November 2018

Prairie County Homemakers,

November is a time of thanksgiving and I want to extend my thanks to the Homemakers for all that you do for Prairie County. From fund-raising benefits to remembering nursing home residents, you are making our community a better place to live.

I hope you enjoy annual Homemaker Banquet and are able to invite a friend to share in this enjoyable event. I also look forward to the decorating and food ideas that will be shared at the Holiday Potpourri. Be sure to spread the word and invite friends to share in this fun afternoon once details are finalized.

Amy and I wish you a Happy Thanksgiving and hope you enjoy your time with friends and family during this holiday season!

Sincerely,

Sharla Sackman
Prairie County Extension Agent

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Holiday Potpourri
December - Date TBA
American Legion Banquet Room

Laura from the Enchanted Room in Glendive will be sharing Holiday craft and decorating ideas with us again at this year’s potpourri. Your clubs are also invited to share holiday recipes for this year’s Potpourri. It would be great if your club would bring a couple of the recipes prepared for sampling. Remember, your old recipes just might be a great new idea for someone else! Please turn in any recipes you will be preparing or would like to share to the Extension Office by November 28th.
Prairie Fare: Inspire Your Autumn Menus With Pumpkin

By Julie Garden-Robinson, NDSU Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist

“What’s your favorite dessert?” I asked my daughter. She was a preschooler at the time.

“Pumpkin pie!” she exclaimed.

Her answer surprised me. I was expecting to hear brownies or chocolate ice cream.

“Really, pumpkin pie?” I asked.

“Yes, but we can’t have pumpkin pie now,” she said. “It’s only for Thanksgiving.”

I guess our holiday traditions had led her to think we had restrictions on pumpkin pie.

“We can have pumpkin pie at other times,” I responded.

In fact, I began gathering supplies for a pumpkin dessert. Pumpkin is a healthful food to include on our menus in a variety of ways throughout the year.

Pumpkin is low in calories and high in fiber, with about 50 calories and 3 grams of fiber per cup. It is an excellent source of beta-carotene, a pigment our bodies use to make vitamin A. This vitamin helps keep our skin healthy, helps with night vision and works as an antioxidant nutrient that may have some protective effects against certain types of cancer.

At this time of year, plastic and real pumpkins greet us on many doorsteps. The large jack-o’-lantern-type pumpkins are best used as decorations. Their flesh is stringy and the texture may not be appealing in your recipes.

Be inspired by all of the pumpkin decorations and “pumpkin spiced” restaurant foods to enjoy some pumpkin on your home menu. You can begin with canned pumpkin or a fresh pumpkin.

If you want to make a recipe using a fresh pumpkin, look for pumpkins that are smaller and rounder. Many times, grocery stores will include a sign by the display or a sticker on the pumpkin that says “pie pumpkin” or “sugar pumpkin.”

To prepare a fresh pumpkin for recipes, first rinse it under running water and scrub, if necessary, with a vegetable brush. This step prevents contaminants that might be on the outside of the pumpkin from being transferred to the flesh during cutting.

Next, cut the pumpkin in half, discard the stem and remove the stringy pulp. Remove the seeds and save, if desired, to make a crunchy snack described later.

To bake the pumpkin, place the halves “face down” on a greased baking pan, cover with foil and bake for one to 1 1/2 hours (depending on the size of the pumpkin) in a preheated 375 F oven. Remove the flesh from the skin and mash or process in a food processor and use in your favorite recipe.

Alternatively, you can cut the pumpkin into chunks and boil or microwave the pumpkin until soft.

What about those seeds? Fiber-rich roasted pumpkin seeds are easy to prepare. Rinse them, then blot them dry with paper toweling. Mix each cup of seeds with about 1 tablespoon of your favorite cooking oil, then sprinkle with the seasonings you like best. You can make them sweet or savory. Roast the seeds in a 300 F oven for about 50 minutes, turning every 10 minutes, or until they are light brown and crunchy.

We have several pumpkin recipes on the front page of our website (https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food) this month. Try making two-ingredient pumpkin spice muffins by mixing one can of pumpkin puree with a box of spice cake mix, placing the batter in muffin tins and baking for about 20 minutes. That’s it - just two ingredients. You can sprinkle the tops lightly with sugar before baking, if desired. Or try some savory pumpkin soup or pumpkin bread pudding.

Remember “impossible pies” from several years ago? They’re still tasty and easy to make. A slice of this dessert has 100 fewer calories than a piece of pumpkin pie with a regular crust.
Impossible Pumpkin Dessert

1/2 c. all-purpose flour
3/4 tsp. baking powder
1/8 tsp. salt
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. ground allspice
1/2 tsp. ground ginger
1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
3/4 c. white sugar
3 Tbsp. butter, softened
2 large eggs, beaten
1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling)
1 (12-ounce) can nonfat evaporated milk
2 tsp. vanilla extract
Optional topping: 1 Tbsp. brown sugar and 1/4 tsp. cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350 F. Spray or grease a 9-inch pie pan and set aside. Sift together the flour, baking powder, salt and spices. In a large bowl, beat together the sugar, butter and eggs. Mix in the pumpkin, milk and vanilla. Add the sifted ingredients and beat until smooth, then pour into the prepared pie pan or square pan. Bake at 350 F for 50 to 55 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

If desired, after 25 minutes of baking, sprinkle the top with the brown sugar and cinnamon mixture. Serve with a dollop of whipped cream if desired.

Makes eight servings. Each serving has 210 calories, 6 grams (g) fat, 6 g protein, 33 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 190 milligrams sodium.

The Pioneer Woman's Apple Dumplings

From thepioneerwoman.com

2 whole Granny Smith Apples
2 cans (8 Oz. Cans) Crescent Rolls
2 sticks Butter
1-1/2 cup Sugar
1 teaspoon Vanilla
Cinnamon, To Taste
1 can (12 Oz.) Mountain Dew Soda

Peel and core apples. Cut each apple into 8 slices each. Roll each apple slice in a crescent roll. Place in a 9 x 13 buttered pan.

Melt butter, then add sugar and barely stir. Add vanilla, stir, and pour entire mixture over apples. Pour Mountain Dew around the edges of the pan. Sprinkle with cinnamon and bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Serve with ice cream, and spoon some of the sweet sauces from the pan over the top.
Growing & Harvesting

Grow. Growing apples requires planting more than one variety for pollination. Purchase one-year-old trees with multiple branches and certified to be disease resistant, especially to Fire Blight. Plant in early spring, allowing 35-45 feet of growth space for standard-size apple trees, less for dwarf varieties. Plant trees in soil at the same depth as the containers they were grown in, and replace soil firmly against the roots. In a two foot diameter around the trunk, water and apply fertilizer as recommended. Visit www.msuextension.org for more information or contact your Extension office.

Harvest. Apple harvest occurs in fall. Start picking apples from lower branches and move to the upper branches. To avoid damaging fruit buds for the next year's crop, carefully twist or cut fruit from the stem, do not pull them off.

Selection

Choose firm, shiny, smooth-skinned apples with intact stems. Apples should smell fresh, not musty.

Storage

Refrigerate apples in a plastic bag, away from strong-smelling food. Store away from other fruits, as apples produce ethylene, which may cause other fruits to prematurely ripen. Use within three weeks.

Nutrition Information

Most fruits are rich in fiber and phytochemicals, but provide negligible amounts of saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium, and are gluten-free. Apples are high in Vitamin C and Potassium and have 32 calories per half-cup serving.

Uses

Applesauce. Place peeled, cored, and sliced apples in one-quarter inch water. Steam apples in a microwave or pan until soft and add water if needed. Remove from heat, mash apples to desired consistency and add seasonings. Eat warm or allow to cool.

Bake. Select larger apples and remove core with knife, leaving half-inch of the apple core intact at the bottom. Put a small amount of seasoning in the hole. Place apples in a baking pan and add 3/4 cup water to the pan. Bake at 375°F for 30-40 minutes or until desired tenderness.

Grill. Combine 1/2 cup water and 1/4 cup lemon juice in a large bowl and put sliced apples in mixture for 30-60 minutes. Place soaked apple slices on skewers and grill about seven minutes on each side. Once grilled, remove from heat and add seasonings. For added variety and texture, add apples to a grilled meat or vegetable kabob.

Raw. Rinse and dry an apple to enjoy as is, or slice and dip in peanut butter, yogurt, or hummus. Dip apple slices in lemon juice to prevent browning.

Season. Enhance the flavor of apples with cinnamon, clove, ginger or nutmeg.

Preserve. For information on preserving apples, look for Extension MontGuides on: Drying Fruit; Freezing Fruit; Home Canning Pressures and Processing Time; Making Jams, Jellies and Syrups. Visit www.msuextension.org/nutrition and click on the food preservation link or contact your Extension office.

Food Safety Tips

1. Clean. Wash hands and food contact surfaces before and after preparation.
2. Chill. Keep produce and food cool and chill promptly.
3. Separate. Keep produce and food separate from raw meats and eggs.

Questions? Click on www.foodsafety.gov
When the holiday season rolls around, many family budgets become strained. With a long list of family and friends, finding enough money to go around may be challenging. To help reduce the stress of your next holiday season, try making gifts instead of purchasing them. Consider these fun and economical gift ideas:

✔ Create gift baskets. For the family member who loves movies, make a “night-in” basket. Get a large bowl for popcorn to use as the container. Add packaged popcorn and a coupon for a free movie rental. Gardening, sports or any other themed baskets also work.

✔ For parents with young children, provide a homemade coupon good for free baby-sitting. Other ideas include coupons for helping walk the dog, painting or cleaning.

✔ Create a recipe booklet with favorite holiday recipes. Copy the recipes onto festive recipe cards, punch a hole in the corner of the cards and tie them together with a red ribbon. Holiday photo albums also can be used to hold recipes.

✔ Fill a holiday mug with packets of flavored tea, hot cocoa or coffee for those who enjoy warm beverages. Or tie a packet of soup mix to a large wooden spoon. Include a bowl and package of biscuit mix for a complete gift.

✔ If you are computer savvy, create homemade calendars for family members. These could include highlighted birthday and anniversary dates. Try adding family photos for a personal touch.

✔ Repurpose old tins, filling them with cookies, muffins or other holiday goodies. A gift like this will be a delight to anybody who has little time for baking.

✔ Make homemade mixes in a jar. Mixes for soups and cookies are popular gift items that are fairly inexpensive to make. The gift recipient will appreciate the attractive and thoughtful gift and also will value the convenience.

Try any of these four tasty and inexpensive recipes during this holiday season. You can decorate the jar with fabric and a ribbon. Either photocopy and cut out the provided recipes or hand-print each recipe on a card and attach it to the jar.

**Country Chili Mix**

1 lb. kidney beans
3 Tbsp. chili powder
2 Tbsp. dehydrated onions
1 Tbsp. garlic salt
1 tsp. oregano
¾ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. cayenne pepper (optional)

* To reduce sodium, substitute garlic powder for some of the garlic salt.

Pour the kidney beans into a clean quart-sized jar. In a small bowl, mix the remaining ingredients. Pour mixture into a clear sandwich bag and place it on top of the beans. Cover the jar tightly with a lid, decorate and attach a copy of the recipe card.

Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D., Food and Nutrition Specialist
Kendra Otto, Program Assistant (former)

For more information on this and other topics, see www.ag.ndsu.edu

NDSU Extension Service
January 2018

Key to Abbreviations

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Country Chili
• 1 container Country Chili Mix
• Additional ingredients: 10 c. water (for soaking beans)
  1 (8-oz.) can reduced-sodium tomato sauce
  1 (24-oz.) can diced tomatoes
  1 lb. ground beef or turkey
  6 c. water (for cooking beans)

Remove bag of seasoning from jar and rinse beans. In a stockpot, bring 10 cups of water to a boil. Add beans and return to a boil; let boil two to three minutes. Cover and set aside at room temperature for one hour. Drain and rinse the beans.

Fill a pot with 6 cups of water and add the beans. Cook beans until soft, about one hour; simmer gently with lid tilted. Brown meat; drain and add to the beans with tomatoes and sauce. Add in seasonings, stir and simmer, covered, for one hour. Add a little more water if needed to thin the broth. For best flavor, use mix within one year.

Makes eight servings. Each serving has 240 calories, 6 g fat, 21 g carbohydrate and 290 mg sodium.

Homemade Cornbread
• 1 container Homemade Cornbread Mix
• Additional ingredients: 1 egg
  1 c. water
  2 Tbsp. oil

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Pour dry mix into a large bowl. In a second bowl, combine egg, water and oil. Add liquid ingredients to dry ingredients. Stir well. Pour into a greased baking pan and bake for 20 to 25 minutes until the top is golden brown. For best flavor, use this mix within nine months.

Makes 10 servings. Each serving has 150 calories, 4 g fat, 25 g carbohydrate and 330 mg sodium.

Cranberry Oatmeal Cookies
• 1 container Cranberry Oatmeal Cookie Mix
• Additional ingredients: ½ c. butter
  1 tsp. vanilla
  1 egg

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, mix butter, vanilla and egg together until smooth. Add cookie mix and mix well. Place by spoonfuls onto a greased cookie sheet and bake for eight to 10 minutes until golden brown. For best flavor, use this mix within nine months.

Makes 28 cookies. Each serving has 100 calories, 4.5 g fat, 13 g carbohydrate and 70 mg sodium.

Friendship Soup
• 1 container Friendship Soup Mix
• Additional ingredients: 1 lb. lean ground beef
  or turkey
  3 qt. water
  1 (28-oz.) can diced tomatoes

Brown meat and drain. Place in a large pot and add the water and tomatoes. Add soup mix except macaroni. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for one hour. Add macaroni and continue cooking for another 10 to 15 minutes (until macaroni is done). For best flavor, use this mix within one year.

Note: To avoid overcooked pasta in leftovers, add the appropriate amount of macaroni to the portion being served.

Makes 12 servings. Each serving has 150 calories, 4 g fat, 12 g carbohydrate and 390 mg sodium.
Every fall, conifers shed some of their needles. This is a natural process known as seasonal needle drop. The amount of needle-loss is dependent upon species, temporal factors and environmental conditions (Figure 1). The occurrence of seasonal needle drop is often mistaken for disease or insect damage.

![Figure 1](https://gardenprofessors.com) Photo: gardenprofessors.com. Edited by Eva Grimme.

**Symptoms**

Seasonal needle drop typically consists of gradual yellowing or browning and eventual loss of older (Figure 2A) needles from the top to the bottom of trees. Some species are affected more than others. Needles that drop due to age may have some spots and blemishes, however they do not display typical symptoms of disease or insect damage. Diseases often cause death of younger needles, death of branches, or thinning of needles on the lower branches.

**White Pines**

White pines are some of the more seriously affected trees. Third, and sometimes second year needles yellow and fall seasonally throughout the entire tree (Figure 2B).

**Austrian and Scotch Pine**

These trees typically lose only fourth year needles. Symptoms are not nearly as dramatic as in white pines.
Cedar

Cedars often display browning of leaves and flagging of older branchlets (Figure 2C). Eventually entire branchlets are shed.

Spruce and fir

Spruce and fir generally maintain many years of growth. Seasonal needle drop is typically not very noticeable and is often only visible if looked for on inner branches.

Larch and Tamarack

These trees lose all of their needles every fall.

Management

Management for seasonal needle drop is not necessary. As long as the yellowing and needle drop is restricted to older growth and is not extreme, it is likely not a problem. Maintain tree health by following good cultural practices.

References

http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/2006/10-4/evergreens.html
http://learningstore.uwex.edu/assets/pdfs/A2614.pdf
http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/fall_needle_drop_a_natural_phenomenon_in_conifers

Sincerely,

Eva Grimme (eva.grimme@montana.edu)

Special thanks to Mr. Edward Barge for his help writing this urban alert.
Holiday Home Tour
Ama de casa Fundraiser

Get yourself in the holiday spirit by visiting several houses in Terry at the Sunday afternoon Ama de Casa fundraiser. Several homes will be included on Sunday, December 2, from 2 - 5 in the afternoon.

Tickets & maps are available at the Kempton Hotel on the day of the event.

*Please be prepared to remove shoes if sidewalks are wet.
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For more information or to register go to [www.msuextension.org/solidfinances](http://www.msuextension.org/solidfinances), Or, contact Joel Schumacher, 406-994-6637, E-mail: jschumacher@montana.edu

All sessions will broadcast from 12:05 p.m. - 12:55 p.m. Mountain Time