

October, 2004



## BOUNDARY COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS MASTER FOOD PRESERVERS



**Monday October 4th  
10:00 a.m.  
MG/MFP Monthly Meeting**

Mark your calendar for October 4th and plan to attend the October Master Gardener/Master Food Preserver Meeting.



Cassandra Rutherford Eckberg will be presenting information regarding the proposed Boundary County Community and Youth Center and how various groups including Master Gardeners and Master Food Preservers, in the county could be involved. The possibilities are promising.

### **Master Gardener Master Food Preserver Recertification**

Please fill out the enclosed recertification forms that pertain to you and bring them with you to the meeting on October 4th.

If you are not able to attend, please drop them in the mail or bring them to the office.  
Thanks, Jo

### **Fall Garden Clean Up**

- ⇒ Remove exhausted annuals. Deadhead perennials
- ⇒ Rake up plant litter and debris
- ⇒ Pull and destroy weeds
- ⇒ Unless diseased, put org. debris in compost pile.
- ⇒ Rake leaves from lawn and add to compost pile.
- ⇒ Cultivate soil to 3". Exposes pests to birds and larvae/eggs to freezing weather.
- ⇒ Prepare beds for springs. Gain a couple weeks.
- ⇒ Cover beds with mulch to protect from erosion and compaction by rain or snowmelt.
- ⇒ Plant last minute ornamental bulbs for spring.
- ⇒ Plant perennials, shrubs and trees
- ⇒ Divide ornamentals.
- ⇒ Clean, oil and repair tools before storage.
- ⇒ Clean pots and potting benches with 10% bleach.
- ⇒ Drain hoses and irrigation pipes. Turn off fountains and exterior water systems.
- ⇒ Plant cover crops and til in in the spring.
- ⇒ Trap, lure or kill slugs before they lay eggs.
- ⇒ Prepare for determined raids by deer.

Source: Small Farm Oct, 2002

**Sarah Howe**  
Extension Educator

**Joanne Erickson**  
Master Gardener Coordinator

## Fruit Flies Again

(I attempted to do an article on fungus gnats, and ended up so confused with fungus gnats, shore flies, moth flies, March flies, humpback flies etc. that I said, "forget it" and decided I'd better stick to fruit flies.)  
jo

We are once again at the time of year when perennial annoyance of "gnats" in the house is driving people buggo. The difficulty is not the occasional fruit fly buzzing around fruit on the countertop, but rather large numbers of fruit flies appearing at windows and over sink drains every day.

The indoor gnat problem of the fall is usually the common fruit fly (*Drosophila*). This is a small, red-eyed, fly 1/4" long and with alternating light and dark stripes on the abdomen. Although commonly associated with over-ripe and fermenting fruits and vegetables, fruit need not be present to have fruit flies, as they can originate from other sources.

Fruit flies can reproduce anywhere there is fermenting organic matter that stays wet or moist. In the house, likely places for flies to breed include slow-moving or seldom used sink, bathtub, shower, or floor drains in which a layer of slime (gelatinous film) has built up above the water line. Other moist accumulations of fermenting organic matter are possible such as wet areas under dripping pipes and refrigeration equipment, garbage containers and discarded bottles and cans. Regardless of where the flies originate, they will be at windows throughout the house and at sinks because they are attracted to light and moisture.

Controlling fruit flies requires locating and eliminating the source of the infestation. Fly breeding areas are occasionally very difficult to locate and perseverance and imagination will be required. Check first the possible breeding sites given above. One way to check individual drains is to temporarily cover the drain with a plastic film taped to the floor or fixture. If the flies are breeding in that drain, the adults will accumulate underneath the film with a day or two.

Cleaning slow moving drains with a stiff brush may be all that is required. Drains that cannot be scrubbed can be rinsed with water under high pressure or "sterilized by

slowly pouring boiling water down along the sides of the drain pipe. Other moisture problems should be corrected as practical.

Household insecticide sprays for flying insects can be used to eliminate the adult flies that are present at the time of treatment but this will be only a temporary relief at best. Eradication will require eliminating the source of the infestation. Fruit flies are usually a temporary annoyance as they eventually disappear on their own without a source ever being determined.

## Time to Think About Planting Your Garlic

Garlic is easy to grow. Separate the bulbs into single cloves and use the larger, outer ones for planting since they produce best.



The most common mistake in growing garlic is not planting early enough. In this area, garlic should be planted in October or before the ground freezes. Garlic can be planted in early spring, but I have better success in the fall.

Before planting prepare soil with a couple inches of well composted compost. Don't over fertilize with nitrogen because that can stimulate too much leaf growth that causes bulbs to suffer. Plant the cloves in rows 2 to 3 feet apart, 3 inches apart and 3" deep, with the pointed end up. I use raised beds and plant my garlic 3" deep, 4-5 inches apart in and cover with about 4" of leaves which I pull back in early spring. Each clove will send up slender spring green spears early in the next growing season.

Garlic will grow in almost any well-drained soil, but it is best to grow it on a soil that has good organic matter content because of the shallow rooting characteristic of garlic.

Around the first part of June start withholding water from your crop. Garlic is ready to harvest about the middle of July or when approximately 1/3 of the leaves have turned brown. To prepare garlic for storage, cure the bulbs under cool, dry conditions.

Tip: removing the bloom from garlic allows the plants energy to go into the bulb.—jo

## Canning Tomatoes From Bad or Frost-Killed Vines

Safe water-bath canning depends on raw tomatoes being sufficiently acid—below 4.6 pH. Researchers have found that's not always the case with tomatoes harvested from dead vines. Whether the vines are killed by frost or by plant diseases, the tomatoes they bear become less acid when the vines die and thus cannot be safely canned in a water-bath canner.



Indeed, a few varieties of tomatoes call short of acid even under the best of circumstances and on the healthiest vines. Because there's no easy, inexpensive way for consumers to determine the acidity of their tomatoes, it is recommended to add acid routinely when canning whole, crushed or juiced tomatoes from live vines. Use 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice or 1/2 teaspoon of citric acid per quart of tomato product and 1 tablespoon bottled lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon of citric acid per pint.

Those added acids won't compensate for acid loss from dead vines, however, so plan to consume the harvest from killed vines fresh, not canned.

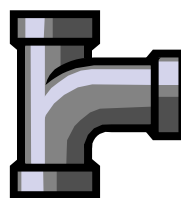


Source,  
Home Economics  
Newsletter Sept. 2002

## Food Safety Issue:

Is it okay to use hot tap water for cooking and drinking?

**Answer:** No it's not a good idea, even though it might be convenient, according to the EPA. Compared with cold water, hot water is far more likely to leach lead and copper from the pipes. Lead solder in copper plumbing pipes was banned in the U.S. in 1986, but older plumbing may still contain lead-soldered joints.



It took until 1988 for the law to go into effect and in some places lead solder may still illegally be used. In addition, brass plumbing parts may also contain lead. The longer water stands in the pipe, the more lead and copper is likely to dissolve.

If you need warm or hot water, take time to heat it. The microwave is a quick solution. It's especially important to use only cold tap water to mix baby food or formula. Lead is especially dangerous for fetuses, infants and children. Let the cold water run a minute or two to flush out standing water if the faucet has been closed for a while. If your faucets are old, consider replacing them with new low-lead models.



Source: October 2004 Wellness Letter

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