

The Sullivan County Extension Connection

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JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2008

The Folklore Behind Holiday Plants



Mistletoe is a parasitic plant with poisonous berries that saps the strength out of the trees it infests; how did this become one of the symbols of a season of merriment and goodwill to all, and why is it

used as an excuse to steal a holiday smooch? For that matter, why do we bring evergreen trees in to our houses at this time of year, grow poinsettias, or deck the halls with boughs of holly? All of these holiday plants have roots that reach deep into folklore.

Mistletoe's name comes from the Anglo-Saxon *mistel* "dung" and *tan* "twig" and comes from the belief that it rose spontaneously from bird droppings in trees. Because of this, and the fact that the plant takes the life from the trees it inhabits, it was believed to possess great powers. Celtic and Germanic tribes in pre-Christian northern Europe held it in particular reverence. They believed it had the power cure a wide range of diseases and maladies, ensure fertility, and even bring the dead back to life. In the Middle Ages, people continued to believe mistletoe helped to ward off evil spirits. In some parts of England and Wales, farmers would give mistletoe to the first cow that calved in the New Year in order to bring good luck to their entire herd. The Norse thought of mistletoe as a symbol of peace, and two enemies who met under mistletoe would call a temporary truce for the day. The practice of kissing under the mistletoe was believed to increase the prospect of a fruitful marriage; one berry is removed after each kiss, with all the magic used up after the last berry is gone.

Like mistletoe, holly was a plant that supposedly had magical properties as a charm against the various evils that beset people in the past. In Germany, a sprig of holly was supposed to protect the house against lightning. The ancient Romans decorated their homes with branches of holly and gave it as gifts during the Saturnalia, a festival they held during the winter. Early Christians continued the tradition, but they replaced the pagan trappings with symbolism from their own religion; the prickly leaves represented Christ's crown of thorns, and the red berries represented the blood he shed. There are a number of legends in which holly figures prominently in the story of the birth of Jesus,

such as one account that related that a holly bush hid Joseph and his family from Herod's soldiers as they fled from Bethlehem to Egypt.

Christmas trees come from the Germanic peoples of northern Europe, though there are varying accounts of how their origin. Because firs and other conifers stay green in winter when everything else around them is grey and seemingly dead, they were thought to possess special properties. Some accounts tell that people tied offerings to the god Woden on the branches, while others mention that they brought branches into the house to once again safeguard against rampant fairy malevolence. One legend states that a missionary trying to convert pagans in Germany cut down an oak tree, also sacred to them. The falling tree crushed everything in the area except for a young fir sapling, which the missionary interpreted as a triumph of his religion. The modern version of Christmas trees also originated in northern Europe, but didn't make their first appearance until the 1500's, perhaps with the popularity of "paradise trees" – evergreen trees decorated with apples for the feast of Adam and Eve. It wasn't until the 1850's, when we began to see widespread immigration from Germany and Scandinavia, that Christmas trees became popular in the U.S.

Poinsettias are probably the most recent addition to traditional holiday plants. Native to Mexico, they were used as medicinally and as a source of dye by the ancient Aztecs. The wild plant bears little resemblance to the garish specimens we have today, but they do feature the bright red bracts (commonly mistaken for flower petals), and these reminded people of the Star of Bethlehem. A popular legend tells of a poor girl in Mexico who left church crying because she had no present to give the Christ Child on Christmas Eve. An angel appeared and reminded the girl that any gift given from the heart would be welcome. When she picked a bouquet from the weeds growing on the roadside and brought it back into the church, they were miraculously transformed into the poinsettia's brilliant red blossoms.

This is Really for the Birds



Each year in the United States, Americans spend more than one-half billion dollars feeding birds. In fact, one in three North American households makes available an average of 60 pounds of supplemental seed annually. Birds are fascinating to watch and dedicated bird feeders buy hundreds of pounds of feed

each winter. Most have a bird book and binoculars to identify and study the birds. And most willingly take the time to replenish feed and water supplies several times a week. Fortunately, ornithologists speculate that if handouts were to stop tomorrow, there would be neither species extinctions nor major population declines. However, some recently enlarged ranges would probably decline.

If you've tried to attract and feed birds in the past, but the venture was never really a success, it may be because you were lacking a few basic pieces of information. Just a few tips on where to place your feeders, what to put in them, and what feeder types are attractive to which species can make the difference between success and failure.

Birds will visit feeders that are placed close to branches of trees and shrubs (especially evergreens) more readily than they will visit feeders in the open. Feeders in the open tend to be more exposed to the elements and to predators. If squirrels are a problem, use baffles and try to place your feeders just beyond jumping distance. Shrub borders near a garden or hedge-rows along the edge of your lawn are ideal sites for feeders. "Edges" between different types of vegetation will attract a wider variety of birds. Perhaps most importantly for you, feeders should be situated near a window for convenient bird watching. If you have no natural cover near a window, you can prop up an old Christmas

(cont. on pg. 8)

Landscape beautification at the Newport Extension office entrance was made possible through a grant from the New Hampshire Master Gardener Association.

UNH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
 24 MAIN STREET
 NEWPORT, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03773

PRESORTED STANDARD
 POSTAGE & FEES PAID
 NEWPORT, NH
 Permit No. 55

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Sandy J. Trybulski
Program Associate
Nutrition Connections
sandy.trybulski@unh.edu

Let's Cook Together

Little hands can help. Children are natural kitchen helpers. They like to share simple tasks of food shopping and choosing foods for meals. They enjoy preparing and serving food to the family.

Cooking builds self-esteem.

Helping in the kitchen builds confidence and early skills of independence. Most kids feel proud and important when they help prepare food. Sharing in family tasks helps them feel that they belong in the family.

Cooking Teaches.

Kitchen tasks give your child a chance to measure, count, and see food change. That's early math and science learning. Your child can learn new words and symbols by cooking with you. Talk about the food and what you are doing. Read words together on food containers. Cleanup teaches responsibility. It's part of many creative, messy things we do. Small muscle skills develop, too, when your child uses his or her hands to help with kitchen tasks.

Cooking together is fun family time.

Kitchen time offers a special parenting chance. Cooking together creates closer bonds and lifelong memories. It's also a chance to talk and hear what your child has to share.

Pick kitchen tasks that match your child's abilities.

- 1) Start: stir, pour, shake, tear
- 2) Then: spread, mix, and knead
- 3) After that: cut, grate, and measure (with supervision)

Think about this!

- If your child makes a cooking mess, it's okay! Young kids don't have the same muscle coordination and skills that you do.
- Even if meals take longer to prepare, it's worth letting your child help. Kitchen time is learning time that you share together.

Kitchen Safety Rules for Kids and Families

- Fasten hair back if it's long.
- Wear clean clothes, maybe with short sleeves.
- Get started with hand and table washing.
- Taste with a clean spoon. A licked spoon goes in the sink, not back in the bowl.
- Resist nibbling cookie dough or cake batter.
- Stay away from hot surfaces and utensils and sharp objects. An adult needs to help.
- Work at a table, child-size surface.
- Walk slowly, Carry food and utensils with care.
- Wipe up spills as they happen.

Together, follow four food safety rules:

- 1) Be clean
- 2) Keep raw and cooked food separate.
- 3) Cook food to proper temperature
- 4) Refrigerate perishable food right away.

Source: Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children, USDA, Food and Nutrition Service

Nutrition Connections Connects with Schools



The fifth grade students at Towle Elementary in Newport are bringing more fruits and vegetables for their snacks, trying more new foods, and washing their hands more frequently, after a series of Nutrition Connections class visits. The students are looking at labels more often to determine the sugar and fat content to make healthy choices. They learned the importance of all the food groups and learned about *MyPyramid*.

Students in fourth and fifth grades at the Charlestown Primary school benefited from a series of lessons and now are washing their hands in class before snack and lunch. They made healthy Halloween party choices, and choose fruit and muffins from the snack cart. Teachers say that the students are discussing foods during snack and lunch time, and have reported the changes they have made at home trying new foods.

Tasting new foods in the classroom was a big hit with all classes. They learned they can take a taste of something they haven't had before and that it may take several tastes to determine if they like it. They learned there are several ways to prepare a food to try.



Family & Consumer Resources

Gail P. Kennedy
Extension Educator
Family & Consumer Resources
gail.kennedy@unh.edu



Earned Income Tax Credit

by *Suzann Enzian Knight, MOE,MS,CFP*
Extension Specialist, Family Resource Management
UNH Cooperative Extension, Durham, NH

Do you qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit?

The Earned Income Tax Credit for Tax Year 2007 lets some working families with children and some workers without children pay less federal income tax or get money back. This money can then be used for anything.

There are two types of families who can qualify for the earned income credit. One type is for workers between ages 25 and 65 with no children. The other type is for workers with qualifying children. This child can be a son, daughter, adopted child, grandchild, stepchild, your brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister whom you cared for as you would your own child; or a foster child placed by a government or private agency. The child had to live with you for more than six months in 2007. This child must be under age 19, or under age 24 and a full-time student, or any age if the child is permanently disabled.

The money you receive varies on your earnings in 2007, whether you have qualifying children and how many qualified children you have. If you have no children and are

between the ages 25 and 65 and earned less than \$12,590 (\$14,590 for married filing jointly) you can receive up to \$428. If you have one qualified child and earned less than \$33,241 (\$35,241 for married filing jointly) you can receive up to \$2,853. With more than one qualified child and earned less than \$37,783 (\$39,783 for married filing jointly) you can receive up to \$4,716. Your investment income during 2007 can't be more than \$2,900.

To get your earned income credit if you have a qualifying child, file Form 1040 or Form 1040A and attach Schedule EIC for the Earned Income Tax Credit. To get your earned income credit if you don't have a child, file Form 1040, Form 1040A or Form 1040EZ. These forms are available at libraries, some post offices and banks. There are a number of free tax preparation sites throughout NH where IRS certified volunteers are trained to help you fill out the tax forms. These sites are operational in late January.

For more information about the earned income tax credit, contact your local UNH Cooperative Extension office in Sullivan County at 863-9200 and request the free publication titled "Earned Income Tax Credit for Tax Year 2007". If you're interested in receiving your earned income tax credit in your paycheck during the year, request the free publication titled "2008 Advance Earned Income Tax Credit".

Calling All Families with 10-14 Year Olds: YOU'RE INVITED TO ATTEND

Celebrate Your Family

Thursday Nights
Feb. 28 - April 10, 2008
6:00 to 8:30PM
Plainfield School
Plainfield, NH

To Register:

Call Stephanie at 493-3527

OR

SFP 10-14 Charlestown

Monday Nights
Feb. 25 - April 7, 2008
5:30 to 8:00 PM
Charlestown Primary School
Charlestown, NH

To Register:

Call UNHCE at 863-9200
FREE Childcare - **FREE** Dinner
FREE Family Fun!

"Chaos to Cooperation: Parents & Children Working Together"

A Family Focus Program for families with Children Ages 6-12 yr. olds

When: Tuesday Evenings
January 8, 15, 22, 29, 2008
6:30 to 8:00 PM

Where: Richards Free Library
54 North Main Street
Newport NH 03773

Presenter: Robin Abendroth, UNHCE Family Focus Parent Educator

Registration: Pre-registration is required by January 4. Please call 863-9200 to register.

Let us know if you will need childcare.

4-H and Youth



Robin R. Luther
Nancy G. Berry
Extension Educators,
4-H Youth Development
robin.luther@unh.edu
nancy.berry@unh.edu

Teen Winter Activity Planned for Arrowhead

Join 4-H Teen Club members at Arrowhead ski area in Claremont for a night of snow tubing fun on **Friday, February 22 from 6-8 p.m.** Arrowhead is behind the Sugar River Technical High School on South Street in Claremont. The cost is just \$7 per teen. (age 12 and up) There are 4 lanes for innertubing. It will be lots of fun!



Call the Extension office at 863-9200 for permission forms or download them from the web at <http://extension.unh.edu/4H/4HForms.htm> You will need a medical, code of conduct and permission form to participate.

For more information, check out the Arrowhead website at www.arrowheadnh.com. Inexpensive refreshments will also be on sale at the ski hill. Other family members are welcome to ski, board or tube at their own risk.



Start sewing for Fashion Revue or try Fashion Selections!

It's time to start planning now to take part in our fashion program in April. If you don't want to sew, and you are 12 or older, we have another **exciting way for you to participate!** For "Fashion Selections" you choose a purchased outfit to model and be judged on. It can be something you wear to school, for special events, a prom outfit or you can even put together an outfit entirely from thrift stores or yard sales! The idea is to use your consumer skills and accessorizing talents to put together a functional outfit. Everyone buys clothing but not everyone likes to sew, so we can include more 4-H members in our show with the Fashion Selections program. This year's theme is **"April Showers Bring May Flowers"**.

Please help us spread the word about this opportunity to your members, both boys and girls, **age 12 or older.** We have an excellent 4-H curriculum called "Discovering Choice: Clothing Decisions" that will help project leaders work with youth on the consumer

CURRENT NEWS

Community Service Project: "Hero Packs"

Community service "Hero Packs" are needed for the children of military families. The Hero Pack project is a chance for groups of youth and adults to work together and become involved in a valuable community service effort. Please consider inviting other groups and businesses to join you in this effort. Keep in mind, you are helping build awareness and fostering community support for "suddenly military" kids dispersed throughout the state.

These guidelines are meant to outline the basic requirements for Hero Pack contents, and examples are meant only as suggestions...be creative! Unless otherwise stated, you must purchase the contents or get donations. The contents in all Hero Packs do

Join the 4-H Health Rocks! Team

Health Rocks! is the name of an interactive 4-H program where teens teach younger students about making good decisions. Teens play games and do fun activities to help 3rd-6th graders choose to abstain from tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.

An all day training workshop is scheduled for **Saturday, January 12 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Claremont Middle School.** The training is free to all Sullivan County adults and teens (8th - 12th grade) who would like to teach Health Rocks! in school classrooms or after-school programs. Supplies including a briefcase, curriculum notebook and t-shirt will be provided FREE of charge. Even lunch is included!

Ideally, an adult mentor will register along with 2 or more teens from the same town or school. Adults will work with the teens to help them prepare to teach younger students. The adult will help the teens find supplies, advise and go with them when they teach

not need to be exactly the same, as long as each pack includes the "Minimum Required Contents" as outlined. The minimum required content categories include: 5 Fun Items, Handwritten Appreciation Letters, 4 Connection/Communication Tools and Operation Military Kids (OMK) Partner Information for Parents (Parent Packet).

The backpacks and parent packets are supplied by OMK. The Teen Club has assembled 30 of these backpacks so far. Call 863-9200 for more detailed instructions.



the six 1/2 hour or 45 minute lessons. The adult mentor will help with classroom discipline if necessary while the teens will do the actual activities and games.

Teens will receive \$20 each for attending the training on January 12 (snow date January 19) and they will receive \$20 each time they teach a lesson to 10 or more students. Funding is provided by NH DHHS, Division of Public Health Services, Bureau of Prevention Services, ATODP.

Twenty nine Sullivan County teens and 10 adult mentors were trained last spring. They reached 151 students and had a lot of fun doing it too! Some of these experienced teens will be helping with the workshop on January 12. Call 863-9200 to receive a Health Rocks! brochure. Learn more at www.msucare.com/4h>Youth/health_rocks.



decisions used in purchasing clothing. Members may still choose to sew an outfit and also put together a purchased outfit this year. They will be judged on both on **Saturday, April 12 and model in the Fashion Show on Friday evening, April 18.** Both events take place at the Claremont Middle School and gifts will be given to everyone who participates.

*Please note that Fashion Evaluation Day will not be held the same day as County Activities Day this year so it's easier to participate in both events. **March 28 is the deadline to register for Fashion Revue and Fashion Selections.**

All organization leaders and clothing project leaders will receive information in the mail on Fashion Revue and Fashion Selections. In the meantime, please talk to members about how they could choose an outfit for one of their hobbies or sports, be sure it is appropriate and fits well, bring props or accessories, and then write a script about how they intend to

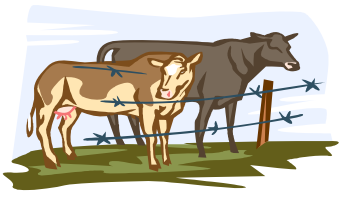
use their outfit.

Fashion Selections categories include:
Best Bargains for under \$25
Sports / Leisure activities
School
Special Occasions
Makeovers
Interview Outfits
Career Fashions

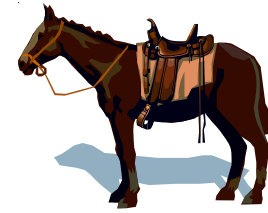


For members planning to sew an outfit, it is important to choose your fabric and pattern early and get started sewing this month so you are not doing it all at the last minute! We still have some patterns in the Extension office that you can borrow for free. We also have guidelines to help you choose appropriate patterns and fabric for each year of sewing. Sewing leaders are urged to call Nancy Berry for more information.

4-H MEMBERS' CORNER



4-H Animal Approval Forms



Members with 4-H animal projects must register their project animal(s) with their County Extension Office annually. Forms must be requested from your leader, the Extension Office or downloaded from the web at <http://extension.unh.edu/4H/4HForms.htm>. Scroll to Animal Science Project Resources and click on the appropriate form. If you are thinking about showing your 4-H project animal(s) at the fairs during the summer of 2008, be sure to submit these forms to the Sullivan County Extension office before or on the most appropriate deadline date listed as follows:

February 1: **Beef Steers to be shown at Eastern States.** (a special eartag is required to be in place before February 15). Contact a 4-H educator to let them know you are interested in participating.

April 1: **Horses to qualify for Eastern States.**

May 1: **Beef Heifers to be shown at Eastern States, Working Steers, Dogs, Dairy Cattle, Llamas and Horses.**

June 15: **All Sheep, Goats, Swine, Small Animals, Poultry and other Beef not to be shown at Eastern States**

All 4-H project animals must be at least three months by show day to be exhibited, shown or brought to any given 4-H event. For instance, a lamb born on May 31, 2008 could not be exhibited at a 4-H event before August 31, 2008.

Members Applauded During Rally and Awards Night

To kick off the new 4-H year families from around the county gathered for 4-H Rally and Awards Night at the Claremont Middle School. During Rally 4-H members and volunteers were recognized for their accomplishments and contributions to their community.

Commentators

Megan McPherson, Fun 4-H
Katherine Stockwell, Horse Huggers 4-H

Flag Ceremony

Covered Bridge 4-H Club

Program Distribution/Food Raising Raffle

Fun 4-H

Installation of Officers

State Representative Carla Skinder

2007 Ivan Head Outstanding 4-H'er Award

Winners

Michael Drye, Covered Bridge 4-H
Megan McPherson, Fun 4-H
Katherine Stockwell, Horse Huggers 4-H

Outstanding 4-H Club Award

Sullivan County Teen Club

County Medals of Honor

Alyssa Adams, Country Kids 4-H
Dylan Adams, Country Kids 4-H
Joshua Baker, Fun 4-H
Rachel Baker, Fun 4-H
Mary Jelliffe, Fun 4-H
Thomas Jelliffe, Fun 4-H
Megan McPherson, Fun 4-H
Ryan McPherson, Fun 4-H
Abby St. Pierre, Fun 4-H
Michael Drye, Covered Bridge 4-H
Dominique Rondeau, Horse Huggers 4-H
Katherine Stockwell, Horse Huggers 4-H

Honorable Mention Certificates

Dominic Stout, Clever Cardinals
Sarah Wilder, Horse Huggers 4-H



Ivan Head Outstanding 4-H'er Award winners: (l-r) Megan McPherson, Kate Stockwell, and Michael Drye.



4-H Leader Awards were awarded to: (l-r) Betty Reavis for 40 years of service, Diane Callum for 30 years of service, and Janyce St. Pierre for 25 years of service.

Ten Year Members.

Lindsay Adams, Fun 4-H
Amy Barriger, 4-H Teen Club
Paige Blanchard, Jim Dandies 4-H
Megan McPherson, Fun 4-H
Jacob St. Pierre, Fun 4-H
Wesley Van Velsor, Jim Dandies

Pumpkin Decorating Contest Winners

Book Character Pumpkin
Jack Hodskins, Bunny Bunch
Amanda Towne, Bunny Bunch
Jacob Baker, Fun 4-H
Monica Stout, 4-H Teen Club
Alyssa Adams, Country Kids
Hillary Ward & D'Arcy Morie, 4-H Teen Club
Sports Pumpkin
Caleb Palmer, Clever Cardinals
Aurora Braswell, Cornish Equestrians
Thomas Jelliffe, Fun 4-H
Dylan Adams, Country Kids
Megan McPherson, Fun 4-H
Isaiah St. Pierre, 4-H Teen Club
Pumpkin Animal
Michael Wilder, Country Kids
Rebekah Baker, Fun 4-H
Mehdi Orogi, Covered Bridge
Megan Wilder, Country Kids
Taylor Hackett, Cornish Equestrians
Holly Towne, Bunny Bunch
Ryan McPherson, Fun 4-H

The Ruth Bascom and

N. H. Antique Tractor Club scholarships
Dominique Rondeau, Horse Huggers 4-H

4-H LEADERS' UPDATE

Join Us For "New Leader Orientation" on January 28

All volunteers who have joined 4-H within the last 3 years are highly encouraged to attend a New Leader Orientation on **Monday, January 28 from 6:30-9:00 pm** at the Extension office.

As a 4-H volunteer you are a coach for your 4-H club. During this session we will share the basics on how to develop successful 4-H team experiences. We will review the play book sections: Inside 4-H, Club Management, Learning the 4-H Way, Working with Club Members, Family Involvement and Risk Management. We will make sure the evening is interactive, informative and FUN! Please **pre-register** by calling 863-9200 and feel free to invite other adults considering 4-H leadership.

Come to the Leader's Banquet!

Friday, February 1 at 6:00 p.m. is your chance to treat yourself to a nice meal as our way of saying "thank you" for all you do for young people in 4-H.



Mark your calendar today because we want YOU to attend our annual Leader Banquet at the Teal Room in the Sugar River Technical School in Claremont. (It's right next to Claremont Middle School on South Street.) We will enjoy a specially catered buffet prepared by the culinary arts students at the school. The menu will feature a meat entree, a chicken entree, a fish entree, a potato or pasta dish, vegetables, soup, salad, rolls, dessert and beverages.

The meal is **FREE** for all currently enrolled 4-H volunteers and there is a small charge for spouses or guests who attend. We will have door prizes and a performance by the young artists of the Performer's Playground for your entertainment enjoyment as well. Your invitation was just mailed to you.

Note: Only **enrolled** 4-H leaders received an invitation, so this is one last reason to get your enrollment form in to our office **now!**

Get R.E.A.L. Workshops Saturday, February 9 8:30 - noon Charlestown Middle School

Watch your mail for a brochure describing all of the exciting hands-on workshops being offered to Sullivan County volunteers and teens. Learn about foods, the arts, dance, knitting, cake decorating and much more!

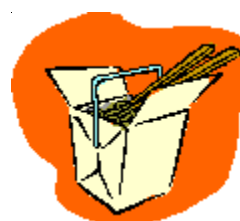
Eagle Times wants 4-H News

Archie Mountain, Managing Editor of the Eagle Times newspaper is making a commitment to get 4-H news and pictures into the newspaper every week. Send him articles and pictures via email to amountain@tsvmedia.net. Your articles should not be sent as an attachment; just put them in the body of the email. Be sure to include the author's name.

If you don't use a computer, mail your articles and pictures to the Eagle Times, 401 River Road, Claremont, NH 03743. To learn more about writing for the newsletter, be sure to sign up for Archie Mountain's workshop at Get R.E.A.L. on February 9.



Try new foods at International Foods Day January 26



International Foods Day is a favorite county event. It provides opportunities for learning, tasting unfamiliar foods and swapping ideas with 4-H members & leaders county wide. **International Foods Day is scheduled for Saturday, January 26th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the cafeteria of the Newport Middle High School.**

The basic steps for club participation follow:

1. **Choose a country** to learn about. Work together to plan a menu using recipes and foods commonly eaten during a meal.

2. **Plan a short presentation** to share a tradition, dance, music, clothing, a ceremony that stands out as being unique & interesting. **Keep club presentations short, focused, simple and fun.** Rehearse at least once so you can be sure the presentation is not longer than 2 or 3 minutes. Your audience will include some of our youngest 4-H'ers who have limited attention spans. Ask members with speaking parts to use the microphone. The room is very large so present the information in a way that it can be easily understood and heard.

3. **Attend Event:** Saturday January 26th. Arrive at 11:00 a.m. with a precooked meal from your country. Bring dishes, silverware, napkins, serving spoons, and pots & pans to re-heat food if necessary. Members set tables and play nutrition games while leaders and parents warm food to be served at noon. Bring a bit more of one item to share. Milk and coffee will be provided.

Call the extension office as soon as you decide which country to represent. As the event gets closer, please let us know the number of participants expected to attend from your 4-H club so we can put together a



Teen club members: (l-r) Malia King, Kayla King (standing), Monica Stout, Lizzy Robertson, Amy Barriger, Rachel Shklar, Caroline Mailhot, and Lyndzee Baronoski at last year's Foods Day.

New Hampshire Hosting NE Regional Volunteer Forum

New Hampshire is hosting the Northeast Regional Volunteer Forum on **October 23 - 26, 2008**. There are volunteer committees working on many aspects of this event which anticipates over 500 attendees from throughout the Northeast.

The programs committee is requesting that people save the following items:

- 3" plastic or metal containers that look like hockey pucks -- some candy and gum comes in these types of containers -- 493 needed so every 1 saved helps.
- Screw on soda or juice bottle caps -- 2000 needed.
- Orange or green ribbon pieces at least 5" long any width, 500 needed of each.
- Felt: 4" x 6" pieces any color except white or off white -- 476 pieces.
- Old cardboard puzzle pieces: 2-4" wide -- 900 pieces.
- Buttons of all shapes and colors. Over 2000 needed.

In addition, each county is asked to provide at least 50 pumpkins. That is because the forum will be participating in the 2008 Keene Pumpkin Fest! So let's help them regain the world record. Is your club willing to plant pumpkins next year and harvest them for the forum?

GENERAL 4-H NEWS AND INFORMATION

Planning a 4-H Demonstration or Action Exhibit

Registration Deadline for County Activities Day is February 22, 2008

Step One: WHAT is the subject matter you wish to present? Select a subject in which YOU are interested and would like to teach to other people.

Step Two: NARROW DOWN the subject to a specific topic or process, i.e. types of seams or steps for a natural wood finish.

Step Three: RESEARCH your topic. Find out the most accurate and recent information on your topic. Consult your project leader, member guides, magazines, books, web sites, encyclopedias.

Step Four: WHY are you giving the presentation – to inform, teach facts, motivate to action, to stimulate thought, to show a process? Write out in one sentence what you would like your audience to be able to do as a result of viewing your demonstration or action exhibit.

Step Five: What are the key points to be made? From your research select the main ideas that you want your audience to know. Think about what graphics and other props will help get your message across. For example: "Three common poisonous plants are poison oak, stinging nettle and oleander." Have a picture or example of the plants and give more details.

Step Six: DEVELOP A TITLE which is an attention getter, summarizes your purpose, and is short and to the point.

Step Seven: Map out your exhibit and posters. Use scrap paper and sketch out what your exhibit will look like.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| ⇒ Where will the title be? | ⇒ How can the points be worded to be brief but give the message? |
| ⇒ How big will the letters be? | ⇒ What graphics will you use? |
| ⇒ What key points need to be written? | ⇒ What colors will you use? |

Step Eight: Gather your materials.

- ⇒ Display board or Poster boards
- ⇒ Markers or paint for your lettering (or you can use computer lettering)
- ⇒ Pictures and other graphics or props to add visual interest.
- ⇒ A yardstick and pencil to make light guidelines and to outline your lettering.
- ⇒ An eraser to remove guidelines and clean up any extra marks.

Step Nine: Put your display together. Work carefully and step back now and then to see if it looks good from a distance. Lay out your whole display including props to see if you have everything you need.

Step Ten: Practice giving your demonstration or action exhibit. Ask family members how to improve it. Be sure you have a catchy introduction and a brief summary at the end.

Step Eleven: Check your exhibit carefully for transport. Large trash bags can be used to make sure that nothing ruins your posters/display board. Put other materials in a box along with a few emergency items for last minute touchups such as markers, tape, glue, etc.

Making Posters

An effective poster attracts attention, focuses on a main interest or idea and motivates you to take action. Posters make people STOP, READ and REMEMBER.

A successful poster will:

- Catch the eye of the passerby
- Be simple and clear: people only glance briefly and are "told or sold"; don't be too wordy.
- Impress one idea upon the viewer.
- Stimulate the viewer to support your idea, get more information, or take appropriate action.

Plan your poster on scrap paper first. Your choice of color combination will affect how easily the message can be read as well as the overall appearance of the poster. Consider contrast: use dark letters on a light background and light letters on a dark background. Keep lettering to a minimum. Use different size lettering for items of varying importance. Keep letters at a size that can be seen at a distance. Letters that are 1/4 inch can be seen at a viewing distance of 8 feet; 1/2 inch letters can be seen from 16 feet. Using a ruler, lightly pencil in straight lines to keep your lettering level. Neatness counts! So be sure to erase any guidelines before it is entered in the contest.

Photography Tips

So, you are thinking of participating in this year's photography contest. Don't worry about the type of camera you use. You can take interesting, well composed photographs with any camera. Following rules for good photo composition is most important.

Basic steps include:

- Holding your camera steady
 - Getting close to the subject (fill the view finder)
 - Keep the background simple.
 - Change the angle from which you take your photo to make it more interesting.
 - Place your subject off center instead of in the middle of your photograph. This is called the rule of thirds.
 - Use leading lines to direct the viewers eye to the subject.
 - Include something in the foreground that "frames" your subject within the photo.
- Be sure you know the contest rules and follow them. When entering a photo exhibit be sure it is labeled correctly, by including your full name, address and county. Provide technical information: type of camera, film, lighting, processing and any enhancements made.

Photo & Poster entries are due February 22, 2008

2008 Photography Themes are:

1. New Hampshire at its Best
2. 4-H at its Best / 4-H Promotion
3. Open category (for juniors and seniors)

Photographs must have been taken since June 2, 2007. Only 2 photo entries per member. Prints must not exceed 9" x 12"

Photos & posters submitted by youth 12 & up will be considered for entry in the state contest. (Only three can be entered in each contest)

Posters must be submitted on 14"x22" poster board.

All photo and poster entries should be labeled on the back. Please include your full name, age address, county and the theme area you have chosen. Photographs also should identify the type of equipment used (type of camera i.e. point & shoot/adjustable; flash, filters etc.) Also indicate the type of photo processing used and if any enhancements were made. Digital photos are welcomed.

2008 Poster Themes

1. Make the 4-H Connection
2. 4-H The Power of Youth
3. Persuasion to Action (limited to seniors, age 14 or older)
4. Open category

Agricultural Resources



Seth A. Wilner
Extension Educator
Agricultural Resources &
Environmental Stewardship
seth.wilner@unh.edu

Lisianthus (Eustoma) a Great Cut Flower to Add to the Mix

If you produce cut flowers for sale, or are considering diversifying your operation to include a cut flower enterprise, then lisianthus (*Eustoma*) is a flower you may strongly want to consider. Below are two articles which may help you determine which varieties and marketing methods to use.

The article was modified from two newsletter publications written by Dr. Cathy Neal et al. in News and Views. The full articles can be found at <http://extension.unh.edu/Agric/AGNLT/NLTNews.htm>. Go to the May and September 2007 newsletters.

Eustoma Cut Flower Production – 2006 Trial Summary

In the summer of 2006, Dr. Cathy Neal experimented with thirteen varieties of *Eustoma grandiflorum* (commonly known as lisianthus) in field beds and high tunnels. The purpose was to compare growth and yield in the field versus in high tunnels and evaluate local market potential.

Plugs were transplanted into 2'- wide beds mulched with black plastic, with a center drip tape running down each

bed. Spacing was six plants per square foot. Many growers don't realize that *Eustoma* should be spaced so closely together. Two layers of flower netting served to keep most of them upright for most of the season.

This one year study found that the number of marketable stems per square foot were equivalent in the field and the high tunnel. However, a much greater proportion of long stems (over 16") were produced in the tunnel (79% long) than the field (46% long).

Based on this trial, Dr. Neal recommends the following varieties for field production: 'ABC Rose', 'Cinderella Blue', 'Echo Champagne' and 'Echo Light Blue', all of which have double flowers. The single flowered varieties did not perform as well, especially in the field. 'ABC Rose' was the only field-grown variety that had over 90% long stems in the field.

For high tunnel production, all of the varieties performed well when planted on time. 'ABC Blue Blush', 'ABC Rose' and 'Echo Champagne' were exceptional for producing above-average yield and over 90% long stems in the early tunnel. 'Cinderella Blue' and 'Cinderella Pink' also had very good yields and 85% long stems. 'Echo Light Blue' was below average for both total stems and stem length.

Conclusions:

- The advantages of growing in high tunnels include longer stem length and a longer harvest season into the fall. To maximize the advantages, plant in tunnels as early in the spring as possible.
- Overall outstanding varieties include 'ABC Rose', 'Echo Champagne', 'Cinderella Blue', 'Cinderella Pink' and 'ABC Blue Blush'.

Color and Price Preferences of Consumers for Lisianthus (Eustoma) Cut Flowers

Late in the summer of 2007 a group of UNH Cooperative Extension researchers set up booths at farmer's markets in Portsmouth, Concord and Durham, NH to conduct surveys about customer preferences towards lisianthus cut flowers. Each booth featured colorful displays of different lisianthus varieties. The group, led by Dr. Cathy Neal, had a short written survey that customers at the market could volunteer to fill out in return for a free cut flower.

The objectives of the survey were as follows: 1) to determine how familiar the general public already was with lisianthus (*Eustoma*) as a cut flower, 2) assess customers' preferences by color and variety, and 3) determine the price customers said they were willing to pay for a bunch of ten stems.

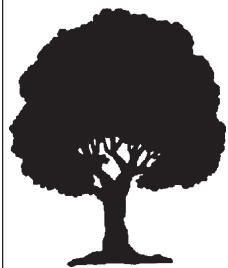
The lisianthus varieties were grown at the UNH Woodman Research Farm in Durham. Eight varieties were included in the customer survey on any given day. The varieties and markets are listed in the table below.

The survey results found that over 80% of the customers had purchased cut flowers during the year. Less than 25% could actually name the flowers displayed (either *Eustoma* or lisianthus were accepted as correct answers) but 85-90% of the people at each market thought they were "gorgeous" or "very attractive" and they generated a great deal of excitement among the customers.

The favorite color at Portsmouth was 'Twinkle Blue', a very deep blue single type flower. This was followed by pink, champagne, blue blush, and white. In Concord, the blue
(cont. on pg. 8)



Forest Resources



Chuck Hersey
Extension Educator
Forest Resources
chuck.hersey@unh.edu



Seedlings ready for grading at State Forest Nursery

New Hampshire's Best Kept Secret?

State Forest Nursery Now Taking Orders

This spring about a thousand New Hampshire landowners will slice the newly-defrosted ground to create thousands of welcoming holes for tree and shrub seedlings bought from the State Forest Nursery.

Howie Lewis, nursery forester, calls his nearly 40-acre nursery one of New Hampshire's best-kept secrets. Lewis says the nursery produces a unique product. "We provide something nobody else does – tree and shrub seedlings native

to New Hampshire, with seeds picked from specimens grown right here in the state. When you buy from the state forest nursery, you know the plant is suited to grow here."

In operation in Boscawen since 1910, the nursery grows more than 50 species of trees and shrubs for reforestation, Christmas trees, and wildlife, and sells them at affordable prices. Seedlings, sold on a "first come-first served basis" include conifers, such as white, red and Scotch pine, Norway, blue, red, and white spruce, concolor, balsam, fraser and douglas fir, and hemlock.

The nursery offers many other species, including arrowwood, crabapple, fragrant sumac, grapes, highbush cranberry, dogwood, rose, nannyberry, beach plum, elderberry, winterberry holly, bayberry, hazelnut, red oak, cedar, sugar maple and white ash. Special "packages," each containing an assortment of 25 shrubs and/or trees, include a Christmas tree sampler and special wildlife-and-songbird, wetlands, native species, and winter survival packages. Besides being one of his best sellers, balsam fir is Lewis' personal favorite. "I've worked with this species the most. I follow seedlings from the parents in the seed orchard through to watching them grow in the seedbed." Balsam fir is a customer favorite because it has that classic evergreen smell. Seedlings sell out, so nursery staff suggest you order early.

Ordering starts in January and ends March 30. "When you are in the nursery business, spring starts a different time each year," says Lewis, "So we ship to a county pickup point in late April or early May, whenever the seedlings can be lifted from the ground." Customers receive a card in the mail announcing the pick up dates. "We work throughout the year getting ready for the spring shipment and hope we have many new customers this year."

Lewis is enthusiastic about his trees and shrubs and hopes "New Hampshire's best kept secret" is known by all.

By Karen Bennett, UNH Cooperative Extension Forest Resources Specialist

More information:

• To receive a catalog, contact the N.H. State Nursery, N.H. Division of Forests and Lands, P.O. Box 1856, Concord, NH 03302-1856, or call 603-271-3456.

• View the State Nursery catalog and order online at <http://www.dred.state.nh.us/nhnursery/>.



Lisianthus (Eustoma) a Great Cut Flower to Add to the Mix

(cont. from pg. 7)

| Series location | Variety | Type | Market |
|-----------------|----------------|--------|---------|
| Echo | Light blue | Double | P, C, D |
| Echo | Champagne | Double | P, C, D |
| Cinderella | Blue | Double | P, C, D |
| Cinderella | Pink | Double | P, C |
| ABC | 2-3 Rose | Double | C, D |
| ABC | 2-3 Blue Blush | Single | P, C |
| Laguna | 2-3 Deep Rose | Single | C |
| Twinkle | Deep Blue | Single | P |
| Twinkle | Pink | Single | P, D |
| Twinkle | White | Single | P, C, D |
| Twinkle | Blue Blush | Single | D |

Market location: P = Portsmouth, C = Concord, and D = Durham.

and pink varieties were almost equally preferred, followed by the blue blush, champagne and white. In Durham, pink had the highest rating, followed by blue, blue blush, champagne, and then white. As expected, white flowers in a single color bouquet did not catch many people's eye. People also clearly preferred double flowers to single flowers.

When asked how much they would be willing to pay for a bunch of ten stems, two-thirds of the respondents in Portsmouth and half in Durham said that they would be willing to pay, between \$5 and \$8. The most frequent response was \$10, and the average was \$9.67. Over half the customers in Concord were willing to pay over \$10 per bunch. It was noted that the customers willing to spend the most on flowers were young men! Perhaps growers might consider targeting or expanding this market for their cut flower!

This is Really for the Birds

(cont'd from pg. 1)

tree or erect a brush pile to create some. Next spring you might consider planting a few shrubs attractive to birds adjacent to your feeder site.

What should go in your feeders? The simplest answer is that supermarket wild bird seed mix is what should not go in your feeders. Supermarket mixes tend to contain large proportions of red millet and milo. Few birds will eat those seeds, but manufacturers put them in because they're cheap. Instead, a simple mix of 50% sunflower seeds (unhulled oil type), 35% white proso millet and 15% cracked corn will appeal to a broad cross-section of seed-eating birds. You can buy in bulk from seed or animal feed dealers. Whether you buy seed mixed or separately will depend on whether you want to vary the proportions to attract the birds you want to see.

Having attractive bird feeds on hand is important, but placement of those feeds is equally important. Just as birds vary in size, shape, color, song and preferred foods, so do they differ in feeding behavior. Some birds feed almost exclusively in trees, others nearly always on the ground, and some will feed wherever they can find acceptable food. Using a variety of feeders makes sense; many can be made at home out of materials you already have.

Most common birds will visit platform feeders. They are simple to build, or you can buy hopper-style feeders that can be suspended by a wire or placed on a pole. You may

want to add at least one hanging feeder filled with sunflower seeds, a rich diet especially attractive to chickadees, nuthatches, grosbeaks and cardinals. Thistle (Niger) seed is a favorite of finches, pine siskens and redpolls and can be offered in a special thistle feeder. Ground feeders like juncos, morning doves, sparrows and cardinals will feed on seed kicked off of platform feeders by other birds or on feed placed on the ground for them. For a complete feeding program, some fats (suet or peanut butter) should be added. Suet attached to tree trunks in wire baskets is especially attractive to woodpeckers.

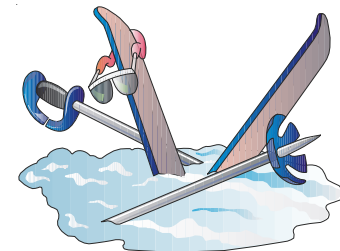
Water is an effective magnet for birds; it is used year-round for both drinking and bathing. It's hard to provide unfrozen water in frigid weather, but it can be done by frequent refilling or by rigging up a heating device. In general, birds prefer water on or near the ground where it should be found naturally.

Feeding can help pull many birds through the extremes of winter. Birds will increase their visits to feeders in bad weather, especially after heavy snows and ice storms which make natural foods inaccessible. Small species, like chickadees, particularly benefit from feeding. So if you start to feed, try to continue feeding on a steady basis. Birds that habitually visit feeders may be slow to adapt to other food sources if feeding is interrupted or discontinued.

Finally, be sure to keep your feeding site clean so that disease doesn't become a problem. Periodically you will need to wash feeders and watering devices with a 10% Chlorox solution, and also rake the ground free of old seed (to prevent the growth of fungi).

Ideally, it's best to continue a winter feeding program into May when new spring growth and insects become available. But if bears are a problem, stop feeding immediately. Repeat bear visits are almost a certainty if food continues to be available. That can be both very risky and very expensive!

Call the UNH Cooperative Extension's Family, Home & Garden Education Center's Info-Line toll free at 1-877-398-4769 for "Practical Solutions to Everyday Questions." Trained volunteers are available to answer your questions Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 2:00pm.



Extension Calendar

January

- 1 **4-H Leader Banquet**, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m., Sugar River Tech Center, Claremont. See page 5 for details.
- 8 **Family Focus: "Chaos to Cooperation - Parents & Children Working Together"** 6:30-8:00 p.m.; Richards Free Library, Newport (see pg 2 for details).
- 12 **Health Rocks Training**, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Claremont Middle School. Call 863-9200 for more information.
- 26 **4-H International Foods Day**, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Newport Middle High School. See page 5 for details.



February

- 1 **Leader's Banquet, 6:00 p.m., Teal Room in the Sugar River Technical School, Claremont.**
- 5 **Teen Decision Making about Risky Behaviors**, Claremont Middle School, 6:30 pm.
- 8 & 9 **Farm and Forest Exposition**, Center of NH - Radison Hotel, Manchester, NH
<http://www.nhfarmandforestexpo.org/>
- 9 **Get R.E.A.L. 4-H Workshops**, 8:30 a.m. to noon, Charlestown Middle School. See page 5 for details.
- 22 **4-H Teen Winter Activity, 6-8:00 p.m., Arrowhead Ski area, Claremont**
- 25 **SFP 10-14, Charlestown Primary School**, Feb 25 - April 7, 2008, 5:30 to 8:00 pm.
- 28 **New 4-H Leader Orientation**, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m., Extension Office, Newport. See page 5 for details.
- 28 **Celebrate Your Family**, Feb 28 - April 10, 2008, Plainfield School, Plainfield, NH 6-8:30 p.m.



UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

SULLIVAN COUNTY
24 Main Street
Newport, NH 03773
(603) 863-9200
FAX 863-4730
sullivan@ceunh.unh.edu

Support Staff
Pam Joslin, *Layout*
Sandy Rumrill, *Layout*

Professional Staff

Nancy G. Berry
Extension Educator, 4-H & Youth Development
Gail P. Kennedy
Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Resources
Robin R. Luther
Extension Educator, 4-H & Youth Development
Sandra J. Trybulski
Program Associate, Nutrition Connections
Seth A. Wilner, Co-Office Administrator
Extension Educator, Agricultural Resources & Environmental Stewardship
Charles Hersey, Co-Office Administrator
Extension Educator, Forest Resources

Advisory Council

Sara Poisson, Claremont
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