Cornell Cooperative Extension
Schoharie and Otsego Counties

Connections

The News of Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties

MAY/JUNE 2018

Puzzling fun at the Cobleskill-Richmondville 4-H Afterschool Program.

Secure Your Child's Future

Whether you are a returning or new parent, get a jump start. Register your child now in Cornell Cooperative Extension's 4-H Afterschool Program at Cobleskill-Richmondville Central and Schoharie Central Schools serving grades K-8 for the 2018-2019 school year. Registration packets are available at the Association's Cobleskill Office or at program sites beginning May 14.

Our licensed, three-hour Afterschool Program is unique, because it is linked with our 4-H youth development program allowing students to experience 4-H in action. Students are provided a nutritious snack, a supervised place for homework, an opportunity to explore the 4-H club experience which is integrated with STEM, and supervised recreation in the gym and outside.

When asked what they liked about 4-H Afterschool, children and parents answered by saying:

"I like Dance Club; they even let me be in charge of the music that we dance to."

"I like to draw and color;" then this 5-year-old Afterschooler choose to tell more by pointing to the drawing supplies she had set up for others and herself at the same time as she presented an original work of art to Miss Sue, Afterschool Program Coordinator.

"As a parent I appreciate that my child looks forward to going to the Afterschool Program."

"You know something is right when your son asks you to pick him up later, so he can have more computer time."

Because youth are registered 4-H members, they are eligible to enter their project work in the Junior Department at the Schoharie County Sunshine Fair, where it can be judged prior to the fair for ribbon placement and premium, and then shown during fair week. Examples of entries from

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Our Mission

Cornell Cooperative Extension puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability, and social well-being. We bring local experience and research-based solutions together, helping New York State families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.

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New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, New York State College of Human Ecology, and New York State College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, Cooperative Extension Associations, county governing bodies, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating.

Design Your Succession Plan

Farm Families/Business Partners Get Started on Their Succession Plans

On April 5 and 6, 2018, David Cox, CCE Ag Program Leader, and Alicia Terry, Senior Planner, Schoharie County Office of Agricultural Development, piloted a new farm-transition planning curriculum to fifteen New York farm families at the new Farm Credit East facilities in Springfield, New York. Design Your Succession Plan is a two-day, interactive curriculum recently developed by North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension and now is available for facilitators across the country. Principal presenters were Carrie Johnson, Ph.D., and Ashley Ueckert, both Extension Specialists at NDSU and among the curriculum developers.

"We were excited to pilot a program for all farm partners that has been five years in development," Cox said. "I have seen many programs over the years, but this one got my attention early on, and I had to be patient while NDSU piloted it for the past two years prior to its release. The need is very real and timely, as we face the aging of our principal farm owners and operators. We were very pleased that several farms in our region took advantage of this unique opportunity. Many thanks to Farm Credit East for hosting the program and to those who sponsored this important event."

Additional presenters included Jerry Cosgrove, Farm Legacy Director at the American Farmland Trust, who highlighted Conservation Options in Farm Estate Planning. Carin Zwahlen, EA, and Ed Maxwell, EA, both tax and finance consultants at Farm Credit East, outlined succession-planning services as well as timely tax tips on estate planning while the IRS income tax deadline was rapidly approaching. Facilitators will be following up with farm participants in three months to update progress, as well as to see where additional help may be needed.

"A successful transition takes careful planning and the willingness to address what can be challenging, but not insurmountable, issues," said Terry. "Participants are better able to open the lines of communication with family and farm partners to create a shared vision for the farm business. This program provides the tools and resources to begin a succession-planning process, but the farms have to be ready to do the hard work."

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Succession Planning Workshop at Farm Credit East

Black-eyed Chicken

A quick and easy skillet dinner

Source: Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties

Serves 6

Know the facts . . .

- Black-eyed peas, also known as cowpeas, are actually a variety of bean. They have a distinctive flavor and do not require presoaking to cook, although if you do, it will speed the cooking process.
- Join our Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and cook with your kids at Cornell Cooperative Extension or in the privacy of your own home. Contact us, or join us on Facebook: EFNEP CCE Schoharie and Otsego Counties.
- For the companion recipe, Strawberry Spinach Salad, go to our website www.cceschoharie-otsego, then click on Connections Newsletter button. Find the recipe link in left menu.

Ingredients

½ cup flour
⅛ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon pepper
⅛ teaspoon paprika
6 chicken legs, skinless
4 tablespoons chopped onion
½ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon basil, dried
5 cups canned black-eyed peas, rinsed
1 medium tomato, diced
1 cup chicken broth, low sodium
Water, as needed
Vegetable oil spray

Directions

1. In a medium bowl combine ½ cup flour, ⅛ teaspoon each of salt, pepper, and paprika, and mix thoroughly to make seasoned flour.
2. Roll chicken pieces in seasoned flour mixture until well coated.
3. Prepare a large skillet with vegetable oil spray. Place chicken pieces in pan and brown on both sides on medium-high heat; when browned, remove from skillet and reserve, keeping warm.
4. In the same skillet, sauté chopped onion on medium heat, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle lightly with garlic powder, pepper, and basil while cooking.
5. Add rinsed black-eyed peas, diced tomato, and chicken broth to skillet. Heat to just boiling on high heat.
6. Arrange reserved chicken pieces into bean mixture.
7. Add additional water to just below the level of beans. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover and simmer 30 minutes or until chicken is thoroughly cooked. Check for doneness with a meat thermometer, to a temperature of 165°F.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 chicken leg & 3/4 cup beans
Servings Per Container 6

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 340	Calories from Fat 60
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 7g	11%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 105mg	35%
Sodium 250mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 33g	11%
Dietary Fiber 7g	28%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 37g	
Vitamin A 2% • Vitamin C 8%	
Calcium 6% • Iron 25%	

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

EFNEP

Notes:

- Skinless chicken breasts or skinless chicken thighs can be substituted for chicken legs.
- 1 lb. of dried black-eyed peas, when cooked, yields a little over 5 ½ cups (follow package directions for cooking). Frozen black-eyed peas can be used in place of canned beans.

Master Gardeners' Corner

Share Your Love for Gardening: Become a Master Gardener

The Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a nationwide educational program in horticulture. The program is an integral component of Cornell Cooperative Extension's outreach programming for home and community gardeners, consumers of horticultural products, youth in afterschool programs, individuals with disabilities, and residents in assisted-living facilities. It is neighbors volunteering to teach neighbors about multiple topics and issues in consumer horticulture and garden-based learning. This corps of volunteers are trained by Cornell Cooperative Extension in the science and art of gardening.

What Master Gardeners do:

- Address horticultural inquires on the helpline and via email
- Write articles about gardening
- Set up demonstration activities in public places
- Consult on school gardens
- Community improvement projects
- Historic garden restoration
- Horticultural therapy
- Organize plant sales and public events
- County fair information and outreach
- Increase awareness and management of invasive species, water quality conservation, and other environmental issues

A Master Gardener Volunteer needs basic interest and a knowledge about landscape and food gardening with an enthusiasm for acquiring horticultural knowledge and skills, coupled with an interest in teaching others and having the ability to communicate information. They also need an understanding of Cornell Cooperative Extension's educational mission, a willingness to volunteer time for horticultural programming and functions that enhance the mission of the CCE Master Gardener Program, and a flexible time schedule to allow program participation.

You supply the interest and willingness, and CCE provides the training, a 50-hour course in general, consumer horticulture designed for Master Gardener Volunteer trainees. The fee for the training is $150/person. Classes will be held on 10 consecutive Mondays, September 10, through November 19, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (with one-hour lunch), at the First Presbyterian Church in Cooperstown. Some classes may be held at SUNY Cobleskill. Instructors include extension educators/horticulture specialists, college professors, agency directors, Master Gardeners, and landscape professionals. Topics include: basic plant pathology, soils, composting, garden botany, annuals and perennials, herbs, basic entomology, organic gardening, permaculture gardening, large and small fruits, trees and shrubs, pruning, ecological lawn care, nuisance wildlife, invasive species, beekeeping, garden-based learning, and more.

Upon course completion, Master Gardener "Apprentices" are expected to complete fifty hours of volunteer service with Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties within a twelve-month period. Service may include committee work/meetings, grounds, helpline, plant sale, and outreach activities.

We are currently recruiting Schoharie and Otsego County residents who are interested being trained in this volunteer service.

To request an application, contact: David Cox, CCE Agriculture and & Horticulture Program Leader 518.234.4303 (x119) or email dgc23@cornell.edu.

Master Gardeners at the Cornell Botanical Garden.

Continued from Design Your Sucession Plan on page 2

To that end, a second round of Design Your Succession Plan is scheduled for fall 2018. On four consecutive Thursdays, October 25 through November 15, CCE Schoharie and Otsego Counties will host the program in Cobleskill from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and CCE Oneida County will host the program in Oriskany from 6 to 9 p.m. The difference from the pilot program will be in participant preparation prior to the first session and the addition of a panel of local professionals in the fourth session. “An assessment of the farm business prior to the core succession workshop helps farm partners better understand what’s actually being transferred,” said Bonnie Collins, Project Director at CCE Oneida County. “And then in the final session, we will devote ample time to meet with local tax accountants, estate planners, lenders, and insurance agents, all experienced in farm-succession planning.” Collins continued to say, “Conservation options will be presented as well . . . many left this session hungry for even more information and another opportunity to perfect their plan.”

Multiple generations are encouraged to attend. USDA research shows that nationally more than 80% of farm and ranch families seeking to pass on the family farm to the next generation, only 30% of farms survive to the second generation, and only 12% survive to the third generation. “The program will prepare farm families to envision and shape the legacy of their family farm or ranch business, as well as save hundreds of dollars by completing these crucial planning steps before visiting with professionals," said Terry, “especially before the owner retires or is gone.”

The fall program will be open to farms throughout the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District, including (but not limited to) Oneida, Herkimer, Otsego, Schoharie, Fulton, Montgomery, Chenango, and Delaware Counties. The cost to participate with a final agenda will be forthcoming. For more information contact Alicia Terry at 518.295.8792, aliciaterry@co.schoharie.ny.us; David Cox at 518.234.4303 (x119), dgc23@cornell.edu; or Bonnie Collins at 315.736.3394 (x104), bsc33@cornell.edu.

My Internship Experience

CCE Intern Samantha Gesmondi handing out Public Presentation Certificates to 4-H members.

My name is Samantha Gesmondi, and I am attending SUNY Cobleskill for my Bachelor of Technology in Animal Science degree. A requirement for my degree was to complete an internship. I chose to do mine with Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties. I chose Cornell Cooperative Extension because I wanted the opportunity to be able to teach others about what I love and be able to learn what this organization could offer. Before interning here, I didn’t know about 4-H and knew little about Cornell Cooperative Extension, except that it helped people in the communities around them.

While here, I was asked to create my own dog workshop, “4-H All About Dogs!”, teaching 4-H youth about the anatomy of a dog, nutrition, jobs, handling, grooming, and breeds. These workshops didn’t always go exactly to plan, but you really never knew what the day would bring. I also was able to help with the 4-H Dog Obedience classes on Sunday afternoons. This was something I looked forward to each week. These taught me how to teach others and how to communicate with different age groups all at once.

Some duties I had while working here were: making certificates, helping with clinics and workshops for both 4-H and EFNEP, organizing inventories, filing, and assisting staff with small tasks around the office. Overall, I am extremely satisfied with my experiences here. Even though I am uncertain where I will end up after my internship and college, I know that being here gave me a solid foundation to help me in my future.

Samantha’s 4-H All About Dogs! workshop in action.

Create Your Own Family Farm Day Adventure

The 6th Annual Family Farm Day, Saturday, August 25, 2018, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., features numerous open houses among working farms in three counties nestled in the foothills of the Catskills. Visit farms in the neighborhood or take a trip farther afield.

- Meet local farmers on their working farmsteads
- Observe authentic farm products being made
- Sample and purchase our local bounty of farm-fresh products
- Experience demonstrations, tastings, and tours
- Enjoy a farm-to-table meal . . . and more

This exciting agritourism event attracts hundreds each year—friends and families experiencing where their food comes from. Group tours are welcome! For returning visitors, experience the farms you weren't able to get to last year, or return to a family favorite. For new visitors, it's a clean slate. When you visit at least three farms and turn in a completed survey, you will receive an insulated Family Farm Day tote bag at no cost.

Plan your trip in advance or virtually while on the road. Navigate the farms with the Farm Guide, which will be accessible on our website. Printed guides will be available at farmers' markets in the weeks prior to the event. Following your tour, take the time to enjoy restaurants, distilleries, wineries, and breweries that source local farm products. Go one step forward and stay the weekend at a historic bed & breakfast, local lodging, or Airbnb. For a list of farm-fresh products, information to accommodate group tours, and other area attractions, visit www.FamilyFarmDay.org. Also visit: www.upstatevacations.com, www.thisiscooperstown.com, and www.greatwesterncatskills.com.

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Secure Your Child's Future, continued from page 1

Schoharie 4-H Afterschool program youth beading at their Discover 4-H Craft Beading Club.

4-H Afterschool in the past have been items from the "Crocheting Project" and a display from the "Bugs in your Backyard" project. It's another opportunity for your child/children to be recognized for their work and creativity.

Susan Salisbury commented, "As 4-H Afterschool Program Coordinator, I see my role to be a liaison between students, parents, programs, schools, 4-H, and the Afterschool Program Licenser, NYS Office of Child and Family Services. Uniting these partnerships is what makes our Afterschool Program strong."

By registering now for the 4-H Afterschool program you are securing your child's/children's spot for the fall school year. Registration deadline is July 31, 2018, for the start of the 2018-2019 school year. For more information contact Susan Salisbury, 4-H Afterschool Program Coordinator, at 518-234-4303.

Program Events

EFNEP—Parent & Child Hands-on Cooking Lesson Series
Join your children/child in this 6–8 lesson series focused on cooking healthy meals and exercising as a family. Find answers and tips about eating more fruits and vegetables affordably and enjoying being active together. The lessons will be taught by Michelle Leveski, EFNEP Nutrition Program Educator.
Tuesdays May 15, 22, 29, and June 5, 12, and 19; at 4:30-5:30 p.m.; free.
Or Thursdays, May 10, 17, 24, 31, and June 14, and 21; at 4:30-5:30 p.m.; free.
Call Cobleskill Office at 518.234.4303 to pre-register by May 10.
Class size is limited. Children 4 and older.
Extension Center, 173 South Grand Street, Cobleskill, New York

Schoharie Master Gardener 23rd Annual Spring Plant Sale
A wonderful variety of perennials, annuals, herbs, vegetables, and more will be offered.
Saturday, May 19, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
Extension Center, 173 South Grand Street, Cobleskill, New York

Otsego Master Gardener Annual Spring Plant Sale
A wide variety of perennials, annuals, vegetables, and herbs will be offered.
Saturday, May 26, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
Education Center, 123 Lake St., Cooperstown, New York

12 Steps to Successful Canning—Boiling-water and Pressure-canning Techniques
This hands-on workshop covers boiling-water canning for high-acid foods and pressure canning for low-acid foods.
Presenters Jan Ryder and Leslie Rigley, Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Food Preservers.
Wednesday, June 20, 6–9 p.m., Cost $20 per person, payable in advance.
Call Cobleskill Office at 518.234.4303 to pre-register by June 18.
Class size is limited.
Extension Center, 173 South Grand Street, Cobleskill, New York

SAVE THESE DATES

Otsego County Fair 2018
The first exhibition was held in October 1877.
This year's Fair runs Tuesday, July 31–Sunday, August 5

Schoharie County Sunshine Fair 2018
Celebrating 142 Years of Agriculture the Fair Way.
This year's Fair runs Tuesday, August 7–Sunday, August 12

Family Farm Day 2018
Saturday, August 25
Experience working farms in Schoharie, Otsego, and Delaware Counties

Master Gardener Volunteer Training
Fall 2018, September–November
One day per week training workshop for ten consecutive weeks
Call 518.234.4303 in Cobleskill or 607.547.2536 ext. 0 to be placed on a notification list in Cooperstown to apply.

Go to our website http://cceschoharie-otsego.org to see additional events not listed.

Get Ready for Showtime!

Every year 4-Hers are encouraged to show their accomplishments and project-work entries, both animal and non-animal, at their local county fair.

You, too, could share this experience by showing your talents. Both animal and non-animal entries can be made by the general public. To meet entry specifics, entry deadlines, and judging dates, visit your local county fair's website and explore its fair/premium books.

The 2018 Otsego County Fair in Morris, New York, will be held July 31 through August 5, 2018. Visit the website www.otsegocountyfair.org for more information or questions email info@otsegocountyfair.org or call the fair office at 607.263.5289. The fair's office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Wednesday from 2 to 7 p.m.; and Saturday from 9 a.m. till noon.

The 2018 Schoharie County Sunshine Fair in Cobleskill, New York, will be held August 7 through August 12, 2018. Visit the website www.sunshinefair.org for more information; for questions, email info@sunshinefair.org or call the fair office at 518.234.2123. The fair's office hours are Monday–Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., except holidays.

Let this be the year you show us what you've got!

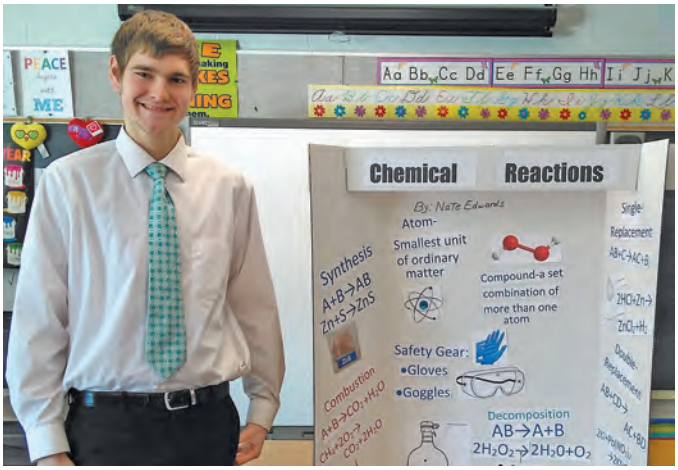
4-H Competition Results

In the March/April 2018 issue of "Connections," we shared information about some of the varied 4-H competitions that 4-Hers in both Schoharie and Otsego could take part in. Here are some of the results.

In Schoharie County fifty-three 4-Hers from seven clubs and three independent members took part in the County 4-H Public Presentation event. The following youth were selected to go to the 2018 Capital District 4-H Public Presentation event on April 28: Ashley Moorhead, Olivia VanEvera, Danika Davis, Alexandria Lincoln, Gabriel Wood, Lillian Parrish, Alex Badger, Case Yacobucci, Emma Rogers, and Stella VanZutphen.

Danika Davis demonstrates 'Hatching a Turkey Egg.'

In Otsego County forty 4-Hers from twelve clubs took part in the County 4-H Public Presentation event. The following were selected for the 2018 South Central District 4-H Public Presentation event on March 17: Nate Edwards, Martha Modinger, and Arianna Bresee. Nate Edwards, member of the Gilbertsville Dairy Club was able to attend the event and represent Otsego County. Nate received a silver medal in the Demonstration category and earned a slot for the state sponsored Communications Institute at Cornell on June 2–3.



Nate Edwards demonstrates 'Chemical Reactions.'

Schoharie County sent one Senior Horse Quiz Bowl team to the 2018 Region 5 Horse Quiz Bowl event on March 10, where the Senior Horse Quiz Bowl Team, Krista Ryder (2nd), Makayla Ryder (6th), Logan Ryder, Hannah Wetsel, and Emily Mazzariello came in second place out of seven competing counties. Those individuals who placed in the top ten are eligible for the State Horse Quiz Bowl event at Morrisville College on April 14.

Senior Horse Quiz Bowl Team: Logan Ryder, Coach Jan Ryder, Krista Ryder, Hannah Wetsell, Emily Mazzariello, Makayla Ryder

Region 5 was able to send two senior teams to the state event. Region 5 Senior Team 1, Alyx Trulsen (Albany), Krista Ryder (Schoharie), Makayla Ryder (Schoharie), and Jillian Hettrich (Albany) came in second place out of eleven teams.

State Region 5 Horse Quiz Bowl Senior Team 1: Coach Jan Ryder (Schoharie), Makayla Ryder (Schoharie), Krista Ryder (Schoharie), Jillian Hettrich (Albany), Alyx Trulsen (Albany)

Schoharie County sent two teams to the 2018 Capital district Dairy Bowl event where the Schoharie Novice Dairy Team, Case Yacobucci (1st), Jacob Enyart (8th), Isaac Conrad (10th), and Daisy Mason (10th) came in second place.

Schoharie Dairy Bowl Novice Team: Case Yacobucci, Jacob Enyart, Isaac Conard, Daisy Mason

The Schoharie Junior Dairy Team, Sean Shultes, Levi Blood (8th), Gus Mason (9th), and Luke Enyart, came in fourth place. Those individuals who placed in the top ten are eligible for New York State Dairy Bowl event.

Schoharie Dairy Bowl Junior Team: Sean Shultes, Levi Blood, Gus Mason, Luke Enyart

Otsego County sent four teams to the South Central 4-H District Dairy Bowl on March 10. The Otsego Senior Dairy Team 1, Garrett Proskine (1st), Austin Ainslie (7th), and Samantha Barringer came in first place.

Otsego Dairy Bowl Junior Team 2: Julia Vunk, Hannah Bonczkowski, Coach Ralph, Abbie Ainslie, Emma Dabreau

The Otsego Senior Dairy Team 2, Rileigh Mumbulo (2nd), Gavin Proskine (9th), and Aidan Ainslie (10th), came in second place. The Otsego Junior Dairy Team 2, Abbie Ainslie (4th), Hannah Bonczkowski (7th) Emma Dabreau, and Julia Vunk came in second place.

Otsego Dairy Bowl Senior Team 1: Coach Amy, Samantha Barringer, Garrett Proskine, Austin Ainslie

The Otsego Junior Dairy Team 1, Dalton Proskine (6th), Maxwell Pullis, and Sean Kersmanc came in fourth place. Individuals who placed in the top ten are eligible for the State Dairy Bowl event.

Congratulations to all the 4-Hers who participated in all the competitions, and continued good wishes to all those continuing to further competitions.

Potatoes: Garden Gold

BY **SCOTT MILLS**, SCHOHARIE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER

Potatoes are the most important vegetable food crop grown on planet earth and for sure in the USA. The key word here is vegetable. Potatoes are surpassed only by crops of wheat, rice, and corn.

I love potatoes and have planted them for well over 30 years. They are a great source of nutrition and, for the most part, easy to grow. They are not flashy or colorful when growing as are tomatoes, but they taste great and can be prepared in so many delicious ways. One of the best things about them for a home gardener is that you are not "harassed" by an overabundance. Here in New York, we all anxiously await our garden bounty after long, cold winters. Then, we find ourselves with too much at once. How do I use it all before it goes bad? Certainly sharing with family, friends, and neighbors helps a lot. That's not a problem with potatoes. What you don't use right away stores well with little prep and little loss of quality. I find my stored potatoes last well into February and March. Some varieties store better than others. If you grow enough to store, you will want to do some homework. How long they last will depend on your storage conditions and will vary from year to year. You don't have to begin growing enough to store. Start slowly. Grow a few rows this year. The important thing is that you get started.

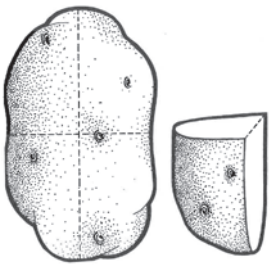
Botanically speaking, the potatoes we know and love are Solanum tuberosum. It is a member of the nightshade family, which includes such plants as tomato, eggplant, pepper, bittersweet, petunia, and tobacco.

Potatoes were originally cultivated in the mountainous regions of South America for centuries. Early explorers introduced them to Europe in the 1500s. It took a while for them to catch on. Eventually, they became a major source of food in most of Europe. It is believed they were first cultivated in North America in New Hampshire in the early 1700s. There were only two varieties in the U.S., as late as 1771. During the nineteenth century thousands of varieties were introduced in America with only a few being accepted. Some varieties still prominent today originated during that period. One is the Green Mountain from 1878. I plan to find some of these this year and try them out. At one time the Green Mountain variety was the most widely cultivated, therefore consumed, potato in the entire country.

One of the most important steps to success in growing potatoes is the use of healthy certified seed. Potatoes are susceptible to several diseases whose symptoms are not easily recognized on tubers or plants. Stay away from grocery store potatoes for your seed potatoes. They can have diseases present and may have been treated with chemicals to prevent sprouting. Buying locally grown seed potatoes assures you'll have a variety that grows successfully in your area. Your local garden supply store sells seed potatoes buy the pound.

Potatoes are highly adaptable. Best soil conditions would be sandy loam, well supplied with organic matter, with an acidity of pH 4.8 to 5.4, but they will thrive in many soils with proper attention. Potatoes are a cool-season crop and can be planted as soon as the frost is out and the soil is dry enough

to work. Use whole or cut seed potatoes. If cut, they should be suberized. This is a process of allowing the cut potato to heal over for a few days before planting. Each cut section should be at least the size of an egg, 1½", and contain two or three eyes.



Generally, the seed should be planted in contact with moist soil, cut face down, 3 or 4 inches deep. I don't bother with a trench in the home garden. I have had plenty of success planting the seed potatoes in a grid pattern two feet apart. I then hill around them when the plants get about a foot high. This works well in smaller spaces where you are hand cultivating. Here's an interesting factoid: The development of tubers does not depend on flowers. You will get tubers (potatoes) whether or not you get flowers. The better the plant growth above ground, the better the crop of potatoes. Any damage to the plant by insect, disease, or injury will result in poorer quality of tubers. Water when conditions are dry and at weekly intervals. Harvest the main crop when the foliage dies back. Before complete harvest, dig a few to enjoy some new potatoes along the way. The skins of new potatoes are thin. No peeling required! Just scrub the potatoes with a vegetable brush. Boil or roast and enjoy.

Unfortunately, you will in all likelihood have a problem with Colorado potato beetles. There are insecticides you can use, but I don't use or recommend them. When the adults appear just pick them off and snuff them out in some soapy water. Check the plants over carefully. Check the undersides of the leaves for orange egg clusters. Crush them or pull the whole leaf off and drop into soapy water. It's not that big a problem if you keep at it. Like weeding, don't let them get out of control.

Potatoes come in many varieties with a wide range of maturity from very early to late. Planting a few varieties can assure you'll have enough for your table from mid-summer until fall. Here are few varieties suitable for the home garden.

- Norland – very early red potato with smooth, oblong tubers
- Irish Cobbler – an old type from 1875; early maturing, white
- Superior – mid-season, white
- Kennebec – popular late variety, white
- Red Pontiac – high-yielding, mid-season maturity
- Katahdin – popular mid- to late-season, white

Go for the gold, at harvest time when you put your fork in the ground and turn up a dozen or more bright white or red potatoes, you'll thank me. I'll be glad to stop by for supper. If you have children or grandchildren, digging up your buried treasure will be something they will enjoy and long remember. Sort over your bounty, and keep the best for storage. Enjoy the rest for first use. Store them dry in a cool, dark place to avoid any greening. Brush any dirt off your crop but do not wash them. They are very sensitive to light. Too much light will cause the flesh under the skin to turn green. This will make them bitter and unfit to eat. Slight greening can be peeled away before use.

In summary, a few rows of potatoes in your home garden properly planted and well cared for will provide satisfaction and achievement, as well as something nutritious and delicious for your table.

Master Gardener
Cornell Cooperative Extension

CNY Beef Producers Meet with Buyers and Plan for the Future

Central NY beef producers and buyers met at the new, state-of-the-art Farm Credit East near Cooperstown, New York, to discuss ongoing progress and future plans during a meeting led by CNY CCE Educator Bill Gibson and Cornell Beef Cattle Specialist Dr. Mike Baker.

Featured at this meeting was a live, web-based conference, with Virginia's Senior Extension Educator of Bedford County, Scott Baker.

Scott shared information provided by Virginia beef producers, along with his experience in developing a successful program and marketing system over the past seven years.

"You've got to have cooperation at all levels." Scott emphasized.

He related the ups and downs that had taken place with securing a reliable location for cattle dispersal and with coordinating protocol for calves.

The Virginia program has found success working with a local auction barn, where feeder-cattle sales are held separately on the day previous to auction sales. This provides sellers the opportunity to offer unsold cattle at the regular auction on the following day.

"This takes some of the risk away," Scott stated.

As with the CNY Beef Producers, Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) methods and protocol are followed, along with stringent adherence to specific vaccination schedules and management strategies.

Dr. Baker presented information on low-stress fence weaning, which has been practiced by some CNY producers with excellent results.

"They can see each other, and it takes the stress off of the calves and the cows," said 'Lil' Dave Stanton, who has practiced this method of weaning for years and has been both a successful producer/seller and buyer at the CNY Beef Producers telecast auction.

Low stress is key in keeping calves healthy and continuing to gain weight.

Dr. Baker reported on data that he had collected over six years showing factors affecting buyer's decisions to purchase feeder cattle and sales results from a "premier feeder-calf sale barn" in New York State.

The report reflected 54 auctions and nearly 30,000 head of cattle.

His overview showed that prices are affected by injuries, sex, muscling, horns, mixed group, and number per group. Individual farms are responsible for grouping.

It was noted that, although in the past most cattle were shipped west, a "growing number are staying in the area."

It was also noted that there is much time required for driving to and then attending these auctions, and while some buyers don't have a problem with investing that time, other buyers such as CNY Beef Producers telecast-auction repeat buyer Allen Hough, Morrisville, is content with not traveling to auction barns.

"I am very happy with the quality of these animals," commented Hough. "That's why I came back."

Buyers reported a variety of interest in feeder cattle, with some requiring smaller-sized steers and finished steers, while others are interested in purchasing heifers.

All buyers stated their satisfaction with the CNY Beef Producers quality of feeder calves, with one buyer saying he had questions that were promptly and accurately answered, with no hemming or hawing involved.

One producer stated that belonging to the CNY Beef Producers has promoted better herd health in his cattle. "As a producer, this group has really helped me. Protocol provided really works," he said.

"I second that," commented producer Fred Ross of T&F Ross Beef Farm, West Edmeston, New York. "I think our herd is a lot healthier, since we started with this group, than it was before."

In addition to vaccinations, strict attention is paid to complete castration of steers — and to assure that heifers are not bred.

CNY Beef Producers have conducted several tele-auctions since the autumn of 2015 as an alternative method for smaller producers to market quality, pre-conditioned calves. The concept was introduced in Otsego County by Dr. Mike Baker, and participation has increased, with 109 calves sold at the October 2017 sale.

"The consignors to the CNY Sale show continuing improvement by making some changes that provide buyers with increased quality feeder cattle," said Dr. Baker. "The buyers show their commitment by continuing to purchase cattle in an unconventional manner. However, by buying cattle that are vaccinated using a strict protocol, weaned a minimum of 30 days, and remain on the farm until picked up, they are reducing their risk. Sellers and buyers are on a learning curve, but by trusting each other, it is a win-win situation."

Baker said CNY Beef Producers are targeting the "natural beef market."

"There is growing demand, and cattle finishers supplying beef to this market are having a difficult time locating this type of feeder calf. By working together, the CNY Beef Producers are able to adjust cattle health and management protocol to meet the demands of this specific market. By building credibility and increasing the numbers they have to sell, prices will only continue to improve."

Gibson says methods have improved with each sale. "Sixteen local beef breeders from Otsego and neighboring counties have sold more than 200 calves weighing between 450 and 850 pounds to nine different buyers."

A follow-up with buyers from recent sales has established that 100 percent of calves sold have remained healthy and are growing well.

"I have been very happy with the animals that I have gotten from the Central NY Beef Producers. The 36 that I bought last fall are all growing nicely," remarked Hough. "They should be ready for market some time near the end of the year."

The group has reorganized a bit, and the next sale, April 13, 2018, will include a change in delivery location. For this sale, the delivery location will be in Schoharie County at the Sunshine Fairgrounds on April 28.

"Feeder calves are offered for sale in lots grouped by frame size and description based on a USDA grading regimens," said Gibson. "Calves will be tagged on-farm with a CNY Beef Producers bangle tag and a New York State metal tag prior to grading."

Videos, grading descriptions, and bidding instructions are available at: http://blogs.cornell.edu/beefcattle/eventsprograms/.

Pre-registered buyers are invited to participate by bids over the phone or in person on Friday, April 13, at the CCE Education Center, 123 Lake Street in Cooperstown.

Calves will be officially weighed and sorted for delivery by noon at the Sunshine Fairgrounds.

"Central New York has, like many regions of the state, seen an increase in the number of beef cows," said Dr. Baker. "These beef farmers have shown a dogged determination to work together. They will succeed and become a model to emulate."

For more information, contact Gibson at wrg56@cornell.edu or 518.588.6032.

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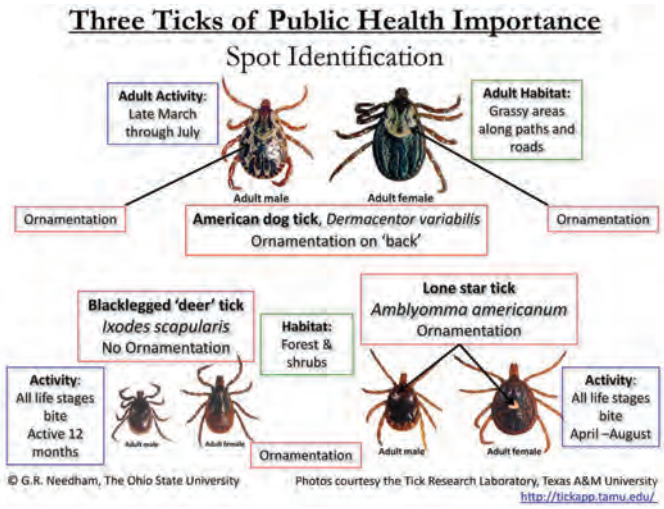
With Ticks, Protection is Key

BY **JAN RYDER**, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Ticks can be tiny terrors because of the diseases they can carry. You may have heard of them, Lyme, Babesiosis, Ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain Spotted fever, Powassan virus, Tularemia, and Anaplasmosis, to name some. Many have lasting physical effects and, in severe cases, can result in death. Not every tick carries them, but you just don't know. Three of the most common ticks found in New York are the Blacklegged tick, commonly called a deer tick, the American dog tick, commonly called a wood tick, and the Lone Star Tick.



In March of this year, I attended a Tick Update offered here at Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties, presented by Joellen Lampman, NYS IPM Program Extension Support Specialist, and here are some facts I thought important to share.

Every season is tick season, even in January and February, when the snow cover is gone and the temperatures rise above 37°F, ticks can be active. Here in New York they are especially active in spring and fall, with much less activity during a hot, dry summer.

Ticks travel by questing, which means they stand at the tips of grass or ends of branches and wave their front claws in the air, just waiting to grab onto a host animal or human that brushes by. You'll even see tick warning signs on park trails recommending you stay in the center of trails to avoid brushing up against vegetation.

Because prevention is key, it is important to dress properly to keep ticks off of you. The best defense is to wear a hat, long sleeves, long pants, and high socks with your pant cuffs tucked into your socks. If the clothes are light in color, it is easier to see any ticks that do get on you, because once aboard, they crawl looking for a nice piece of skin to latch onto. You can also buy clothing treated with tick-repelling compounds, and if it is too warm to wear the recommended protective clothing, you can use a bug spray with 30% DEET to act as a tick repellant on exposed skin.

Note the size difference between the different life stages of the Deer tick. Thankfully the smallestones, the size of a poppy seed, called larvae are incapable of transmitting disease. Photo: Fairfax County

After a day outside, it's a good idea to do a "tick check," and put the clothes you were wearing in the dryer to kill the crawlers; you can wash them afterwards. If you do find a tick during your "tick check," the best method of removal is to use fine-pointed tweezers. Grab the tick as close to the skin as possible, and pull straight up until the tick releases. Don't worry if you accidentally break off the head; treat it like you would a splinter. If you grab the tick too high, or use other methods such as matches, nail polish, or petroleum jelly, you can irritate the tick causing it to regurgitate its disease-ridden stomach contents directly into your bloodstream. After removing the tick, place it in a plastic bag labeled with the date, and put it in your freezer just in case it is needed for future identification.

The best strategy is to avoid getting bit, but don't let that stop you from being active outside. For more information visit www.nysipm.cornell.edu/whats-bugging-you/ticks.

Working with Your USDA Meat Processor

BY **MACKENZIE WARO**, CCE HARVEST NY LIVESTOCK PROCESSING AND MARKETING SPECIALIST

We all have heard it said, "My butcher screwed up my order," or "My butcher will not use my personal cut sheet," or "I cannot get the processing days I want," or "I have to schedule six months out, and I don't even have the animal yet!"

How can you work with your butcher to get what you need? Here are a few tips to consider based on what we have learned from a recently completed New York and New England Packing Plant Survey. Eighty percent of the USDA red-meat packing plants in New York, Pennsylvania, and New England responded to the plant survey.

Meat Pickup Time: Pick up your meat on time and pay at pickup. Keeping your meat at the plant creates a bottleneck; freezer space is limited and the product needs to be moved quickly. Some plants may impose a surcharge on your product, meaning if you do not pick up your finished product on time, the plant may charge an additional fee or could even give the product away. If you are having problems picking up the product or paying for the service, you must call the plant and let them know the problems. Many of the plants are willing to work with you, but they need you to be honest with them.

Busy Time of Year: Over half of the plants are extremely busy from September to early January. Many plants begin to book fall slots during the previous fall. Even if you have processing slots one fall, it does not guarantee slots for the following fall. Producers must call early, sometimes even in the spring, to set up appointments.

Number of Animals: Bring the agreed-upon number of animals. If you scheduled to bring three beef cattle, bring three. If you know you are bringing only two of three, call the plant days ahead of the appointment. This will give the plant time to find another animal to fill the slot. If you bring four instead of the three scheduled, you may push the plant into overtime, and you are now responsible for paying the USDA inspector's overtime pay.

Cut Sheets: Three quarters of plants surveyed request producers use the plant's cut sheet. If you are confused by cut sheets, the plant owners/managers are more than willing to review them with you. The plant wants an accurate sheet just as much as you want the correct cuts. A wrong cut of meat can be very costly to the plant and could hurt its reputation among producers. Work with your plant to make sure the cut sheet is legible and filled out accurately to both the plant and your standards.

Creating a Meat Label: Many plants will help producers create custom meat labels, from changing the name and logo on the plant's machine to using a custom printed, colorful, and eye-appealing label. Some plants may charge for a label change, so you'll need to work with the plant before creating your own custom label. There are many rules and guidelines to creating a meat label, and these rules must be strictly adhered to for USDA.

It is important to work with your butcher and the plant. The plant is under the jurisdiction of USDA, and they must follow federal laws and regulations. USDA has the final word on each and every animal that is federally inspected in the plant. If you have a question, ask the owner/manager. They want the product to be safe, while meeting the expectations of end consumers, just as the producers do. Producers and processors make a great team when they work together. We must be all in together in creating good, wholesome, and safe products for the consumer.

Can It!

Canning is a food preservation method that has been used for more than a century, but the recommendations for how to can foods have changed over the years.

Be sure to follow the most recent USDA guidelines. The hot-pack countertop method practiced by some of our grandparents, for example, is no longer acceptable for the safe practice of canning. Temperature and timing recommendations have been developed specifically to kill or prevent the growth of the heat-resistant spores of *Clostridium botulinum*. So plan on canning those high-acid foods like fruits, pickles, preserves, and acidified tomatoes in a boiling water canner and low-acid vegetables, some sauces, some soups, meats, poultry, and seafood in a pressure canner. Only recipes with tested process timing, printed after 1986, should be used. **Remember canning is food science—not creative cooking.**

Even the recommendations regarding jars have changed; the wire-bail jars with the rubber jar seals are not recommended. They have twice the potential for seal failures because of their four sealing surfaces, the wire bails can become bent, and the glass may be too brittle to withstand today's recommended heat treatment and timing. These older-style jars should be considered antique and be used for something other than canning, if you have them in your cupboard.

With this said, if you follow up-to-date practices, canning can be very safe for preserving foods, whether produce and meat were raised by you, picked at a u-pick farm, or purchased from a local farm, farmers' market, or store. Remember to process as quickly after harvest as possible for the best quality product. Having these foods in your pantry can save time and help put quality food on your family's table, allowing your family and you to experience nature's bounty year 'round.

If you're interested in learning more about up-to-date canning practices, attend Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties' 12 Steps to Successful Canning Workshop on June 20, 2018. Preregistration and fee are required.

You can also visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation website at www.uga.edu/nchfp, ex-plore the most recent Ball's *Blue Book Guide to Pre-serving*, or call the Fresh Preserving Help Line at 1.800.240.3340.

Newsletter Subscription

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