Welcome to the January/February issue of "Solutions in Your Community", the University of Maryland Extension, Prince George's County newsletter! This month you'll find information about how to plan for the upcoming growing season during the cold winter months, highlights from recent programs and upcoming events that may interest you.

UME staff reach out to the community through workshops, clinics, print and online resources, small group/individual consultation, and media efforts. We're here to serve the community.

We hope you enjoy the articles and opportunities presented here. Let us know how we can help you to develop solutions in your community by emailing me at: kdyson1@umd.edu.

Karol Westelinck Dyson
County Extension Director

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Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) Partners with the Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC)
The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program with University of Maryland Extension in Prince George's County, MD partnered with the Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc. (ECDC) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to pilot a 6-week series of nutrition education classes specifically tailored for members of the Bhutanese refugee and asylee community who reside in Riverdale, MD. In an effort to tailor the curriculum materials for this first group of refugee families from Bhutan, EFNEP worked closely with the families along with partnering organizations to learn about eating patterns and shopping habits. The future goal is to extend this series of nutrition classes to other groups of ECDC families who have resettled from other parts of the world. ECDC was instrumental and committed to recruiting their families for this intervention and provided translation assistance during the classes. As a result of ECDC's dedication to this partnership, there was a high retention of participants (approximately 90%).

Although the EFNEP educators used the Eating Smart Being Active curriculum as a guide, the lessons and materials were adapted according to the participants': 1) interests, 2) baseline knowledge about healthy eating and shopping wisely, and 3) literacy level and language barriers.

To learn more about these families' eating patterns and shopping habits here versus in their country, EFNEP inquired weekly about their food preferences by food group (e.g., grains they ate here versus in their country) and then tailored the lessons, materials, and recipes to be culturally appropriate.

To learn more about PG County EFNEP:
Congratulations to the **Weaver Birds 4-H Club** on their recent successful application to the National Quilting Association for funds to develop a Quilting project for youth in Prince George's and Charles Counties! This 4-H group has been learning to sew for 2+ years and will now have the opportunity to learn about the history of quilting as well as techniques from the past and present. Participants in this project will have the opportunity to develop many skills that will contribute to the Essential Elements needed for positive youth development including basic sewing and quilting (Mastery), group learning (Belonging), community service (Generosity), and communications (Independence). For more information about starting a 4-H Club in your community, contact Lisa Edwards at the University of Maryland Extension 4-H office in Clinton at 301-868-9636.

**Maryland Farmers Offer Winter Planning Tips to Backyard Gardeners**

Take it From Maryland Farmers: Backyard Actions for a Cleaner Chesapeake Bay

Despite the recent snow, spring really is just around the corner. Homeowners who want to improve their lawns or gardens this year and contribute to a cleaner, healthier Chesapeake Bay, should start planning now—and there's no one better to provide conservation planning tips than Maryland farmers. The [Maryland Department of Agriculture](https://www.mda.maryland.gov) (MDA) "Take it from Maryland Farmers: Backyard Actions for a Cleaner Chesapeake Bay" homeowner education program provides wintertime conservation planning tips and online resources for lawn and garden enthusiasts throughout the year. Read more of this news release from MDA [here](https://www.mda.maryland.gov).

**Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) Partners with Adelphi Presbyterian Church**
For four consecutive Sundays in November and December, twenty-four recent immigrants participated in classes on healthy eating habits from University of Maryland Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) at the Adelphi Presbyterian Church. This program is designed to assist limited resource audiences in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed behaviors necessary to develop nutritionally sound diets, and to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of the total family diet and nutritional well-being.

All participants graduated from the program, and we are hoping to have more classes in the future together with the youth and parents.

To learn more about PG County EFNEP:

Check out our Website!

Give Plants With a "Heart" to Your Valentine

Instead of chocolates, which will disappear and/or go to your Valentine's waist, why not give your sweetheart a "heart-shaped" house plant? Some plant flowers and leaves are heart-shaped while others just have heart-shaped leaves. Three of the most popular plants are listed below and can be found at garden centers, nurseries and some other stores.

Anthurium has red and pink heart-shaped flowers and green leaves.
This is a tropical plant that likes bright light and moisture - but does not like to be soaking wet.

Philodendron has heart-shaped leaves. Philodendrons grow better than most other houseplants under adverse conditions of most homes. They do well as long as they are kept warm, moderately moist and out of direct sunlight. They can grow under fluorescent light quite well. There are many types of Philodendron available and they come with a wide variety of plant and leaf forms.

Pothos looks like a smooth-stemmed philodendron, but can be distinguished from the philodendron by its ridged stems. They are vigorous climbers and look nice in a pot or in a hanging basket. They have a variegated look of cream and green in moderate light. Variegation, however, disappears under low light conditions.

House Plants and Your Health

Do you sometimes have lingering odors in your home or does your office smell strange? If so, what you may need are some house plants. House plants not only provide an attractive and decorative touch, but they also have an added benefit of helping to clean the air. Click here to see what plants can have an added benefit for your home and/or office while possibly improving your health at the same time!

Does 4-H Matter Now More than Ever?
By Forrest Pritchard

"A few years back, a friend from Washington D.C. visited my farm for the first time. Right off the bat, he noticed the bumper sticker on my pickup truck, a green four-leaf clover emblazoned with large, white H's.

"Forrest," he said, without the slightest trace of
humor, "you never told me you were Irish!"

Suffice to say, he had never heard of 4-H, a youth program every bit as venerable as the Boy or Girl Scouts. But he’s not alone. Even with 6 million current members, 30 million alumni, and a 110 year track record, 4-H continues to fly beneath our cultural radar. Unless you happened to be raised in rural America, chances are you might not have crossed paths with this program yourself. But 4-H remains a vital-if habitually unassuming-thread in our national tapestry, and it’s a program that deserves more positive press than it commonly receives.”

Read the rest of Forrest’s article here.

Register Now for the Second Annual Growing Community Gardens!

Register now for the 2nd annual Growing Community Gardens event—a gathering for Prince George’s County community gardeners to build community, learn from each other, and gain gardening skills. The event will be held on Saturday, March 23, 2013 at the University of Maryland’s Center for Educational Partnership in Riverdale.

Visit the event’s website.