WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY EXTENSION

Extension Quarterly

November—February, 2007

A Quarterly Newsletter from WSU / Grays Harbor County Extension
http://graysharbor.wsu.edu 360-482-2934
Grays Harbor County Noxious Weed Control Board 360-482-2265
Visit our offices at 32 Elma-McCleary Road, Elma, WA (located at the GH County Fairgrounds)

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Washington State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Grays Harbor County Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.

In the wake of our past storm, subsequent power outages, damaged properties and food issues related to the storm, the following are resources you can access to get information for recovery efforts:

* **EDEN** (Extension Disaster Education Network) for issues related to flooding, pets and livestock, food safety, house and property clean-up efforts, etc.
* If you live in Grays Harbor, Lewis and Pacific Counties, report damage to your farm to:

  USDA Farm Service Agency
  Chehalis Service Center
  1554 Bishop Road
  Chehalis, WA 98532
  Phone: 360-748-0083

* **American Red Cross**
  1-866-GET-INFO (1-866-438-4636)
  298 Clemons Road North, Ste #100
  Montesano, WA 360-249-2341

* **FEMA**, Disaster Recovery Centers
  At the Disaster Recovery Center you will have an opportunity to meet face to face with representatives from state and federal agencies to find answers to questions you may have about the recovery process. Register online at (www.fema.gov) or call 1-800-621-3362 before coming to either of the centers listed below:

  Grays Harbor County
  Elma Fire Station
  112 N. Second Street, Elma, WA

Photo courtesy of Nancy Ness

  Lewis County
  Yard Birds Mall, 2nd Floor
  2100 N. National Avenue
  Chehalis, WA

* **Flood Recovery at Washington State University; http://ext.wsu.edu**, includes links to information on dealing with downed and lost livestock, food safety information, spontaneous combustion in hay, etc.

Crab 'n Crackers

1 cup flaked crabmeat
1/2 cup sour cream
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup cream cheese
1 tablespoon horseradish

Combine all ingredients in a microwave dish, then heat until hot. Serve warm as a dip for crackers, or as a spread for buttered bread rounds. Makes 2 cups of dip.

It's Dungeness Crab Time

Now's the time to enjoy one of the most delicious seafoods on the coast, with the opening of the Dungeness crab fishing season. Over twenty million pounds of crab were caught in Washington last year, and harvests this season should be better than ever. Crab are crustaceans, like many insects, and shed their shells as they grow larger. That means that a full sized Dungeness crab, four years old, has shed his shell about twelve times. The crab simply splits his old shell along the back edge, and pulls himself out, legs, antennae, and eye stalks all at once. A new soft shell formed beneath the old shell, is inflated to a larger size with water, and hardens in several weeks.

Only large male crabs can be commercially harvested using baited pots, from now until late summer. They're delivered live to the processing plant for cooking, either whole, or in sections for later removal of the meat. About 25% of a whole cooked crab's weight is meat. If you're catching and cooking your own crab, use a large kettle filled with boiling salty water (about a quarter cup of salt per gallon), and cook whole crabs 15 to 20 minutes and cleaned crab halves 12 to 15 minutes. Crabs that are cooked whole have more flavor, but the meat is not as white.

To get the meat out of the crab, start by taking the back shell off, pulling up on the back part of the shell, then clean the viscera away and rinse with water. Hold the legs with each hand, then bend the crab upwards to break it in half. Now break off sections of the body still attached to the leg. Using a sturdy bowl, shake the body meat out by tapping the section on the edge of the bowl. You may have to remove small sections of shell to get all the meat out. Now you're ready to remove the leg meat. For this, pros use an aluminum crab block and mallet. At home, you can use a short 6-inch section of 2x4 lumber covered with aluminum foil, or the middle of your double sink. The handle of a chisel or screwdriver will serve as a mallet. The trick to extracting whole sections of the leg meat is to pull out the cartilage filaments that extend from one section of the leg into the next. So, starting at the claw end or tip of the leg, remove the first tip section, pulling up. Notice the filaments that are pulled out of the next section. Place the next leg section over your block, and crack the shell slightly with your mallet, without crushing it. Remove part of the shell, and shake the leg meat into the bowl. Now pull up on the remaining shell to remove it along with the filaments in the next meat section. Crack this using your block and mallet, then shake the meat from this section. Crack the final large section, then shake out the meat.

Dungeness crab is delicious right out of the shell, or you can try these recipes:

"Dungeness crab dominates the commercial fishing industry in our region, however, this fishery takes place during the worst weather conditions of the year."

Cordova Crab

4 Dungeness crabs
2 cups salad oil
1 cup vinegar
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
4 cloves garlic, finely crushed
1 large onion

Cook and clean the crabs. Separate the body and leg sections. Crack legs to allow the marinade to flavor the meat. Place the crabs in a deep bowl.

Mix other ingredients and pour marinade over the crabs. Use a basting tube to pour sauce over the crabs for several minutes.

Cover the bowl and refrigerate. Every half hour for 4 hours, repeat the basting process. Serve cold, as an appetizer or an entrée. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Crab Louis

Arrange crab meat on top of your favorite green salad. Top with Louis sauce.

Louis Sauce

1 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup chili sauce
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons minced onion
2 tablespoons chopped green pepper
2 tablespoons minced parsley
Season to taste

- - Steve Harbell, GH County Extension Director
Marine Resources Extension Agent

Hints for Keeping Your Tree Fresh Through the Holiday Season!

There are several things you can do that will help maintain the moisture content and thereby extend the life of your tree. For beginners, when you bring the tree home, immediately cut off a disk of wood about one-half inch thick from the base of the trunk before putting the tree in the tree stand. Make the cut perpendicular to the trunk axis. Don't cut the trunk at an angle, or into a V shape, which makes it far more difficult to hold the tree in the stand and also reduces the amount of water available to the tree. Put your tree in water just as soon as possible after re-cutting the trunk. Species such as Douglas fir and Fraser fir can go 6 to 8 hours after cutting and still take up water. Don't bruise the cut surface or get it dirty. Keep displayed trees away from sources of heat (fireplaces, heaters, heat vents, and direct sunlight). Lowering the room temperature will slow the drying process, resulting in less water consumption each day.

The temperature of the water is not important and does not affect water uptake. Check the stand daily to make sure the level of the water does not go below the base of the tree. With many stands, there can still be water n the stand even though the base of the tree is no longer submerged in water. Drilling a hole in the base of the trunk does not improve water uptake. Using additives in the water has not proven to be effective in extending tree life. Research to evaluate the addition of floral preservatives, commercial tree preservatives, molasses, sugar, bleach, soft drinks, aspirin, honey and other concoctions has shown that clean water is al that is needed to maintain freshness.

Applying film forming anti-transpirants to a tree does not have a significant effect on the amount of moisture loss from the tree. These products supposedly block the evaporation of water from the surface of the foliage, but in reality they have little effect. Monitor the tree for dryness. If the tree becomes dry, remove it from the house.

WSU Christmas tree research specialist Dr. Gary Chastagner found that water use changes during the display period, and also varies among species. Cut Christmas trees generally consume about one quart of water per day per inch of stem diameter. Species such as Noble and Fraser fir tend to use large quantities of water over extended display periods. A typical 6 foot tall Noble or Fraser fir can easily use 4 quarts of water per day during the first week, and 2 to 3 quarts per day thereafter for the next 3 to 4 weeks. In contrast, water use by a Douglas fir may decrease noticeably after a week.

- - Don Tapio, WSU Agriculture and Horticultural Agent
tapiod@wsu.edu

Noble Fir needles turn upward, exposing the lower branches. Known for its beauty, the noble fir is a hearty-long-lasting species, and its stiff branches make it a good tree for heavy ornaments. The species is growing in popularity and is also widely used in the greenery business to make wreaths, door swags, garland and other Christmas products.

Ref: Pacific NW Christmas Tree Association, wwwnwtrees.com

Holiday Lights: LED and Fiber Optics

Light Emitting Diode (LED) holiday lights are a new application for a mature technology. Each year since 2002, manufacturers have improved the choices, producing bigger and brighter bulbs and new color options. LED lights have a number of benefits over conventional lighting:

- Energy efficient
- Long Life Span
- Safety
- Sturdy bulbs

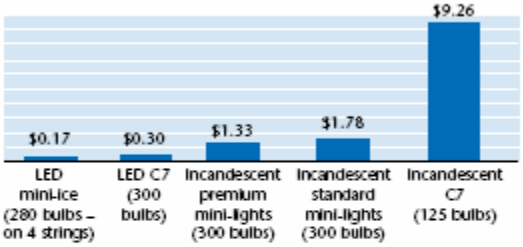
LED lights are currently available in strings from 25-150 bulbs in various colors. Costs may vary substantially by color because, rather than painted bulbs, the color is produced by the chemical make-up of the bulb.

As illustrated in Figure 1, keep the cost to operate energy-consuming devices over time overcomes the initial purchase price. Despite a higher initial cost, LEDs are a clear winner over incandescent C7 lights when you compare the cost to purchase and operate a system for five years (and beyond).

Reference: Washington State University Extension Energy Program
www.EnergyIdeas.org

Figure 1.

Energy Cost* of Comparable Options



**Assumptions:*

- *Lighting for an 8-foot tree for one season (5 hours per day for 30 days). Because standard incandescent bulbs appear brighter, fewer are needed for a display.*
- *Wattages: LED mini-ice 280 bulbs = 14 watts; LED C7 multicolor 300 bulbs = 24 watts; incandescent premium (energy saving) 300 mini-lights = 108 watts; Incandescent standard 300 mini-lights = 144 watts; Incandescent C7 125 bulbs = 750 watts (6 watts per bulb).*
- *Energy cost calculated at $.0823/kWh (8.23¢/kilowatt hour).*

Food $ense Nutrition Program

The WSU Food $ense nutrition education program in Grays Harbor is in its 15th year of operation. The Food $ense program delivers 6 to 20 one-hour lessons to elementary and middle school students. Students receive education on preparing healthy, nutritious meals, along with food safety lessons.

The following are samples of the Food $ense and Washington State University Nutrition Program curriculum which is used in the classroom:

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Food $ense

Self-Crust Pumpkin Pie

Makes 8 servings

2 cups (1 lb can) pumpkin, canned or cooked
1 cup nonfat dry milk
2 eggs
2/3 cup brown or white sugar
¼ cup flour
1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup water

1. Mix all ingredients except water together in a large bowl.
2. Slowly stir in water. Mix well.
3. Pour into a greased, 9 inch pie plate.
4. Bake at 350°F for 45 to 55 minutes or until a knife inserted 1 inch from the center comes out clean.
5. Refrigerate pie within 2 hours.

Children can help measure and mix ingredients.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (125g) 1 piece
Servings Per Container 8

Amount Per Serving
Calories 150 Calories from Fat 15

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 1.5g	**2%**
Saturated Fat 0.5g	**3%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 55mg	**18%**
Sodium 140mg	**6%**
Total Carbohydrate 29g	**10%**
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Sugars 23g	
Protein 6g	

Vitamin A 170% • Vitamin C 6%
Calcium 15% • Iron 6%

*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

Food $ense Good source of Vitamin A and calcium.

This material was developed and/or distributed as part of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, funded by the United States Department of Agriculture. Food and Nutrition Service. Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office. February 2005.

Simple steps you can follow to prevent food borne illness:

* WASH YOUR HANDS
* KEEP YOUR KITCHEN CLEAN
* COOK YOUR FOOD ADEQUATEY
* KEEP PERISHABLE FOODS COLD
* AVOID RISKY FOODS AND WATER

- - foodsafety.wsu.edu

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

For more recipes, link to http://nutrition.wsu.edu

Kids Can Cook!

Tasty Tostada

This simple and quick dish uses foods from every food group. Serve with low-fat or nonfat milk and fruit for dessert.

* Whole wheat tortilla
* Canned beans, such as pinto, re-fried or black beans
* Fresh vegetables, such as chopped lettuce and tomato
* Grated cheese, such as 2% reduced-fat cheddar
* Salsa

1. Lightly toast the tortilla under the broiler on both sides.
2. Put the beans in a bowl and microwave until warm.
3. Let children spoon beans onto tortilla, then top with veggies.
4. Sprinkle with cheese and top with salsa, if desired.

Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension Office. Funded through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in cooperation with Washington State University Extension.

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Food $ense

Impossible Chicken and Broccoli Quiche
6 servings

1 ½ cups fat free milk
½ cup baking mix
3 eggs
¼ teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
½ to 1 cup chopped broccoli, fresh or frozen
1 cup shredded cheese (4 oz.)
½ cup chopped onion
1 cup diced, cooked chicken

1. Heat oven to 400°F.
2. Lightly grease a 9-inch pie pan.
3. In a medium bowl, beat milk, flour, eggs, salt and pepper until smooth. Pour into prepared pie pan.
4. Sprinkle chicken, broccoli and cheese evenly over egg mixture.
5. Bake 30 minutes until golden brown and knife inserted in center comes out clean.
6. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.
7. Refrigerate leftovers within two hours.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (179g) 1 piece
Servings Per Container 6

Amount Per Serving
Calories 230 Calories from Fat 110

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 13g	**20%**
Saturated Fat 6g	**29%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 150mg	**49%**
Sodium 430mg	**18%**
Total Carbohydrate 12g	**4%**
Dietary Fiber 1g	**5%**
Sugars 4g	
Protein 15g	

Vitamin A 10% • Vitamin C 25%
Calcium 25% • Iron 8%

*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

This recipe is high in cholesterol. It can be part of a healthy diet if you choose low cholesterol foods at other meals during the day.

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Grays Harbor 4-H Youth Development

Where can kids have fun, participate in exciting hands-on activities and make new friends?

4-H has something for everyone. Boys and girls ages 8—18 join 4-H to learn about science, engineering, technology, community service, nutrition, exercise and more.

In 4-H clubs, camps, in-school and after-school programs, kids learn leadership, citizenship and life skills while they participate in experiences that prepare them to be successful adults.

Today's 4-H touches the lives of more than seven million kids across America in urban, suburb an and rural communities. To learn about how to join or volunteer in our community, call 360-482-2934 or on the web at http://graysharbor.wsu.edu

What is Know Your Government?
February 16-18, 2008

KYG is an annual event, held in Olympia, WA, where teens explore the government process. engage in leadership, citizenship and lifeskills development.

This year, teens will explore political parties, nomination processes, party platforms and parliamentary procedure. After the KYG party candidate and party platform is finalized, they will meet with their county legislators and a breakfast.

The Grays Harbor delegation will be forming soon, preparing their platform and planning their agenda. If you know someone who might be interested in joining us, call 482-2934 or email crieth@wsu.edu. Don't delay—registrations are due end of January!

"I like learning about biases, how to dig deeper and look at several news sources so I can decide for myself who is the best candidate," said Allison Zeller a Pierce County 17 year old who attended the 2007 KYG Conference.

Matthew Barrett and Kathryn Slaybaugh flank political analyst Ron Reagan at 2007 KYG

- **Have you always wondered what made a rocket fly,**
- **Wondered how to make a fleece hat for the cold weather,**
- **Wondered how to compost with and make a worm bin?**

Join us at Magnificent Monday, Grays Harbor County Fairgrounds, **Monday, January 21, 2008** for these classes plus more including "desensitizing your horse", horse dressage, crafts galore, etc.! Single registration is $5.00 and families may attend for $15.00. You do not need to be enrolled in 4-H to attend this exciting event. Please call 360-482-2934 for more information and/or to request a registration form.

Volunteer displaying baby bunting sewn during Mag Monday, 2006. Buntings were donated to local charity.

The Grays Harbor 4-H Youth Development Program reached 2,560 youth members last year!

Of these, 462 are active club members who are mentored by 197 adult leaders.

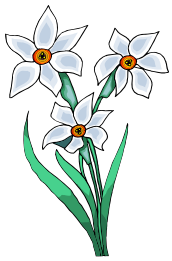
Clubs are forming now! Call the WSU Extension office to inquire how you can become a part of this great national organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of our members and leaders.

360-482-2934
http://graysharbor.wsu.edu

Should you Become a WSU Master Gardener?

Training classes will run for approximately six consecutive weeks, two days a week, beginning in late September, 2008.

For more info, call 360-482-2934 or http://pnwmg.org



How to Force Bulbs Indoors

Many bulbs can be forced or stimulated to bloom indoors in the winter. Look for bulbs that have been specifically bred for forcing, or those that have been prechilled. Start with a clean container. An azalea container or squat-shaped pot is better than a tall, narrow container.

Use any good-quality potting soil available at your favorite Garden center or nursery, but don't use fertilizer because it will increase salt content. Place approximately two to three inches of potting soil in the bottom of the container. Place bulbs on the potting soil, but don't force them into place. Cover the planted bulbs leaving the tips exposed.

Your bulbs are now ready to be chilled. The amount of chilling required varies with type of bulb and cultivar, bulb size, number of bulbs per container, and start date. Your local supplier can provide information about the specific cultivar chosen. Next, determine the bloom date and count backwards. For example, early-blooming tulips can be forced before February 1, if they're started in early September. They need 14 to 20 weeks of cold preparation at 41 to 48 degrees Fahrenheit, followed by two to three weeks indoors to force them to flower.

Don't let the bulb pans dry out or become too wet while chilling. Avoid storing bulbs in the same area as fruits and vegetables. Ripening vegetables and fruit, like apples, give off ethylene, which can cause flower-bud development to fail.

After you bring the bulb pans in from chilling, place the pots in indirect sunlight at 60 degrees Fahrenheit for several weeks. When the plants are four to six inches tall, increase the temperature to 68 degrees Fahrenheit through exposure to direct sunlight. ***Daffodils and narcissus, tulips, crocus, hyacinth, grape hyacinth and iris bulbs*** are generally easy to force in the home using these techniques.

-- Reprinted with permission from Colorado State University Extension, Denver Botanic Gardens, and Green Industries of Colorado

eXtension

eXtension is a new interactive website is a new information resource for American consumers. Through Events, FAQ's, Learning Lessons, News and the ability to "Ask an Expert", you will find help on a variety of subjects. At the present time, find help on such subjects as:

* Consumer Horticulture
* Parenting
* Dairy Cattle
* Entrepreneurs and Their Communities
* Imported Fire Ants
* Personal Finance
* Horses
* Wildlife Damage Management

Coming soon: Cotton, Beef Cattle, Family Caregiving and Geospatial Technology, plus more!

Weapons for the Weed Warrior

Weeding by hand is making a comeback but you need to decide which is the best tool for the job. Many people are reluctant to apply herbicides in their home landscapes, and will only consider herbicide applications if other methods fail. Those other methods may include:

A good trowel with a nice grip.

A shovel with a nice sharp edge can get to the root of weed problems.

There are several types of hoes, from small hand-held to a hula hoe, circle hoe, or hefty mattok or adze. Hoes work well in garden rows, seed beds, and established plantings.

A linoleum knife can do wonders on a number of weeds, thistles, cattails, yellow flag iris, and many other herbaceous perennials. It can also do major damage to your fingers if not careful.

A dandelion fork works wonders with the taprooted weeds.

A scythe, the original weed whacker, covers a lot of ground in short order, and is great for trailblazing or finding your way through blackberries.

Loppers with gears for leverage can topple old growth Scotch broom and many other weedy woody invaders.

Small cultivators like a garden weasel or a small high speed rototiller work well on young weeds in lighter soils.

Weed wrenches can be used to apply leverage to brooms and gorse to pry out of the ground.

A weed flamer, (there are several types and models) has great application opportunities like gravel paths, driveways, and weeds in the cracks of pavement. Use with caution and prepare to change to other tools when the landscape gets dry.

Mulch is great at preventing weeds from germinating, but can also be used to smother weeds with cardboard or layered newspaper underneath.

Green mulch or cover cropping is a way of preventing weeds from appearing in fallow fields or garden beds.

Chickens can be utilized to eat weed seeds and scratch newly sprouted weeds.

Goats, llamas and sheep are being used more and more for targeted weed control.

Many gardeners and weed warriors will adapt or invent tools that work for them. Wrapping handles with ace bandages or duct tape will make a comfortable handle.

There are weeding tools made for all sizes and abilities and with the world wide web only a few keystrokes away, a weed warrior has an arsenal at their command.

- - Nancy Ness, GHC Noxious Weed Control Educator
nessn@cahnrs.wsu.edu

What is a weed?

"A plant held to have no value, especially one growing plentifully or detrimentally in a garden or lawn" according to Webster's Dictionary

What is a Noxious weed?

A non-native plant designated as such by federal, state or county law as aggressive and/or injurious

Yellow Loosestrife graysharbor.wsu.edu/weeds/ed.html

WHAT IS EXTENSION?

32 Elma-McCleary Road, Elma, WA.....360-482-2934

- √ How do I feed my family nutritious food for less?
- √ What kind of things do youth do in 4-H?
- √ What weeds are taking over my lawn, garden, pasture?
- √ How can we learn about growing commercial agriculture crops?
- √ How do I preserve seafood, fruit and vegetables at home?
- √ Can I finish my college degree here in Grays Harbor?

WSU / Grays Harbor County Extension wants to help you put knowledge to work. We are a three-way partnership of the US Department of Agriculture, Washington State University, and Grays Harbor County that delivers unbiased, research-based information and educational programs focusing on the above mentioned areas.

Keeping Those Holiday Pounds Off

Are you dreading the upcoming holiday season because you worry you will gain weight? The best advice is avoid dieting and maintain your current weight. Here are some tips to help you:

Plan ahead to avoid overeating.....A good way to avoid gaining weight over the holidays is to plan what you will do at various holiday get-togethers before you arrive. Here are some ideas to try:

- Eat a light meal or snack such as fruit or a bowl of soup before going to a party. Drinking water will also fill you up so you are less likely to eat too much.
- At holiday gatherings, fill your plate first with vegetables, skinless chicken, pasta or bread, fruit and salad. Then go back for seconds and small portions of your favorite foods only if you are still hungry.
- Eat slowly. You will enjoy your food more and eat less.
- Follow a "heavy" high calorie meal with a "light" meal. If you do this, your overall calories for the day will not be too high.
- Eat breakfast. It will help you not to overeat or reach for foods you want to avoid.
- And finally, if you do overeat at a party, don't think you've "blown it." Instead go right back to your healthy way of eating the very next day.
- Keep pre-cut vegetables, shredded cabbage and salad mixes on hand to make a quick salad or stir-fry.
- Toss seasoned canned tomatoes, frozen vegetables and canned beans together for a quick pasta dish.
- Keep salsa on hand and use it as a dip for fresh vegetables for a quick snack.

Choose to be active.....Physical activity helps keep those extra pounds away and can help to relieve the stress of the holidays. Be sure to spend a total of 30 minutes most days of the week in some type of activity.

- Ellen Schuster, M.S., R.D.
Reprinted with permission from Oregon State University Extension Family and Community Development, http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fcd/index.php

The holidays are here — the lights are bright, delicious food abounds and holiday plants and trees are set out. Humans love these things. Unfortunately, so do many pets, and holiday foods and decor can be hazardous to them. To keep your pets safe, watch them carefully this time of year and be aware of the following dangers.

- **Chocolate.** Chocolate contains caffeine and theobromine compounds. These are methylxanthines that cause stimulation of the nervous system. Milk chocolate contains about 6 mg of caffeine and 44-56 mg of theobromine per ounce. Baking chocolate contains about 10 times those amounts of each compound. The amounts of caffeine and theobromine in semisweet and dark chocolate fall between milk chocolate and baking chocolate. About 1 ounce of milk chocolate per pound of body weight can result in tremors or seizures in dogs. Thus, much lower amounts of semisweet or baking chocolate could cause the same effect. A dog that eats a significant amount of chocolate should be taken to a veterinarian for treatment.
- **Plants.** Poinsettias have a reputation of being very poisonous to pets; however, this is a myth. Poinsettia ingestion by pets can result in digestive upset (vomiting and diarrhea), but nothing more. Floral arrangements containing day lilies, tiger lilies, rubrum lilies or lilium-type hybrid lilies can be lethal to cats. Ingestion of as little as two or three leaves or parts of the flower can result in kidney damage leading to kidney failure in cats. However, at worst, it causes only an upset stomach in other animals. Holly and mistletoe are potentially toxic ornamental plants. Natural evergreen trees, if ingested, may cause pets to have an upset stomach, but nothing more.
- **Water additives**. Water additives for natural trees are generally composed of low concentrations of fertilizers and sugars. These materials are not dangerous to pets unless high amounts of fungus or bacteria are growing in the water. Keep tree water and additives fresh.
- **Holiday foods**. Ingestion of poultry bones can cause pets to have digestive tract obstructions or perforations. Poultry bones splinter easily, causing sharp points that can be dangerous and even life threatening if swallowed. Ingesting an excessive amount of table scraps or grease can cause pets to have digestive upset or even life threatening symptoms. The ingestion of an excessive amount of fat can cause a dog to develop pancreatitis. Moldy refrigerated foods can contain toxins produced by the molds. Often these molds and toxins attract dogs. Some penicillium and aspergillis molds produce tremorogenic mycotoxins, especially when they grow under colder temperatures. This type of toxin can cause an acute onset of seizures in pets.
- **Ornaments**. Small moving ornaments may stimulate the curiosity of pets. If ingested, ornaments can cause choking or digestive tract obstructions. If ingested, tinsel can cause obstructions as well. Lights and wiring can be lethal if pets chew into the cords.

Jeffery Hall, Utah State University Veterinary Diagnostician/Toxicologist
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