

# Extension news

Surry County Center

May 2017

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## National Salsa Month

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Bites Newsletter, /fnh/healthy-bites



Salsas -- Spanish for the word "sauce" -- are low in calories, full of flavor, and available with a variety of ingredients. May is National Salsa Month, and the perfect way to celebrate is by experimenting with different salsa recipes. Salsas can be scrambled in eggs, dished as a garnish for chicken and fish, and served as an ice cream topping. Salsas are enjoyed for their intense flavors and colors. Check out these tips to make sensational salsas.

- **Spice up a meal or snack.** A combination of tomatoes, onions and peppers can add zest to chips. A mixture of fruit, herbs, onion, and pepper added to meat or fish can add unique flavors to dishes. There are a variety of salsa options for different preferences and dishes such as spicy, hot, sweet, savory, herbal and aromatic. All can make meals tasty without adding lots of calories.
- **Salsa ingredients and preparation tips.** Keep cut fruits, such as apples, pears, bananas and peaches, from turning brown by coating them with an acidic juice such as lemon, orange or pineapple juice. Or use a commercial produce protector such as Fruit-Fresh, and follow the manufacturer's directions. Cover and refrigerate cut fruit and veggies until ready to serve. Most salsas taste best if refrigerated for about an hour before serving to let flavors blend.
- **Serve salsa safely.** Perishable foods like dips, salsas, and cut fruit and vegetables should not sit at room temperature for more than two hours. Simply set out a smaller bowl and then replace it with another one when it is empty. Do not add fresh dip or salsa to dip or salsa that has been sitting out. Refrigerate and use up any that has not been served within three to four days of preparation.
- **Salsa canning basics.** Canning your own salsa recipe or changing the proportions of ingredients in a tested salsa recipe can be unsafe. The types and amounts of ingredients used, as well as the preparation method, are important considerations in how a salsa is canned. Improperly canned salsas or other tomato-pepper combinations have been implicated in more than one outbreak of botulism poisoning. If you don't have a tested recipe or proper canning equipment, you might try freezing your salsa. Be aware there may be changes in texture and flavor after freezing and thawing. Try freezing a small amount the first time. Herbs and spices may taste better if they are added fresh just before serving.
- **New to canning or need a refresher course?** The National Center for Food Preservation ([nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu)) has a lot of great resources, or come out our June 13th food preservation workshop.
- **Salsa recipe ideas.** Check out these salsa recipes, such as mango salsa, peach apple salsa and tomato salsa, from the National Center for Home Food Preservation at [http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_salsa.html](http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_salsa.html). Or contact us for a brochure.

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# Gardening for Beginners

There are numerous vegetables and herbs grown in our area, but some are easier than others. If you are a beginning gardener or are simply looking for a few easy crops, consider the following suggestions for your garden this year.

Herbs are easy to grow because they have few pest problems and are rarely bothered by deer. The key to a good herb garden is excellent drainage and lots of sun. Raised beds work well for herbs because they increase drainage and can be filled with a sandy soil mix. Mixing compost into the soil is beneficial, but fertilizers should be applied sparingly since high nutrient levels reduce flavor intensity.

Many herbs are perennial, meaning they live for several years and do not have to be replanted each season. Among the very easiest to grow are rosemary and chives. Rosemary grows into a large, evergreen shrub, often reaching 4' in height and width. Chives are much smaller plants with tubular, grass like leaves. Oregano and sage are also undemanding, but thyme is less tolerant of summer humidity and may need to be replanted every few years. Mint is very easy to grow, but also very invasive. It should be planted in a large pot where its rapidly spreading roots will stay contained. Now is a great time to plant perennial herbs in raised beds or containers.



Basil, dill, parsley, and cilantro are annual herbs. This means they live only one season and must be

planted each year. Basil requires warm weather, while dill, parsley, and cilantro thrive in the cooler temperatures of fall and spring. Basil is very easy to grow from seed and should be planted outdoors after threat of frost has passed. It does well in containers as long as it is watered regularly. Dill, parsley and cilantro can be planted now but produce better if planted in time to harvest in the spring. These

plants will not survive the heat of summer, but a second planting in September will provide flavorful herbs for fall and winter.

Like herbs, vegetables need plenty of sun and good drainage to thrive, though they prefer richer soils and regular watering. Raised beds work well for vegetables and should be amended with compost and fertilized with a time release fertilizer such as Osmocote or an organic fertilizer. If you have limited space, most vegetables grow well in large containers filled with potting soil; just remember to water them daily in the summer.

Unlike herbs, most vegetables are annuals and must be planted each season as seed or young plants. Some crops prefer cool weather and grow best in fall and spring. Easy to grow cool season vegetables such as loose leaf lettuce, broccoli, spring cabbage, and Swiss chard should be planted in March when temperatures are cool. Now is the time to plant summer vegetables.



Some of the easiest vegetables to grow are vigorous warm season

producers like peppers, watermelons, squash, and zucchini, which yield lots of fruits over a long season. Watermelons need plenty of room to grow and are often planted on mounds spaced 6'-8' apart. Set them out in May. Each vine will produce 2 to 4 melons, ripening around 90 days after planting. Squash, zucchini, and cucumbers can be set out in early May but should be protected if a late frost is expected. These crops generally do very well the first part of summer but often succumb to disease and insect problems by mid-July.

Peppers (both hot and sweet) and their relative, eggplant, are typically easy to grow and produce well into the fall. Tomatoes are more challenging, except cherry tomatoes which yield hundreds of small, sweet fruits throughout summer. These crops are best planted as young plants in early May in raised beds and even grow well in large containers.

# 4-H County Activity Day



It's time to start preparing for our 2017 Surry County's 4-H County Activity Day. This year's competition will take place on **Monday, May 8** at the Surry County Extension office.

Presentations will begin at 3:30 p.m. and youth will be able to sign up for a 15 minute time slot. Our county winners will be eligible for district competition at District Activity Day which will be held on **Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>** in Caswell County. Please mark these dates on your calendar. Also, there will be a talent and visual arts portion to County Activity Day. Come and showcase your talents through your art work being displayed, public speaking, or a unique song/dance. We have options for everyone! Registration due by May 5, 2017.

Also...if you are interested in doing a presentation but would like help putting it together, consider attending a 4-H County Council meeting where we will be working on 4-H Presentations. Please don't hesitate to call Whitney at (336) 401-8025 if you need further assistance. New members are welcome to participate too! You **MUST** present at the county level before you can be considered for district competition.

Registration Forms can be found online at: <http://surry.ces.ncsu.edu/categories/4-h-youth-development/> under 4-H Presentations. Due: May 5, 2017. Youth who participate will receive 4-H scholarship money. Winners who place will win more based on their level.

What is a 4-H Presentation? Below are two good YouTube videos that show you the basics of a 4-H Presentation to help get you started thinking about your own.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a\\_g26c9CGNE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_g26c9CGNE)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTytHTCkv8c>



Dobson - Thursday - 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
 Dobson Square Park  
 Elkin - Saturday - 9 a.m. to Noon  
 Town Hall Parking Lot  
 Mount Airy - Tuesday - 9:00 a.m. to Noon  
 Mill Creek General Store

**TSC TRACTOR SUPPLY CO.** **Clover Campaign**  
 TractorSupply.com

The spring Paper Clover Campaign at Tractor Supply Company will be held from April 26 to May 7. During this time, customers at Tractor Supply in Elkin and Mount Airy can choose to donate \$1.00 (or more) at the register to 4-H. You will get to put your name on a clover that will be displayed in the store windows. 100% of the proceeds will go directly to 4-H with 60% coming back to Surry County 4-H. These proceeds can be used to help send children to camp, fund youth scholarships, and to recognize 4-H youth for their accomplishments.

*Thank you for supporting 4-H!*



# Summer Explosion 2017

We will begin taking summer registration on **Tuesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-6:30 pm for enrolled 4-H members** at the Extension Center in Dobson. We will then open registration for **non-4-H members on Thursday, May 18 from 5:30-6:30**. If you are unsure of whether or not you are an enrolled 4-H member please call 336-401-8025 and we will be glad to answer that for you.

Registration will continue to be taken until all classes are full following the registration kickoff. If there is a must have class we encourage parents to come early. Look for a summer brochure coming soon!



## Three Food Preservation Workshops

*Pre-registration is required: call 336-401-8025*

### Freezing Foods 101

May 8th from Noon to 1:00 p.m.

We will learn how to freeze fresh fruits and vegetables for future use.

### Basic Food Preservation

June 13th from Noon to 1:00 p.m.

This is for the beginning canner or those who need a refresher course. We will focus on water bath and pressure canning.

### Preserve It and Serve It—Adult/Youth Workshop

June 8th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Cost \$15.00 for each team.

**Class Limit: 6 teams (6 adults and 6 youth)**

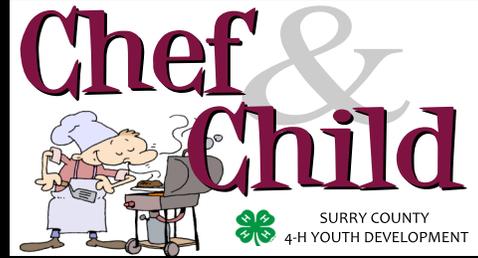
Do you know a young person, ages 9 and up, who enjoys food? Bring them to "Preserve It and Serve It" and learn together how to freeze and dry fruit and then how to use the finished products in delicious recipes. We will also learn about water bath canning. This is an introductory class and future classes may be planned based on interest levels.

## Dial Gauge Pressure Canner Checks



Canning season will soon be here. Make sure all of your equipment is ready before it's time for canning to begin. Call the

Extension Office at 336-401-8025 to make an appointment to have your dial gauge pressure canner checked at your convenience.



OPEN TO ALL YOUTH

## FREE EVENT!

June 20th to 22nd  
 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Learn to cook from a real chef when you participate in Surry County's Chef and Child experience. Chef Rob Creel will share recipes for some delicious meals and snacks during this hands-on opportunity.

Register by June 16, 2017 by calling 336-401-8025.



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Growing Herbs Workshop

May 2, 2017  
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Surry County Extension Center, Dobson

## Surry County Beekeepers Meeting

May 8, 2017 / 7:00 p.m.  
Surry County Extension Center, Dobson

## Freezing Foods 101

May 8, 2017 / 12:30 Noon - 1:00 p.m.  
Surry County Extension Center, Dobson

## 4-H County Activity Day

May 8, 2017 / 3:30 p.m.  
Surry County Extension Center, Dobson

## Master Gardener Asheville Field Trip

May 10 & 11, 2017  
Meet at Surry County Extension Center,  
Dobson

## 4-H Plant Sale Pick-Up

May 11, 2017 / 8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m.  
Surry County Extension Center, Dobson

## 4-H Summer Explosion Member Registration

May 16, 2017 / 5:30 p.m.—6:30 p.m.  
Surry County Extension Center, Dobson

## Diabetes & You

May 17, 2017 / 12:00 Noon  
Reeves Community Center, Mount Airy

## Vinedresser Field Day

May 18, 2017 / 1:00 p.m.

## 4-H Summer Explosion Non-Member Registration

May 18, 2017 / 5:30 p.m.—6:30 p.m.  
Surry County Extension Center, Dobson

## Farmers Market Application Deadline

May 26, 2017

## ECA Achievement Night

June 1, 2017 / 6:00 p.m.  
SCC—Viticulture Center, Dobson

## Farmers Market Application Deadline

May 26, 2017



## **Accommodation Statement:**

For accommodations for persons with disabilities, contact the Surry County Center at (336) 401-8025, no later than five business days before the event.

## **Disclaimer**

Recommendations for the use of agricultural chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by North Carolina Cooperative Extension nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use agricultural chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any chemical. For assistance, contact your county Cooperative Extension agent.

**Special Note: Registration for events listed in this calendar are required unless otherwise noted. Register by calling (336) 401-8025.**

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