

Geary County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

geary.k-state.edu

April 2018

Ask the Agent

Q: How can I freshen up my garbage disposal?

A: It's important to maintain your disposal by regularly grinding up pieces of lemon peel and ice cubes. This not only helps reduce the risk of clogged up lines, but also leaves it fresh smelling. You can also avoid odors by treating your disposal monthly with a 1/4 cup of baking soda and 1/2 cup of white vinegar. Let it stand in the disposal until it stops foaming, then rinse it down the drain with cold running water.

For more information call the Geary County K-State Research & Extension office at:

785-238-4161

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April Showers Bring Healthy Living?

We've all heard the old saying "April showers bring May flowers." I contend that these showers also offer us the opportunity to improve our health.



Physical and Mental Benefits of Gardening

Perhaps you already know of the many nutritional benefits of eating locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables, but did you know that growing your own food and gardening, in general, has a much broader scope of benefits beyond that?



Being outside brings its own advantages to your health. Nature has long been recognized for its ability to relax and calm a person's mood. The tranquility of a spring-blooming flower bed is soothing to the soul. While enjoying the sights and smells of spring, you can also work some physical activity in by weeding, watering, and pruning as needed. Gardening is considered a moderate level for physical activity. It raises your

heart rate, increases circulation, and offers fresh air to your lungs.

Just as gardening in your flower bed(s) can be soothing, so can food gardening. This type of gardening has the added benefit of the gratification you get from eating the "fruits of your labor." From the time you prepare the soil until you reap the harvest of your work, there is always a task, big or small, that could be attended to during the growing season.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that 2.5 hours of gardening, or other moderate-intensity levels of activity, can reduce the risk for obesity, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, stroke, depression, colon cancer, and premature birth.

This physical health benefit, coupled with the mental health benefits is a winning combination for all of us. Studies show that gardeners and their children eat healthier, more nutrient rich diets than do non-gardening families. Being in a natural setting, such as a garden, helps people recover from mental fatigue, improves their outlook and life satisfaction, helps cope with stressors from our daily lives, and improves our ability to recover from illness and injury.



The mental health benefits are notable, as well. People who garden have been shown to have increased ability to concentrate and improved productivity in their daily living.

I won't go as far as saying that gardening is a miracle cure for everything and everyone, but it does pack a good punch when it comes to physical and mental health benefits. Even if you choose to do simple container gardens, you can still benefit from a daily "work out" in the garden.



The Value of Vinegar

A staple in most kitchen pantries, vinegar has long been used by consumers for food preservation, food flavoring, cleaning, and even treating minor medical ailments.

Vinegar has an extremely long history dating back to about 5000 BC. The Babylonians used the fruit of the date palm to make wine and vinegar used for both food preservation and as a pickling agent. There has been evidence of vinegar residue found in urns from ancient Egypt that are traced back to 3000 BC. Chinese historical documents make reference to vinegar back in 1200 BC. This only proves that humankind has had a long-standing faith in the qualities vinegar brings to our homes.

There are a wide variety of vinegars. Here are some of the more common ones:

White Vinegar: This clear vinegar is made from grain alcohol and is very acidic with an overpowering sour flavor. Of all the varieties of vinegar made in the United States, this is the most common vinegar. It is used in pickling, salad dressings, and mustards.

It also has some very beneficial cleaning applications for around the house. See the article on the opposite page for tips for using vinegar in your cleaning routines.

Cider Vinegar: This pale brown colored vinegar is made from fermented apple juice. It has a cloudy appearance with a fruity, if not slightly apple flavor. This vinegar is commonly used in salsas, marinades, coleslaw, and sweet pickles.

Health and Wellness

Balsamic Vinegar: This dark red, sweet vinegar is very popular in the culinary world. Often labeled as “traditional”, balsamic vinegar is aged in wooden barrels for many years. As it ages, it becomes sweeter and thicker – as well as more expensive! The less expensive balsamic vinegars have a much shorter fermenting time and typically have added coloring from caramel and sugar that has been added to the liquid. Balsamic vinegar is often used in dressings, sauces, salads, and vegetables to add a boost of flavor. It is also used with poultry and meats to not only add flavor, but serve as a tenderizer for beef and a marinade with added olive oil for a wide variety of protein foods.

Malt Vinegar: At one time, this was considered the standard variety used in Britain, but is used around the world for its distinctive flavor. It is commonly served with fish and chips, but also serves as an important ingredient in brewed beverages such as beer. It is made by malting barley or other grains.

Rice Vinegar: Just as the name implies, this vinegar is made from rice and is commonly referred to as rice wine vinegar. It's mild, sweet flavor is due to it being a much less acidic vinegar than most of the others mentioned in this list. Rice vinegar is used in salad dressings, seafood marinades, and many traditional Japanese and Chinese dishes.

Keep your vinegar fresh and ready for use by storing it in the original bottle in a cool dark place.

Vinegar – Making a Clean Sweep

Here are some great cleaning tips using vinegar that can also serve as a budget friendly alternative to expensive cleaning chemicals.

Use it to freshen the fridge. Wipe the shelves and refrigerator walls with a solution of half water and half vinegar.

Remove offensive odors. Sometimes our plastic ware takes on the odors of the foods we make in them. Add some vinegar to your dishwasher to help remove these offensive odors. If the odor can't be cut with this diluted approach, try dampening a cloth with vinegar and wiping the odors away. By adding vinegar to your dishwasher, you can also reduce if not eliminate the spots on your glassware!

Remove stains. Use a small amount of salt with vinegar in your coffee and tea cups to gently scrub the stains away.

Disinfect surfaces. Whether using vinegar on kitchen countertops or in the bathroom sink or tub, this all-natural cleaning liquid is a great way to kill germs. Put vinegar in a spray bottle at full strength and wipe germs away with a damp cloth as you clean these surfaces.

Break through toilet bowl grime. In the Midwest, we struggle with lime build up in a variety of locations in our homes. The toilet bowl is one of these challenging areas. Pour a cup or more of distilled white vinegar into the toilet bowl and let sit for several hours then scrub with a toilet brush and flush. If you find timing to be a challenge, you can put the vinegar in before you go to bed and attend to it first thing in the morning.

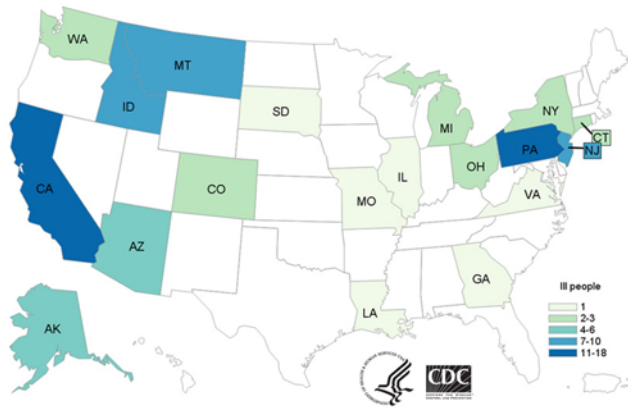
For homemade “green” cleaning solutions that include vinegar and other household products, check out the Green Cleaning Recipes bulletin posted on our Geary County K-State Research and Extension office website: <http://www.geary.k-state.edu/health-home-family/> then click on the Housing and Home Safety tab in menu on the left.

Food Safety Alert

Case Count Maps

Posted April 25, 2018 2:30 PM EST

People infected with the outbreak strain of *E. coli* O157:H7, by state of residence, as of April 24, 2018 (n=84)



The Centers for Disease Control recently released advice for consumers in regards to the widespread recall of romaine lettuce grown in the Yuma, Arizona growing region:

- ◆ Do not buy or eat romaine lettuce at a grocery store or restaurant unless you can confirm it is not romaine lettuce from the Yuma, Arizona, growing region.
 - ◆ Unless the source of the product is known, consumers anywhere in the United States who have any store-bought romaine lettuce at home should not eat it and should throw it away, even if some of it was eaten and no one has gotten sick. **This includes whole heads and hearts of romaine, chopped romaine, and salads and salad mixes containing romaine lettuce.** If you do not know if the lettuce is romaine, do not eat it and throw it away.
- ⇒ Product labels often do not identify growing regions; so, throw out any romaine lettuce if you're uncertain about where it was grown.
- ⇒ Wash and sanitize drawers or shelves in refrigerators where romaine lettuce was stored.

CDC also recommends these five steps to clean your refrigerator following any food recall:

Items needed to clean your refrigerator:

- Sealed Bags
- Warm, Soapy Water
- Clean Towels
- Optional: Water + Bleach

STEP 1 – Throw out recalled food

Throw out the recalled food, and any other foods stored with it or touching it.

- Put it in a sealed bag in the garbage.
- If the recalled food was stored in a reusable container, wash it with warm, soapy water before reusing.

STEP 2 – Empty your Refrigerator

- Empty the rest of the items in your refrigerator and put them on a counter or table while you clean.
- Take out shelving, drawers, and any other removable parts.
- Don't leave unrefrigerated food out for more than two hours.

STEP 3 – Wash Removable Parts

- Wash shelving, drawers, and any other removable parts by hand with warm, soapy water.
- Dry with a clean towel.
- Don't run cold glass shelves or drawers under hot water – the glass could crack. Let them come to room temperature first.

STEP 4 – Clean and Sanitize Inside the Refrigerator

- Wipe the inside of the empty refrigerator with warm, soapy water, then wipe with clean water to rinse off soap.
 - Dry with a clean towel.
- Don't forget to wipe inside the doors and any drawers that cannot be removed

* Optional Step

Use a solution of 1 tablespoon of liquid bleach in 1 gallon of water to sanitize your refrigerator. Do this after cleaning it with warm, soapy water.

STEP 5 – Return Shelves, Drawers, and Food

- Put the shelves, drawers, and other removable parts back in the refrigerator, along with the other items you took out.
- Wipe food and drink containers with warm, soapy water before returning to the clean refrigerator.

And don't forget!

Wash your hands with warm water and soap once you've finished cleaning.

For more information about food safety, contact Deb Andres at the Geary County K-State Research & Extension office 785-238-4161.

Keep an eye on this food recall and others at:
<https://www.foodsafety.gov/>

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Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

Requires pre-registration. Call 238-4161 to pre-register

May

- 3 Knowledge at Noon**— Seniors CAN: Productivity and Aging, Valley View Estates, 1440 Pearl Drive, Junction City, KS. This free program begins at noon and is open to the public. Call the Extension Office by May 1, 2018 to reserve your seat 785-238-4161.
- 9 Better Brains for Babies—Train the Trainer Workshop. **Registration and payment due by May 2, 2018:** Please submit your training fee of \$20.00 to the Geary Co. Extension Office. Make checks payable to Geary Co. Extension. A minimum of 10 registered participants are required to hold the train-the-trainer experience. The experience will be capped at 30 participants.
- 12 Walk Kansas 2018 Concludes! - Get your miles in and help your team meet their goal!

June

- 7 Hands-On Healthy Eating— A hands-on food preparation class that will meet weekly each Wednesday. Elements featured include how to make positive changes to achieve good nutrition and health, increase physical activity, control portion sizes, practice food resource management skills, practice food safety in preparation and practice safe storage and handling. Check out the upcoming May FCS Connection newsletter for more information.



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