

July/August 2015

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How to Prepare Trees for Storms

Grantly Ricketts

Living in Central Florida gives us the luxury of doing outdoor activities all year round. The weather seems to be great most of the time, but there is the harsh reality of hurricane season which begins June 1st of each year. In addition, I will not fail to mention the abundance of oak trees growing here in Central Florida; some over 100 years old. Some of these trees are unhealthy with branches hanging over the roof which is a safety concern. In my role as an Extension Agent, I have the opportunity to educate homeowners about their beloved trees. I frequently ask homeowners, when was the last time they inspected and maintained their trees. The answer is always, "Never." Every year trees are lost to storm related events; part of or the entire tree can be damaged. Trees can fall on our houses, cars, take people's lives, and it can be very costly to clean up after a storm.



The risk of trees getting damaged during a storm can be reduced by taking the following precautions: Inspect trees frequently for damage such as rot in the roots, stem, or branch and from beetle infestations. If you are not sure whether or not your tree is in good health, it is always a good idea to get the advice of a certified arborist. Pruning dead branches will drastically reduce the risk of damage to your property. Also, it is important to note that improper pruning such as removing more than 25% live canopy will encourage weak branches to grow and the tree will eventually become susceptible to storm damage. Furthermore, maintain young trees by removing low branches that will become large trunks; the aim is to have one central leader. Trees that have more than one central leader are undesirable and pose a greater risk of getting storm damage. Carefully examine trees that are leaning toward a structure; there is a higher chance that a leaning tree will not withstand vicious winds. Equally, trees with an unbalanced canopy should also be a concern to homeowners.

What to do before a storm - Contact a certified arborist, remove trees with cracks or splits; note some municipalities require that you get a permit before removing trees, so check your local ordinance. Equally important, examine trees for rot, remove rubbing and broken branches, and notify the power company of any part of a tree interfering with a power line.

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What to do during a storm - Seek shelter in a secure place and avoid going outside as flying objects can cause bodily injury leading up to death.

What to do after a storm - Carefully inspect trees for damage; it is possible that trees could be damaged but did not fall. To remove fallen or damaged trees, it is always a good idea to get at least three estimates, and keep in mind that the cheapest is not always the best. Finally, if you are a “do it yourself” person, then be careful when using a chainsaw; always remember safety comes first.

For more information on trees and other related horticulture topics, contact Grantly Ricketts with UF/IFAS Extension in Osceola County at 321-697-3000 or email gricketts@ufl.edu.

Serving Up Some Tips for Cutting Down on Calories

Gabriela Murza

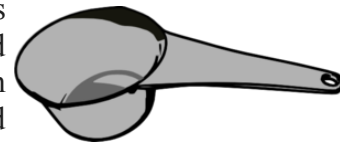
It is no secret that portion sizes have changed over the years. We have especially seen the change in the amount of food served in restaurants. Larger portions are served to consumers, which is having an effect on our ability to estimate proper portion sizes when trying to meet a weight-related goal. While some restaurants are decreasing portion sizes again, the change is happening slowly. Plus, we have grown accustomed to receiving more food, especially if we feel that the amount is not “worth” the cost of the meal.

When trying to lose, gain, or maintain weight, we sometimes tend to overthink the process; to feel like we have to incorporate a lot of strategies at once to see benefits. However, the best approach is to start with just one or two until they become routine, or focus on the strategies that have the most impact in meeting your goal.

Keep in mind that a “portion” and “serving” are different – a portion is the amount of food we choose to eat; a serving is based on recommendations for our body’s needs and optimal performance.

Below are a few suggestions that you can try. Some may be easier to incorporate than others, but it’s worth trying them all to see which result in the best changes.

Measure food using measuring equipment. Do you know what three ounces of meat looks like? What about a cup of vegetables? Use measuring spoons, cups and a food scale to find out the appropriate serving size of a particular food item. After a few weeks, you will train your brain into knowing what the amounts look like without the use of equipment. No need for expensive equipment either! Make sure the scale at least reads in ounces and kilograms and is easy to understand.



Use a smaller plate. Some dinner plates are huge! Most have a decorative “ring” that tends to get covered up with more food. However, using the inner portion of the plate (keeping the “ring” free of food) automatically decreases your portions. If this doesn’t work, start with a disposable plate– they are the recommended 9 inch size. Remember though don’t be tempted to stack your food into the shape of a small mountain!

Use your hands or everyday objects to estimate serving size. While most serving sizes are exact in terms of cups or ounces, you can estimate by using your hand. A serving generally fits into a cupped hand. Keep in mind the size of a child’s hand when serving them. They have smaller hands (they also have smaller stomachs!) so their servings should be appropriate to their size. Everyday objects are also used; for example, three ounces is the size of a deck of playing cards; one cup is the size of a baseball; one ounce is the size of a playing die, etc.

Go small. Use smaller utensils or make smaller sized items (example: mini muffins). The former makes eating last longer while the latter makes you feel like you’re indulging. Both trick your brain into thinking you’re eating more.

Drink water. Thirst and dehydration can be disguised as hunger. If you're feeling hungry, drink a glass of water and wait a few minutes. If you're still hungry, grab a healthy snack. According to current recommendations, you can find out how much water is suggested by taking your weight in pounds and dividing by two. The result is the number of ounces of water to consume. For example, if you weigh 100 pounds, you should consume about 50 ounces of water per day. The new recommendation also allows for other liquids like coffee, tea, and juice, but water is still the best choice because it has no calories, sugar, sodium, or caffeine.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind. Next time you order a meal at a restaurant, ask for a to-go box with your meal so you can immediately put half of it away. You can save it for another meal, or share with a friend!

What are some strategies that you have used? How about your friends and family? Try some of these to see how well they work. You may be surprised at the results!

For more information or resources, contact University of Florida/IFAS Extension in Osceola County at 321-697-3000 or via email at gmurza@ufl.edu.

Annie's Project: Education and Networking for Farm and Ranch Women

Jessica Sullivan



For the first time in Osceola County, the University of Florida IFAS Extension is offering Annie's Project, a three-part series designed to help women strengthen their business management skills and find the resources they need for successful agricultural operations. The series addresses the challenges of managing agricultural businesses, including: record-keeping, reducing agricultural business risks, financial planning, marketing, insurance, and funding. "The goal of Annie's Project is to empower women to take active leadership roles in their agricultural operations." said Jessica Sullivan, Agriculture Agent and Project facilitator.

This unique educational program includes discussion, learning activities, and presentations from diverse local and statewide professionals. "Annie's Project was very informative - definitely a must." said Suzanne Richmond, past participant of Annie's Project in Florida and operator of Funky Chicken Farm, Melbourne, FL.

Annie's Project will be held September 10th, 17th, and 24th, 2015 at CareerSource Central Florida, 1392 E. Vine St., Kissimmee. *Registration deadline is September 1st.* Online registration: <http://ocagriculture.eventbrite.com>.

Manure—Waste or Resource?

Eleanor Foerste

All animals including humans, pets, wildlife and agricultural animals produce manure. While it is sometimes called waste, UF IFAS Extension is working to change attitudes and build anaerobic digesters, also called biodigesters. Through a process called anaerobic digestion (AD), natural microbes convert manure and other organic material into usable water soluble fertilizer and renewable natural biogas. The biogas is a natural gas composed of carbon dioxide and methane which can be burned for energy for cooking or water heating or for gas lighting.

As animals use food for growth and energy, the byproduct is manure which contains chemical compounds such as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and iron that are important nutrients for plant growth. In natural ecosystems such as forests, prairies, pond and lakes, nutrients are recycled as animals eat plants and animals eat other animals. When plants and animals die, natural fungi, bacteria and other organisms decompose them and nutrients are recycled

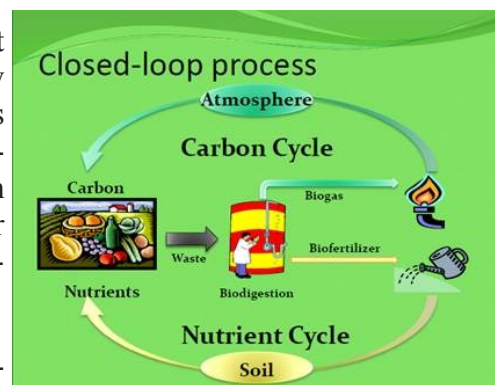
through the soil and reused by plants and animals again. Commercial fertilizers also provide plant nutrients for growth and may be either slowly available or water soluble and readily available.

As manures decompose in the soil, nutrients are slowly released for plant growth. Farmers and gardeners often use dried animal manure as natural slow release fertilizer for growing crops, gardens, trees and flowers. Communities process human manure into “reuse water” and “biosolids” which contain important plant nutrients. The lavender pipe in landscapes provides nutrient-rich water for irrigation. Milorganite is a nationally marketed commercial fertilizer made from solids from the wastewater (aka sewage treatment process) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Rapidly growing crops benefit from frequently applied, readily available fertilizer, however, over-irrigation and heavy rainfall can wash excess nutrients into nearby waterways and result in algae growth. In some situations, pets and farm animals may produce more manure than can efficiently be used by plants on the property. Florida agricultural producers are required to manage manure to reduce nutrient runoff going into ground and surface water. Pet “waste” can wash off yards and dog walk areas into our streets, ditches and eventually ponds and lakes. Pet owners are urged to pick up after their pets and dispose of manure in the garbage or toilet.

Anaerobic digesters (biodigesters) work like septic tanks (our home manure management systems) that do not use air or oxygen. The biodigesters can be used to manage farm “waste”, including manure, chopped weeds, crop residue and food waste and convert it to natural biogas and soluble nutrients for use on the farm or as a value-added commodity for sale. Unlike septic tanks that release nutrient-rich wastewater into the soil, the biodigesters collect the liquid so it can be applied as needed, at rates and timing that minimize the chance for stormwater runoff or excess infiltration into ground water. The quantity of nutrients can be calculated and the liquid fertilizer applied to crops or pastures through an automatic irrigation system or applied separately.

Thanks to a Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) mini-grant of \$10,608, UF IFAS Extension faculty in Central Florida are working with farmers and animal producers to understand the anaerobic digestion (AD) process, build small scale demonstration units and learn how the process can help prevent pollution. Workshops are being planned on farms to show the basic components and help farmers identify the quantity of manure and other organic materials to feed the biodigesters and the volume of liquid fertilizer and biogas that will be produced. The products can be used on the farm or sold off the farm to generate extra income. As a result, biodigesters can become a common, easy-to-use Best Management Practice (BMP) resulting in environmental and economic benefits to farmers/ranchers and the community.



Beefin' It Up Right!

Ashley Fluke

As we roll into the summer months, many folks are gearing up for grill season. It's a wonderful thing to cook out with family and friends and enjoy the summer in Florida. As you head to your local grocer, be prepared to select the best piece of meat for your barbeque. With an understanding of meat selection and proper preparation you can be a Grill Genius! There are also many cuts of beef that do best when prepared in an oven, in a skillet, or in a smoker. No matter your technique, there is a brilliantly beefy option for you.

The first step to becoming a Meat Master is good selection. As you search for that superstar steak, there are a few key selection factors you need to identify. Color is important for all meat. Beef products should be a nice cherry-red. Lamb will be slightly darker than beef, pork should be a gray-pink, and veal should be a pale pink. Marbling is another significant aspect of selecting a beef product. Marbling is the small bits of fat you see throughout the cut of beef and is a major determinant of tenderness and flavor. A good amount of marbling is desirable and will insure the juiciness

Extension Services Calendar of Events

Registration for any class is required ! You can register at www.tinyurl.com/ufclass

JULY 2015		
Wed., July 1	2:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Taking Control of Your Money, Extension Services, OHP www.ocfcs.eventbrite.com
Wed., July 1 - Aug 5	6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	NHF Dinner Dine-In Wellness Series - Wed's July 1-Aug 5 www.ocfcs.eventbrite.com
Tues., July 14	9:00 am - 4:30 pm	A Home Your Own, One Day Class, Extension Services, OHP www.ocfcs.eventbrite.com
Tues., July 14	6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	Growing Produce for Farmers Market - UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County \$5fee http://ocagriculture.eventbrite.com
Wed., July 15	5:30 pm - 8:30 pm	Taking Control of Your Money, Extension Services, OHP www.ocfcs.eventbrite.com
Fri., July 17	1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Irrigation Technology for Commercial Fruit and Vegetable Growers - UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County http://ocagriculture.eventbrite.com
Fri., July 17	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Irrigate Responsibly, Effectively, and Save Water - UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County http://ocagriculture.eventbrite.com
Wed., July 29	2:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Taking Control of Your Money, Extension Services, OHP www.ocfcs.eventbrite.com
Tues., July 31	6:30 pm	Beekeepers Association Meeting - UF/UFAS Extension Osceola County - no registration is required to attend.
AUGUST 2015		
Tues. Aug 4, 11, 18 & 25	6:00 pm - 9:00 pm	A Home of Your Own Series, Extension Services, OHP www.ocfcs.eventbrite.com
Tues., Aug. 11	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Beekeeping: Is it for me? - UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County http://ocagriculture.eventbrite.com
Wed., Aug 12	5:30 pm - 8:30 pm	Taking Control of Your Money, Extension Services, OHP www.ocfcs.eventbrite.com
Thurs., Aug. 13, 20 & 27	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Small Farm Success Class Series - UF/UFAS Extension Osceola County \$25 for series / \$10 per class Aug. 13 - Getting Started With Your Small Farm Aug. 20 - Crops and Livestock for Your Small Farm Aug. 27 - Planning for Profits www.ocagriculture.eventbrite.com
Thurs., Aug. 20	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Florida-Friendly Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Quality GI-BMP - CEU's are available. \$15 pre-registration by August 16th http://occeu.eventbrite.com
Thurs., Aug. 25	6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	Intro to Beekeeping - UF/UFAS Extension Osceola County - \$30 for individuals / \$40 per couple http://ocagriculture.eventbrite.com
Wed., Aug 26	2:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Taking Control of Your Money, Extension Services, OHP www.ocfcs.eventbrite.com

everyone loves in their steak. A third component of selection is knowing the quality grade of your beef. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grades the cuts of beef according to quality. The major deciding factor of quality is based on marbling. As mentioned earlier, marbling gives the meat its tenderness and juiciness. USDA Prime is the highest grade of beef. It will be very palate pleasing. Prime is wonderful for special occasions and also used in fine restaurants. USDA Choice follows Prime. USDA Choice is a popular option for cooking. It is a high quality product for a reasonable price. Choice is a definite crowd pleaser. Select, the third quality grade, is very affordable and if cooked properly can be a tasty product. With this basic understanding of quality, you can then decide exactly what cut of beef you want. Tenderness is also dependent upon what area of the carcass the meat comes from. Muscles used for locomotion will not be as tender as muscles used for posture. If you are among the many consumers searching for lean cuts of beef, look for cuts from the round and loin. Tenderloin, sirloin, and flank steak are among the many lean cuts of beef.

There is a large variety of beef cuts and all can be delectable when prepared properly. Preparation is the second step for Captain Carnivore status. When perusing through the meats at your grocery store you will find many choices of beef products. There are chuck roasts, round roasts, tenderloins, sirloins, t-bones, brisket, skirt steak, flank steak, and more. We also should not overlook the ever so famous ground beef for our hamburgers, tacos, and loaded nachos. With all these choices comes several ways to prepare the beef. For the occasions you are determined to get outside and grill, the product options include tenderloin steak, ribeye, t-bone, sirloin, New York strip, porterhouse, ribs, kabobs, and burgers. Dry seasonings, rubs, BBQ sauce, or simply salt and pepper (my personal favorite) are all flavoring options for this type of meat and cooking method. These steaks and burgers can also be cooked in a skillet on medium to medium high heat. If you prefer to roast, slow-cook, braise, smoke, or stew you can go for a chuck roast, shoulder pot roast, rib roast, round roast, brisket, or stew beef cuts. With added moisture and slow cooking these beef options are mouthwatering and very tender. Herbs, garlic, mushrooms, onions, reductions, and broths can all add intense flavor to these dishes. You may also try pan searing each side of the roasts, deglazing your pan, and then adding that to the slow cooker or roasting pot for added flavor. Finally, if you're interested in some of the newer cuts of beef that have been added to the shelf such as flank steak and skirt steak you will need to use some other preparation methods. Top round steak, shoulder steak, chuck steak, and eye round steak also fit into this cooking category. These cuts of beef are typically lean and come with less natural tenderness. Marinades are ideal for preparing these meats and create a lot of flavor and tenderness. Often, these products are thin cuts and can be cooked quickly after marinating. Pan searing on medium high heat is one method or grilling. These meats are great for an affordable, healthy choice. Skirt steaks can also be prepared without being marinated. They tend to have a higher marbling content. Two general rules of thumb for beef preparation are 1.) Tender cuts of beef are best prepared using dry heat like grilling and searing while less tender cuts require adding moisture such as marinades, braising, and slow cooking in broth and 2.) USDA recommends ground beef be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F while whole muscle cuts like steaks should have an external temperature of 160°F but the internal temperature for medium rare can be 145°F for maximum tenderness. Whole muscle cuts can be cooked to a lower internal temperature than ground beef because the internal portion of the meat has not been exposed to any external surfaces whereas ground meats have been exposed to such conditions and thus should be cooked to the appropriate temperature. If you inject your meat with any flavor it has then been exposed to external elements and needs to be cooked to 160°F.

Now that you are steak savvy and may as well have a Bachelor's of Beef, go out and grab that master ingredient! No matter the crowd, you can tickle their taste buds with any budget and whichever cooking method you prefer. If you like your beef well-done you may want to try the slow-cooked, braised, or marinated meats. If you tend to venture on the rare and juicy side go for a good quality ribeye, tenderloin, or sirloin. Always follow the USDA cooking recommendations when preparing your beef. Enjoy the summer, spend some time outdoors, get some friends and family over and serve them a meal that will crown you Cookout King ... or Queen! A link to a "Beef Made Easy Cut Chart" is provided and will show you all the available cuts of beef you will find in your grocery store along with best cooking methods. Also, the USDA link answers frequently asked questions about meat and has a section on beef preparation. This article and the links provided are great tools to get you cooking!

<http://nationaladmin.beef.org/CMDocs/BeefRetail/efcdisplaytools/BeefMadeEasyCutChart.pdf>

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Factsheets/Color_of_Meat_&_Poultry/index.asp

“You Can Change Your Financial Future Starting Today”

Johanna Ramirez

Economic development is a key component of Osceola County’s, one of the fastest growing counties in Florida, endeavors. Future plans include introducing a variety of new businesses and more profitable employment opportunities for residents. Due to the community oriented atmosphere and recent economic improvements, a surge in families interested in purchasing a home in Osceola County has increased. Along with a focus on families and children, new housing developments in our area will open doors to a more diverse community. In order to meet this need we are looking to expand and offer services to provide one-on-one pre and post-purchase counseling to clients. The educational focus will be in empowering clients with the necessary skills and tools to not only qualify for and purchase an affordable home but to sustain their housing as well.

However, we must remember our commitment to families currently without housing, struggling with foreclosure or loss mitigation solutions, or in imminent default. We aim to research and implement innovative solutions for those in danger of losing their permanent residence and who are underqualified for low-income housing. HUD-certified counselors are available for personal counseling and assistance with the overwhelming process of loss mitigation. Also, a partnership with local community based non-profits is currently in progress towards resolving and ameliorating the issue of displaced families in the county. The hope is to motivate Osceola County families to take charge of their financial situation.

As the new Finance and Housing Extension Agent of UF-IFAS Extension Osceola County, I am committed to the program’s vision to continue developing programs that can provide financial sustainability education and tools to our residents. My team and I are dedicated to identifying the challenges and strengths of our community in order to maximize the use of our resources and provide necessary education in the areas of personal finances, savings, creating future financial goals, and a spending plan. Residents can gain more information on a myriad of topics by attending our department’s financial literacy classes. The message to our community is “you can change your financial future starting today.” Making a difference in the way you look at money and developing a plan that personally adjusts to you and your family needs are the first steps toward financial success. Our team is here to assist you along the way. Are you ready to start today?



If you would like more information about finance and housing programs, you can contact UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County at 321-697-3000 or visit us at: <http://osceola.ifas.ufl.edu>

UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County

EXPLORE STEM WEEK!

July 13-17

The week at a glance...

Come and join us for a week of fun! We will go on educational and exciting field trips to different places. We will explore marine life and wildlife, witness a rocket launch into space, and experience the force of wind and its energy, along with gravity. You can pick and choose which events you would like to attend or you can attend them all!

For more information and to register visit Eventbrite at:

<https://www.oc4h.eventbrite.com/e/explore-stem-week-tickets-17517555480>

**MONDAY- CENTRAL
FLORIDA ZOO
\$17/PERSON**

**TUESDAY- THE ORLAN-
DO EYE/SEA LIFE
AQUARIUM
\$17/PERSON**

**WEDNESDAY- ROCKET
LAUNCH
\$17/PERSON**

**THURSDAY- IFLY
\$40/PERSON**

**FRIDAY- GATORLAND
\$17/PERSON**



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Osceola County Extension Director

James Fletcher