



Spring Cleaning Time!

We've experienced some spring-like weather, and that may have you thinking about refreshing some areas of your home.

- When you are doing your spring cleaning, do not overlook the kitchen pantry. Stored food pests, such as meal worms, moths, beetles, and weevils, can thrive in shelf-stable items, such as cereal, cornmeal, flour, grits, and cake mixes. A thorough cleaning once a year is an opportunity to throw out expired items and check opened items for pests.
- If you come across a few uninvited guests, they were likely in the product when you brought it home from the grocery store. But these pests also exist in the natural environment and can get into these products once we open them.

Use these tips to keep pests at bay in the kitchen pantry:

- ◇ Store opened food items in airtight glass or plastic containers.
- ◇ Keep flour and cornmeal in the refrigerator or freezer until ready for use.
- ◇ Replace damaged storage containers or bags immediately.
- ◇ Clean up any spills and crumbs right away.
- ◇ Discard expired food items.

Other cleaning tasks to do this spring:

- ◆ Clean out the refrigerator and freezer.
- ◆ Clean window curtains or blinds.
- ◆ Clean out clothes closet.
- ◆ Clean ceiling fan blades.
- ◆ Clean light fixtures and door knobs.
- ◆ Replace air conditioning filter.
- ◆ Deep clean kitchen (mop floors, clean cabinet doors, clean table chairs)
- ◆ Clean baseboards.
- ◆ Clean microwave.



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Gardening Myths



Don't believe everything you hear. That piece of advice can be applied to gardening as well. We've all done something because a friend says that it works. Or maybe you do something because that's the way you've always been told to do it. While those techniques may not be completely wrong, they often don't have the scientific evidence to back them up. At the Extension Office, we believe in using research-based information to help us garden.

We've compiled a few gardening myths you've probably heard and we will sort out what the truth is.

◆ Add gravel to the bottom of containers to help with water drainage.

We've all purchased beautiful containers and later realized there is no drainage hole at the bottom. You've probably heard that all you have to do is place a layer of gravel at the bottom of the container to help with drainage. **The truth is, the gravel will only hinder water movement within the container, so it is not recommended to try this.** Instead, drill several small holes in the bottom of the container and be sure to use good soil. Your plants will thank you.

◆ Newly planted trees need to be staked.

It is usually not necessary to stake a new tree. Any tree that has a sturdy root ball does not need the extra support to help it stand up. However, **staking may be helpful if the tree cannot stand up by itself or if it is planted in a windy area.** Information Sheet 0965, "*Transplanting Trees and Shrubs in the Landscape*" found on the Extension Website, is a helpful resource for learning how to properly stake a tree, if needed.

◆ Epsom salt will help prevent blossom end rot on your tomatoes.

Many people claim that Epsom salt is beneficial to your tomatoes and can keep them from developing blossom end rot. This is not true. **Blossom end rot is caused by a calcium deficiency and inconsistent watering, and Epsom salt does not contain calcium. It may actually promote blossom end rot more than prevent it.** Extension publication 2975, "Tomato Troubles: Common Problems with Tomatoes," can help you identify other physiological problems that often occur in tomatoes.

◆ Apply pruning paint on wound dressing when pruning trees.

There is no need to paint over cuts. **Trees have the natural ability to heal (compartmentalize), so applying paint does not provide any added benefits.** The best thing you can do is make clean cuts with properly sharpened tools.

April Gardening Tasks



If you are anything like me, I find any excuse to get outside. The warmer temperatures and colorful blooms are refreshing, especially after the cold winter we had! Working on outdoor chores is a great excuse to get some fresh air.

Here are a few tasks you need to cross off your checklist during April:

1. Once your **azaleas and other spring flowering shrubs** have bloomed, give them a good pruning to encourage growth for next year. If you are looking to plant more azaleas in your yard, consider purchasing them in April to be sure you like the color.
2. Add a pop of color to your landscape by planting summer annuals. It is important to do research and planning before heading to the garden center. The plant tags often contain lighting and watering requirements. Check out Extension publication 1826, *“Annual and Perennial Flowers for Mississippi Gardens,”* for a list of top performing annuals and perennials to consider planting.
3. It is time to start planting your **summer garden!** There is nothing like garden fresh veggies during the summer. Vegetables including okra, melons, peas, corn, beans, and cucumbers can be direct sowed. Transplants of eggplant, peppers, and tomatoes can be purchased and planted throughout the month for enjoyment in the later summer months. Need help growing vegetables? Extension’s Garden Tabloid is **available for pick-up at our office or find it on-line.**
4. **If you want to plant summer and fall blooming bulbs** into your landscape, now is a great time to get them planted.
5. Give **shrubs like boxwood and holly** a light shear to get them looking nice. For information on pruning formal shrubs and other landscape plants, check out Extension Information Sheet 0204, *“Pruning Landscape Plants.”*
6. Dividing **summer flowering perennials** helps you to keep your flower beds neat. Transplant the divisions in other parts of your yard or share as pass-along plants with friends and family. The Extension blog on *how to divide perennials* offers a handy tutorial. (<https://extension.msstate.edu/extension-stories/video/2017/dividing-perennials>)

**** If you have not yet fertilized your shrubs, be sure to check that off your list this month as well. ****

Peanut Butter Is...

- ◆ **Good protein source:** Peanut butter is comprised of about 25% protein, making it an excellent plant-based protein source. However, it is low in the essential amino acid methionine.
- ◆ **Low in carbs:** Peanuts are low in carbs and suitable for people with type 2 diabetes or those following a low-carb diet.
- ◆ **High in healthy fats:** Pure peanut butter is a good source of healthy fats. While some people have been worried about its omega-6 linoleic acid content, limited evidence justifies their concerns.
- ◆ **Rich in vitamins and minerals:** Although peanut butter is high in many healthy vitamins and minerals, it also contains a substantial amount of calories.

Vitamin E: 45% of the RDA

Vitamin B3 (Niacin): 67% of the RDA

Vitamin B6: 27% of the RDA

Folate: 18% of the RDA

Magnesium: 39% of the RDA

Copper: 24% of the RDA

Manganese: 73% of the RDA



- ◆ **Rich in antioxidants:** Peanut butter is rich in antioxidants, including p-coumarin and resveratrol. These plant compounds have been linked to various health benefits in animals.
- ◆ **Weight loss aid:** Calling peanut butter a diet food may seem counter-intuitive, but, truth be told, eating peanut butter actually suppresses hunger which leads to weight loss. It has the enviable combination of fiber and protein that keeps you feeling full for longer, so you end up eating less overall.

Monster Cookie Energy Balls

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups quick oats
- 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter (not all natural peanut butter)
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup mini M&M's



Directions

1. Add all ingredients into a mixing bowl. Combine together. *may need to add more peanut butter for ingredients to bind together.*
2. Shape into balls, about 1" in size, and place on a plate or Tupperware type container.
3. You can eat right away or refrigerate for about 30 minutes to 1 hour before serving.
4. Store energy balls in a covered container in the fridge.

Notes

Quick Oats: Quick oats are a finer texture oat that is more binding. It acts as flour would in a recipe. For best results use quick oats.

Peanut Butter: Use creamy peanut butter. The balls will not hold together well if you use all natural because natural peanut butter does not have the oils in it that are needed to "bind" the energy balls together.

Miniature chocolate chips/miniature M&M's: Using these do make a difference. The smaller size helps the energy balls bind together better.

**MAKE IT
YOUR OWN**

You can alter this recipe by adding ingredients you like, such as raisins, coconut flakes, cranberries, pecans or any other nut.



Dry vs. Liquid Measuring Cups



Dry measuring cups are designed to measure dry ingredients like flour, nuts, and berries. They hold the exact amount of an ingredient and should be leveled off with a flat edge.

How to use a dry measuring cup:

- Spoon or scoop ingredients into the measuring cup. Use the back of a kitchen knife or other flat surface to level off the top.
- Only pack ingredients if they say “packed,” except brown sugar. Brown sugar is always measured packed.



Liquid measuring cups are designed to measure liquids like water, cooking oil, and yogurt. They allow you to pour a liquid into the cup, and bring it even with a measurement line without spilling.

How to use a liquid measuring cup or glass:

- Place the measuring cup on a flat surface. Add the liquid to the desired measure.
- Squat down to eye level with the measuring cup. Once the liquid is still, make sure it is at the level of the mark you want.
- Do not hold the measuring cup to check if it is level. If you move your hand, you will not be able to tell the measurement.



Measuring spoons are the only all-purpose measuring tool. You measure both wet and dry ingredients in measuring spoons.

How to use measuring spoons:

Ingredients that are measured with measuring spoons are measured the same way as using dry measuring cups.

Strawberry Banana Cheesecake Wraps

Ingredients:

- 4-ounce package reduced-fat cream cheese
- 2 teaspoons sugar, optional
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla
- 3 (8-inch) whole-wheat tortillas
- 2 cups strawberries, washed, thinly sliced
- 2 bananas, washed, thinly sliced



Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. In a small bowl, mix together cream cheese, sugar (if desired), and vanilla extract.
3. Spread cream cheese mixture all the way to the edges of each tortilla.
4. Lay the strawberries in a single layer on top of the cream cheese. Top with banana slices.
5. Roll up tortilla, being careful to keep the filling inside the wrap. Set seam-side down.
6. Store in the refrigerator until ready to serve. Cut in half to serve.

No-Yeast Pizza Crust

Ingredients:

- 1⅓ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup nonfat or 1% milk
- 2 Tablespoons oil



Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Mix flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. Stir in milk and oil until a soft dough forms.
3. Place dough onto a clean, lightly floured surface and knead 6 to 8 times. Dough should feel soft but smooth, not sticky. Shape dough into a ball. Turn the bowl upside down over the dough. Let sit for 10 minutes.
4. On a baking sheet, roll or press dough into a 12-inch circle.
5. Bake crust at 400°F for 8 minutes.
6. Remove from oven and add your choice of sauce and toppings.
7. Return to oven and bake until light golden brown, 12–20 minutes. Serve hot.
8. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Food Safety at Home

2nd and 4th
Wednesdays

at 10:00 a.m.

on

Lee County Extension
Facebook Page

Drive Through Food Giveaway

@ Tupelo Furniture Market
every Wednesday at Noon

Sponsored by:

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