

THE Tyler County AGENTS' ADVICE

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Nov 3rd - Breakfast CEU's 7am at Whataburger

Nov 11th - Veteran's Day (All County Offices will be closed)

Nov 18th - FCS Advisory Board Mtg. 11-12pm EOC Rm 1

Nov. 19th - 4H County Council Meeting @ 5:00pm - Nutrition Center Room C

Nov 20th - Pesticide Certification and Recertification course in Livingston at First Baptist Church 106 Colt Rd. 8:30-3:00pm

Nov. 26th-27th - Thanksgiving Holidays (All County Offices will be closed)

Dec 9th - FCS Advisory Board Mts. 11-12pm EOC Rm 1

Dec 24th-25th - Christmas Holidays (All County Offices will be closed)

December 31st - New Year's Holiday (All County Offices will be closed)

Much To Do About Mulch



One of the best methods of growing healthy plants and conserving water at the same time is to use mulch in the landscape.

Experienced gardeners have long known the secret of mulching the garden and all its benefits. What is mulch? It's simply a protective ground covering that saves water, reduces evaporation, prevents erosion, controls weeds, and in the case of organic mulches, enriches the soil.

Almost sounds too good to be true! Mulches can be classified as organic or inorganic. The organic mulches are most popular and include straw, leaves, bark, pine needles, compost and similar materials. Inorganic mulches include rocks, rock chips, synthetic fabrics, and other non-plant materials. A big advantage of mulching is it reduces soil moisture loss through evaporation. Mulches also reduce the soil's exposure to wind which, in turn, reduces water loss through evaporation. The insulating quality of mulch helps to keep the soil cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. By maintaining more even soil moisture and temperature,

mulch promotes better root growth and plant health. Erosion control also is important, especially in steep areas. Mulch helps to reduce rain splash and runoff, which in some cases will also help prevent the spread of plant disease. Mulch also suppresses the growth of many weeds. A 3- to 4-inch layer of organic mulch should be sufficient to prevent sunlight from reaching the soil, thereby reducing the chance of weed growth. Any weed seedlings that do manage to germinate and break through the layer of mulch are easily pulled. A mix of coarse and fine mulch will help reduce seed germination. Mulches should not be piled up against the trunks of plants, but rather form a donut around the base of trees.

Food Safety: Storing Thanksgiving Leftovers

A good rule of thumb for food safety is to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Take your time around the dinner table, but start packing up and refrigerating the leftovers within two hours.

The best way to store leftovers is to make sure to pack them in several shallow containers rather than one large one. Never stack warm containers, as this will trap the heat, allowing for the possible growth of bacteria.

Leftovers can safely be stored in the refrigerator for

up to four days. Try to reheat only what you'll be serving at one time rather than reheating the entire portion, so that your food will not lose its flavor and moisture. Use a thermometer to make sure food is heated to the proper temperature of 165°F. Sauces, soups and gravies should be heated to a full boil. If you are using a microwave, cover the food and rotate it frequently to make sure it heats evenly.

Freezing keeps food safe by preventing the growth of bacteria, which can cause food to spoil. As long as your leftovers have been frozen at



0°F, you can store them for long periods of time, but will taste best if used within two or three months. Remember, that liquids expand as they freeze so choose the size of your container wisely and never use non-freezer safe glass.

Don't forget to label and date your containers!

Tyler County Extension Agents



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Jacob Spivey, Agriculture/Natural Resource

What's in Season? Apples

For more information on SNAP-Ed, contact your local county Extension office. Better Living for Texans is located in over 200 counties across the state.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Better Living for Texans programs are available to all without discrimination.

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Apples are a very popular fruit and there are many factors to explain that. In addition to the great taste, apples are high in fiber and vitamin C, potassium, and antioxidants. Apples can be eaten by themselves or used in various recipes, juices, and drinks.

Apples come in many types, and in a variety of colors and sizes. In terms of taste, apples range from very tart (i.e. Granny Smith) to very sweet (i.e. McIntosh).

Apples should be stored in the refrigerator to prolong a firm texture. The USDA

recommends that apples are not to be washed until ready to eat.



Monthly Recipe: Rustic Fresh Apple Tart

Ingredients:

2/3 cup all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup cold butter, cubed
6-1/2 teaspoons cold water
1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract

FILLING:

1-1/2 cups chopped peeled tart apples
3 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

TOPPING:

1 teaspoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons caramel ice cream topping, warmed

Prep time: 20 mins. + Chill time: 25 mins



Nutritional Facts: 1 slice equals 286 calories, 12 g fat (7 g saturated fat), 31 mg cholesterol, 226 mg sodium, 44 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 3 g protein.

Directions: In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar and salt; cut in butter until crumbly. Gradually add water and vanilla, tossing with a fork until dough forms a ball. Cover and refrigerate 30 minutes or until easy to handle. Preheat oven to 400°. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 10-in. circle. Transfer to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Combine the filling ingredients; spoon over pastry to within 2 in. of edges. Fold up edges of pastry over filling, leaving center uncovered. Combine sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle over filling. Bake 25-30 minutes or until crust is golden and filling is bubbly. Using parchment paper, slide tart onto a wire rack. Drizzle with caramel topping. Serve warm. Yield: 4 servings. **Source:** Taste of Home

*** CONVERT your Favorite Recipes to the SLOW COOKER ***

- 1) Soups, braises (stews) and some casseroles with cooking time over an hour work best.
- 2) Brown beef or other small pieces of meat before putting in the slow cooker.
- 3) If original cook time was about an hour, cook for 4 hours on HIGH. If original cook time was longer than 1 hour, cook for 8 hours on LOW.

