Prairie County Homemakers,

I hope you all enjoyed your summer.

Thanks to you and all of your clubs for your participation in the Prairie County Fair. Support from community members like you is what makes “the biggest little fair in all of Eastern Montana” a success. We couldn’t do it without you!

The Fall Homemaker Council meeting is right around the corner. An agenda for the meeting is included for your information.

Don’t forget that your questions are always welcome here at the Extension Office, from canning to gardening to family economics. We are here to help you.

Sincerely,

Sharla Sackman
Prairie County Extension Agent
FALL COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday, September 19  7:00 p.m.    Fallon Fire Hall

Agenda

Call to Order ~ Arlene Morast

Pledge of Allegiance

Women’s Creed

Roll Call ~ Lotty Rambur

Minutes of the Spring Council Meeting ~ Lotty Rambur

Treasurer’s Report ~ Nancy Birkholz

Bills and Correspondence

Unfinished/Old Business:
  Fair Booths
  Pie/Bake Sale Auction Report – Ama de Casa
  50 Year Members & 60 Year Members
    Submit names the Extension Office by October 15
  Cowboy Bandstand
    Maintenance Committee Report ~ Fallon
    Christmas Decorating ~ Cabin Creek (lights are at Town Hall)

Ongoing Business:
  Fall Banquet ~ Committee report
    Date: Tentatively November 5th, 6:00 p.m.
    *Banquet Assignments
    *Speaker: Philip Burgess, Penny Postcards & Prairie Flowers
      Remember to invite a guest
    * Christmas Potpourri: Presented by Laura of The Enchanted Room
    * Suggestions for food items?
    * Spring Potpourri: Presented by Jody Haidle (week of April 8 or 15)

Fundraisers for 2019
  Bake Sale and Luncheon ?
    *Date: Feb 8
    *Chairpersons: Lois Pfiefle, Co Chair: Dorcas Lee
      Other volunteers (to chair 2020)?
    *Proceeds Recipient
    *Retain percentage?

Spring Council Meeting
  Refreshments ~ Cabin Creek
  * Set 2019 Dues
  Reviewed Nursing Home list

Announcements

Election of Officers:  Vice President and Secretary
  (Nominating Committee: Arlene, Lois, Lotty & Nancy)

Installation of Officers

Refreshments served by Ash Creek

* Discuss these agenda items at your meeting and bring your club’s ideas to the Council meeting.
“Please enjoy these fresh pickles. Your food will be out shortly,” the server said as she placed a plate of cucumber slices in front of us. They were sprinkled with dill weed and had a nice crunch.

I was in a restaurant in another state, and the somewhat sweet yet vinegary flavor and crisp texture made me nostalgic for home. The pickles were very tasty and soon the serving plate was empty.

When I was young, we used to have fresh-from-the-garden cucumber slices and onions marinated in a vinegar and sugar brine. I would place a couple of slices on my plate to appease my parents, who wanted me to enjoy different foods. I wasn’t always keen on trying “different” foods back then.

When guests came over, pickles or relishes of some sort always were served as a side item. I gradually grew to like the various renditions of pickled vegetables that were on our menus regularly.

However, despite their coaxing, pickled pigs feet did not make it on my plate. I had to put my own foot down on some things.

Our pantry was stocked with a wide variety of canned pickles and relishes, from beet pickles to watermelon pickles. Some pickles were sweet because the brine contained a lot of added sugar and other pickles were quite sour.

Cabbage was fermented to form sauerkraut in a crock with a heavy cover in a cool room in our basement.

Preserving food by fermentation predates all of us by thousands of years. Pickles can be made from almost any vegetable or many fruits, and their history dates back to 2000 B.C. In the absence of refrigeration, early people figured out that salt helps prolong the shelf life of foods. Perhaps someone dropped vegetables in salty seawater and a couple of days later, they noticed some bubbling as the vegetables began to ferment. The salt prevented the dangerous bacteria from growing and allowed the beneficial bacteria an opportunity to grow.

We aren’t sure what happened next in history because no one had Facebook or Twitter to post photos.

Evidently, someone was brave enough to have a taste of the sour vegetables. Or perhaps they noticed that an animal ate the vegetables in the salty brine and survived.

These early food scientists set the stage for a wide range of foods that have become very popular throughout the world. Lactic acid bacteria on the vegetables convert natural sugars to acid, and salt helps the process. Acidic foods stay safe longer.

Fermented foods are a growing trend in our food supply, and different countries have introduced various fermented or pickled foods to world cuisine. Kimchi, which is a spicy fermented cabbage, originated in Korea. Pickled daikon radishes have long been popular in Japan, and pickled eggplant is one of the signature items from Italy.

Sauerkraut, by the way, originated in Europe. To make sauerkraut, you just need salt, chopped cabbage and a covered container. Then natural fermentation takes over. On the other hand, most “pickled” vegetable recipes contain vinegar, salt and spices.

Eating fermented foods may have some health benefits. You may have heard the term “probiotics,” which literally means that the food supports life because it contains some beneficial lactic acid bacteria. Probiotic-rich fermented foods may offer some health benefits to our immune system and
digestive system. They may help restore levels of healthy bacteria in our gut.

The fermentation process also may enhance the ability of our bodies to use the nutrients in food. Besides fermented vegetables, foods with “live and active cultures,” such as some types of yogurt, sour cream and buttermilk, are sources of probiotics.

If you are inspired to try making sauerkraut or a wide range of pickled foods, visit [https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food) and click on “Food Preservation,” then “Ferment” or “Pickle.”

As we complete our fall harvest of fresh local vegetables, here’s a tasty recipe for fresh pickles to try.

Quick Pickled Cucumbers, Peppers and Onions

1/2 c. vinegar
1/2 c. water
1 1/2 Tbsp. sugar
1 1/2 tsp. mustard seed
1 1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. minced garlic
1 1/2 tsp. dill weed (or 4 Tbsp. chopped fresh dill)
5 c. cucumber slices
1/2 small onion, sliced into rings
1/2 red bell pepper, sliced into 1-inch strips

Heat vinegar, water, sugar, mustard seed, salt and garlic until sugar dissolves. Rinse cucumbers, then peel and slice. Prepare onion and red bell pepper as described. Mix vegetables in bowl and add dill weed, stirring gently to coat. Pour vinegar mixture over vegetables. Refrigerate for at least two hours, stirring at least once to submerge vegetables in brine. Remove pickled vegetables with a slotted spoon to a serving dish and return the remaining vegetables to the refrigerator. (Note: This is not a tested recipe for canning. Enjoy them fresh.)

20 Minute Garlic Beef and Broccoli Lo Mein

From therecipecritic.com

Ingredients

8 ounces lo mein noodles, or spaghetti noodles
3 cups broccoli florets
1 Tablespoon olive oil
8 ounce flank steak, sliced against the grain
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 medium carrot, shredded
¼ cup packed brown sugar
¼ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
2 Tablespoons hoisin sauce
2 teaspoons sesame oil
¼ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
¼ teaspoon pepper

Instructions

1. In a large pot with boiling water, cook the noodles according to package directions. Add the broccoli the last 5 minutes of cooking and let them cook until tender. Drain the noodles and broccoli.
2. While the pasta is cooking, add olive oil to a medium sized skillet. Cook the steak until no longer pink. Add the garlic, and carrots and cook for a minute more.
3. In a small bowl whisk together the brown sugar soy sauce, hoisin sauce, sesame oil, ginger, red pepper and pepper.
4. Add the spaghetti to the skillet and pour the sauce on top and toss until incorporated.
The first portion of the program will be “Who gets Grandma’s yellow pie plate?” This session will focus on Montana’s law for distributing tangible personal property after the death of the owners and other ways to distribute such property. Most individuals, regardless of financial worth, heritage, or cultural background have personal belonging such as rings, guns, wedding photographs, special dishes, or a yellow pie plate that contain meaning for them and for other members of their family. However, who gets personal property is an issue frequently ignored until a crisis occurs (death of the owners or when an elderly family member moves into a long-term care facility. This session is designed for filling in the gap in educating families in this important area.

The second portion of the program will focus on tools to designate beneficiaries. Contractual arrangements that specifically provide for the passing of property to a beneficiary are considered as transfers taking effect at death. Some of the tools include PODs and TODs (payable on death and transfer on death designations) as well as beneficiary deeds.

During her career, Goetting has delivered over 1,500 estate planning workshops, reaching more than 40,000 Montanans. She has also created peer-reviewed fact sheets, called Montguides. Goetting emphasizes the importance of estate planning and the need to keep courses up to date.

“Changes in the law and transfer of property continue to be a critically important topic,” Goetting said. “There are many ways to avoid probate that weren’t available years ago. It’s essential that we get that information out there.”
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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](mailto:jschumacher@montana.edu)

All sessions will broadcast from 12:05 p.m. - 12:55 p.m. Mountain Time
Wish you had time to whip up a batch of corn muffins to go with the steaming hot chili you are serving for dinner? Now you can. Make a batch of Cornmeal Master Mix and you’ll be able to make cornbread or corn muffins quickly and at a lower cost than store-bought mixes.

Cornmeal Master Mix uses common household ingredients such as cornmeal, flour and nonfat dry milk. Always use good-quality ingredients and measure carefully when making a mix. To save money, shop for ingredients when they are on sale, and label ingredients with the date of purchase.

**Cornmeal Master Mix**

7 c. cornmeal  1 Tbsp. salt
2 c. unsifted regular flour  ¼ c. sugar
4 Tbsp. baking powder  1 c. shortening
1½ c. nonfat dry milk

Combine all dry ingredients and stir carefully to blend. Add shortening and use a fork, two knives or a pastry blender to blend the shortening into dry ingredients. The mixture should look like cornmeal. Label with date and store in a covered container in a cool, dry place (or in the refrigerator) for up to eight weeks.

**Yield:** 14 cups

**Oven Cornbread**

2 c. Cornbread Master Mix
2 eggs, beaten
1 c. water

Preheat oven to 400 F. Measure Cornbread Master Mix into bowl. Combine eggs and water in large measuring cup. Pour ½ cup water-egg mixture over mix and stir to blend. Add remaining ½ cup water-egg mixture and beat until smooth. Pour into a well-greased 8-by-8-inch pan or a 10-inch iron skillet. Bake in 400 F oven for 20 to 25 minutes.

Makes eight servings.

Per serving: 136 calories, 19 g carbohydrate, 5.3 g fat, 1.6 g fiber and 269 mg sodium

**Tip:** For variety, add these ingredients:

- **Harvest-Corn Squares:** Add 2 Tbsp. sugar and ¾ cup diced apples to Cornbread Master Mix.
- **Onion-Cheese Cornbread:** Add ½ cup chopped onion and ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese to Cornbread Master Mix.
Corn Muffins
2 c. Cornmeal Master Mix
1 Tbsp. sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1 c. water
1 Tbsp. melted shortening or margarine

Preheat oven to 400 F. Combine Cornmeal Master Mix and sugar in bowl. Combine eggs, water and shortening in separate bowl. Pour half of liquid into mix; blend. Add rest of liquid and beat. Fill greased muffin tins two-thirds full and bake for 20 minutes.

Makes 12 servings.
Per serving: 136 calories, 19g carbohydrate, 5g fat, 1.6g fiber and 269mg sodium

Quick Drop Biscuits
2 c. Cornmeal Master Mix
½ c. water

Preheat oven to 425 F. Add water to the cornmeal mix and stir only enough to mix. Drop by tablespoonfuls onto a greased pan. Bake for 12 minutes.

Makes 12 muffins.

Tip: For variety, add ⅛ cup well-drained canned corn or increase sugar to ¼ cup and add ⅛ cup favorite fruit or nuts.

Quick and Easy Chili
3 c. cooked or canned pinto or red beans
1½ lb. lean hamburger
3 (8-oz.) cans tomato sauce
1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
3 Tbsp. chili powder
2 tsp. cumin
1 tsp. paprika
1 tsp. thyme
1 tsp. oregano

Sauté hamburger and chopped onion; drain. Add to beans with spices, garlic and tomatoes. Salt and pepper to taste. Simmer one hour or until heated and flavors blend.

Makes eight servings.
Per serving: 213 calories, 22g carbohydrate, 4g fat, 7.5g fiber and 575mg sodium

Menu Idea
Quick and Easy Chili
Carrot sticks
Cornbread
Baked apples
Low-fat milk

Tip: Cornbread goes great with chili. Serve Quick and Easy Chili with cornbread or corn muffins for a meal your family will love.

For more information about nutrition and food safety, visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/food

Compiled by Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D., food and nutrition specialist; Bridget Curley, program assistant (former); and Tera Sandvik, project coordinator (former).

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During late summer and early fall it is normal for spiders to enter buildings and homes. This includes hobo spiders which have long been prevalent in Montana. Common misconceptions about the hobo spider often cause unnecessary concern.

**Things to know:**

- Spider bites are rare. Generally, their fangs are small and lack the musculature to pierce the human skin. They typically only bite if threatened or if trapped in clothing, shoes, etc.

- There is no conclusive evidence that hobo spider venom causes necrosis in humans; and a large body of scientific research that proves it does not.

- The most common cause for necrotic lesions (wounds not healing) in the West is a bacterial infection called MRSA (Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) infection. MRSA and other bacteria can enter the body through punctures which could include a spider bite, as well as many other more likely wounds. If a wound from any bite or scratch becomes inflamed, or if soreness persists, medical care should be sought as secondary infection that enters the body through the wound may need to be treated.

- Hobo spiders are not known to be naturally aggressive in their native area or in the United States. Their nickname, aggressive house spider, comes from an errant translation of their scientific name, *Eratigena agrestis*. The Latin translation of agrestis is not aggressive, but rather “rural” or “in the fields”.

![Figure 1. Male hobo spider. Photo by Lynette.](image1)

![Figure 2. Female hobo spider. Photo by Kerry Matz.](image2)

**Disclaimer:**

These recommendations are provided only as a guide. It is always the pesticide applicator’s responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. Due to constantly changing labels and product registration, some of the recommendations given in this writing may no longer be legal by the time you read them. If any information in these recommendations disagrees with the label, the recommendation must be disregarded. No endorsement is intended for products mentioned. The authors and Montana State University assume no liability resulting from the use of these recommendations.