

Columbia County Extension will hold summer canning classes

Have you thought about learning to can fruits, vegetables, jams, jellies or fish or game this summer? Are you an experienced canner who would like an update on the latest USDA recommendations? Then plan to attend one or more of the canning classes offered by the Columbia County Extension Service. Classes will be held at the First Lutheran Church, 360 Wyeth St., St. Helens (on the corner of N. 4th St. and Wyeth St.). Each class will cost \$20.00 or \$70.00 for all four. A small number of scholarships are available. Payment must be made in advance to

hold your spot. Class size is limited.

- Tuesday, August 2, Canning Jams & Jellies
- Tuesday, August 9, Canning Fruits and Pie Fillings
- Tuesday, August 16, Pressure Canning Vegetables & Meats
- Tuesday, August 23, Canning Tomatoes and Salsa.

All classes are from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

For more information and to register for classes, please call or visit the OSU Extension Service office at: 505 N. Columbia River Highway, St. Helens or 503-397-3462

Refreshing ideas to quench your summer thirst

Here are some refreshing ideas for quenching summer thirst.

- Drink to *prevent* thirst. So, before starting exercise, drink one or two cups of water.
- Make it a habit to carry along a water bottle, especially if activities take you to locations that lack a water fountain.
- Either straight from the tap or bottled, water is the best choice for keeping the body hydrated. Tap water in many communities has an edge over bottled water as it contains fluoride that helps prevent tooth decay.
- If water's taste is not to your liking, add a slice or two of lemon, lime or any citrus fruit.
- Most people find cold water more refreshing than that right out of the tap. Keep a contain-

er of water in the refrigerator or in an insulated mug on your desk at work.

Here are a few additional suggestions for thirst quenchers:

- Mix 100% fruit juice with plain or sparkling water.
- Combine unsweetened, decaffeinated iced tea with orange juice or lemonade.
- Add a dash of cinnamon or vanilla to iced decaf coffee along with coffee ice cubes to keep the drink cold and undiluted.
- Try your favorite herb tea as iced tea.
- Mix 100% juice and water and freeze into fruit juice popsicles for a refreshing thirst quencher.
- Use sparkling water instead of tap water to reconstitute frozen juice concentrates.

Source: Linda Rellergert, Nutrition Specialist, University of Missouri

Do you know what to do during lightning?

Observed the last full week of June, National Lightning Safety Awareness Week not only helps get safety messages out, but also signals summer as lightning season. Outside is the most dangerous place to be during a lightning or thunderstorm, and more people are outside during the summer. According to FEMA Regional Administrator Ken Murphy, lightning strikes and high winds associated with thunderstorms also increase the risk of wildfires.

"Summer is wildfire season in the Pacific Northwest, and those of us who live in urban interface areas, wooded lots, or near heavily-grassed and dry rangeland should create fire-safe perimeters and update family disaster plans," said

Murphy. "Lightning can strike up to ten miles away from any rainfall and can create hotspots that smolder for days, bursting into flame when conditions are right."

Lightning accounts for more average deaths per year than tornados. "The safest place to be during lightning activity is a large enclosed building, not a picnic shelter or shed," said Murphy. "The second safest location is an enclosed metal vehicle, car, van, etc., but not a convertible, bike or other topless or soft top vehicle. If caught outdoors and no shelter is nearby, stay away from tall trees. If there is no shelter, crouch in the open, keeping twice as far away from a tree as it is tall."

Lightning safety tips for in-

side the home include:

- Avoid contact with corded phones.
- Avoid contact with electrical equipment or cords. If you plan to unplug any electronic equipment, do so well before the storm arrives.
- Avoid contact with plumbing. Do not wash your hands; do not take a shower; do not wash dishes; and do not do laundry.
- Stay away from windows and doors, and stay off porches.
- Do not lie on concrete floors, and do not lean against concrete walls.

For more information on lightning safety, visit www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

Low risk of wildfire not same as no risk

Wildfire experts and weather specialists have predicted a low-risk, late-starting wildfire season for the Pacific Northwest this summer, but emergency managers caution against complacency. As tall grasses and foliage dry out, the likelihood of brush, range and timber fires increases, and according to FEMA Regional Administrator Ken Murphy, even a mild wildfire season – and there are never any guarantees – begs the question: What if it's your woods that are burning?

"An informed, responsible and committed public can play a major role in safeguarding property and saving lives. Our firefighters are well-trained, well-resourced and totally dedicated, but they can't do it alone," said Murphy. "Planning for disasters means that we must plan for the Whole Community, including people of dif-

ferent ages and those with various access and functional needs."

Murphy encourages all homeowners to exercise extreme caution with grills, campfires, trash fires and other heat sources, and to embrace the common sense commitment to pre-disaster wildfire preparedness accepted in more traditionally recognized wildfire-prone areas. "Talk with your local fire department or forestry office," said Murphy. "Stay abreast of local burn bans and changing weather conditions. Talk with your neighbors. After all, a community is only as safe as its least prepared member."

Common sense wildfire preparedness measures include creating a Safety Zone or Defensible Perimeter:

- Establish firebreaks around the perimeter of structures, power poles and property.
- Cut back flammable weeds and brush, and remove branches within 15 feet of the ground.
- Mow regularly and rake leaves, limbs and twigs.
- Landscape with fire resistant plants.
- Keep roofs, chimneys and gutters clean.
- Install smoke detectors on every floor, and near sleeping areas.


• Stack firewood away from your home. Store combustible materials only in approved containers.

- Keep fire tools (shovel, rake, water bucket and ladders) handy.
- Clear overgrowth from house numbers and street signs
- Clear driveways and access roads so fire vehicles have room to maneuver.
- Plan and rehearse family evacuation plans.

Don't overlook adequate insurance coverage. Sit down with your insurance agent and make sure that coverage is still adequate and up-to-date for the hazards you face.

It is also smart to keep important personal documents quickly available should you need to evacuate. Consider collecting your driver's license, passport and other identification, birth and marriage certificates, Social Security card, insurance policies, tax records, wills, deed or lease and stocks and bonds. Also know where your main turn-off switches and valves are for electricity, water and gas.

Evacuation kit contents
See Wildfire on page 22



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