

CCE

APRIL 20, 2026

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Saratoga County

NEWSLETTER

New Cornell CoE Office Supports 100+ Food Businesses and Counting

The New York State Center of Excellence for Food and Agriculture at Cornell AgriTech (CoE) opened a satellite location at the CCE Saratoga County office in August 2025, bringing expanded food product and business development capabilities to the greater Capital Region and beyond.

The office has two full-time staff members – Business Development Specialist Joseph Ganley and Extension Support Specialist Emile Punzalan, Ph.D. – committed to helping aspiring entrepreneurs grow their businesses and bring new food and beverage products to market.

The CoE satellite, also known as “CoE East,” includes laboratory space, allowing food and beverage producers to bring their products to the office for basic food safety testing and product development guidance.

Since the new office opened, Ganley has provided business mentorship for more than 60 businesses and entrepreneurs – largely based in the greater Capital Region – while Punzalan has completed food product safety evaluations, scheduled processes and other services through the Cornell Food Venture Center (CFVC). Since the office opened in August, Punzalan has worked with more than 120 businesses, totaling more than 450 food and beverage products tested.

There is no cost to companies for working with the CoE for business mentoring services. Product testing done through the CFVC is performed at cost and is discounted for New York-based businesses.

The creation of this office was made possible by Assemblywoman Carrie Wornner (D-Round Lake), who secured \$500,000 in state funding to launch and sustain the office.

For more information, visit the [CoE's website](#), or email coe-foodag@cornell.edu.



Horsemen’s Social Celebrates 20th Anniversary!

CCE Equine is excited to announce its annual Horsemen’s Social will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary on June 12, 2026! The Horsemen’s Social, presented by *CCE Equine*, will be hosted this year where it all started at our *4-H Training Center*. CCE Equine was started 20 years ago as a division of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County with state grant funding and from there, the program has grown to serve the equine community across New York State.



From **6:30 pm to 9:30 pm on Friday June 12, 2026**, join all the horsemen of the greater capital district at the 4-H Training Center, located at **556 Middleline Road, Ballston Spa, New York**.

Celebrate with us with an evening of food, drinks and networking with all the horsemen & businessmen that keep our Equine industry thriving. Featuring food from the *Neighborhood Kitchen*, drinks from *Bars Without Boundaries*, and NEW this year, we will host several games of BINGO! Stop by the silent auction items or sit down and have that conversation with the members of the horse community you always run into at the feed store and never get to really chat with!

The Horsemen’s Social was created for local equine enthusiasts and professionals to network and collaborate within our equine community. With great success, this event has grown to include over 200 participants from all aspects of the horse world.

Tickets are \$35. Get yours soon before they sell out! Ticket price includes admission, light appetizers, desserts and several rounds of BINGO. If you have any registration questions or would like to become a sponsor for this event, contact Nicolina at nvf5@cornell.edu . **To purchase tickets, follow the link below or scan the QR code.**

Ticketing Link: <https://www.paypal.com/ncp/payment/HHQF5UFN36EPE>

This event promises an evening filled with networking opportunities among equestrians, farriers, veterinarians and horse enthusiasts alike. Join us for an unforgettable night of celebrating our 20th anniversary and more importantly raising a glass to *The Year of the HORSE!*

Again, for more information, contact Nicolina at nvf5@cornell.edu or call the Cornell Cooperative Extension office of Saratoga County (CCE Equine) at 518-885-8995.



CAR SEAT CHECK

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County is partnering with New Country Toyota of Clifton Park for a FREE car seat check to insure your car seat is properly installed. Nationally Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians and Instructors will be on site.

THURSDAY, MAY 7 | 4 pm—8 pm
New Country Toyota of Clifton Park
202 Route 146, Mechanicville

To schedule an appointment call 518-885-8995.

What to bring to your car seat check:

- Your child (if possible)
- Your car seat manual
- Your vehicle owner’s manual
- A cleaned-out vehicle (remove other items for easier access)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The next Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for **May 20, 2026 | 7 pm | Extension Office**

CCE Saratoga’s Board of Directors

- John Mancini - *President*
- Liz Newsom - *Vice President*
- Mark Preissler - *Secretary*
- Jim Pettis, Jr.—*Treasurer*
- Tom Venditti
- Alex Guilmette
- Ian Murray—*Board of Supervisors Representative*
- Danielle Hautaniemi - *Cornell Representative*



If you would like to attend, please reach out to Wendy at wlm8@cornell.edu.

CCE Broome County Offering FREE How To Series via Zoom

Fridays, April 24 & May 8 | Noon - 1 pm

April 24, Noon - 1 pm: How to Start a Farm Stand



In this session we will cover all the business basics and considerations when looking to start a farm stand. From permits and licenses, to insurance, parking, signage, pricing and more! Learn about various incentive programs which can help your bottom line! Attendees will leave the session better positioned to open a farm stand in 2026.

May 8, Noon - 1 pm: How to Start Selling Meat (and Poultry)



In this session we will cover all the business basics and considerations when looking to sell meat (or poultry) at your farm. We'll cover permits & licenses, pricing models, sales platforms, packaging/bundling options, and more! Attendees will leave this sessions better positioned to start selling meat (or poultry) (or more profitably) in 2026.

Email Laura Biasillo at lw257@cornell.edu with questions or to register.

CCE SOUTHWEST NEW YORK DAIRY, LIVESTOCK AND FIELD CROPS PROGRAM

Virtual Fecal Egg Count Training for Sheep and Goats

APRIL 23, 2026 | 6:00 - 7:30 pm | Zoom

Registration Link: <http://tinyurl.com/FECHowTO>

Rachel Moody and Amy Barkley, Livestock Specialists with Cornell Cooperative Extension, invite farmers, veterinary professionals, and farm consultants to learn the why, how, and interpretation of fecal egg count testing for sheep and goats using the McMaster method. This methodology helps farmers to understand the internal parasite burdens in their small ruminants to help them make informed decisions on which animals to deworm, breed, or remove from the herd. Using this method in combination with other tests such as FAMACHA and fecal egg count reduction tests can help you determine if a particular dewormer is still effective on your farm.



CORNELL IPM Program

What's Bugging You?

Not all things that buzz, crawl or slither are pests. Figuring out WHAT is bugging you is the first step.

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

MAY 1: Jumping worm management | Feeding Friendly Insects: look for seedlings

Learn how to know if you have jumping worms in your yard and what you can do about it. And if you're growing perennial plants to feed friendly insects, start looking for seedlings. [Register here.](#)



SUSTAINABLE LAWNS

We will help with how to properly take care of your lawn with low maintenance techniques along with lawn alternatives to provide pollinator habitats.

\$10
Pre-registration
deadline 4/24

ZOOM
4/29 @ Noon

Pre-payment & registration required
Registration can be made by emailing
Jessica Luse at jmh452@cornell.edu
Pre-payments can be made by
using the QR code or mailing your check to
CCE-Saratoga County
50 West High St, Ballston Spa NY 12020

<https://www.paypal.com/ncp/payment/KHWFDUF8Q4MY>

Should you not be able to make the zoom, a recording will be available!

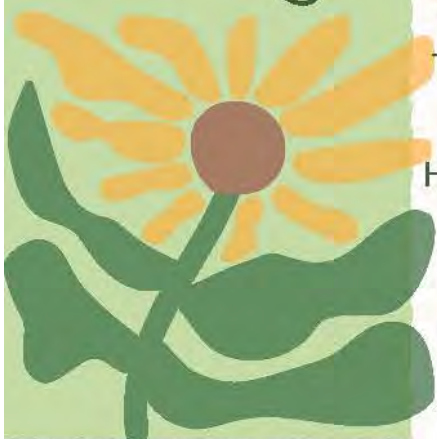


All proceeds benefit the Unlimited Garden Fundraiser! 

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Saratoga County



Save the Date



SARATOGA COUNTY HORTICULTURAL TOURS

MAY 9TH, 2026

10AM-2PM

GUIDED & SELF
GUIDED TOURS,
EDUCATIONAL & PHOTO
OPPORTUNITIES

FARM LOCATIONS:

- MCINTOSH CREEK FARM
- BOWMAN ORCHARDS
- GREENFIELD'S FOREVER, LLC
- SORANO'S GREENHOUSES, LLC.
- NATIVE SUN FLOWERS
- THE GARDENERS GREENHOUSES
- THE DAYDREAM FARMER

TOUR MAPS ARE LOCATED AT CCE OF
SARATOGA- 50 W.HIGH ST, BSPA
[HTTPS://CCESARATOGA.ORG/GARDEN
ING-LANDSCAPE](https://ccesaratoga.org/gardening-landscape)

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Saratoga County

April is National Gardening Month so here are some tips:

- *Design your garden to please your eye while it is ecologically sound.* My garden reflects my emotions, it is connected to our family garden in France; it also incorporates a diversity of keystone plants to support a broad diversity of life.
- *Foster pollinators, soil organisms, and other wildlife by focusing on native plants.* I have planted many native plants.
- *Prevent stormwater runoff with the use of rain gardens and rain-capturing systems, such as rain-barrels, or re-direct your gutters' downspouts to water parts of your garden.* Most of my gutters empty in a collector that ends in the large front flowerbed.
- *Reduce and replace resource-intensive lawns.* I replaced part of my front lawn with a drought tolerant Creeping thyme (*Thymus Serpyllum*) and I mow it once or twice a year.
- *Conduct wildlife-friendly garden cleanup.* I have set aside a portion of the back of my garden with a pile of leaves (a good butterfly winter habitat.)

What is a rain garden?

It is a garden designed to soak up rain water, mainly from structures such as roofs, patios, and driveways. It looks like a regular flowerbed; while it is designed to fill with a few inches of water, it allows it to seep into the soil slowly (about 30% more than a conventional flowerbed.)

A rain garden should be located on a relatively flat or slight slope, at 10 feet away from a house, away from a septic system, with full to partial sunlight, and with an overflow outlet to carry excessive rainfall properly. By capturing rainwater, a rain garden also helps reduce stormwater pollution and protects streams, lakes and rivers.

You can learn how to establish a rain garden by contacting Saratoga County Cornell Cooperative Extension (518) 885-8995, www.saratogastormwater.org.

Recently I attended a virtual horticultural presentation on how to add interest to the garden, by incorporating a variety of plants which focal points are the textures and colors of the leaves.

I must say that I had never really made this a priority, focusing more on the heights and bloom colors. So I took a quick inventory of my flowers and realized that I could add more plants with a variety of leaf structures and color. I'll make sure to keep that in mind when selecting future plants. Yes, there is always room to add more plants!..

Lately, I have enjoyed walking around the flowerbeds while reacquainting myself with flowers. Now is the time to appreciate all the signage that I meticulously write. Its so easy to forget what and where plants are located.

Until the outdoor temperatures are between 60 and 80 F, leaves should be left on top of the flowers. Many butterflies seek shelter in piles of leaves during the winter, be it in the form of eggs, chrysalis or caterpillars. Last spring, I inadvertently killed a Lunar moth chrysalis. I thought that it was just an odd-shaped, oval brown thing, almost like a small pine cone. So I opened it and was horrified to acknowledge that I had just killed a future beautiful moth. I am still trying to redeem myself! Oftentimes during the fall season, a Lunar moth chrysalis falls from a tree and becomes covered by leaves. The Lunar moth does not have any feeding apparatus; it lives for a couple of days only to strictly mate and lay eggs.

I have noticed that quite a few plants are emerging, still covered by leaves. As the weather warms up over the next few days, I will gently uncover the flowerbeds.

The following plants are now visible: Black-eyed Susan, Mullein, Irises, Phlox, Geraniums, Coral Bells, Chrysogonum, Creeping sedum, Bergenia, Shasta Daisies, Blanket flowers, Lamb's ears, Sundrops, Sweet Williams, Oxeyed daisies, Campanula gromelata, Creeping thyme, Hollyhocks, Echinacea, Jacob's ladder, Creeping phlox, Lamium, Hot pink geraniums, and Day lilies.

The following are presently in bloom: Crocuses, Hellebores, Primroses, Forsythia, and one Daffodil.

News from the petunias:

We are the Easy Wave type and we have fancy names: "Pudding Mix" and "South Beach". We were seeded a few weeks ago in a special growing medium. We are growing in the basement under grow lights, at 64F. It took us ages to germinate because we are extremely tiny seeds. We finally started to sprout. Then we developed true leaves and beautiful roots. A few days ago we were transplanted into larger pots, with grown-up potting soil. A few of us are a bit of the runt of the litter so we may return to earth.

Spring is often a time for new projects in the garden. Before you dig call **Dig Safe NY** (800-962-7962) to locate any underground utility lines.

Written by Rosine, Saratoga County Master Gardener Volunteer

For questions and comments: MyGardenNews22@gmail.com

Sunflowers



Sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) are a cheerful annual that remain a favorite in gardens across Minnesota and beyond. Native to North America, they have been cultivated for more than a thousand years, valued not only for their beauty but also for their seeds, oil, and even natural dyes.

Pollenless cultivars are especially popular for cut flower use, as they do not produce the bright yellow pollen that can stain clothing and surfaces. These varieties range in height from two to eight feet and come in a wide array of colors and flower forms. Well-known selections include the 'ProCut' series, 'Double Quick,' and 'Sunrich.'

Dwarf cultivars, which reach three feet tall or less, are well suited for the front of garden beds and borders, as well as for containers and smaller spaces. Varieties such as 'Teddy Bear,' 'Sunspot,' and 'Ms. Mars' provide compact growth without sacrificing visual impact.

Semi-dwarf cultivars typically grow between three and eight feet tall and generally do not require staking, making them a practical choice for most home landscapes. They perform well in beds and borders, with varieties like 'Cappuccino,' 'Chianti,' 'Italian White,' and 'Moulin Rouge' offering diverse color options.

For those looking to make a bold statement, giant cultivars can reach heights of eight feet or more. These impressive plants may require staking to support their large flowers and seed heads, and they should be spaced about two feet apart to ensure good air circulation. Notable examples include 'Cyclops,' 'Mammoth Russian,' and 'American Giant.'

Maintaining healthy sunflowers is relatively straightforward. Although they are somewhat drought-tolerant, consistent watering—especially during the 20 days before and after flowering—encourages strong root development, which is particularly important for taller varieties with heavy blooms. Applying a side dressing of an all-purpose slow-release fertilizer once plants have developed several true leaves can promote faster growth and larger flowers. Keeping weeds under control through cultivation, hoeing, or mulching will also support healthy plant development.

While sunflowers are generally easy to grow, they can face challenges from wildlife and insects. Birds are often attracted to the seeds, but deterrents such as spinners, scarecrows, or owl decoys can help protect the crop until harvest. Deer may quickly damage young plants, so fencing or repellents may be necessary in areas where deer are common.

Insect pests can also appear, although sunflowers attract many beneficial insects and pollinators as well. Stink bugs may cause damage with their piercing and sucking mouthparts, while aphids feed on plant sap and produce sticky honeydew that can lead to sooty mold. Caterpillars, with their chewing mouthparts, can consume leaves and flower petals rapidly. Careful monitoring and thoughtful management can help keep these issues under control while preserving beneficial insect activity.

Fungal infections are occasionally found on the leaves of sunflower, typically affecting the oldest leaves first. If the plants are old enough and have vigor, they can normally grow despite these diseases.

Whether you're hoping to brighten your landscape, create a fun, natural play space for children, or cut blooms for bouquets and arrangements, there is a sunflower variety to suit your needs.

Sunflowers are among the easiest flowers to grow from seed. Their large size makes them simple to handle, and they can be sown directly in the garden or started indoors and transplanted once true leaves develop. Regardless of how you begin, their growing requirements are the same.

These plants thrive in full sun and perform best in well-drained soils. While they are adaptable to a range of soil types—including clay loam, silty clay loam, and sandy loam—they grow most successfully in slightly acidic soil with a pH between 6.0 and 6.8. Before planting, a soil test is recommended to determine any nutrient needs.

For direct seeding, wait until all danger of frost has passed, then plant seeds about one inch deep. Spacing depends on the variety: smaller types that reach two to five feet tall should be placed about six inches apart, while taller varieties need at least one foot between plants, and giant sunflowers should be spaced about two feet apart. Seeds typically germinate within seven to ten days.

If starting seeds indoors, use biodegradable containers so the entire pot can be planted without disturbing the roots. Be sure to remove any portion of the container that extends above the soil surface, as it can wick moisture away and dry out the roots.

To enjoy blooms throughout the growing season, consider succession planting. This can be done by planting different varieties with varying maturity dates at the same time, sowing the same variety at one- to two-week intervals, or combining multiple varieties and planting them every three to four weeks for a continuous display of color.

There is a wide range of sunflower varieties to choose from, each offering unique characteristics. Branching cultivars tend to grow quite large and produce an abundance of blooms over an extended period, making them ideal for continuous color in the garden. Because of their size, they require more space, typically 18 to 24 inches between plants. Popular examples include 'Sonja,' 'The Joker,' 'Shock O Lat,' and 'Teddy Bear.'



Homesteading



THE NATIONAL GARDENING ASSOCIATION, Bob Bennet

Rabbits for Gardeners

Tons of clay, alternately sticky and bricklike, once lay where my vegetables and flowers now flourish. When asked for the secret ingredients in my now-workable, rich soil, I have an easy answer: my "homegrown" rabbit manure. Four times more nutrient-potent than horse or cow manure and twice as rich as poultry manure, rabbit manure is a more perfectly formed soil conditioner than any I have ever known.

What's more, raising chickens or other farm animals is much more difficult, and is even illegal in some communities. Chickens cackle and crow at dawn. Rabbits, on the other hand, are as quiet as a rosebush breaking bud. After raising rabbits for 28 years, I still don't know what sound they make.

In a space no bigger than your kitchen table, you can house a buck and two does. Each year they and their offspring produce at least two cubic yards of manure, plus 100 to 125 pounds of rabbit meat.

If the prospect of raising rabbits and eating them doesn't appeal to you, they also make excellent pets. Most of the following guidelines still apply, though the specific breed you choose is less significant. Of course, one or two pet rabbits won't make nearly as much manure as the family unit of three plus offspring.

Rabbit Manure

This stuff is remarkable. It comes nicely packaged in a convenient, round, dry, pelleted form. As a fertilizer, fresh rabbit manure is approximately 2% nitrogen, 1% phosphorus and 1% potassium. Use it fresh, directly from under the hutch. It won't burn plants. Use the small marbles to top-dress your lawn, or mulch roses, vegetables or flower beds. Or supercharge your compost pile and create an earth-worm population explosion.

Rabbit Meat

Domestic rabbit meat is high-quality, gourmet food. The all-white meat contains more protein and less fat, calories and cholesterol than any other meat. The retail cost equals sirloin steak. It's easy to find a buyer for the young rabbits you produce, and often the same people will barter or sell back to you dressed and packaged rabbit meat ready for the freezer. Some rabbit raisers I know swap some rabbit for other kinds of meat.

Starting Right

Which rabbit breed to choose can seem a bit bewildering. There are 50 breeds available and sizes range from two to 20 pounds. Good meat producers weigh five to 10 pounds at maturity. Two of my five-pound favorites are the Tan and the Florida White. No rabbit outperforms a Florida White for percentage of edible meat per pound of live weight. Consider the Tan if you like a little color. The

10-pound New Zealand White is the most common domestic rabbit in America today. Other 10-pounders to consider are the Californian, white with black markings, and the Rex, which comes in about 15 colors and has velvety, plush fur.

Start your search for rabbits, hutches and supplies at the local farm supply store. Ask there who raises good rabbits. Most farm supply stores have a bulletin board.

Check it for advertisers of rabbits. Put up your own notice. Visit a few rabbit raisers. Most of them love to talk about their rabbits. Choose yours from a producer who keeps them in spotless wire hutches.

Fall is the best time of year to get started with rabbits because lots of young stock is available and prices are at their annual lowest. Expect to pay \$10 to \$20 each for white rabbits. Fancy colored breeds usually cost considerably more, but they don't grow or taste any better.

Rabbits are bred for the first time when they're six months old, so you will find many "juniors" (younger than six months) for sale. You could also buy one older doe, up to a year or so in age, and have her bred by the person selling her to you. This will get you off to a fast start, but it's usually a good idea to start with young animals so you can learn about them before you mate them. For best production, keep does three years and bucks five years. The natural life span of a rabbit is about 10 years.

A buck and two does require four wire cages (the fourth is for weaned offspring). These hutches are 30 inches by 36 inches and cost \$20 to \$35 each. They're also easy to build. Please don't make hutches out of wood and chicken wire. These are unsafe, unsanitary and unsightly. You'll also need feeders and water bottles.

Rabbits are hardy outdoors in all garden zones but prefer temperatures below 90°F. Without space in a garage or other building, consider building a shed. A good design has four pressure-treated posts with a slanted roof to protect the rabbits from sun, wind, rain and snow. Choose a siding appropriate to



Article continued on next page

Rabbits for Gardeners ... continued from previous page

the season and your climate. Or keep your hutches under an arbor or lath house. A strong fence to keep dogs out is essential.

Pick up a bag of rabbit pellets and a bottle of sulfaquinoxaline at the farm supply store. Add the latter to their drinking water to control an internal parasite, their only real pest. Your rabbits' staple diet should be commercial feed. It costs about \$13 for a 100-pound bag. Each rabbit will consume a nickel's worth a day.

You can supplement their diet with feed that costs you little or nothing. Here's an excuse to let a section of lawn grow tall and go to hay, or plant some of it to alfalfa, red clover or oats. But remember to sun-dry grass or clover before giving it to your rabbits, abruptly adding these materials when fresh to their diets can upset their stomachs.

Rabbits recycle some of your excess garden vegetables, too. Carrots (especially the big, woody ones), chicory, overgrown beets, rutabagas, Jerusalem artichokes, lettuce and parsnips are all excellent. Put chunks of dried sunflower heads in the cages and the rich seeds will make their coats shine. The only vegetables to avoid are any of the cole crops, such as cabbage, mustard or broccoli.

Feed your rabbits all the pellets they will eat each day until they are six months old. Mature rabbits consume four to six ounces of pellets a day, less if you supplement the diet. Whenever you change their diet, do it gradually.

They Breed Like ... Well, Like Rabbits

At six months, take the doe to the buck, never the other way or they'll fight. Don't blink or you'll miss everything. Rabbits have earned their reputation for fast mating and reproduction.

Gestation is 31 days. On the 28th day, add a nest box with two to three inches of wood shavings topped with handfuls of straw. You can buy or build one. Make it 10 inches by 18 inches and eight inches high; use the same wire as on the hutch floor, or wood. The doe will line the nest with fur from her chest and stomach. Litter size averages eight. When the litter is due, keep things quiet: no noisy children or dogs. After the birth, give the doe all the feed she can clean up in a day.

In two weeks, the litter will come bouncing out of the box and want to start eating solid food, although they will nurse for another six weeks as well. Keep all green stuff out, and as a transition, give a little dry oatmeal or whole or cracked oats along with the pellets.

Wean young rabbits at eight weeks, moving one or two a day to another cage. Once all are weaned, you can rebreed the doe. You can keep weaned rabbits together for another month or so. Females can stay together longer, but each male needs his own hutch after 12 weeks or they'll fight. Each doe typically produces four litters a year. Occasionally, a doe will fail to conceive on schedule, but well-bred rabbits are dependable.

New Zealand-size weanlings will weigh four pounds at eight weeks. About half of that is good freezer meat. A little arithmetic shows that eight litters from two does produces as much as 128 pounds of meat a year. Florida Whites or Tans produce half as much meat but need less food.

If slaughtering rabbits is unsavory for you, ask at the farm supply store who can do the job for you. Or just keep a few for pets. Either way, look out or you'll get hooded on rabbit raising, just as I did.



TASTE NY - ADIRONDACK WELCOME CENTER

Culinary Cultivation - Growing, Foraging and Cultivation Mushrooms

Celebrate Earth Day with us on April 22 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the Adirondack Welcome Center (northbound between Exits 17 and 18) for a special 90-minute workshop led by Jacob Howard of The Mushroom Shop. This free program is open to the public and will explore sustainable mushroom cultivation, responsible foraging practices, and the vital role mushrooms play in maintaining healthy ecosystems.

Participants will learn practical tips for growing mushrooms at home and enjoy samples of mushroom jerky and mushroom noodle soup. Grow-your-own mushroom kits will also be available for purchase.

Join us for an engaging afternoon of learning, tasting, and celebrating Earth Day through food, nature, and sustainability.





IOWA STATE ANSWERLINE, Marlene Geiger

Am I saving money by preserving my own food?

Interest in preserving food at home has increased dramatically in recent years. There are many reasons for this trend. Gardeners enjoy having produce from their gardens year round. Others like or need to control what is in their food for health reasons such as eliminating preservatives, salt, and sugar. Some enjoy the process as a hobby or continuing the family tradition. Still others cite they do it to save money. But does preserving food at home really save money? The short answer is, it depends!

To fully answer the question, one must consider several factors such as availability of raw materials (produce and ingredients), equipment and supply investment and upkeep, resources (water, electricity, gas), and time.

Raw Materials.

Where is the produce coming from? Home garden, farmer's market, donation? If produce comes from a home garden, one must consider the cost of seeds or plants, soil amendments, water, time, etc. Beyond the produce, one must also figure the cost of added ingredients: salt, sugar, vinegar, lemon juice, citric acid, ascorbic acid, ginger, garlic, spices, pectin, etc.

Equipment and Supplies.

Depending upon the type of food preservation desired, special equipment and supplies are needed along with maintenance of the equipment and replenishing of supplies. Dehydrating may or may not require a dehydrator. Freeze drying requires the purchase of a home freeze drying unit. Depending on what one wants to can, a water bath, pressure, or atmospheric steam canner will be needed. And to freeze, a freezer is a must. Beyond the outlay for these pieces of equipment, one needs to add the cost of jars, rings, flats, canning tools, packaging materials, oxygen absorbers, vacuum sealers, and other supplies needed to properly store preserved foods. Finally, one needs to also consider the cost of storage space for equipment and equipment maintenance.



Resources.

Water, electricity, and gas are also cost considerations. Food preservationists should invest in reliable recipe resources such as [*So Easy to Preserve \(6th edition\)*](#), the [*USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning \(2015\)*](#), and [*Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving \(38th ed\)*](#). A small investment of a [preserving notebook](#) is a great way to keep track of recipes used, quantities preserved and used, tips, notes, answers to questions, dates preserved or put into storage, new equipment to check out, and more.

Time.

Many preservationists do not consider their time investment as it is something that they do for personal reasons. However, time does have value and the amount of time one spends can vary greatly depending on the knowledge and experience of the preservationist.

After considering all the costs associated with preserving food at home and comparing that cost with food purchased, one may find that the cost of preserving at home outweighs or equals the savings. However, if one makes a long-term commitment to home preserving, the chances of saving increase. Cost or saving, anyone who preserves food at home will attest that having shelves or a freezer filled with ready-to-use food with known ingredients, is a feeling like no other!



UCCE MASTER FOOD PRESERVERS of EL DORADO COUNTY

How to Tighten Rings on Ball Jars

Until recently, Ball recommended tightening jar lids to "fingertip tight plus" - meaning to turn the band until resistance is met, then add an additional $\frac{1}{4}$ turn. Their current guidance has been updated to advise tightening only until resistance is met. While it is unclear when this change was made, this is the most up-to-date recommendation available.

Watch the video to the right on how to properly apply lids and bands to a Ball jar.



The Latest from Our 4-H Youth

From Learning to Leading: Youth Master Tractor Safety Skills

During spring recess, 24 youth from across the Capital District—including six dedicated Saratoga County 4-H members successfully completed the HOSTA Tractor Safety Course!

Throughout the program, participants gained essential skills and knowledge in farm and equipment safety through on-farm visits, engaging presentations, and hands-on equipment operation. This experience helps prepare them to work safely and confidently while strengthening New York State's future agricultural workforce.

We extend our sincere thanks to the presenters and partners who generously shared their time, expertise, and resources to support this program and help keep our youth safe:

- Kinderhook Creek Farm
- New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH)
- Saratoga Sod Farm
- United Ag & Turf – Northeast (Greenwich)
- Capital Tractor, Inc. – Greenwich
- Tim Havens, Falls Farm and Garden Equipment Co.
- Cole and Laurel Gailor, Gailor Ground & Earthworks
- Aaron Bogdan, H & M Equipment Co., Inc.
- Washington County Fair

Your commitment makes a lasting impact on our youth and the future of agriculture in New York State.



Country Kids of Gansevoort 4-H Club Learned about Fire Extinguishers

On Saturday, April 11, members of the Country Kids of Gansevoort 4-H club participated in an informative hands-on meeting centered on fire safety. During the session, members learned about fire extinguishers including their proper use, and practiced safe and effective operating techniques.



4-H Members Get Hands-on at Turkey Hunting Workshop

On Saturday, April 11, 4-H members participated in an engaging Turkey Hunting Workshop where they learned the basics of turkey hunting and its techniques. Participants also had the opportunity to craft their own turkey calls during the hands-on session.

Special thanks to Bryan Southard of Sweet Cedar Game Calls for generously providing the call-making kits and sharing his expertise with participants, as well as to all of the dedicated volunteer presenters who helped make the workshop a success.





Registration begins at 6 am. Fishing starts at 7 am.
For more information, contact the Town of Milton at (518) 885-9220

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