



Winter 2010

Helping Your Children Beat the Winter Blues

By Christina M. DeJulio, Extension Resource Educator



After the excitement of the holidays is over, it's no wonder children feel restless, bored, and even tired. All too often during the long winter months parents will hear the saying... "there's nothing to do!" Sounds as if your child(ren) have a good case of the winter blues. Winter blues is often used to describe physical and emotional symptoms from little activity and sunlight.

Although you may not be able to change the amount of sunlight during these winter months, you can help your child(ren) and yourself beat the blues.

- ❄ Get Outside -- Bundle up, go ice skating, take a walk, build a fort, go sledding, have a snowball fight or just roll down a snow-covered hill.
- ❄ Eat the Right Foods -- Choose foods high in Omega-3 Fatty Acids (salmon, nuts, canola oil), vitamin B, B₆, B₁₂, and Folic Acid (soybeans, beets, oranges, oatmeal, broccoli, low-fat milk, eggs) high quality carbohydrates (vegetables, fruit, brown rice, sweet potatoes) and rich in vitamin D.
- ❄ Take up a Hobby -- Model airplanes, beading, scrap-booking, instrumental lessons, and indoor sports are all good examples.
- ❄ Indoor Field Trips -- Enjoy a day at a local children's museum, YMCA, theater, or at a musical performance.
- ❄ Get Crafty & Creative -- When all else fails, clear the breakables and have a tug-of-war, a pillow fight, or a scavenger hunt in the house!



Information courtesy of:

<http://www.associatedcontent.com>; <http://kids-indoor-activites.suite101.com>; <http://www.dailyregister.com>;
<http://hubpages.com>; <http://www.troubledwith.com>; <http://blogs.consumerreports.org>

The Great Cabbage Mystery

By Jean Cook, Master Gardener

Very early in April, two flats of cabbages, each containing eighteen plants, appeared at our church. Two questions needed to be answered: why were they there, and why were they four-or-five inches tall, ready to be set out?

The first was answered in an accompanying brochure, promoting them as a fund-raising project. Since our church does not have that activity, it was not an option.

So my husband and I took them home, but what to do with them? It was much too early to put them in the ground, so in consultation with other Master Gardeners at the greenhouse, we decided the only course was to pinch them back and see what happened. During April and May, we removed some of the leaves as they grew, and kept them watered in their plastic cups. When the weather warmed up, we put them outside on the deck, under the shelter of the roof, exposing them gradually to air and sunlight. But, one by one, they began to die. We gave them a feeding of a mild liquid fertilizer, which didn't seem to help very much. We resigned ourselves that they were not going to make it into gardens.

Then one morning, my husband excitedly called me to come look. Seemingly overnight, the remaining ones had started to grow. That was the turning point, and the remaining eighteen flourished. In early June, we took them back to church and gave a few each to our gardening friends. As the summer progressed we heard how well the cabbages were doing, and at a friend's house, I even had coleslaw made from one of them.

As for the mystery of why they were planted to be set out in April, a closer look at the cups in which they were grown revealed the answer. The nursery that planted them was located about 60 miles west of the capital district, but the home office was in Tennessee and that apparently was the timetable used. While we were thankful to save half of the cabbages, it serves as a strong lesson to start seeds in early spring based on the growing season of our own location.

Full grown cabbage just like those grown by the author and others in her church.



For more information about growing cabbage in your garden, contact our Master Gardeners on the Master Gardener hotline.

In This Issue...

<i>The Great Cabbage Mystery</i>	2	<i>Portable Teaching Kitchen at SICM</i>	7
<i>Healthy Children, Healthy Families</i>	3	<i>Season Two of From Farm to Table is Underway</i>	8
<i>Spring Open House</i>	4	<i>Little Diggers</i>	9
<i>Dealing with Storm-damaged Trees and Shrubs</i>	5	<i>Welcome to our New Staff Members</i>	10
<i>Starting Houseplants from Cuttings</i>	6	<i>Welcome to our New Staff Members (con'td.)</i>	11
		<i>Spring Ahead!</i>	12

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. NYS College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NYS College of Human Ecology, and NYS College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, Cooperative Extension associations, county governing bodies, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating.

Healthy Children, Healthy Families: Parents Making a Difference!

Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County (CCE,SC) is excited to share the success of the first pilot of a new curriculum *Healthy Children, Healthy Families: Parents Making a Difference!* It focuses on six nutrition and activity messages known as the paths to success. These messages were selected based on research regarding childhood behaviors that increase the risk of child obesity and chronic disease. The messages help children and families maintain healthy lifestyles and prevent unhealthy weight gain - the focus is on good health for all. The curriculum also introduces four keys to success. These are effective parenting strategies to help parents cope with the challenges today's families face when they try to eat well and be active. Participants are encouraged to take steps along these paths and keys toward healthier practices.

The pilot was an 8-week series offered at Alpha Pregnancy Care Center during the months of December 2009 and January 2010. Participants consisted of a diverse group of six mothers who found common ground in wanting the healthiest choices for their children. New paths and keys to success were introduced to participants each week by trained nutrition educators through fun and interactive sessions along with an active play break and a food demonstration. During the Take a Healthy Step activity, participants were encouraged to choose a healthy goal to practice at home with their family. The following week, educators would reward the efforts that the participants made along the paths. The curriculum was very well received and participants made many positive changes each week and were excited when their efforts were recognized.

As a result of participating, one participant shared that her family is finally sitting and eating meals together. The process started as her Take a Healthy Step goal in week one. The first week the table was set and the expectation was there, but no one actually sat at the table. She was encouraged to try again and it was better the next time because everyone sat for about five minutes before they got antsy. By the end of the program she had learned ways to include the children in planning the meal and cooking, which helped the family successfully sit and eat an entire meal together. She was pleased that she had accomplished the goal and was even more thrilled that her children enjoyed their new responsibilities and the time they were able to spend together as a family.

Another great accomplishment was from a participant who was trying to cut down on sugar and to give her daughter a choice between water and milk instead of sweetened drinks. She started giving her daughter the better options, but the girl's grandmother was still letting her choose juice and soda. Mom talked with the grandmother about the changes she was trying to make and why cutting down on sweetened drinks was important. She then worked with her mother so that she would offer the same choices to her daughter. The mom was so excited to share with the group that the grandmother was starting to offer just the milk or water most of the time. It was a huge accomplishment for her to not only ask her mom to make this a priority, but also that her daughter was making the choice of milk or water without it being a big ordeal.

Other successes from participants include adding less salt when cooking, increasing physical activity, eating out less often and making "homemade" healthier fast foods. Everyone was offering vegetables more often. Plans are underway to continue the series. CCE, SC hopes to work with many Schenectady county parents and caregivers because they are pivotal to influencing a child's behavior as the first teachers and primary gate-keepers in the child's environment.



**Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County
& Schenectady County Soil & Water Conservation District
10th Annual**

Spring Open House

**at the
Schenectady County
Horticulture Education
Center/Greenhouse
Central Park**

**Wednesday
May 5, 2010
3:00 - 7:00 PM**

Rain or Shine



**Native plants,
herbs and
vegetable sale**



Soil Testing



**Children's
Activities**



**Free Child ID's
Operation Safe Child
Sch'dy. County Sheriff's Dept.**



Tomato Plant Giveaway



Cases 4 Kids collection site
Drop off new or gently-used suitcases for children and youth in foster care residing in the Capital Region. Your suitcase will be filled with stuffed animals, a composition notebook, colored pencils and other items to make a smooth transition for a child.



**Fire Safety Smoke House
Sch'dy. City Fire Dept.**

Individuals with special needs requiring accommodation should contact the Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County office, 372-1622, prior to the program or activity.

Dealing with Storm-damaged Trees and Shrubs

By Chris Logue, Executive Director

The recent heavy wet snows have caused a great deal of damage to trees and shrubs throughout the area. Now is a great time to review a bit about safety and best practices for this type of situation.

First, one must know one's limitations. Large trees or those that require going on a ladder or climbing are best left to professionals who have extensive training and insurance for these types of jobs. As always, any tree that is in close proximity to a utility line or could fall on a structure is also best left to someone with specialized training and experience.

For smaller trees and shrubs that are bent over from heavy snow, be very careful about removing the snow and ice. Often the act of knocking the snow off can cause even greater damage by cracking and breaking limbs and stems.

If branches are broken or split, they should be removed using proper pruning techniques. Cornell has a great resource on proper pruning techniques located at <http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/woodies/index.html>. Key things to remember include always making clean cuts, maintain sharp edges on your pruning tools and always prune back to a branch or a bud so that you do not leave "stubs".

Some types of shrubs can benefit from a "rejuvenation" or "renovation" pruning. Good candidates for this practice include spirea, forsythia, potentilla, mock orange and honeysuckles. These plants, when cut back severely, will sprout back from the roots vigorously and regain their shape and fullness. Keep in mind, however, that by doing this you may lose a season of flowering, but the results will be worth the wait.

Another common pruning question has to do with wound dressings. Should they be used or not? Most research indicates that wound dressings really do nothing to speed up the process of healing wounds on trees and shrubs. If you make the pruning cut in the proper place the plant has all the proper wound healing chemicals available. Make sure to look at the link to the pruning bulletin to learn how to treat your trees and shrubs right.



Heavy snow buildup

Ice on branches



Photos courtesy of DavesGarden.com

Winter Gardening: Starting Houseplants from Cuttings

By Laura Milak, Resource Educator

Are you looking for a gardening project to enrich those winter days ahead? Why not consider propagating some of your houseplants to share with your friends and family? An assortment of small potted houseplants would make a wonderful gift and beautify any home windowsill.

Plants are propagated, or reproduced, by two basic methods. The first is sexual propagation, or by planting seed. Although this is a very economical method, it can take a long time to produce a new plant and oftentimes the results are unpredictable. The second method is asexual, or vegetative, propagation. Vegetative propagation ensures that the new plant is identical to the original plant. I think that it's amazing that some plants have the unique ability to generate roots from just a piece of a stem or leaf. This is because plants have a special layer of cambium tissue just beneath their surface. After cutting, this layer forms callus tissue which is then able to differentiate into new roots and/or shoots.

Cuttings:

The most common type of vegetative propagation involves rooting a stem or herbaceous cutting (or slip). Houseplants such as coleus, jade, ivy, geranium, begonia, philodendron, croton, and many others can be propagated successfully by this method.

Begin by selecting a healthy, vigorous shoot from your parent plant. Although even a one inch terminal shoot will work, I would suggest harvesting a stem section that is between three-to five-inches long and contains three-to seven-leaves. When taking your cutting, position the bottom cut about 1/4 inch below a node (place where leaves emerge) and then carefully remove these bottom-most leaves. I have found that leaving three-to-five leaves on my cuttings ensures the best rooting. After removing the lower leaves, dust the end with rooting powder (optional) and insert the base of the cutting into growing media. Be careful that you don't remove the rooting powder and make sure the lower node is covered with media.

Final Tips:

- Soil Media: For best results I prefer a sterile peat-based growing media. To increase the drainage, add an equal portion of horticultural-grade vermiculite, sterile sharp sand or perlite.
- Cover new cuttings with a loose-fitting piece of plastic wrap or a bag to keep the humidity high and prevent the cutting from drying out. Place sticks or a plastic fork in the pot to support the plastic and leave an opening to allow a little air circulation.
- Keep new cuttings out of direct sun!
- Once the rooted cuttings form new leaves, they can be transplanted to individual pots.
- Containers: Use sterilized containers (clean in 10% bleach solution) with drainage holes.

When transplanting, place your plants at the same soil level as they were growing previously. Take extra care to loosen tightly-woven roots to encourage them to grow out into the fresh soil. After planting, irrigate slowly until the water runs out the bottom of the pot. Next, top dress your plant with a sprinkle of slow release fertilizer; use according to label directions. Watering requirements can vary depending on the type and size of the plants you choose, available light exposure, room temperature, and the container type and size. As your plants form roots and begin to grow, their pots will tend to dry out quicker, as would containers that are placed in a window that receives full sun. There are several ways to determine if your plants need water: plants will start to wilt, the soil will become light in color, and the container will feel light in weight. Remember, when you do water your plants, water them until the water begins to run out the drainage holes.

For more information, contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office.



Partnering with our Community Grant –funded Portable Teaching Kitchen at SICM Food Pantry

Submitted by: Denise Kolankowski MS, RD, CDN



Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County applied for and received a grant this past summer 2009 to fund a portable teaching kitchen for the Schenectady Inner City Mission (SICM) food pantry located at 839 Albany Street, Schenectady, NY. SICM operates the largest emergency food pantry in Schenectady County, serving a record 37,721 clients in 2008. SICM food pantry is unique due to the large donations of fresh fruits and vegetables. SICM food pantry receives weekly donations of a variety of fresh produce from local area supermarkets, Roxbury Farms in Kinderhook, NY, and the Roots & Wisdom Program of Schenectady County. The purpose of the teaching kitchen is to provide equipment readily available at the food pantry for which community nutrition programs, such as Eat Smart New York (ESNY), could present cooking demonstrations for the clients who utilize the pantry. Nutrition education and recipe sampling on preparing the fresh produce has been identified as a skill need for pantry visitors. Many visitors to the food pantry do not know what to do with the produce donated. The individuals and families will benefit from healthy new recipes to expand their menu planning.

The new portable kitchen was unveiled on September 9, 2009 during open pantry hours. An Eat Smart New York nutrition educator prepared a recipe using fresh produce for clients to sample. The ESNY staff is very excited about the fully-stocked portable teaching kitchen that allows them a convenient method for presenting cooking demonstrations to benefit the clients who visit SICM.



The portable teaching kitchen with equipment visible on top with the remaining supplies stored inside the unit.

ESNY staff member presenting a cooking demonstration during operating hours at SICM.



Season Two of *From Farm to Table* is Underway



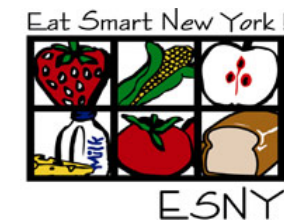
"Egg-Ceptionally Healthy Comfort Foods" kicks off season two of *From Farm to Table*, the 13-episode local foods cooking series co-production of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) and local PBS affiliate WMHT, on Saturday, January 23, 2010 at 2:30 pm. Returning host Kim Sopczyk, a nutrition educator from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Warren County, once again is on hand to demonstrate how easy it is to select, use and prepare fresh produce that is grown in the greater Capital District region. The series also introduces viewers to local farmers who talk about how food is produced and the sustainable agriculture practices they employ at their enterprises. In addition, each episode features four quick, healthy and nutritious recipes that illustrate how consumers can stretch their food dollars using local produce and products.

Season two takes a close look at the following commodities and nutritional trends: eggs, root vegetables, yogurt, squash, on the go meals, berries, cheese, cabbage, peppers, tomatoes, skillet suppers, cider, and canning and preserving. A WMHT film crew visited nine farms over the course of last summer and early fall including Gibson's Grazin' Angus Acres, Hawthorne Valley Farms, and Mountain Range Farm, all in Columbia County; Goold's Orchards, Rensselaer County; Barber's Farm and Schoharie Valley Farms (The Carrot Barn), Schoharie County; Nettle Meadow Farm, Warren County; and the Argyle Cheese Farmer and Slack Hollow Farm, Washington County. One episode, "Savory Skillet Suppers" shows scenes from the Saratoga Farmer's Market.

Twenty-one CCE staff from six counties were part of the "behind-the-scenes" and "on camera" production team that worked on this year's series in such capacities as research and episode development, remote field site identification, sous chefs, word processing, web resources, series host, and co-production responsibilities. This year's series underwriters are the Eat Smart New York! Food Stamp Nutrition and Education Program, which is administered by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, and Honest Weight Food Coop, located in Albany, NY. Season one was broadcast on five other New York State PBS stations, so if you are outside the WMHT viewing area, check your local listings or visit www.wmht.org to view previously-aired episodes, obtain recipes and check out additional resource information.

Remaining season two episode air dates and titles are:

- Jan. 30 -- "Root Vegetables Rock"
 - Feb. 6 -- "Yogurt-- More Than a Breakfast Food"
 - Feb. 13 -- "Succulent Squash"
 - Feb. 20 -- "On the Go Meals"
 - Feb. 27 -- "Berry Treasures"
 - Mar. 27 -- "Cheese Please"
 - Apr. 3 -- "From the Cabbage Patch"
 - Apr. 10 -- "Peppers Pack a Punch"
 - Apr. 17 -- "Tasty Tomato Treats"
 - Apr. 24 -- "Savory Skillet Suppers"
 - May 1 -- "It's Cider Time"
 - May 8 -- "Canning and Preserving is Fun and Easy"
- Note: All shows air Saturdays at 2:30 PM*



Announcing ...

Little Diggers ... A Gardening Series for Preschoolers and their Caregivers

June 3, 10, 17, 24
and July 1, 2010

at the
Horticulture Education Center
180 Chaires Lane, Central Park
Schenectady, NY 12308



Discover the wonders of gardening and nature with your preschooler
(ages 3-5) through a series of hands-on educational programs.

Each themed class introduces children to gardening, including:



flowers and vegetables



insects such as



ladybugs and butterflies



and much more!

Garden exploration, nature walks, crafts, a yummy snack, and stories and songs will
enrich your child's understanding and appreciation for our natural world.

Questions? Please call Angela Tompkins at 372-1622 or email her at
amj22@cornell.edu.

Class size is limited to 10 children.
Please register with payment (\$50) by May 27, 2010.

To receive a brochure with registration form, contact Grace at 372-1622, ext. 240.

Welcome to our New Staff Members

Over the past few of months, we have added a number of new staff members to our programs. We'd like you to meet these people, too, so following are short write-ups from each of them.



Nutrition and Health Program Educators:

My name is Kalynn Droz. I was hired at the end of November as a Nutrition Educator. Previously I have worked for the YMCA and have been there for six years as a personal trainer and Nutrition advisor. I have a degree in Physical Education and am currently studying for my Bachelor's degree in Nutrition. I am very eager to learn and have enjoyed the training process with the other new hires. I look forward to starting as a NPE and helping others in the community. My husband and I are currently flipping a house in Troy with our two big dogs.

Moderation, balance and outreach are the key components I strive to live by on a daily basis. My name is Erin Madigan and I am a new hire for the Schenectady County Nutrition Education program. I am excited to have the opportunity to help others learn, set goals and discover healthy choices. We live in a very diverse world and being healthy can be very challenging. I feel very grateful to have the opportunity to be a catalyst or resource for the residents of Schenectady County.

I would like to introduce myself. I am Kristin Ricciardi and am an emerging professional in the field of community nutrition. A recent graduate of SUNY Plattsburgh with a BS in Food, Nutrition and Institutional Management, I am eager to educate participants and encourage healthy lifestyle practices through the Eat Smart New York program. Presently I am the Regional Collegiate Representative to Phi Upsilon Omicron, a National Honor Society in Family and Consumer Sciences as well as a member of the American Dietetics Association. My professional interests include public health policy, herbal and whole food supplementation. I reside on the Sacandaga Lake and work as a server in an Italian restaurant outside Saratoga, NY and promote nutrition seminars for a whole food supplement company in Middle Grove, NY.

Hi! I am Rhonda Vaughn. I joined Cornell Corporate Extension in November, 2009 and look forward to the challenges with my new position. Previously I was with the YMCA Child Care department as Site Director for over six years. I have worked with a wide range of children for the past 17 years in various capacities. I hold a New York State School-Age Care Credential Certification and accredited the Kidz Korner After School Program when I was the Child Care Director. I am married with one child and a playful beagle.

WIC Program:



My name is Meghan Taney, and I just started as a Nutritionist at the WIC clinic this past December. I graduated from Russell Sage College a couple of years ago with a bachelor's degree in Nutrition. The following year I worked at Parson's Child Program, under a year-long grant, to introduce new fruits and vegetables to 2-5 year olds. Each week I prepared an exciting activity about each fruit or vegetable and then served the food to the children. It was an eye-opening experience and SO MUCH FUN! I'm excited to be able to be working with children and families again here at the WIC clinic! I am looking forward to learning more about the program and helping families to feel better by eating better!

Continued on Page 11

New Staff Members, continued

WIC Program (continued):

Hello, my name is Bryan Tusch. I was hired December 1st as one of the new nutritionists for the WIC Program. I am from Latham, NY, where I currently live. I graduated from Shaker High School in 2004. I went on to Johnson and Wales University in Providence, RI where I graduated with an A.S. in Pastry Arts. I transferred to SUNY Oneonta, and graduated in 2009 with a B.S. in Dietetics/Nutrition. I hope to finish my RD within the next few years and would like to earn a Doctorate at some point in my life. I have a passion for sports and recently was a part of the coaching staff for Shaker High JV football. We finished as champions of Section 2.

Hello, my name is Grace Reidel. I am one of the new administrative assistants for the Schenectady WIC program. I have lived in Schenectady most of my life and graduated from Schenectady High School in 1998. I attended SUNY Potsdam and studied art. I graduated in 2002 with a B.A. in Studio Art. I hope someday to combine my passion for art and working with people. I enjoy reading, knitting and English Country dancing (think Jane Austen Movies). I also enjoy making my own bread and cooking.

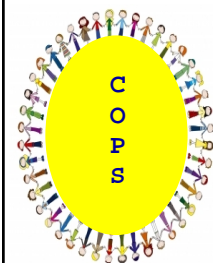
Children, Youth and Families:

I am Sarah Shufon, and am a new member of the CCE Staff. I joined the organization as a 4-H Educator in January, 2010. This is quite a career change for me. For the last 5 years, fresh out of college, I had worked as an Account Executive in Corporate Legal sales.



While my career path has changed, my heart has always been with 4-H and joining the 4-H organization as an employee is like going home. I was a member for 11 years, and have been a volunteer to the local and state horse program since. I am very excited to now be an integral part of a great organization. I am looking forward to the many 4-H and county events this year, and am thrilled to have the opportunity to positively impact the youth of Schenectady County.

Some of my passions and interests are horses, dogs and gardening. While I don't own any horses of my own anymore, I enjoy riding and schooling horses for friends, and managing and judging horse shows. Another passion of mine is public education about, and the rescue/adoption of, pit bulls. I have two rescued pit bulls of my own, Charlotte and Dexter, and urge many people to meet responsible pit bull owners and their dogs, to discover the true nature of the breed: that of a people-loving, clown of a dog.



My name is Theresa Smigelski and I am new to the CCE staff, working as a community educator in Children, Youth and Families. I was born and raised in the suburbs of Schenectady, am a graduate of Oneonta State University with a Bachelor's in Child and Family Studies and a Masters of Education in School Counseling from Sage Graduate School. I work with the Child and Families Opportunities Program (COPS) and Independent Living Skills (ILS) programs, where I assist youth in gaining more independent skills and improving their self sufficiency.

Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County welcomes all our new staff members, and we look forward to many years of working together to better our community.



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
of Schenectady County

107 Nott Terrace, Suite 301 Tel: 518 372-1622
Schenectady, NY 12308 Fax: 518 372-8703
E-mail: schenectady@cornell.edu
Web: www.cceschenectady.org

Learn more about all Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County
programs and events by visiting: www.cceschenectady.org



**Daylight Savings Time
begins on March 14**



Mission: Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County engages individuals and communities, through education, to develop knowledge, skills and leadership to improve their quality of life.

The information given herein is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Cornell Cooperative Extension is implied.