



Alabama Cooperative Extension System  
St. Clair County Office

# Extension Newsletter

January/February 2012

Volume 7, Issue 37

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Happy Valentines Day!

Dear Friends of Extension,

HAPPY NEW YEAR! I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas! As we embark on another year, many of us are resolving to make changes in our lives. From losing those extra pounds to managing your money better, the St. Clair County Extension office is your source for the latest research-based information. Be sure to read more about some of the great programs we have scheduled for 2012 in this issue of the *Extension Newsletter*.

As always, feel free to contact me if I can ever be of assistance.

Until next time,

## America Saves Week



**america  
saves  
week**

Most Alabamians are not saving adequately for retirement and most lower-income households do not have adequate emergency savings for unexpected expenses, such as a car repairs. With encouragement and support, more Alabamians can build wealth, not debt.

During *Alabama Saves Week*, February 19<sup>th</sup>—26<sup>th</sup>, individuals are encouraged and assisted to review their savings progress and take action to advance this progress. This encouragement and assistance is provided by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System because we have an interest in improving the financial security of individuals and families. Some of our goals for *Alabama Saves Week* include:

- Employers encourage and make it easier for employees to participate in savings and retirement programs;
- Banks and credit unions promote automatic transfers from checking to savings and investments;
- Mortgage lenders help consumers attain homeownership by saving the down payment on a first mortgage loan;
- Nonprofits promote savings programs such as individual development accounts;
- Financial educators discuss savings opportunities such as automatic deposits and the "miracle" of interest compounding;
- The media report and editorialize about personal savings activities and the activities during *America Saves Week*;
- Individuals take action to save more effectively and encourage family and friends to do the same.

For more information about how you can start saving, please contact Regional Extension Agent, Ruth Brock, at 205-338-9416 or visit <http://www.americasaves.org>.



# Fireplace Safety

**W**oodburning and gas fireplaces are designed to safely provide years of comfort, warmth, and relaxation. To ensure they can do their job, fireplaces require maintenance and proper operation. Before lighting a fire there are a few important fireplace safety tips to remember.

## WOOD BURNING FIREPLACE SAFETY & MAINTENANCE TIPS

### PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

- > Have the chimney inspected annually and cleaned as necessary by a professional chimney sweep to ensure it's clear of obstructions and creosote.
- > Have a cap installed at the top of the chimney to avoid the possibility that debris or animals can block the chimney.
- > Install both a smoke and carbon monoxide detector. (Make sure the batteries work.)
- > Keep a fire extinguisher on hand.
- > Make sure the area around the fireplace is clear of furniture, books, newspapers and other potentially flammable materials. (Two feet away is a good rule.)

### LIGHTING FIRE

- > Clean out ashes from previous fires. Open the damper.
- > Use a fireplace grate.
- > Keep glass doors open during the fire.
- > Build a safe fire.
- > Always close the fire screen when in use.

### USE COMMON SENSE

- > Never burn garbage, rolled newspapers, charcoal or plastic in the fireplace.
- > Never use gasoline or any liquid accelerant to help start a fire.
- > Keep small children and pets away from the fireplace.
- > Never leave a fire unattended.
- > Don't close the damper until the embers have completely stopped burning.
- > Make sure the fire is completely out before going to bed or leaving the house.
- > When cleaning the fireplace, store ashes in a non-combustible container with a tightly fitting lid and place container away from the house.
- > Never burn a Christmas tree in the fireplace.

### STARTING A SAFE FIRE

Creating a perfect fire starts with using seasoned firewood cut to the correct length. To start a safe fire, crumple paper on the grate within the fireplace and cover it with kindling or a manufactured firestarter. Open the fireplace damper fully and light the paper. Once the kindling or the firestarter is burning brightly, add dry seasoned wood to the fire and shut the firescreen. It's important to avoid overloading the fireplace so the firewood doesn't tumble out. A couple of logs will suffice. Burning a manufactured firelog purchased from the grocery or hardware store is a good alternative to firewood, and does not require paper to get the fire started.

### ROLE OF CHIMNEY SWEEPING

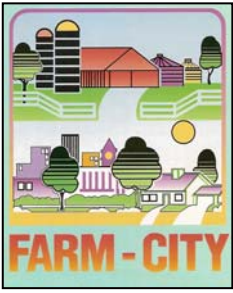
Chimney upkeep is complicated by the fact that many problems (cracks, faults, and structural damage) are not visible from the outside. To ensure chimney safety, the best course of action is to have a professional chimney sweep, certified by the Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA), perform an annual inspection and clean the chimney as necessary. Chimney sweeps remove creosote and obstructions, such as leaves, branches or bird's nests, and look for other problems within the system.

### GAS FIREPLACE SAFETY MAINTENANCE TIPS

Gas fireplaces also require routine maintenance and service to ensure their proper working order. The best person to perform the service is a specialty retailer who is trained in the maintenance of gas fireplaces. A retailer will complete the following type of tasks when performing service on a gas fireplace:

- > Adjust millivolt output.
- > Clean and adjust the glowing embers and logs for best appearance.
- > Clean the fan and related air circulation passages.
- > Clean the glass.
- > Check the batteries in the carbon monoxide detector.

*continued on page 9* →



# Farm-City Poster & Essay Contest Award Winners

The St. Clair County Farmers Federation Annual Farm-City Banquet was held on Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011. We were honored to welcome Mr. John McMillan, Alabama Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries, as our guest speaker.

Several awards were presented during this year's banquet. The Hardwick Family Farm and Wadsworth Family Farm was recognized as a Century & Heritage Farm by the Alabama Department of Ag and Industries (*see page 4 for more information about the farm and award*). The Perry Poe family was recognized as the 2011 Outstanding Farm Family (*see page 5*).

The Farm-City Scarecrow contest winners were announced and awards were presented. K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade winners were: Mrs. Beth Evans-Smith's Kindergarten, Ashville Elementary, "Sam I Am," —1<sup>st</sup> place; Mrs. Brittney Brown's Kindergarten, Steele Elementary, "Hungry Caterpillar," —2<sup>nd</sup> place; and Mrs. Angela McClung's Kindergarten, Ashville Elementary, "Super Foods Super Hero," —3<sup>rd</sup> place. 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade winners were: Mrs. Morrow's Photography Class, St. Clair County High, "Harvest Time," —1<sup>st</sup> place. Business category winners were: Ashville Florist—1<sup>st</sup> place; Taylor Fence—2<sup>nd</sup> place; and Odenville Utilities—3<sup>rd</sup> place.



Two hundred eighty-four 4-H'ers from across the county participated in the Farm-City poster contest. Chris Thomas, 4-H Agent Assistant, presented the awards. Poster contest winners (pictured above from l to r) are: 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade Division Winners: 1<sup>st</sup> place, Alana Hyatt, Ashville Middle School, Mrs. Janet McBroom's 5<sup>th</sup> grade; 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Sara Payne (*not pictured*), Ashville Middle School, Mrs. Janet McBroom's 5<sup>th</sup> grade; and tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> place, Macy Freeman, Springville Elementary School, Mrs. Robin Maynard's 5<sup>th</sup> grade and Emily Tibbs, Ashville Middle School, Mrs. Cheryl Boissel's 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Kindergarten—3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Division Winners: 1<sup>st</sup> place, Malachi Swindall, Mrs. Laura Swindall's Homeschool group; and 2<sup>nd</sup> place, Sera Beth Potter, Ashville Elementary School, Mrs. Jeanna Gossett's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.



The Farm-City Essay contest winners were also announced during the Banquet. Chris Thomas, 4-H Agent Assistant, presented the awards. In Division I (7<sup>th</sup>—9<sup>th</sup> grade), Victoria Booker, pictured left with 4-H Agent Assistant, Chris Thomas, won 1<sup>st</sup> place and is in Mr. David Curren's 9<sup>th</sup> grade class at Springville High School.

In Division II (10<sup>th</sup>—12<sup>th</sup> grade), Rebecca Parker, pictured right with 4-H Agent Assistant, Chris Thomas, won 1<sup>st</sup> place. She is homeschooled and is in Mrs. Jan Parker's 12<sup>th</sup> grade class. Kameron Crenshaw (*not pictured*) won 2<sup>nd</sup> place. She is also homeschooled and is in Mrs. Robin Crenshaw's 11<sup>th</sup> grade class. **CONGRATULATIONS** to all our winners!



# Century & Heritage Farms Recognized



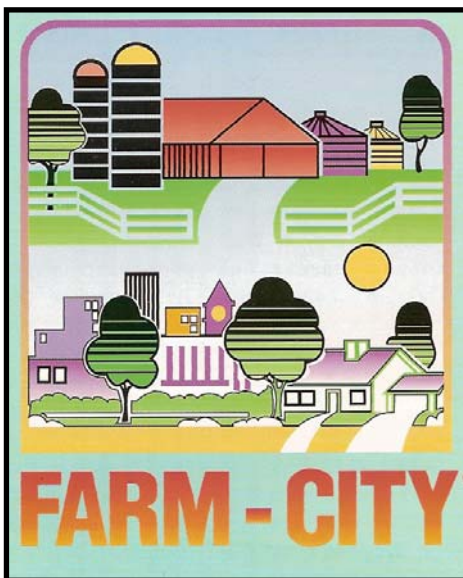
Since the Century and Heritage Farm program began in 1976, the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries has recognized over 500 farms in Alabama. In the past, 26 other farms in St. Clair County have been recognized as Century and/or Heritage Farms.

Two farms with this distinction were recognized at the annual St. Clair County Farm-City Banquet, held November 14<sup>th</sup> at the Farmers Federation Building in Ashville. Both farms have been owned and operated by the same family for over 100 years. The Alabama Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries, John McMillan, presented this year's awards.

The property known as Hardwick Farm (family pictured top left) was acquired by Robert and Elizabeth Hardwick some time prior to 1907. In the past, the family has grown cotton, peanuts

and forage as well as raised beef and dairy cattle on the farm. Today, the farm, located 1 1/2 miles south of Pell City, is owned by Robert Hardwick and his sister, Francis King, the great-great grandchildren of Robert and Elizabeth Hardwick. The Hardwick family grows timber and raises beef cattle on the farm today. There are several structures on the farm with historical and agricultural significance including: a home built in 1937, an outhouse and smokehouse built in the 1940's and a dairy barn built in 1948.

The property known as Wadsworth Farms (family pictured lower right) was purchased on January 21, 1911 by William Lee and Ella Wadsworth. In the past, the family has grown corn, cotton, fruits and vegetables, hay, and pecans as well as raised chickens, mules and cattle. Today, the farm, located 5 miles south of Pell City, is operated by Edward Wadsworth, the grandson of William Lee and Ella Wadsworth. The Wadsworth family grows blueberries, pecans, timber and hay and raises beef cattle on the farm today. There are several structures on the farm with historical and agricultural significance including: a corn crib built in 1911, a dwelling built in 1946 and a barn built in 1965.





# Outstanding Farm Family Named

The St. Clair County Farmers Federation recognized the Perry Poe family as the 2011 St. Clair County Outstanding Farm Family at their annual Farm-City Banquet held on November 14<sup>th</sup>. Rod Goode, District Conservationist, announced the winner and Alabama Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries, John McMillan, presented the award. The family has been raising poultry on their farm since 1983. Perry has been active in his community. He has served as past president of the St. Clair County Poultry Growers Association, and since 1989 has served on the St. Clair County Soil and Water Conservation District Board, and on the Coosa Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council since 1996.



Through a continued partnership with the Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A), the St. Clair County Extension office has been able to continue to offer the Generations on Line program. The program is a national community service initiative which is intended to reduce the digital divide among older adults. There have been many students to graduate the course since it started early

last year. Participants comment that the program has opened up a new world while putting them in touch with old friends and extended family through social networking sites and email. Several students have been excited to discover that they can even do their genealogy research online.

Ms. Kathleen Monaghan is the peer coach who works with registered seniors wanting to learn how to navigate the internet. The program is free and was originally only open to seniors but now has been extended to those 45 years and older. She is currently taking Monday and Tuesday appointments.

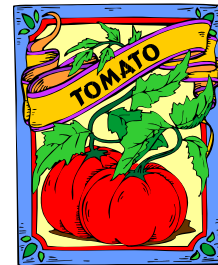
Kathleen started working with the program in June. Originally from Centerpoint, she currently lives in Odenville. Kathleen enjoys volunteering, playing Bunco, and traveling with her family and friends. She thinks that the Generations on Line program is an excellent opportunity for seniors and looks forward to working with those who have registered for the class. For more information about the class or to register, please contact the St. Clair County Extension office at (205) 338-9416.



*Kathleen works with Generations on Line participant, Pat Jackson*

# The Gardening Corner

By: Sallie Lee, Urban Regional Extension Agent  
Home Grounds, Gardens & Home Pests



## Catalogs & Calendars

**Question:** This time of year I start getting gardening catalogs galore in my mailbox. I enjoy reading through them, looking and drooling over pictures of beautiful vegetables and reading descriptions of them. I want to order some of everything, but that's not practical. Can you give any suggestions regarding which catalogs are the best and what I should order? And, where can I find help on when to plant "things" once I've decided to buy them?

**Answer:** Yes, catalogs come along when we're dealing with "cabin fever." We know it's too early to start a garden in this area, but those pictures are so tempting! Over a period of 3 weeks, my mailbox coughed up nearly a dozen of the colorful things, from all over the country, listing every kind of ornamental, fruit or vegetable known to man, or at least most of them.

How to determine which catalogs offer varieties adapted to the southeast USA and which ones have efficient and timely delivery systems is based primarily on research, with a little trial and error thrown in. If you've lived around here for a few years and know some gardeners, chances are those folks will be happy to offer their stories about which companies seem to know their business and which ones don't. So, ask your gardening friends, garden club members, etc.

If you're new to the area, check out books at your local library as they contain a plethora of information on appropriate plant materials for our locale. The public library at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens is one of the best around for plant material. Also, the St. Clair County Extension office offers publications that help with the "when" part of your question. You may also

check the Extension website <http://www.aces.edu> for two popular planting guides: ANR-0047 *Alabama Gardener's Calendar* and ANR-0063 *Planting Guide for Home Gardening in Alabama*.

Another factor depends on the kind of seeds you're interested in planting. Do you crave the newest varieties, the ones with all the letters after them? A good catalog describes the variety and explains those letters in easy-to-understand language. Are you convinced that old-timey, heirloom plants produce the tastiest crops or most fragrant flowers? There are catalogs tailored to both kinds of gardeners; many seed companies offer both, sort of a one-stop shopping experience.

Do be careful about a couple of issues. Some seed companies offer plant material that is better adapted to other regions of North America. Some catalogs even offer not-so-subtle warnings with phrases such as "not for southeast U.S." Take those comments to heart and order only if you're prepared to experiment. There are companies whose catalogs offer seeds of plants, both ornamental and edible, that are grown on other continents and that are very exotic. While these plants may be beautiful and no one else in the neighborhood has one, they could also be invasive or exhibit less charming characteristics not mentioned in the seed book (catalog). However, that doesn't mean you can't try seeds or a plant you've not grown before. In fact, to many gardeners, that's one of the "fun" things about gardening—trying something new every year. As example, trying a highly recommended tomato variety that we haven't tried before is how we learn what works in

*continued on next page* →

# 'Home Grown'

## Starting Seeds Workshop

hosted by  
the Alabama Cooperative Extension System  
St. Clair County Office

Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
9 a.m.—11 a.m.  
Pell City Civic Center

Cost is \$10 per person. Fee covers all materials  
needed. Pre-registration & payment required  
by Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012



There are many varieties of tomato and pepper seeds out there. A lot of these varieties are not available as transplants in the stores. Sometimes the only way to guarantee you have these varieties for your vegetable garden is to start them indoors from seeds. Many gardeners have tried this only to end up with leggy plants that aren't ready when the time comes to plant.

This workshop will cover all aspects of growing healthy seedlings for transplanting at home. This is a hands on workshop, so prepare to get your hands dirty. Participants will take home a flat of tomatoes to grow indoors at home.

To pre-register, please contact the St. Clair County Extension office at (205) 338-9416 or download a registration form to mail in with payment by visiting [www.aces.edu/StClair](http://www.aces.edu/StClair). Class size is limited to 25, so don't delay, register today! For more information about the workshop, please contact Danielle Carroll, Outreach Programs Administrator, at the St. Clair County Extension office or email her at [carrodl@aces.edu](mailto:carrodl@aces.edu).

### *Gardening Corner continued from page 6*

our garden and what doesn't. Just be a bit cautious about the origins of the plant; we really don't need another Kudzu vine in Alabama!

While it won't guarantee success, before ordering from any catalog, know the winter hardiness zone where you live and stick to plants suited for it. This area usually falls in zone 7b, though not all experts agree; some contend our climate is closer to zone 8. Make sure the plants won't ship until time to plant in your hardiness zone – most reputable catalog companies will ship close to the time you should plant, but be sure before ordering.

The best catalogs include details such as the correct botanical name of the plant, whether it needs sun or shade, how much water will be required to keep it happy, how short or tall it grows, what wildlife it attracts such as bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, etc. These catalogs often include comments regarding the plant's drought tolerance, and if vegetables, will tout the pest resistance of some varieties. Information often includes when to plant the bulbs, seeds or transplants, as some are fall blooming but should be planted in spring.

And above all, especially if you're new to garden catalogs, *remember the lovely pictures in the catalog are of mature plants at their best*. Yours won't look that way for a year or two so don't panic or pull yours out of the ground. Keep trying—that's what gardeners do, and gardening catalogs are there to support our efforts and lure us into experimenting!

# Pond Fertilization

It's almost February and most of us are thinking about fertilizing our fruit and pecan trees, but it is also time to make your first application of pond fertilizer. We want to begin pond fertilization this time of year to get ahead of weed growth that may become a problem later in the season. After the initial fertilization you need to make three more applications at three-week intervals followed up by monthly applications, if needed, based on water clarity.

Most folks don't think about fertilizing their pond until later in the season when weeds or filamentous algae becomes a problem. Weeds and filamentous algae grow much better when pond water is clear.



Pond fertilization boosts the overall food chain in the pond by increasing the phytoplankton in the water, which feeds the zooplankton, which feed the baby fish. This algae bloom also makes the water stained which reduces the amount of sunlight that penetrates to the pond bottom, which prohibits weed and filamentous algae growth.

There are some cases in which ponds do not need to be fertilized. If you are not fishing and removing fish from the pond there is no need to fertilize it. If you have a large amount of water flowing through the pond then fertilizer has minimum impact because most of it is running downstream. If you have a catfish pond and are feeding the fish you don't have to fertilize unless you have a weed problem, then you may want to consider fertilizing as a weed management tool. There are several types of pond fertilizers available at local farm supply stores. Check with them and make sure you read and follow directions on any pond fertilizers you purchase.

For more information about farm pond fertilization, please contact the St. Clair County Extension office at (205) 338-9416.

*Source: Dan Porch, County Extension Coordinator, Blount County*

## Rain Barrel Workshop

Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Pell City Civic Center

10 a.m.—2 p.m.

Cost: \$40

*(includes lunch & rain barrel)*

**Please pre-register by Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>**



Registration forms available at the Extension office or online at [www.aces.edu/StClair](http://www.aces.edu/StClair). For more information, please contact regional Extension agent, Charles Pinkston, at (205) 338-9416 or email [pinksch@aces.edu](mailto:pinksch@aces.edu).

*This workshop is being presented by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, St. Clair County office in partnership with the Middle Coosa Watershed Project and the Coosa Basin Clean Water Partnership*



# Agent Spotlight



## Bethany O'Rear

### Regional Extension Agent

Commercial Horticulture, Home Grounds,  
Gardens & Home Pests

**B**ethany O'Rear joined the Alabama Cooperative Extension System this summer. She currently serves as a Regional Extension Agent in the area of Commercial Horticulture, Home Grounds, Gardens and Home Pests. Prior to coming to Extension, she worked for a landscape contractor in Birmingham for 10 years as a nursery manager and purchasing agent. She is a native of Hayden, Alabama and a graduate of Hayden High School. She received her Bachelor's degree in Horticulture from Auburn University.



*Bethany talks with elementary students about growing fruit in their backyard*

**B**ethany lives in Hayden with her husband, Cliff, and their two children, Elijah, who is 8 years old, and Isaac who is 5 years old. She is housed in Jefferson County at the C. Beaty Hanna Horticulture and Environmental Center but also serves the Birmingham Metro area, which includes St. Clair County. She serves as president of the Alabama Nursery and Landscape Association and is a member of the Alabama Farmers Federation Greenhouse, Nursery and Sod Committee. When she's not working, Bethany enjoys vegetable gardening, reading, and scrapbooking.

**I**f Bethany can be of assistance, please contact her by calling the St. Clair County Extension office at (205) 338-9416 or email her at [bao0004@aces.edu](mailto:bao0004@aces.edu). She will be happy to assist you.

### *Fireplace Safety continued from page 2*

- > Ensure the vents are unobstructed and able to do their job.

Professional installation by a qualified technician is essential to the proper performance and safety of a hearth product and its venting system. Unlike a malfunctioning refrigerator, a hearth product that doesn't do its job properly can have serious consequences. Many specialty retailers offer installation by factory-trained and/or nationally certified staff. To verify if an installer is certified, contact the National Fireplace Institute (NFI) at [www.nficertified.org](http://www.nficertified.org), or to verify factory training, use the hearth product manufacturer directory at [www.hpba.org](http://www.hpba.org) for contact information.

### **HEARTH RETAILERS ARE AN IMPORTANT RESOURCE**

All hearth products, not just fireplaces, need to be maintained and operated properly in order to function safely and perform at their best. To fully understand the necessary steps involved in proper operation, read the manufacturer's instruction manual for the hearth product and consult with a local specialty retailer for input and guidance. A specialty retailer is an important resource. To locate a specialty retailer, go to [www.hpba.org](http://www.hpba.org).

*Source: Hearth, Patio, & Barbeque Association*

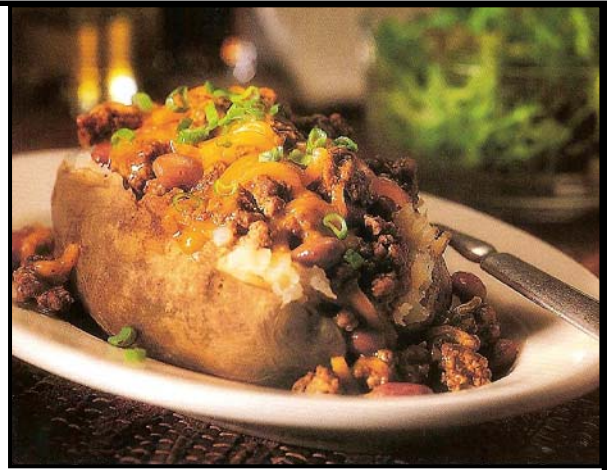
## Visit us on the World Wide Web!

[www.aces.edu/StClair](http://www.aces.edu/StClair)



# Beef Chili 'N Cheddar Topped Potatoes

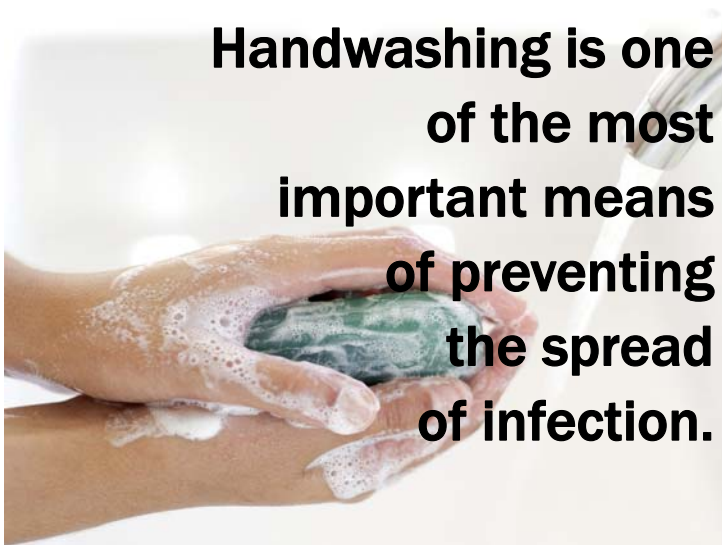
- 1 ½ lbs. ground beef
- 4 medium (8 oz. each) baking potatoes
- 1 Tbsp. chili powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 can (15 oz.) chili beans
- 1 ½ cups cheddar cheese, shredded
- ¼ cup sliced green onions



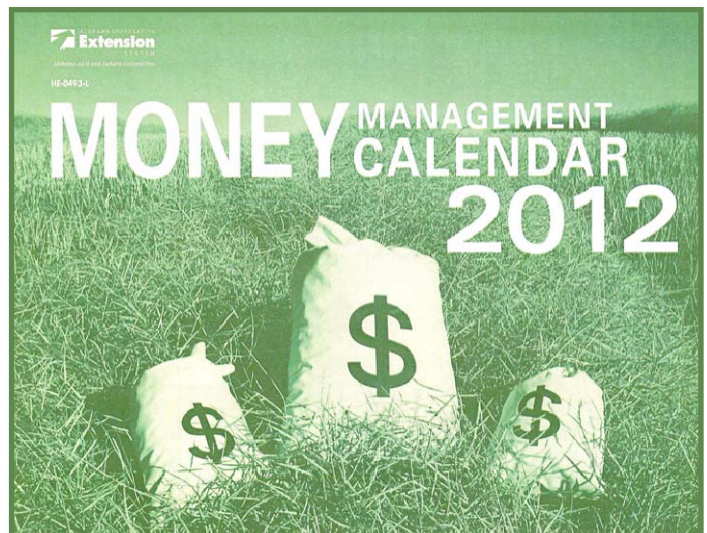
- 1.) Pierce potatoes with fork. Microwave on HIGH 11 to 13 minutes or until tender, rotating ¼ turn after 6 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes.
- 2.) Meanwhile in large skillet, brown ground beef over medium-high heat 6 to 8 minutes or until beef is no longer pink, breaking up into ¾-inch pieces. Pour off drippings; stir in chili powder and salt. Add beans and 1 cup cheese; cook and stir until heated through.
- 3.) Cut a slit in potatoes; fluff pulp with fork. Season potatoes with salt and pepper, if desired. Spoon equal amounts of beef mixture over each potato. Top with remaining cheese and green onions. Yield: 4 servings.

*Note: You may substitute a can of chili with beans instead of using beef, chili powder, salt and chili beans.*

**Handwashing is one  
of the most  
important means  
of preventing  
the spread  
of infection.**



—U. S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention



**Stop by or call for your  
FREE copy today!**

***“The great pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do.”***

*~Walter Bagehot*

# Extension Publication Feature

I would like to introduce a new section of the *Extension Newsletter*. Each issue will now feature a publication offered by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. We have a wealth of research-based information on hand that you may not be aware of. Hopefully this new feature will shed more light on what is available. You may pick up a copy at our office or publications can be ordered or download by visiting our website at [www.aces.edu/StClair](http://www.aces.edu/StClair). Just click on publications at the top and then search for the name or number of the publication you are looking for in the box provided.

In this first feature I would like to showcase one of our newest publications, *Communicating with Your Teen: Social Networking & Cyberbullying*. This publication is part of our Principles of Parenting series.

If you are a parent of a teen, you know teens are very comfortable with, and often prefer, using electronic forms of communication. Teens of today will more likely text you than call you. They would rather communicate with friends via a social networking site such as Facebook or MySpace than send an “old-fashioned” email. Teens are into instant messaging, blogging, and sharing photos and videos online.

Online social networking provides a way for teens to connect with friends, as well as to express themselves and explore their interests. Most teens will tell you that time online does not take away from time they spend with friends; however, some research shows that electronic connections may be reducing teens’ interest in communicating with their friends face to face. This trend may produce long-term consequences for teens, especially in their relationships with others, such as family members and coworkers.

Experts at one time believed that talking with others online was taking away from teens’ “real” friendships, but experts have discovered that social networking sites such as Facebook and the ability to instant message have actually increased teens’ communication with their real friends. These more recent methods of communicating online encourage youth to connect with existing friends, and new studies show that most teens are communicating online with current friends, not strangers.

But the tone of the online conversations matters. While more teens are using networking sites to connect with their friends, the type of feedback teens receive about themselves online can be good or bad. When the feedback is positive, teens feel better about themselves, but when the feedback is negative, this can harm their well-being and self-esteem. Many of the hurtful things said online or electronically would not be said face to face because people are typically more polite in person.



The challenge for parents and other caring adults is to keep teens safe, both physically and emotionally. We want teens to use online social networking as a way to maintain healthy, meaningful connections with others. Although instant messaging and social networking sites are great ways for teens to stay in touch with friends and extended family members, especially those who live far away, online communication can compete with in-person communication and can also be a powerful way for teens to bully other teens. Parents need to take an active role in monitoring their teens’ social networking and other electronic communication and should talk with their teens about being online.

Did you know that many experts think that cyberbullying occurs more often than does bullying someone in person? Twenty-five percent of teens report being victims of cyberbullying and only 30% of kids who know about cyberbullying said they would report it to a parent or other adult. Because a lot of cyberbullying takes place at home when a teen is on the computer, it is important that parents know about cyberbullying and how they can get involved to prevent it.

Request this publication so that you can learn more about how to communicate with your teen when it comes to social networking and cyberbullying.

Source: HE-0939 *Communicating With Your Teen: Social Networking & Cyberbullying*



# Cooking Smart Class

Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup> & Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>

9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

St. Clair County Extension Auditorium

Lunch Provided

The goal of this program is to teach parents the knowledge and skills needed to prepare healthy meals at home to balance their calorie intake, which is essential for weight management and obesity prevention.

To accommodate as many people as possible, the class will be offered on two different days. Please choose a date that will work best with your schedule and pre-register no later than Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>. Registration forms are available at the Extension office or may be downloaded from our website at [www.aces.edu/StClair](http://www.aces.edu/StClair). Each class is limited to 18, due to space limitations. For more information, please contact Regional Extension Agents Jennifer Dutton or Angela Treadaway by phone at (205) 338-9416 or email Jennifer at [jld0021@aces.edu](mailto:jld0021@aces.edu) or Angela at [treadas@aces.edu](mailto:treadas@aces.edu).



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