



Alabama Cooperative Extension System  
St. Clair County Office

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Dear Friends of Extension,

HAPPY SPRING!! After such a bitterly cold winter and the nice warm up that we experienced recently, I'm sure you're like me—you have a severe case of spring fever! And, if you also love to garden, I know you're ready to get outside and start planting. If so, you will find lots of information about home gardening in this issue as well as a list of Extension resources available.

We are so excited to share that our Generations Online Program has had an overwhelming response, with 100+ people already on the waiting list. Since it is a one-on-one, self-paced class, please be patient with us. The peer coaches have been busy scheduling appointments and you should hear from them soon if your name is on our list.

Until next time,

*Lee Ann Clark*

## Financial Security for All Community Page



The **Financial Security for All Community of Practice**, a virtual community led by twelve Extension professionals from across the country, has over 260 members from Land Grant Universities in 44 states and one territory. Members are organized in three major subject matter areas—Financial Security in Later Life, Financial Literacy for Youth, and Financial Stability. They develop resources, provide peer-reviewed Frequently Asked Questions and Featured Resources, and answer Ask the Expert questions.



Financial security, the ability to meet day-to-day expenses while saving and investing for tomorrow, is a lifelong goal for most individuals and families. The national Financial Security for All team began collaborative work to provide consumers a source for reliable and up-to-date financial and consumer information through a knowledge base of commonly asked questions that have science-based, peer reviewed answers.

Online learning lessons have been developed to create self-paced learning objects that youth and adults can use to further enhance their knowledge in particular areas. The newest lessons being developed are for "Bankruptcy Education" and "Getting Motivated for Estate Planning."

Visit [www.eXtension.org](http://www.eXtension.org) to learn more about how to successfully manage your money and resources.

# Care of Easter Lilies

Each year, more and more Alabamians enjoy fresh flowers and flowering potted plants in their homes at holidays and for special occasions. Producers are growing higher quality plants today, and they are available from a wide variety of retail outlets.

Fresh flowers and flowering potted plants have a limited life, but, with proper care, your enjoyment of fresh flowers and plants can be extended from several days to several weeks. Proper care and handling are important, but selecting a high quality flower or plant in the retail outlet is also important.

The following care and handling tips may help you better select and care for your Easter lily. The longer you can enjoy them in your home, the better the value for your money

## Common Name. Easter Lily

**Scientific Name.** *Lilium longiflorum*

**Bloom Season.** Early to mid-spring. Available before the Easter season.

**Flower Color.** White flowers with yellow anthers. You can remove the anthers, as they reduce the life of the bloom. Take care when removing them, though, because they can stain fingers and clothing.

**Varieties or Cultivars.** Nellie White and Ace are two excellent lilies. The Easter lily can reach a height of 2 to 4 feet, depending on the variety or cultivar.

**Foliage.** Waxy, thin, pointed green leaves emerge out of the Easter lily stalk.

**Flowers.** Large, trumpet-shaped flowers radiate from all sides of the top of the plant. One lily can produce from three to eight flowers, generally once each year. It is difficult to make the lily re-flower. It is best to discard the plant after the flowers fade and die.

**History.** The Easter lily grows naturally along the coast of Okinawa. Some Japanese refer to the Easter lily as the “gun lily” because of the shape of the flower. Japan closed its borders to the western world in the 1600s and 1700s, so the Easter lily was introduced to the West only in 1819. In the Christian faith, the Easter lily’s white flower represents purity and newness in life.

**Plant selection.** Check the following list when choosing an Easter lily:

- Dark green foliage all the way to the base of the plant.
- Buds in the “puffy white” stage. This means that they are showing color (puffy white) but not fully open. Flowers will open relatively quickly in the warmth of the home if they are purchased in the puffy white stage. Open flowers will last a few days less than ones purchased in the puffy white stage.
- A plant that can support its own weight and does not need a stake or wire in the pot to support it.
- A plant without disease or insect problems—disfigured or discolored new or older leaves (shriveled or yellowed leaves), or damaged stems, leaves, or flowers.



**Plant care.** After bringing the plant home, you need to take several steps to keep it healthy and flowering. While all plants and flowers have a limited life, you should enjoy an Easter lily for 2 to 3 weeks by following these recommended care and handling tips.

**Light.** Bright, indirect sunlight is recommended to keep the plant alive, but direct sunlight will cause the blooms to fade. Hold the plant indoors in indirect sunlight (through the curtain) and display it for shorter periods of time in areas of less light, such as on the dining room table.

**Water.** Water only as the plant needs it, when the potting mix becomes visibly dry. Irrigate with enough water to allow some to come out of the bottom of the pot. Be careful not to allow the potting mix to become too dry, as it will not easily become wet again. Be sure that the plant does not stand in water, or disease problems may result.

**Fertilizer.** Fertilizer will not be needed on lilies.

**Temperature.** Lilies will survive best at a minimum temperature of 60°F and a maximum temperature of 80°F.

**Maintenance.** Remove all dead leaves and faded blooms and keep the foliage dry to help prevent disease and insect problems.

**Usage.** The Easter lily cannot be grown outside in Alabama. It is difficult to force the lily to flower again. It is best to discard the plant after the flowers fade and to replace it with a new plant during the next Easter season.

Source: ANR-830 Care of Fresh Flowers and Holiday Plants



## St. Clair County Master Gardener Association Activities Report

The St. Clair County Master Gardener Association was very busy during the months of November and December. Several of us assisted with the new class at the Extension Office. We also worked at least two days each week on the project at Moody High School. It involved a wheelchair accessible path to the outdoor classroom next to a small stream in the middle of a circle of large trees. The project also included a butterfly garden, a small green house, an amphitheater with stage for the band and drama clubs. We have also developed a bog garden and fish pond at the student's request. The final element of the project will be a nature trail along the stream and through the woods with major plants and trees labeled with common and scientific names.



*Moody High School Project*



*Moody City Hall and Police Station Project*

We stopped work on that project in order to enjoy a Christmas Party/Meeting during which we voted on new officers for 2011 and welcomed the new interns from the recently graduated class. Regional Extension Agent, Charles Pinkston, attended our meeting and passed out certificates to the new graduates. The new officers for 2011 include: Don Patterson—President; Patricia Peoples—Vice-President; Donnie Olis—Secretary; Pat DeMotte—Assistant Secretary; Gloria McLeod—Treasurer; Bill Dean—Assistant Treasurer; Patricia and Frank Peoples—Representatives to the State Advisory Board.

During the January meeting the new officers were sworn in and committees were organized and began planning activities for the new year. We have several projects requested and planned to begin as soon as the weather allows. We also hope to be of assistance to the Extension office and to the Birmingham Master Gardeners who are planning the state convention for 2012.

*Submitted by: Nola Shiflett*



## St. Clair Co. Farmers Federation Women's Division Quilt Fair

**Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**10 a.m. until noon**

**ALFA Building—Ashville**

**FREE Admission**

*\*4-H Quilt Projects Will Also Be On Display*

# The Gardening Corner

By: Tony Glover, Regional Extension Agent  
Commercial Horticulture  
Home Grounds, Gardens & Home Pests



## Planting on Good Friday

**Question:** I am a native of Ohio that recently relocated to Alabama. I want to plant a vegetable garden and my neighbor says I should plant on Easter weekend. What is your advice on planting times for vegetables?

**Answer:** I grew up in Alabama and have heard this maxim all my life but never knew the basis for this advice. Nevertheless, I can confidently tell you that this is not always good advice because the date Good Friday falls on changes from year to year. When I researched the question the only old world reference I found was related to planting potatoes. It seems there was great resistance to growing potatoes as a food crop in Ireland because potatoes are not mentioned in the bible. They decided if they planted them on Good Friday the potatoes would be blessed and alright to eat. The Irish soon came to depend on potatoes too heavily, this fact combined with political oppression led to the potato famine which in turn led to massive starvation and emigration (mostly to the United States).

People that immigrate here bring their traditions with them but sometimes they get changed a little. Such is the case here because in the south Easter comes too late (most years) to plant potatoes and is closer to the time to plant other warm season vegetables. Therefore, in the south this tradition was transferred to all vegetables and it is considered good luck to plant on Good Friday.

The average frost free date is sometime between March 30 and April 5. Therefore, the risk for a frost is relatively low in 2011 since Good Friday is April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Although this year Good Friday will likely be a good date to plant it is safer to base planting on soil temperatures rather than a lucky date. The soil temperatures needed for warm season vegetable seed germination is closer to 70 degrees F. You can purchase a soil thermometer to check temperatures at most garden centers. If you want to plant a little early, plant in raised beds covered with plastic to warm the soil. Commercial farmers use black plastic but you can cover with clear plastic for several days and remove before planting.

For information on soil temperature needs of various vegetables visit our Extension website at <http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1061/>



*"I am only one, but I am one.*

*I cannot do everything, but I can do something.*

*And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do."* —Edward Everett Hale

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.

# Spring is Time for Termite Swarms



Spring will soon be here in Alabama, and an entomologist with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System says spring will bring out a serious insect pest. Dr. Xing Ping Hu says termites will be swarming in coming weeks.

“While native termite species can swarm any time of the year, spring is peak swarming season for these pests in Alabama,” she says. It is during these first warm months of the year that county Extension agents get the most calls about swarms and infestations.

Hu explains that termite swarms are composed of winged male and female termites. “They fly from their home colonies to mate, disperse and start colonies of their own,” says Hu. She notes that swarming serves several other purposes. Swarming functions to mix the termite gene pool and spread the species, and it helps termites find new sources of wood to attack.

“In-ground tree stumps, downed trees, moist wooden fences, unprotected homes and mulch around houses are all food sources favored by termites.” Alabama is home to several different types of termites including native subterranean types as well as Formosan subterranean termites. Hu says that most native subterranean termites swarm during the day, usually on a sunny, still, later morning one or two days after a rain. These native termites are dark bodied and have gray wings.

In contrast, she says that Formosan subterranean termites,

which are yellowish colored with tan wings, swarm in the evening to early night and will be attracted to lights. They are often found in window sills and swimming pools the day after a swarm.

Swarming means that the parent colony is mature and healthy enough to reproduce. Before swarming, workers and soldiers usually make tunnels upward to a higher location such as above the windows of homes or up tree trunks.

She says that the colonies infesting trees construct a kind of launch pad, while colonies infesting homes usually chew tiny exit holes through sheetrock walls. “Homeowners should have their homes thoroughly inspected where swarms have been reported, particularly if the termites swarm within the home.”

She says because of swarming, spring is the best time for termite inspection. Homeowners should be on the lookout for signs of mud tunnels and earth spots on walls, foundations and columns.

## Home Gardening Information Available



- **Free Soil Sample Boxes** available at the St. Clair County Extension Office. Cost to have analyzed is \$7/per sample.
- **Master Gardener/Horticulture Hotline #1-877-252-4769** Call toll-free, choose menu #5 for our area. Available Monday-Thursday, beginning April 4<sup>th</sup>, from 9 a.m.—3:30 p.m.
- **Home Garden Website:** [www.aces.edu/homegarden](http://www.aces.edu/homegarden)
- **Contact an Expert.** Regional Extension Agents Charles Pinkston and Tony Glover are available to answer your home horticulture, home garden and home pest management questions. They can be reached by phone at (205) 338-9416 or by email: Charles—[pinkscb@aces.edu](mailto:pinkscb@aces.edu) or Tony—[gloveta@aces.edu](mailto:gloveta@aces.edu)
- **Free publications** available at the St. Clair County Extension office, located on the lower level of the St. Clair County Courthouse in Pell City, and on our website at [www.aces.edu/StClair](http://www.aces.edu/StClair). Just click the *Publications* link at the top of the page and type in what you are searching for.

# New Finding: Heavy People May Also Face Higher Bone-Loss Risk

The last excuse for not losing weight is now being seriously challenged. Experts once assumed that overweight people, despite the many factors working against them, could at least be reasonably certain of one thing: healthy bones.

Fat mass and body weight were credited with preserving bone mineral density and reducing fracture rates—or so they thought. Now, that widely prevalent view is being challenged.

“We have always thought that overweight people didn’t have bone problems because carrying that extra weight around caused their bones to strengthen,” says Dr. Robert Keith, System nutrition and health specialist and Auburn University professor of nutrition and food science.

Experts assume that this rule applied at least up to the point at which severe obesity caused people to become almost or entirely sedentary.

“At this point, their bones began to deteriorate—we’ve known that for a long time,” Keith says. As researchers are learning, among obese people, this problem appears to occur much sooner, even among only moderately obese people.

Excess body fat, known as adipose tissue, is cited as the culprit. “Body fat is not an inert tissue as scientists first believed,” Keith says. In fact, the opposite is true. “What they’re finding is that adipose tissue secretes a number of inflammatory chemicals,” Keith says.

These pro-inflammatory chemicals appear to contribute to increased activity of osteoclast cells, which release enzymes responsible for bone degradation. “We’re finding that people who acquire a certain level of body fat, even if they are only moderately obese and somewhat physically active, are secreting chemicals that are linked with bone-density loss.”

Predictably, the problem appears to be even worse among seriously obese people who have also become sedentary. Researchers believe prescribing anti-inflammatory medications may provide one solution. But diet may also serve an important role too. “Some facets of our diet have pro-inflammatory effects, while others produce just the opposite effect,” Keith says.

Foods with pro-inflammatory elements that may contribute to bone loss appear to include the following:



- Refined sugars, candies, pastries and sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Highly processed carbohydrates, such as donuts and potato chips.
- Oils, namely oils derived from hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated fats
- Processed meats, such as hot dogs, luncheon meats, and sausage
- Saturated fats
- Trans fatty acids and margarine

On the other hand, foods cited for their anti-inflammatory properties include the following:

- Beans and legumes
- Beverages such as green tea and red wine
- Fish such as cod, halibut, herring, oysters, salmon and tuna
- Fruits, especially apples, berries, and cherries
- Herbs and spices, such as basil, cinnamon, ginger, mint, oregano, and thyme
- Nuts, such as almonds, hazelnuts and walnuts
- Oils, such as canola and extra-virgin olive oil
- Savory snacks, such as dark chocolate
- Vegetables, especially bell peppers, broccoli, cabbage, garlic, greens, onions, and sweet potatoes

Keith says it may be possible for at-risk people to improve their condition by consuming as many of the anti-inflammatory foods and beverages as possible—albeit in moderate amounts—while cutting back on pro-inflammatory products.

The daily portion size of red wine should not exceed 5 fluid ounces for women and 10 fluid ounces for men, Keith says.

# Limits to Leftovers



Americans are economizing and stretching every dollar. As many consumers make their dollar go farther by preparing more meals at home and saving leftovers, it is essential to follow safe food handling practices. This includes discarding refrigerated leftover food within 3 to 4 days.



## FIGHT BAC

### When heating & storing leftovers

- ◇ Always wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- ◇ Temperatures between 40° F. and 140° F. allow bacteria to grow rapidly. Refrigerate cooked leftovers promptly—within 2 hours and 1 hour when the temperatures are over 90° F. Use an appliance thermometer to ensure that your refrigerator is at 40° F. or below.
- ◇ Divide leftovers into smaller portions and store in shallow containers in the refrigerator. Hot food can be placed directly in the refrigerator.
- ◇ Leftovers should be reheated to an internal temperature of at least 165° F. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature. Sauces, soups, and gravies should be reheated by bringing them to a boil.
- ◇ When microwaving leftovers, make sure there are no cold spots in food (where bacteria can survive). Cover food, stir and rotate for even cooking. If there is no turntable, rotate the dish by hand once or twice during cooking.



Buying food in bulk can be a money-saver. Remember, whatever the quantity of food—safe handling is a must! Large packages of perishables like raw ground meat and poultry products can be refrigerated for 1-2 days, but then the food should be cooked or in the freezer.



Temperature and time cause bacteria to grow which is why it is so important your refrigerator be cold enough and you not keep leftovers too long.

There is a limit to how long food can be safely kept!



## FIGHT BAC

### Clean, Separate, Cook & Chill

#### Clean

Wash hands and surfaces often.

#### Separate

Don't cross-contaminate!

#### Cook

Cook to proper temperatures.

#### Chill

Refrigerate promptly!

Source: Partnership for Food Safety Education

# Test Your Salt Savvy

Salt is in the news a lot lately. Most reports say Americans are consuming too much of it. How much do you REALLY know about salt? Test your “salt savvy” with the following quiz!

Before you read further, you may wonder, “What’s the difference between ‘salt’ and ‘sodium’?” According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Sodium chloride is the chemical name for salt.
- The words salt and sodium are not exactly the same, yet these words are often used in place of each other. For example, the Nutrition Facts Panel uses “sodium,” whereas the front of the package may say “low salt.”
- Ninety percent of the sodium we consume is in the form of salt.

Take the following quiz and test your salt savvy!

## Questions:

- 1) **How much sodium does the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science recommend people strive to eat daily?**
  - a. 1,500 mg
  - b. 2,300 mg
  - c. 2,400 mg
  - d. 3,000 mg
- 2) **What is the approximate average daily sodium intake for persons age 2 and up in the United States?**
  - a. 800 mg
  - b. 1,500 mg
  - c. 2,300 mg
  - d. 3,400 mg
- 3) **Which of the following are benefits from reducing the amount of sodium in our diets?**
  - a. Lowered blood pressure
  - b. Reduced risk of heart disease

- c. Reduced risk of stroke
- d. Reduced risk of gastric cancer
- e. All of the above

- 4) **Approximately how much of our sodium comes from processed foods?**
  - a. 45%
  - b. 55%
  - c. 65%
  - d. 75%
- 5) **How much sodium is in a teaspoon of salt?**
  - a. 1,300 mg
  - b. 2,300 mg
  - c. 3,300 mg
- 6) **Can foods be high in salt without tasting salty?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 7) **Based on the Nutrition Facts label at right, how much sodium is in 1 cup of the food?**
  - a. 30 mg
  - b. 250 mg
  - c. 470 mg

## Answers:

- 1) **a. 1,500 mg.** *The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005* recommended consuming less than 2,300 mg of sodium for the general population 2 or more years of age. The 2005 Guidelines also identified at-risk subgroups within the general population—persons with hypertension, African Americans, and middle-aged and older adults—and recommended a sodium intake no greater than 1,500 mg per day for them.

New analysis of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Data shows this 1,500 mg recommenda-

tion would apply to 69 percent of U.S. adults with the 2010 Dietary



Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) now recommending 1,500 mg per day be the guideline for the general population. The DGAC recommends this change occur gradually as time is required to adjust taste perception in the general population.

Unfortunately, there isn’t an easy test to determine whether a person is salt sensitive and whether reducing salt intake now would be beneficial later. Whether or not a person reduces salt intake to 1,500 mg, some reduction in salt is probably a good idea for most of us.

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)		
Servings Per Container 2		
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>		
<b>Calories</b> 250	Calories from Fat 110	
<b>% Daily Value*</b>		
<b>Total Fat</b> 12g		<b>18%</b>
<b>Saturated Fat</b> 3g		<b>15%</b>
<b>Trans Fat</b> 3g		
<b>Cholesterol</b> 30mg		<b>10%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 470mg		<b>20%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 31g		<b>10%</b>
<b>Dietary Fiber</b> 0g		<b>0%</b>
<b>Sugars</b> 5g		
<b>Protein</b> 5g		
<b>Vitamin A</b>		<b>4%</b>
<b>Vitamin C</b>		<b>2%</b>
<b>Calcium</b>		<b>20%</b>
<b>Iron</b>		<b>4%</b>
* 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
Sat 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

- 2) **d. 3,400 mg.** The average daily sodium intake for age 2 and up is 3,436 mg. This amount equals about 1.5 teaspoons of salt per day.
- 3) **e. All of the above**
- 4) **d. 75 percent.** The natural sodium content of food, on average, accounts for only 10 percent of total intake. Discretionary salt use (i.e., table and cooking salt) provides another 5 to 10 percent of the total. About 75 percent is derived from salt added during processing by manufacturers. The most effective strategies for reducing sodium, therefore, are reducing sodium during food processing, and for individuals to choose more fresh, less processed items and to use less salt during food preparation.
- 5) **b. 2,300 mg.**
- 6) **a. Yes.** For example, a food can taste sweet and still contain a significant amount of salt. The best way to determine the amount of salt in a food is to check the Nutrition Facts Label.
- 7) **c. 470 mg.** When reading nutrition labels, it is important to check the amount of sodium in a serving size you are consuming. For example, if you ate 1.5 cups of this food, you would consume 705 mg of sodium.

### To Reduce the Salt in Your Diet, Try These Tips

- Check food labels for salt and compare brands and varieties for those lower in salt. Many manufacturers are in the process of producing lower salt foods—continue to check labels periodically for lowered amounts of sodium foods.
- Eat more fresh foods (fruits, vegetables, lean meats, seafood, and poultry). Frozen vegetables are typically lower in sodium than canned vegetables.
- Look for low-sodium products or foods without added salt to replace regular higher-sodium foods. For example, check for no-added-salt or low-sodium versions of broth, vegetables, etc.
- Avoid salting food during cooking or reduce the amount of salt you add in cooking. An exception might be yeast breads where the salt works together with the yeast in the rising process.
- Request salt not be added to your food when eating out.
- Use flavorings other than salt, such as spices and herbs, citrus juices and zest, and flavored vinegars.

*Source: Alice Henneman, MS, RD, University of Nebraska—Lincoln; Lancaster County Extension*

## Make-Ahead Crumbled Beef

*1 batch makes enough for 4 to 6 servings*

Think of how often you could use already-browned and ready-to-go ground beef “crumbles” in recipes such as soup and sauces. Ground beef may be browned ahead of time and frozen for quick and convenient use in spaghetti sauce, chili, sloppy joes, etc. Here’s how to make your own and keep them frozen for ready access!

### Basic Directions

Use 90% lean and higher ground beef for these directions; 16 ounces raw ground beef yields equally to 12 ounces fully cooked ground beef crumbles.

1. In general, brown no more than 1 pound of ground beef at a time. As ground beef browns, some meat juices are released. If you overload the skillet, moisture is trapped and meat is steamed rather than browned.
2. Brown lean ground beef in large non-stick skillet over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes or until beef is not pink, breaking beef up into 3/4-inch crumbles. Remove beef with slotted spoon.
3. Add one or more of the antioxidant foods and spices listed in number 2 under “Tips for Success” below to the beef as it is browning to aid in flavor retention during freezing. **Note:** You may find it most versatile and time-saving to add one chopped medium onion to the beef as it is browning. So many recipes call for both beef and onions.



### Tips for Success

1. When making beef crumbles for later use, if possible, avoid using iron or aluminum cooking utensils as these speed flavor changes.
2. Brown crumbles with onion or unroasted bell peppers which have antioxidant properties and slow flavor changes. OR, brown the meat, seasoned lightly, with one or more of these herbs and spices that have antioxidant properties: rosemary, sage, marjoram, thyme, mace, allspice and cloves. Use the seasoning and amount that will be suitable for the recipes you

(continued on next page)

## Make-Ahead Crumbled Beef Continued

make. Add more seasoning when you prepare the food, if needed, as freezing may affect the intensity of the flavor of spices and herbs.

3. Do not use salt; add salt later when meat is used in your recipe. Salt may hasten undesirable flavor changes in beef crumbles. Freezing the crumbles as part of a sauce, such as spaghetti sauce, also helps preserve flavor. Make sure the sauce covers the entire meat surface.
4. Cool and refrigerate beef crumbles promptly in shallow containers. Containers may be placed in refrigerator before beef has cooled entirely. Loosely cover refrigerated container until beef has cooled.
5. Promptly transfer the cooled beef crumbles to plastic “freezer,” NOT “storage” bags. Eliminate air pockets. Freezer bags are thicker than storage bags and will keep the food fresh longer. Label and date packages; include amount of beef or number of servings.
6. Speed freezing and hasten thawing by freezing crumbles in a thinner, flattened shape in freezer bags. Do not stack packages—the quality will be better if the beef freezes faster. A rounded shape takes longer to thaw through to the middle. Flattened packages also will stack better in your freezer. Place on a flat surface, such as a metal pan or cookie sheet until frozen. Then, remove and stack.
7. Use frozen beef crumbles within 2 to 3 months for best flavor and quality. Freeze at 0 degrees F or lower.
8. **IMPORTANT:** Unless you plan to use beef crumbles within a day or two, freeze crumbles promptly after cooling for best quality and safety. If stored in the refrigerator for a day or two, transfer to a tightly covered container after they have cooled.

*Source: Alice Henneman, MS, RD, University of Nebraska—Lincoln; Lancaster County Extension*

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## Coney Island Taters

Make quick work of this main dish by using one batch of frozen crumbled meat mixture, made with chopped onion, instead of preparing the ground beef and onion from scratch. You may need to heat frozen crumbles longer than the time cited in the recipe; heat until steamy hot throughout.



- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 cup prepared barbeque sauce
- 2 large all-purpose potatoes
- 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup sliced green onions (optional)

In large skillet, brown ground beef and onion over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes or until beef is no longer pink, breaking up into 3/4-inch crumbles. Pour off drippings. Stir barbeque sauce into beef; cover and simmer over medium-low heat 10 minutes.

Meanwhile pierce potatoes in several places with fork. Place on paper towel in microwave oven. Microwave on HIGH to 10—11 minutes or until tender, rearranging potatoes halfway. **TIP:** Some potatoes may become tender before this—start checking a few minutes before time is up.

Cut potatoes lengthwise into quarters. Cut each quarter crosswise in half. Arrange 4 pieces of potato on each serving plate; top with beef mixture. Sprinkle with cheese; top with green onions, if desired.

Recipe courtesy of National Cattlemen’s Beef Association at <http://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com>.



# Agent Spotlight



**Henry Dorough**  
Regional Extension Agent,  
Animal Science and Forages

**H**enry Dorough joined the Alabama Cooperative Extension System 21 years ago. He currently serves as a Regional Extension Agent in the area of Animal Science and Forages. He is a native of Jacksonville, Florida and admits to being a Navy brat who traveled with his family a bit before settling in Alabama when his dad retired and moved the family to his home in Chambers County, AL when he was 13. Henry graduated from Valley High School and earned his B.S. degree in Animal Science and M.S. degree in Animal Nutrition both from Auburn University. He is a member of Epsilon Sigma Phi and the National Association of County Agricultural Agents where he serves as secretary.

**H**enry has one son named Matthew who is 18 years old and attends Sacred Heart Catholic School in Anniston. While away from his job he enjoys working on his farm, Boy Scouts, and backpacking. He has backpacked many miles of the Pinhoti and Appalachian Trails, the Sipsey Wilderness, Adirondack mountains of New York and the Sangre de Cristo mountains on the Philmont Boy Scout Ranch in Cimmaron, New Mexico.

**H**enry is now housed in St. Clair County, but also serves Calhoun, Chambers, Clay, Cleburne, Randolph, Talladega and Tallapoosa counties. He enjoys conducting on-farm demonstrations and product trials in pastures and hayfields, as well as conducting programs on fire ant management, sheep, goat, and beef cattle production. For more information about animal science and forages, please contact him at (205) 338-9416 or email at [dorouhd@aces.edu](mailto:dorouhd@aces.edu). He will be happy to assist you.



## Friend of 4-H Award

Mrs. Michelle Taylor



St. Clair County 4-H is proud to announce Mrs. Michelle Taylor as this issue's winner of the *Friend of 4-H Award* in recognition of her outstanding volunteer service. Michelle started volunteering with 4-H in St. Clair County in August, 2009 when she formed the *St. Clair County Home School Junior 4-H Club*. She believes 4-H is important and believes in teaching students the importance of their community and their health. She enjoys helping students learn things that are new to them, watching the expressions on their faces and how they soak up all of the interesting things they learn. Michelle is originally from Oklahoma where she participated in 4-H during her fifth grade year.

Michelle currently lives in the Chula Vista area of Pell City with her husband and daughter, Allison who is 13 years old. Her husband, Staff Sgt. Joel Taylor, is deployed in Afghanistan. She graduated from Minor High school in 1985 and attended college for awhile at UAB.

Her hobbies include reading and watching her daughter Allison play basketball and softball.

Congratulations Michelle for the countless hours you have dedicated to St. Clair County 4-H! If you would like to be a 4-H volunteer or nominate someone for this award, please contact the St. Clair County Extension office at (205) 338-9416.



*Mrs. Taylor leads 4-H Club meeting*

# Diabetes & Your Diet Day School

When: Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>

Where: St. Clair County Extension Office Auditorium

Time: 10 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Cost: FREE

Class Limit: 20

Lunch Provided for Registered Participants



This class is designed for you or someone you love that has been newly diagnosed with diabetes or just struggling to manage diabetes and their diet. The one day school will be taught by Jennifer Dutton, Regional Extension Agent and Registered Dietitian with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Topics to be covered include: Diabetic Meal Planning; Diabetic Menus & Recipes; Carb Counting; Portion Sizes; Glycemic Index & Glycemic Load; Weight Management; and Healthful Whole Grains.

Please call the St. Clair County Extension Office at (205) 338-9416 to register. Don't miss out! Space is limited, so call and register today!



*Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities*

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