Small Pond Fish Farming

An informative program on "Small Pond Fish Farming" presented by Dr. Jesse Chappell, Extension Specialist in Aquatic Resources, will be held Thursday, March 19, 2015 at 6:00 pm. See the enclosed flyer for more information and registration.

LUNCH and LEARN
Tomato Growing 101
Tuesday, March 17, 2015
12:00 – 1:00 pm

A tomato growing program will be held at the Chilton County Extension Office. Topics will include: Proper Planting, Variety Selection, Insects and Diseases. There is no charge, but please register by Monday, March 16, 2015 by calling 205 280-6268. Bring your lunch; tea and water will be provided.

Eggs-tra Care for Spring Celebrations

It's spring -- the season to enjoy the great outdoors and celebrate special occasions, like Easter, Passover, and graduation! While eggs are used all year 'round, they are especially important for many spring and summertime activities. They are used for cooking festive delights and for decorating and hiding just before the big Easter egg hunt.

Like meat, poultry, seafood and produce, eggs are perishable and need to be handled properly to prevent foodborne illness. Occasionally, eggs with clean, uncracked shells can be contaminated with bacteria, specifically Salmonella Enteritidis. Here's what YOU can do to have a safe and egg-cellent spring!

Clean Up, Clean Up...

Clean hands are key! Always wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after food handling. Beware of cross-contamination. Foodborne illness can occur when kitchen equipment is not thoroughly washed between uses. Always wash food contact surfaces and cooking equipment, including blenders, in hot water and soap.

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Red Beet Eggs

12 peeled, hard-cooked eggs (see instructions in the Eggs-tra Care article)
1 cup red beet juice (from canned beets)
1 1/2 cups cider vinegar
1 teaspoon brown sugar
A few canned whole tiny red beets (or several slices of beets can be used)

Directions: Bring all the ingredients except the eggs to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Pack no more than one dozen peeled, hard-cooked eggs loosely into a warm, pre-sterilized quart jar (or other similar size container which can be closed tightly). There needs to be plenty of pickling solution, and enough to completely cover the eggs. Pour the hot pickling solution over the eggs in the jar, cover, and refrigerate immediately. The pickled egg recipe is for eggs stored in the refrigerator. DO NOT store pickled eggs at room temperature except for serving time, when they should be limited to no more than 2 hours in the temperature danger zone of 40 to 140 degrees F.

After making the eggs, the eggs require some time to season (i.e., pick up the flavors from the pickling brine). Keep them refrigerated at all times. If small eggs are used, 1 to 2 weeks are usually allowed for seasoning to occur. Medium or large eggs may require 2 to 4 weeks to become well-seasoned. Use the eggs within 1 month for best quality.

(Continued – Eggs-tra Care)

Cook and Keep Cool...

Bacteria love to grow in moist, protein-rich foods. Refrigeration slows bacterial growth, so it's important to refrigerate eggs and egg-containing foods. Your refrigerator should be at 40 °F or below. Use a thermometer to monitor.

Remember the 2-Hour Rule: Don't leave perishables out at room temperature for more than two hours.

Whether you like your breakfast eggs scrambled or fried, always cook eggs until the yolks and whites are firm.

Tasting is tempting, but licking a spoon or tasting raw cookie dough from a mixing bowl can be risky. Bacteria could be lurking in the raw eggs.

Cook cheesecakes, lasagna, baked pasta and egg dishes to an internal temperature of 160 °F. Use a food thermometer.

Easter Egg Hunt Know-How

Only use eggs that have been refrigerated, and discard eggs that are cracked or dirty.

When cooking, place a single layer of eggs in a saucepan. Add water to at least one inch above the eggs. Cover the pan, bring the water to a boil, and carefully remove the pan from the heat. Let the eggs stand (18 minutes for extra large eggs, 15 minutes for large, 12 minutes for medium). Immediately run cold water over the eggs. When the eggs are cool enough to handle, place them in an uncovered container in the refrigerator where they can air-dry.

When decorating, be sure to use food-grade dyes. It is safe to use commercial egg dyes, liquid food coloring, and fruit-drink powders. When handling eggs, be careful not to crack them. Otherwise, bacteria could enter the egg through the cracks in the shell.

Keep hard-cooked Easter eggs chilled on a shelf inside the refrigerator, not in the refrigerator door.

Hide the eggs in places that are protected from dirt, pets and other potential sources of bacteria.

Remember the two hour rule, and make sure the “found” eggs are back in the refrigerator or consumed within two hours.

Remember that hard-boiled eggs are only safe to eat for one week after cooking.

If you have more questions or concerns about food safety, contact:

To Prune or Not To Prune: That is the Question

Is this the best time to prune? It’s cold outdoors, most of our gardening activities have been done for a while, and we’re itching to “Do Something” while the sun is shining!

Here are a few suggestions for shrubs you might want/need to prune. It’s always OK, regardless of the season, to prune out the three D’s: dead, damaged, or diseased parts on the plant. Like human health, wounds (damage) can provide a “door” to an infection; dead tissue may require pruning; diseased areas on a plant can’t protect the plant as well as healthy growth. Make sure the branch or limb is not merely dormant, which can look dead, by gently scratching your thumb nail on the bark. If the cambium (layer beneath the bark) is green, that means the branch is alive and can be left on the tree or shrub.

The May rule of pruning suggests that: if the plant blooms before May 1, prune it AFTER the flowers fade. These plants set flower buds the previous year, so if you’re itchy pruning arm goes to work during fall or winter, most or all the flower buds will be pruned off and there won’t be many, if any, flowers in the spring. The plant won’t die, and the following year should be OK after new growth sets new buds. The other part of this pruning rule of thumb: if the plant blooms May 1st or later, prune in late winter/early spring as these plants bloom on current year’s growth. This can be frustrating for those who only remember “my XXX plant didn’t bloom this past summer,” but cannot remember when it was supposed to bloom in the first place.

Hydrangeas are a ‘special’ group and have sent some gardeners into a frenzy of concern over their prized shrub’s failure to provide a flowering spectacle for their neighbors to enjoy. Part of the confusion comes from not being sure which hydrangea is involved, and it’s easy to be uncertain unless there’s a tag hanging somewhere on the plant, or you’ve kept a record of what was planted. Basically though, hydrangeas with big pink or blue flowers (H. macrophylla) and the oakleaf (H. quercifolia; photo above) both bloom on old wood so should be pruned right after they finish flowering. The other hydrangeas with white conical shaped blooms (H. paniculata) and the ‘Annabelle’ (H. arborescens) bloom on new wood (current year) and will do better if pruned in late winter/early spring.

Relax. If a mistake is made and the shrub (you realize later) is pruned when it shouldn’t have been, make a note and adjust your timing, or instruct whoever is doing the work for you. There’s always next year!

Written by Sallie Lee of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Quinoa and Black Bean Salad

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup quinoa (dry)
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 teaspoons lime juice
- 1/4 teaspoon cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon coriander
- 2 tablespoons cilantro (chopped)
- 2 scallions (medium, minced)
- 16 ounces black beans (rinsed and drained)
- 2 cups tomato (chopped)
- 1 red bell pepper (medium, chopped)
- 2 green bell pepper (medium, chopped)
- 2 green chiles (fresh, minced, to taste)
- black pepper (to taste)

Directions

1. Rinse the quinoa in cold water. Boil water in a saucepan, and then add the quinoa.
2. Return to boil, and then simmer until the water is absorbed, 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Cool for 15 minutes. While quinoa is cooking, mix olive oil, lime juice, cumin, coriander, chopped cilantro, and scallions in a small bowl, and set aside.
4. Combine chopped vegetables with the black beans in a large bowl, and set aside.
5. Once quinoa has cooled, combine all ingredients and mix well. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Makes 6 servings

USDA What’s Cooking?

Food For Thought:
May your thoughts be as glad as the shamrocks. May your heart be as light as a song. May each day bring you bright, happy hours that stay with you all the year long.
Small Pond Fish Farming

featuring

Dr. Jesse Chappell
Extension Specialist in Aquatic Resources

Thursday, March 19, 2015

Alabama Power Conference Center, Clanton

6:00 PM

Registration required by March 17th

205.280.6268

Sandwich supper provided for preregistered participants

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