

Urban Living

Volume 17. No. 5.

News You Can Use For Your Family, Home And Garden

November/December 2004

Peak Burglary Season Has Arrived: Are You Prepared?

by Gwendolyn B. Jackson

The holidays are a joyous time for many families. Unfortunately, they are also a time of increased home burglaries. The number of burglaries rises dramatically twice each year, during the holiday season of November and December, and when people take vacations in July and August. The reason is simple: Folks let their guard down.

Over the past 20 years, the number of house burglaries has been declining steadily, according to statistics from the

For nighttime protection, adequate outdoor lighting is an important deterrent that will make your house less attractive to a burglar.

U.S. Department of Justice. In 1981, home burglaries reached a high of 106 break-ins per 1,000 households. By 1999, the number dropped to 34 per 1,000 households—about one home in 30.

Even so, with approximately 3.6 million completed or attempted home burglaries in 1999, one burglary takes place every 11 seconds in the United States. The latest 1999 numbers from the Bureau of Justice Statistics indicate that 42 percent of all reported household burglaries occurred during the day and 32 percent at night with the time of the remaining 26 percent unknown.

Simple Safety Steps

There are many steps homeowners can take to protect their homes. Most are simple, such as installing deadbolts on all outside doors and making sure all doors and windows are securely locked before leaving home.

For nighttime protection, adequate outdoor lighting is an important deterrent that



Photo credit: Leviton Institute

Most home burglars are semiprofessional thieves or amateurs that live in the neighborhood.

Where Does A Burglar Enter A House?

- 34% through the front door.
- 23% through a first-floor window.
- 22% through the back door.
- 9% through the garage.
- 12% through the basement, a storage area or from the second floor.

and off during the night. The lights don't have to be on long, but you do want to have several lights going on and off at different times to make it appear that someone is moving about the house.

For year-round convenience, the use of electronic timers to control porch lights and landscape lighting is also recommended. These devices allow you to program a variety of on and off sequences during the night. They are installed in the wall and replace regular wall switches.

PLC Devices

Another solution for controlling indoor lights is to install power line carrier (PLC) devices that replace standard switches and receptacles and use your home's existing wiring to control lights and appliances. With PLC devices you can program the lights in your home to turn on and off at preset time intervals. You can even control your lights and appliances remotely from a telephone keypad.

Setting Up A Good Defense

Security experts advise putting certain lights in your home on timers all year long, not just when you are away from home. This sets up a routine that gives your home a lived-in look that deters burglars. The locations recommended are near your front and back windows. Remember to keep the curtains drawn. Most home burglars are semiprofessional thieves or amateurs who may live in the neighborhood. They typically spend less than two minutes trying to get into a door or window before giving up and looking for an easier target. By setting up a good defense, with deadbolt locks, windows that lock securely, and good lighting, you can safeguard your home when you're away. Also, the installation of a security system and its use, would be an excellent deterrent.

Source

Leviton Institute. Helpful Hints on Home Electricity Newsletter. Volume 6.

What's Inside?

- The Turkey's On**
Cooking guidelines.....2
- No More Winter Blues**
Put green in the garden.....4
- Affordable Gifts**
Given with love.....7

will make your house less attractive to a burglar. However, the price of electricity to keep outdoor floodlights on all night can be somewhat expensive for some folks. That's why the use of motion detectors is recommended.

Motion Detectors

A motion detector is an inexpensive device that automatically turns on the lights it controls. When the device detects that pres-

ence of a person within its sensing range, it turns the lights on. After the person is no longer in its sensing range, it turns the lights off. However, avoid placing the device at the far end of the house's overhang or eave.

Timers

You can give your home a "lived-in look" to deter burglars by using rotary timers to turn room lights, radios and TVs on

Turkey Is Tradition

by Gwendolyn B. Jackson

The native wild turkey was a tough wiry bird. It had to fly to survive and could glide a full mile without fluttering a wing. Over the years, selective breeding and special nutrition have given us the modern bird with more meat in relation to its bone structure.

If you're hosting your holiday dinners this year, here are suggestions on selecting, protecting, thawing, and roasting your plump, juicy bird, which is rich in protein and B vitamins and low in calories.

Abracadabra, Which One Should You Select?

Today's consumer has a variety of choices among fresh, frozen, prestuffed, boneless turkeys or just the parts: breast, legs or wings. A whole turkey's weight ranges from 9 to 24 pounds.

There is no magic in your selection. Here are a few realistic hints:

- Purchase 1 to 1½ pound per person.
- Choose a fresh or frozen turkey in tightly wrapped packaging that is free of tears.
- Check the label for the expiration, sell by or best if used by etc.
- If making your purchase of a fresh bird from a poultry shop or municipal market, examine the bird for any scars.

Take Your Bird Under Your Wing: Handle With Care

Once purchased, take the turkey home immediately, and store in the refrigerator or freezer, placing it in the coolest spot. Even though today's turkey is safer and more wholesome than ever before, proper handling is a necessity.

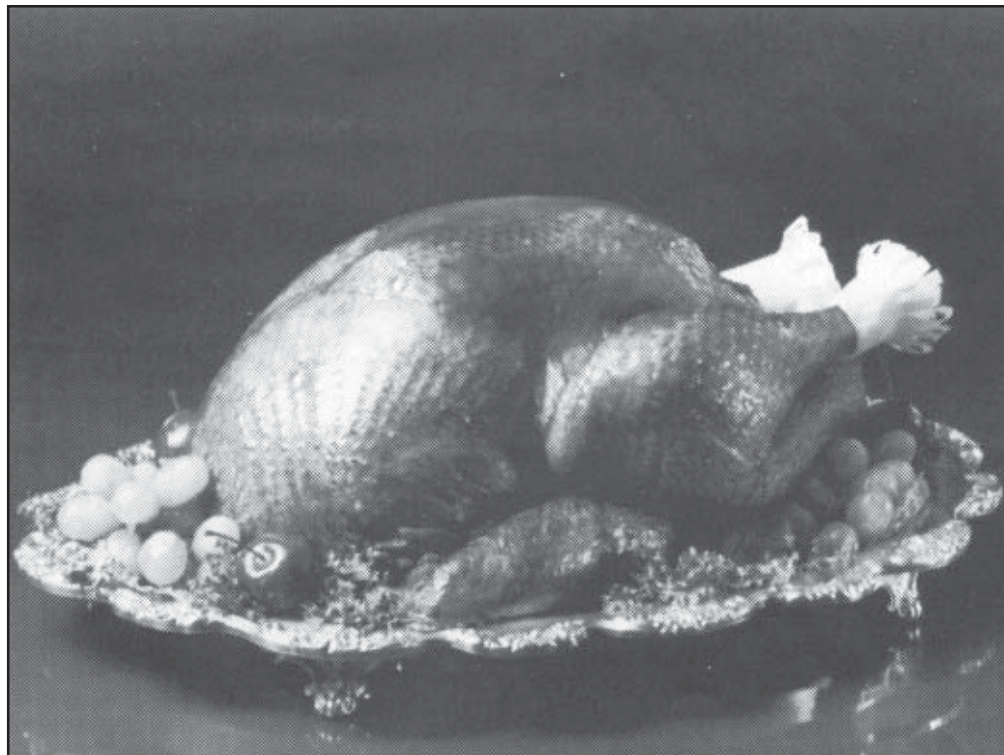
If a frozen bird is purchased, allow sufficient time for thawing. Thaw only in refrigerator, never on the kitchen countertop. Like any other perishable meat, the turkey

If a frozen bird is purchased, allow sufficient time for thawing. Thaw only in refrigerator, never on the kitchen countertop.

should never be held at room temperature for more than 2 hours. If you are pushed for time, use the cold water method of thawing. Submerge the wrapped turkey into cold water (outside the refrigerator). Change the water every half hour. It's best to leave the turkey in its original wrap.

Traditional And Adventurous Roasting Methods

There are many different methods of roasting a turkey. Other than washing the bird and sprinkling on salt and pepper (if desired), no other work is needed. If the bird is to be stuffed, do so immediately before cooking time. Remove the stuffing before storing leftovers. (These procedures are recommended to help reduce food bacteria and possible food poisoning).



However you cook it, turkey remains an American holiday tradition.

Photo credit: National Turkey Federation

Cooking Time for Open Roasting Pan Method

Type of Turkey	Ready-to-Cook Weight (Pounds)	Roasting Time (Hours)
Whole Turkey (Unstuffed)	6 - 8	2¼ - 3¼
	8 - 12	3 - 4
	12 - 16	3½ - 4½
	16 - 18	4 - 5
	20 - 24	4½ - 5½
Whole Turkey (Stuffed)	6 - 8	3 - 3½
	8 - 12	3½ - 4½
	12 - 16	4 - 5
	20 - 24	5 - 6½
Frozen Prestuffed Turkey	7 - 9	5 - 5½
	9 - 11	5½ - 6
	11 - 14	6 - 6½
	14 - 16	6½ - 7
Turkey Breast and Parts	2 - 4	1½ - 2
	3 - 5	1½ - 2½
	5 - 7	2 - 2½

Internal temperatures to be reached:

Thigh 180-185°F
Breast 170°F
Stuffing 160-165°F

Standing time before slicing:

Whole Turkey 15 minutes
Turkey Breast 10 minutes

Test for Doneness

- For whole turkey, insert meat thermometer into thickest part of thigh next to body, not touching bone. Thigh temperature should be 180° to 185°F; breast 170° to 175°F. If turkey is stuffed, place thermometer in center of stuffing—it should be 160° to 165°F.
- Protecting fingers with paper or cloth, press thigh and drumstick. Meat should feel soft.
- When thigh skin is pricked, juices should be clear.

Roasting Methods

Method	Directions	Comments
Conventional Oven: Open pan	Roast breast up on flat rack in shallow pan 325°F oven.	This preferred dry heat method is easiest. It requires minimal handling. Turkey is golden brown, attractive and has a rich roasted flavor.
Covered pan	Cook breast up in covered dark enamel pan in 325°F oven. than OpenPan.	Cooking time is shortened, but appearance is less attractive. This moist heat method often produces uneven browning and turkey lacks roasted flavor.
Oven Cooking Bag	Place turkey breast up, in shallow open pan. Close bag.	Turkey cooks in drippings trapped in bag. This moist heat method produces a less attractive that lacks roasted flavor.
Foil Wrapped	Place <i>unstuffed</i> turkey breast up, on foil. Wrap loosely and cook in shallow pan in 450°F oven.	Cooking time is shortened by this moist heat method. Turkey may cook unevenly; check final internal temperature of thigh and breast.
Clay Pot	Place turkey breast up, in presoaked covered clay pot in cold oven. Cook at 450°F.	Cooking time is shortened. Turkey browns nicely. With this fast cook method, a meat thermometer is essential to ensure thigh and breast and stuffing reach recommended final temperatures. Oven mitts are a must to handle the hot pot.
Other: Microwave	Cook stuffed or unstuffed turkey, breast down, at High 4 minutes per pound, and breast side up, at Medium (50% power), 8 minutes per pound.	A cool cooking method for roast 12 pounds and under in about half the time. This method requires special handling during cooking. Use special browning sauce for even color.
Charcoal Covered Kettle Grill	Place turkey on rack over drip pan with 25 hot coals on each of two sides. Add briquettes every hour.	Barbecue turkey on the grill is most attractive. It has a slight smoked flavor. A stuffed turkey is not recommended because the stuffing takes on a smokey flavor.
Charcoal Water Smoke Cooker	Place unstuffed turkey on rack over water pan and hot coals with wet wood to generate smoke. Cover. Add briquettes as required.	Turkey will be dark brown with distinct smoky flavor. For food safety, turkey must pass through critical range of 45° to 140° in less than 4 hours.

All The Trimmings For Your Holiday Dinner!

The main entrée for the holiday dinner is easy, but all the other foods that fill the plate can contribute hefty amount of calories, fat and sodium. The average holiday turkey dinner can easily exceed 2,500 calories, alone. Use one or more of the following recipes as alternatives to help maintain a healthier diet.

Salmon Dip

1 can (15-ounce) red salmon, well drained, with backbone and skin removed
 4 ounces low fat cottage cheese
 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
 2 teaspoons onion, finely chopped
 1½ tablespoons lemon juice
 ¼ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
 ¼ teaspoon white pepper
 ½ teaspoon dried dill
 ½ teaspoon chipped fresh chives
 sprig of fresh parsley

In food processor, blender or in bowl with electric mixer, combine all ingredients until smooth and creamy, 1-2 minutes. Fold into serving dish. Chill at least 1 hour before serving. Garnish with parsley. Can be made a day in advance. Makes 2 cups.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: 1 table-spoon serving: 62 calories, 4 g total fat (1 g saturated fat), 0 g carbohydrates; 7 g protein, 0 g dietary fiber, 170 mg sodium.

Trim Your Holiday Foods – And Your Waistline!

Foods make holidays festive. But some festive foods often include more fat than your health or your hips allow. If you need to trim fat from your diet to control your cholesterol count or your measurements, you can still keep food exciting. Try these trimming tips for replacing favorite, fat-dense holiday ingredients with lower ingredients with lower-fat alternatives.

- For 1 cup of butter in baking, use 1 cup applesauce
- For 8 ounces of cream cheese, use 8 ounces of yogurt cheese
- For 1 cup crème fraiche, use 1 cup yogurt cheese made from low fat or non fat yogurt
- For 1 cup heavy cream – recipes, not for whipping, use 2 teaspoons cornstarch or 1 tablespoon flour whisked into 1 cup nonfat milk
- For 1 cup sour cream, use 1 cup low fat cottage cheese + 2 tablespoons skim milk + 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- For 1 cup fat for sautéing, use 4 cups low fat stock, fruit juice or wine and sauté until liquid evaporates
- For 1 egg, use 2 egg whites
- For 1 cup oil or fat for basting, use 1 cup fruit juice or low fat stock

Lite Apricot Stuffing

1 cup celery, sliced
 ¾ cup onion, chopped
 1½ cups turkey broth or reduced-sodium chicken bouillon
 16 slices reduced-calorie bread, cubed and dried
 2 tablespoons dried parsley
 1½ teaspoons poultry seasoning
 ½ teaspoon salt
 2 egg whites
 ¼ cup dried apricots, chopped

In small saucepan, over medium-high heat, combine celery, onions and turkey broth; bring to boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender. In large bowl combine celery/onion mixture, bread cubes, parsley, poultry seasoning, salt, egg whites and apricots. Spoon into lightly greased 2-quart casserole; cover. Bake in a preheated 325° F oven for 30 minutes or until the internal temperature reaches 165°F. Makes 8 servings.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: calories 140, total fat 1.5g, saturated fat 0g, cholesterol 0mg, sodium 440mg, total carbohydrate 27g, dietary fiber 5g, protein 6g

Candied Yams

3 medium yams, about 1½ cups
 ¼ cup brown sugar, packed
 1 teaspoon flour, sifted
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 ¼ teaspoon orange peel
 1 teaspoon soft tub margarine
 ½ cup orange juice

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut yams in half and boil until tender but firm (about 20 minutes). When cool enough to handle, peel and slice into ¼ -inch thickness.

Combine sugar, flour, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, and grated orange peel. Place half of sliced yams in medium size casserole dish. Sprinkle with spiced sugar mixture. Dot with half the amount of margarine.

Add second layer of yams, using the rest of the ingredients in the same order as above. Add orange juice.

Bake uncovered for 20 minutes. Makes six ¼-cup servings.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: calories 110, total fat less than 1gm, saturated fat less than 1gm, cholesterol 0mg, sodium 115mg, total fiber 2gm, protein 1 gm, carbohydrates: 25gm, potassium 344mg

Smothered Greens

3 cup water
 ¼ pound smoked turkey breast, skinless
 1 tablespoon fresh hot pepper, chopped
 ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
 ¼ teaspoon cloves, ground
 2 cloves garlic, crushed
 ½ teaspoon thyme
 1 stalk scallion, chopped
 1 teaspoon ginger, ground
 ¼ onion, chopped
 2 pounds greens (mustard, turnip, collard, kale or mixture)

Place all ingredients except greens into

large saucepan and bring to boil.

Prepare greens by washing thoroughly and removing stems. Tear or slice leaves into bite-size pieces. Add greens to turkey stock. Cook for 20-30 minutes until tender. Makes 5 one-cup servings.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: calories 80, total fat 2gm, saturated fat less than 1g, cholesterol 16mg, sodium 378mg, total fiber 4gm, protein 9gm, carbohydrates 9gm, potassium 472 mg

Vinaigrette Salad Dressing

1 bulb garlic separated into cloves, peeled
 ½ cup water
 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
 ¼ teaspoon honey
 1 tablespoon virgin olive oil
 ½ teaspoon black pepper

Place garlic cloves into small saucepan and pour in enough water (about ½ cup) to cover them. Bring water to boil, then reduce heat and simmer until garlic is tender (about 15 minutes)

Reduce liquid to 2 tablespoons and increase heat for 3 minutes. Pour contents into small sieve over bowl. With wooden spoon, mash garlic through sieve.

Whisk vinegar into garlic mixture, then mix in oil and seasoning. Makes 4 servings, 2 tablespoons each.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: calories 33, total fat 3 g, saturated fat 1g, cholesterol 0mg, total fiber: 0g, protein 0g, carbohydrates 1g, potassium 9mg

Dieter's Cornbread

1½ cups stone-ground yellow cornmeal
 ½ cup all-purpose flour
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 1 egg, beaten
 2 cups cultured nonfat buttermilk
 vegetable cooking spray

Combine first 4 ingredients, and stir well. Add beaten egg and buttermilk; stir until smooth. Pour batter into a 9-inch square pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 400 for 35 minutes or until golden. Makes 9 servings.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: 120 calories, 5gm protein, 2gm fat, 19.6 gm carbohydrate, 33 mg cholesterol, 199 mg sodium, and 114 mg calcium per 3-inch square.

Pumpkin Pie

For crust:
 1 cup quick cooking oats
 ¼ cup whole wheat flour
 ¼ cup ground almonds
 2 tablespoons brown sugar
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
 1 tablespoon water

For filling:
 ¼ cup brown sugar, packed
 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 1 egg, beaten
 4 teaspoons vanilla
 1 cup canned pumpkin

2/3 cup evaporated skim milk

Preheat oven to 425°F.

To prepare crust: Mix oats, flour, almonds, sugar and salt in small mixing bowl. Blend oil and water in measuring cup with fork or small wire whisk until emulsified. Add oil mixture to dry ingredients and mix well. If needed, add small amount of water to hold mixture together.

Press into 9-inch pie pan, and bake for 8-10 minutes, or until light brown. Turn down oven to 350°F.

To prepare filling: Mix sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt in bowl. Add egg and vanilla, and mix to blend ingredients. Add pumpkin and milk, and stir to combine.

Pour filling into prepared pie shell. Bake for 45 minutes at 350°F or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Makes 9 servings.

Nutrition Facts Per Servings: calories 169, total fat 7g, saturated fat 1g, cholesterol 24mg, sodium 207mg, total fiber 3g, protein 5g, carbohydrates 22g, potassium 223mg

Sweet Potato Pie

For Crust:
 1¼ cup flour
 ¼ teaspoon sugar
 1/3 cup skim milk
 2 tablespoons vegetable oil

For Filling
 ¼ cup white sugar
 ¼ cup brown sugar
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
 3 large eggs, beaten
 ¼ cup canned evaporated skim milk
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 3 cups sweet potatoes, cooked, mashed

Preheat oven to 350°F.

To prepare crust: Combine flour and sugar in bowl. Add milk and oil to flour mixture Stir with fork until well mixed. Then form pastry into smooth ball with your hands. Roll ball between two, 12-inch squares of waxed paper, using short, brisk strokes, until pastry reaches edge of paper. Peel off top paper and invert crust into 9-inch pie plate.

To prepare filling: Combine sugars, salt, nutmeg and eggs. Add milk and vanilla. Stir Add sweet potatoes and mix well.

Pour mixture into pie shell. Bake for 60 minutes or until crust is golden brown. Cool and cut into 16 slices. Makes 16 servings.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: calories 147, total fat 3g, saturated fat 1g, cholesterol 40mg, sodium 98mg, total fiber 2g, protein 4g, carbohydrates 27g, potassium 293mg.

Renew your free
 Urban Living
 subscription.
 See page 7

Celebrate The Season—Go Dwarf

by John Foerster

Fall is slowly slipping into the holiday season and winter. Where once green, lush vegetation grew, there are only the browns of the coming winter. Cheer-up, there is a solution to the winter gardening blues, and to keeping some green in the garden. Why not treat yourself to a gift of a dwarf conifer?

A multitude of shapes, colors and textures can help your garden. It does not matter if your garden is for beautification or food. The outer edge of your garden can become a visual treat not only during the winter but throughout the year. How do you do this?

This holiday season plant a dwarf conifer trees or shrub. They are easy to maintain, and do not require shearing or trimming. Check with a local nursery before they close for the season. Usually, you can get some dwarf conifers at reduced cost. Once you plant them, they require only watering during the first year. Look for semi-mature plants, because they have been grown in the field and are hardy. You can plant different sizes, shapes and colors for an eye-catching display. If you are working in a community garden, consider getting with your fellow gardeners and buy a few dwarf conifers so you can line the edges of the garden.

So What Is A Dwarf Conifer?

It is simply a smaller version of the more familiar plants we have all seen. Plants like native Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) can grow 25-30 feet in 20 years. The dwarf variety (*Tsuga canadensis* 'bennett') grows only two feet in 20 years. Dwarf really means that the plants are smaller because they grow slower. Due to their slow growth, these plants stay small for a long time. Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) can reach 50 to 75 feet in 25 to 40 years. Dwarf White Pine might never be taller than five feet after 20 years. Gardening enthusiasts classify the dwarf growth rate in conifers as three to six inches per year. These growth rates are a sum of what the plant gets from your local climate; the amount of sunlight; the amount of rainfall; the type of soil; and other factors such as urban air pollution and pet waste.


Dwarf Conifers come in an array of shapes and forms to fit just about any available space in your garden. The box shows some examples you will see in the nursery or garden store. These terms tell you how the plant looks as it grows.

Dwarf conifers are not always green. Many varieties have leaves that are yellow, blue or purple. Some plants are bi-colored and have a variegated pattern. Also, dwarf conifers can feel compact with short needles (Hemlocks), or feel soft (Cypresses). Other conifers have needles that feel long, and diffuse (Pines), or tight but soft (Arborvitae). All of these variations make for an interesting landscape.

Care In The Garden

Plant your new plant in full sun (some will tolerate partial shade); average, well-drained soil with good leaf compost; and mulch. Water so plant becomes established after planting. You can plant any time of year when the ground is not frozen. Dwarf

Common nursery terms used to describe the shape of the conifer tree (modified from *Mountain Meadows Dwarf Conifers* 2004).

Shape	Description	Example
Globose	Rounded, Ball Shaped	
Conical/ Pyramid	Narrow upright, taller than broad	
Pendulous	Weeping (drooping) branches	
Broad Upright	Equally broad as tall	
Spreading	Broader than tall	
Prostrate	Ground hugging, carpet-like	

Conifers spend the winter growing roots and establishing itself. The best time to plant depends on where you live in Baltimore (near water, or not), and the microclimate of your garden. This means if you are growing near a sidewalk or road you will have temperature extremes (freezes quicker, gets hot and dry faster) than plants at the back of the garden with no hard reflective surfaces. Also, when do you get the sun? Morning is best through mid-day. Afternoons and evenings in the summer can stress plants. In Baltimore, the soils have a lot of clay. Treat the soil before planting with a small amount of fertilizer made for acid loving plants.

Conifer trees provide a landscape with year-round interest, color and texture. They are versatile and can be used as a specimen, a hedge, a privacy screen, a backdrop for smaller flowering plants or as a windbreak. You can even decorate them for the holiday season.

Mark Your Calendars

Beginning in February the Community Gardening Classes return. Information will be ready by January 2005. Call John Foerster at 410-396-1888 or Email (forester@umd.edu).

The topics will include:

- Organizing a Community Garden
- Using Native Plants
- Growing Ethnic Vegetables
- Starting from Seeds
- Garden Thugs
- The Importance of Good Soil
- Herbs

Gardening Tip

Here is how to figure the amount mulch or leaf compost you need for your garden – length of your garden bed (in feet) *times* the width of your garden bed (in feet) *times* 0.166 (2-inch depth of mulch or compost) all *divided* by 27 cubic feet. The result is yards of material you need. Bagged material comes in 1½, 2 or 3 cubic foot bags. You will need about 14 two-cubic foot bags to get one cubic yard.

Formula:

$$\frac{\text{Length} \times \text{Width} \times \text{Depth}}{27} = \text{cubic yard(s)}$$

Just How Do You Make A Tablecloth?

Smart Dressing For The Table

by Gwendolyn B. Jackson

The holiday season brings about our desire to set a pretty table, but if you have priced tablecloths lately, you realize that they are not cheap. That's only one reason you should try to make one for yourself or for a close friend. Sometimes you need to hide an unattractive, battered table or perhaps you can't find the design or size you like.

A tablecloth can protect or even hide an ugly table. (Once I personally made a larger table by placing a sheet of plywood over a

Washable fabrics are a must, and 100% cotton is most preferable. Synthetic blends (polyester and cotton) tend to trap stains, making them hard to get out.

smaller table; then I padded the plywood with an old sheet and created a very pretty dressed table—although I warned my guests not to put their body weight on any edge of the table!) But, the tablecloth saved the effect and enhanced the serving table.

The pattern in a cloth highlights the plates in the place settings, adds sparkle to the flatware and simply provides a lovely background for the food.

A tablecloth can help you present a theme to your dinner. Or if dining space is limited, and you must serve in the living room or den, use a tablecloth that blends with that room's decor. And who has the time to find a match for a certain color or print? Fabric shops offer a wide range of plain and fancy fabrics that can be used as tablecloths, and you do not have to be an expert seamstress. There are kits available—especially holiday themes—that require very little sewing. Find your favorite fabric shop.

Selecting The Fabric

However, if you want something a little different, buy yardage of a print that goes well with the room and the plates you will use. Equally important, do not choose a color or pattern that will make the food unappetizing. Black and dark prints tend to make a dish of food look unappealing. Light colors, yellows, reds and lively blues enhance foods the best.

Say Yes To Cotton

It's an open season on the fabrics you can use. Washable fabrics are a must, and 100% cotton is most preferable. Synthetic blends (polyester and cotton) tend to trap stains, making them hard to get out.

Taking The Measurements

When constructing a basic rectangular tablecloth, measure the length, width and drop from the table. The finished cloth will be:



Width plus 2 times the drop = width of cloth

Length plus 2 times the drop = length of cloth

To determine the yardage for a basic round tablecloth, measure the diameter of the table and add twice the distance for the drop. For example, a 36" tablecloth diameter with a 10" drop from the top would measure:

Fabric shops offer a wide range of plain and fancy fabrics that can be used as tablecloths, and you do not have to be an expert seamstress.

$36" + 10" + 10" = 56"$

Add 1" to 1 1/2" for the hem.

Fabric is not usually wide enough to make a tablecloth. Therefore, it will require the joining of two or three lengths of fabric/panels to create the necessary width. The number of panels you will need will depend on the width of your fabric. See the box below to help you.

To determine the yardage needed, multiply the number of inches in each length (including the hem allowance) by the number of lengths. Divide this total by 36". For example: 56" cloth, fabric 45", two lengths needed.

$56" + 3" = 59" \times 3 = 177" \div 36" = 5$ yards

You should always add a few inches as a safety measure. If using a print fabric, allow extra yardage for matching the pattern repeat.

Putting It Together

To construct the tablecloth, sew your panels together, hem all sides and press. A further complement would be matching napkins!

Watch your guests rave—even before the meal is served! Or give your best friends an original tablecloth—made by you!

Determining Amount Of Fabric Needed for A Round Tablecloth

Fabric Width	Diameter of Tableskirt	Lengths Needed	Hem Allowance
36"	up to 69"	2	2"
	69-105"	3	3"
44-45"	up to 85-87"	2	2"
	88-131"	3	3"
48-50"	up to 93-97"	2	2"
	over 97"	3	3"
54-60"	up to 53-59"	1	1"
	up to 105-113"	2	2"
	over 113"	3	3"

Baltimore City 4-H And Govans Child First Academy, A Dynamic Partnership

by Teresa Sivels

In early 2003, Gladys Demby-Smith, a former 4-H'er, contacted Teresa Sivels, 4-H Educator and asked if we could provide some after-school programs for the Govans Child First Academy. Ms. Demby-Smith was very familiar with 4-H and the types of quality educational programs provided by 4-H, and being the caliber of leader that she is, she wanted all she could get for her children.

A few months later, the 4-H Educator, Ms. Demby-Smith and student, Gabrielle Webb, wrote and applied for the National 4-H Life Skills Training Grant. The grant was awarded to Baltimore City 4-H and Govans Child First Academy in the amount of \$4,000.00. Life Skills Training is a pro-



Photo credit: Teresa Sivels



Protected under 18 U.S.C. 707

The [National 4-H Life Skills Training] grant was awarded to Baltimore City 4-H and Govans Child First Academy in the amount of \$4,000.00.

Life Skills Training is a program for elementary and middle high students focused on building life skills in order to make safe and healthy decisions to resist tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse.

gram for elementary and middle high students focused on building life skills in order to make safe and healthy decisions to resist tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse.

Forty youth completed lessons from the Life Skills Training Curriculum, watched videos, played games, created skits and poems and created a puppet show to reinforce what they were learning. The youth participated in a presentation called "Kicking Drugs and Violence to the Curb," and they learned up beat rap songs about self-esteem, not smoking, drinking or using drugs.

Sharing The Lessons

They made healthy lifestyle posters discouraging the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs and their posters were exhibited in the Baltimore City Youth Expo as well as the Maryland State Fair. The young people also created a mural with the assistance of one of the teachers at the school and the mural now hangs in the hallway. The Youth Ambassadors of Govans shared what they learned with other students at the school who were not involved with the program and gave out stickers and pencils with powerful messages. The Closing Activity, Awareness Night, was held in the Library and the youth did presentations for their parents that included a puppet show.

As a result of this program, the partici-



The participants in the after-school program shared what they learned with their parents and other students at their school.

pants have a greater awareness of the dangers of smoking, drinking and using drugs. D'Angelo King said, "The thing I learned is that you shouldn't do drugs even if your friends want you to." Gladys Demby-Smith commented, "This program is a great idea and an informal time to really capture children's interest and lay a lifetime foundation."

This successful youth-adult partnership would not have been possible without the input of Gladys Demby-Smith, the Coordi-

nator of the Govans Child First Academy. The Govans Child First Academy provides a safe, nurturing, educational environment for over 200 students weekly. Ms. Demby-Smith says, "You can see the motto 'Where minds are challenged, spirits nurtured and every child succeeds' being fulfilled on a daily basis." Ms. Demby-Smith is a 34-year veteran with the Baltimore City School System and she has headed up the Academy for eight years now. Ms. Demby-Smith's favorite saying is "Every child deserves a

plethora of opportunities and experiences."

I recently came in contact with one of Ms. Demby-Smith's former students at another 4-H sponsored program. Ms. LaToya Frazier, now a parent of three children, said "Teachers with the commitment of Gladys Demby-Smith are rare today." I would have to agree with Ms. Frazier because this has been a dynamic partnership and we look forward to 4-H and Child First Academy continuing it for many years to come!

Holiday Gifts From The Heart Not The Wallet

Keep the January credit card bill at acceptable levels. Think about the gifts that you remember from past years. Think of the ones that touched you, made you feel special, the ones that really thrilled you with their thoughtfulness. If you are like me, you won't remember the cards with cash in them, the cooking and cleaning utensils that collect dust underneath your sink, or the extravagant clothes that you would never wear. Sometimes, I am embarrassed by the money thrown away on stuff that I have absolutely no use for, given by friends who appear to have more money than time.

Last year, the Conference Board predicted that the average U.S. family would spend around \$483 during the holidays. Do you think you have it in you to be "less than average"?

There are some wonderful and touching gifts that we can all give; ones that will be keepers and remind the recipients of who gave them (hopefully with fondness.)

Here are 12 ideas that might strike a resonant chord in your heart and keep that January credit card bill at acceptable levels.

1. **Holiday Wreaths** – They cost \$30 to \$40 for essentially something made out of the cast off boughs from pine or fir trees. How hard are these to make? With a wire, a red bow and some other ornaments, you are in business. It's even better if you have access to your own trees or leftover evergreen branches. Trim your trees and make a wreath.
2. **Framed Pictures** – The nicest frames can be found at garage sales and flea markets, and there is nothing like a picture to bring back fond memories. Pictures of yourself are not recommended. Think of photos with the kids or photos of you and the recipient. You can add a note reminding them of when and where the scene took place and how much fun you had.
3. **Themed Holiday Cards** – Wouldn't it be wonderful if the card and the present were the same thing? I knew of an artist who designed a series of holiday cards, each starting with a large letter on the front. It took 14 years to get the whole message out, but people saved those cards and brought them out every year.
4. **Holiday Ornaments** – I have a friend who loves to make little pottery figurines. Every year she picks an animal and makes a dozen or more. She hand paints each one and signs and dates them. I always look forward to seeing what animal will pop up on my tree this year, and whenever I put up the tree, her ornaments always make me think of her.
5. **Family Heirlooms and Memorabilia Passed on to the Younger Generation** – The older we get, the more stuff we have. Some of it is valuable and some is a reminder of our past. Some are both. These make thoughtful gifts from parents to children and pass on a sense of the family history.
6. **Personalized Gift Certificates** – My favorite was from an eight-year-old who once gave me a signed certificate that said "I promise to go to bed at 8 p.m. upon presentation of this coupon." I kept it for six years before I used it. She honored it!
7. **Children's Handicrafts** – Anything signed "Love" by a child is a keeper. Get some craft materials and let the kids have fun on the next rainy weekend.
8. **Homemade Jams, Jellies, etc.** – These are both pretty and practical. We should all be so fortunate as to receive some.
9. **Herb Gardens** – These are not only sensible from the giving point of view, but also a tremendous money saver for those receiving them. Herbs are incredibly expensive to buy, yet so easy to grow in almost any house or apartment. Light and water is all you need and fresh herbs add elegance to any meal. You can buy the seeds and germinate them yourself. Then look around for nice containers or make your own.
10. **Plants with a History** – A plant is a plant, but how many have their genealogy attached? My mother has plants and cuttings that go back for decades and she can tell me who she got them from, where they were in their garden and where it has been grown since. Write a short note when you pass on a particularly "historical" plant. And, of course, you can always put it in a hand painted pot.
11. **Art Work** – If you are artistic, then share your work with your loved ones. It's a piece of you that you can give with love.
12. **Poems and Stories from Creative Writers** – Why not? If you can write, then write a special story or poem for those close to you. It's flattering to be the subject of such a work. (And if you can get children involved, even better! They certainly have great imaginations and come up with astounding story lines.)

A gift from the heart is a true gift and one from the wallet is a business transaction!

Source

The Dollar Stretcher. "Living Better...For Less." November 15, 2004. Volume 9, Number 45.

Urban Living

City Extension Director
Gwendolyn B. Jackson, CFCS

Extension Educators
4-H: Manami Brown, Teresa Sivels
Family & Consumer Sciences:
Gwendolyn B. Jackson, CFCS
Urban Horticulture: John Foerster
Wanda MacLachlan p/t

Artist/Photographer: Merry V. Bush
Editor: Melinda S. Frisch
Editorial Assistants: Barbara Campbell, Portia Campbell, Stephanie Clark

Urban Living is your newspaper. It comes to you monthly, upon request, as a service from the Baltimore City Office of the Maryland Cooperative Extension (MCE), University of Maryland at College Park & University of Maryland Eastern Shore. The newspaper is free to Baltimore City residents. It is also available to non-residents for a nominal postage and handling fee.

MCE is a partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), state land grant universities and local governments. The Smith-Lever Act requires the Extension Service to "extend" information and research. Baltimore City's government has supported a city office since 1948.

Information areas include: urban and rural agriculture; natural resources; family and consumer sciences (financial planning, nutrition, human development, family and community life), and youth leadership and development.

Local residents are offered research-based expertise and technology from the University of Maryland via Extension workshops, classes, publications, consumer calls, fairs and exhibits, 4-H Clubs, radio and TV.

If you have a gardening, budgeting or nutrition question, or if you know someone who wishes to join a 4-H Club, call us: 4-H, 410-396-4906, urban agriculture, 410-396-1888; family and consumer science, 410-396-1883; nutrition, 410-396-1780.

We welcome letters from our readers. Please share your suggestions or success stories of your use of our information. Write to: Editor, *Urban Living*, 17 S. Gay Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. www.agnr.umd.edu/BaltimoreCity

*Educating
People To Help
Themselves*

Important!

Renew Your Free *Urban Living* Subscription TODAY!

Dear Reader:

By government regulations, we must update our mailing list. To continue receiving *Urban Living*, please clip out this box, return it in an envelope, addressed to Cooperative Extension Service, 17 S. Gay Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202. Please return it by **February 1, 2005. If we receive no response, mailings to you will be discontinued.**

Be certain that your name, address, and zip code as they appear on the label are correct. Please add your daytime phone number here. _____

Kindly answer the following questions:

1. What articles/topics do you use the most?
2. What articles/topics would you like to see in future issues?
3. Do you share *Urban Living* information with others?
4. Have you ever reprinted our articles in your community/local newspaper or newsletter? If so, what is your circulation?
What is the publication? What article?

Director's Note

You're Serving What?

When I first came to Baltimore, I could not understand why the folks around me were so excited about their holiday dinner plates. There was turkey, bread stuffing and white mashed potatoes with gravy, sauerkraut and a dot of cranberry sauce. In addition to everything looking bland, I was not accustomed to sauerkraut being served with turkey. You see, I grew up in a southern-oriented home where turkey dinners included cornbread stuffing, sweet potatoes and greens.

I now realize that the combination of foods at my first Baltimore turkey dinner is pleasing to the palate, but I still would have preferred something green on my plate, at least some green beans. I've learned that Baltimore's German emigrants influenced the local cuisine and introduced sauerkraut to the city's traditional turkey dinners. And I've enjoyed other holiday dinners where the main entrée was ham, a pork loin, grilled fish and even an impressive crown roast. Side dishes vary, as well as relish trays. Dessert offerings vary widely, too. Some folks consider apple and pumpkin pies seasonal favorites, while others insist on sweet potato pies, only. But the important thing is that families and friends set down to a fest of foods that they enjoy together.

Just as our tables are laden with different foods, it's just another example of our diversity. And that's what we offer you in this issue of *Urban Living*. John Forester's discussion on

dwarf conifers offers something new and different for your environment or makes the suggestion of giving a unique gift. We have also provided you with a dozen gift ideas from the heart. The diverse list of personalized items will not hurt your wallet. There is also the traditional article I present on the turkey. If you have questions about selection and/or preparation, read and use, and then clip and save for next year's special fest.

If you're hosting a holiday dinner this season, but you don't have the tablecloth to set the background for your festive setting, the easy to follow directions to make your own tablecloth are given in "Just How Do You Make A Tablecloth?"

Teresa Sivels' article about 4-H's partnership with the Govans Child First Academy illustrates the gift of giving. A former 4-H'er reaches out to challenge the minds of children and watches them succeed. The nurturing of our youth is always a gift, regardless the season.

Finally, the cover article reminds us of the darker side of the holidays, the peak season for burglaries. Be on guard and protect yourself and your family.

On behalf of the Extension family, be safe and enjoy the holidays even more this year by adding some diversity to your table, your gift giving and with new and different relationships.



Gwendolyn B. Jackson, CFCS
City Extension Director



Potted amaryllises set into decorative containers add a holiday touch to year-round houseplants.

Photo credit: Netherlands FlowerBulb Information Center

Visit our website:

www.agnr.umd.edu/BaltimoreCity

Urban Living

Educating People To Help Themselves

CITY DIRECTOR (410) 396-1753	4-H and Youth Development (410) 396-4906	Family & Consumer Sciences (410) 396-1883	Food and Nutrition (410) 396-1780	Urban Agriculture (410) 396-1888
---------------------------------	--	---	---	--



BALTIMORE CITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
17 S. GAY STREET, 3RD FLOOR
BALTIMORE, MD 21202-4006

The University of Maryland is equal opportunity. The University's policies, programs and activities are in conformance with pertinent Federal and State laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, and disability. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990; or related legal requirements should be directed to the Director of Personnel/Human Relations, Office of the Dean, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Symons Hall, College Park, MD 20742.

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Baltimore MD
PERMIT NO. 7498