chewing branches. Slip those branches through the drilled holes and wire them in securely, because bucks are going to trash them by pulling at the branches and beating them up with their antlers.



Red attaches pieces of scrap wood to the post to serve as anchors in the dirt, to hold the post when heavy bucks are rubbing with all their weight. The anchors are attached about 18 inches from the bottom of the post and then buried below ground level.

You must make sure that the post is securely planted in the ground about 2 feet deep to withstand the abuse. I also attach a couple of pieces of wood, screwed about 18 inches from the bottom of the post just under ground level. This will help steady the post when the buck tries to rip it out of the ground and push on it as hard as he can. Make sure the licking branches are around five feet off the ground. You don't want anything in the way when they go into destroy mode to strip the bark off the post.

Rub Post Location

Selecting the placement of the pole is essential. You'll want to install the post out in an open food plot, but not in the middle. The best location is where deer gain access to the field. Place the rub post 20 to 30 feet from the edge of the field and set up your camera.



A buck will watch the rub post from just outside of the plot, sometimes observing it for several minutes while he checks the wind and watches for other deer. He may even put in a scrape at the rub post. I have observed the post getting muddy from so many bucks working it. I've seen every size buck give it a push, a rub, and a nibble on the branches, even this year's buck fawns. Interestingly, a doe passing by will sniff the area and licking limb, but she will usually not come close to the post.



A post will only last a year, and the process of building a new one starts over again in the fall. Traditional rub post placement has been a draw to the bucks on my property and has been very fun to watch. Good luck with your own buck rub post!

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



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