

THE Tyler County AGENTS' ADVICE

UPCOMING EVENTS:

December

Tuesday, December 13th – Make up day for Breakfast CEUs at 7am, Extension Office

Thursday, December 15th Walk Across Texas Ending Celebration, Room C of Nutrition Center, 5pm

Friday, December 16th – Beef and Forage Workshop, Corrigan City Hall from 8:30am – 3pm, RSVP by December 14th, \$15

Mon.-Wed, Dec. 19th-21st – Kids Christmas Cooking Camp, Extension Office 9am-12pm - Call to Register.

December 23rd, 26th, and 30th – Closed, County Holiday

January

January 2nd Closed - County Holiday

Tuesday, January 3rd – Breakfast CEUs, 7am at Extension Office

Thursday, January 5 – County Food and Fashion Show and Photography

January 13th – February 4th, Fort Worth Livestock Show and Rodeo

Monday, January 16th Closed – MLK Day

Monday, January 23 – County Wide 4H Council Meeting, Room C at 6pm

Tuesday, January 24th – Tyler County Beekeepers Association Meeting, Room C at 6pm

Tyler County Extension Agents



Kelly Jobe, Family & Consumer Science
Jacob Spivey, Agriculture/Natural Resource

What your plants need to survive cold temperatures.

Each Winter we get to experience at least a little bit of cold weather. The way our temperatures can drop so suddenly can be very hard on plants. In some climates, plants can get used to freezing weather if they are exposed to it consistently and gradually, but here in our part of Texas, our warm periods in between cold snaps, make it hard for plants to adjust and so they are much more vulnerable to frost and freeze damages. Sudden sharp temperature drops, as we sometimes face, can cause serious damage to plants. When our temperatures drop below freezing we can see the water inside plant cells freeze, which can cause ice crystals to form that can pierce and damage cells walls, killing the cell, then as temperatures rise and that ice begins to melt and flow out of the damaged cells, we see decay begin often killing an entire plant.

A frost, by contrast, happens when the sky is clear and there isn't much wind. The amount of

radiation given to the plant by the sun is lost gradually during the night to the freezing point just before sunrise.

Frosts can be severely damaging as well but normally only at the top or most exposed part of the plant. Frosts, which we are much more likely to get here in Tyler County, are much easier to protect plants from. Plants growing under tree canopies will be impacted less than those more exposed.

Likewise, plants in pots can be placed under the overhang of a house for some protection.

Where possible, the best protection would be from opaque covers such as sheets, blankets, cardboard boxes or trash cans, but wait until early evening so the plant can absorb as much sun radiation as possible. Freezes are not easily deflected by the methods used for a frost.

While a cover by itself would not be adequate during a freeze, adding a heat source such as a string of outdoor lights can

help, because it adds heat.

Plants in containers are more likely to be harmed than those in the ground because they lack the insulation that the earth provides.

Move container plants inside the home or garage, if they can't be moved indoors, put them on a more protected side of the house. Then water them well and pile on mulch, leaves or hay and cover with a frost blanket.

Plants that are permanently set in the landscape can receive some protection from semi-permanent structures such as polyethylene film-covered structures), windbreaks, and mounds of soil or mulch heaped around the lower trunk. Wait to prune frost- or freeze-damaged plants until the spring, because the dead foliage can provide a protective layer during the next cold spell and because pruning could prompt new, tender growth.

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.

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Contact Us:

Tyler County Extension
201 Veteran's Way
Woodville, Texas 75979

Phone: (409)283-8284
Fax: (409)331-0015

Emails: (FCS) kelly.jobe@aq.tamu.edu
(AG/NR) jacob.spivey@aq.tamu.edu

website: www.tyler.agrilife.org
Facebook: Tyler County Agrilife Extension

What's in Season? Green Beans

Green beans, which used to be referred to as "string beans" because of the string that was once their trademark, are now more commonly known as "snap beans", due to the fact that they are picked at a younger, immature stage, and can literally be snapped in half with a simple twist of the fingers. Although these bright green and crunchy beans are available at your local market throughout the year, they are in season from summer through early fall when they are at their best and the least expensive.

How to Select and Store

If possible, purchase green beans at a store or farmer's market that sells them loose so that you can sort through them to choose the beans of best quality. Purchase beans that have a smooth feel and a vibrant green color and that are free from brown spots or bruises. They should have a firm texture and "snap" when broken. At full maturity, their pods are often too thick and fibrous to be readily enjoyed in fresh form, but the

Beans inside their pods are perfect for drying and storing. Store unwashed fresh beans in a plastic bag kept in the refrigerator crisper. It is vital to keep the beans cold. This helps preserve their nutritional composition. Whole beans stored this way, should keep for about seven days.

Freezing your green beans is also an option for maintaining their freshness and nutritional vitality. Properly frozen, green beans will keep for 3-6 months. If you wish to freeze green beans, it is recommended that you steam the green beans for 2-3 minutes, then remove from the heat and let them cool completely before placing them in freezer bags and storing them in your freezer. If you don't have fresh green beans available on a year-round basis, purchasing frozen green beans can definitely provide you with a nutritionally valuable option.

Health Benefits

Green beans are high in conventional antioxidant nutrients like Vitamin C, and beta-carotene. Green beans also contain important amounts of the



antioxidant mineral manganese. But the area of phytonutrients is where green beans really shine. Green beans, especially young, immature beans, contain a wide variety of carotenoids and flavonoids that have all been shown to have health-supportive antioxidant properties. Some of these benefits are cardiovascular in nature, by using the omega-3 fatty acid content to improve the levels of blood fats, thus protecting the heart from damage. The strong carotenoid and flavonoid content of green beans also appear to give this vegetable some potentially unique anti-inflammatory benefits. Because type 2 diabetes is a health problem that is known to contain a basic component of chronic inflammation, research is now showing that a high intake of green beans, with its high fiber and many nutrients, may help to prevent this disease.

Monthly Recipe: Maple Pecan Green Beans

INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup pecans
- ½ kosher salt
- ¼ black pepper
- 2 pounds green beans, trimmed
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup



Per serving: 169 calories,
14g fat, 11g carb, 3g protein,
337mg sodium, 4g sugar, 4g
fiber, 0mg cholesterol

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 400°. Spread the pecans on a rimmed baking sheet and bake, tossing once, until toasted, for 6 to 8 minutes. Let cool. Roughly chop and set to the side. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to a boil and add 1 tablespoon salt. Add the green beans and cook until just tender, 4 to 5 minutes. Drain and place in ice water to cool and stop the cooking process. In a large bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar, mustard, maple syrup, ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Add the green beans and pecans and toss to combine. Serves 8

Start a New Tradition: Build a Gingerbread House with your Kids

Don't want to bake gingerbread??? Use Graham Crackers!!

Graham Cracker Gingerbread Houses

Graham Crackers (at least 6 per house)

Royal Icing: (see recipe below)

4 cups confectioners' sugar

5 tablespoons meringue powder

1/2 cup water

1. Beat together the confectioners' sugar and meringue powder and some of the water. Add the remaining water, bit by bit, until a stiff icing forms.

2. Scoop the icing into a large ziploc bag or pastry bag and pipe together the gingerbread house as seen here. Allow it to set overnight. Decorate with icing and candy!

www.happinesishomemade.net/make-graham-cracker-gingerbread-houses/ - for more instructions and ideas

