

OSU has recently embarked on creating **new logos** as part of a marketing campaign. For DASNR, the OSU logo has been super-imposed over a triangle representing our teaching, research, and extension functions. Take notice of the Newsline heading to see Cooperative Extension's logo!

## Pumpkin Carving

The internet has several great sites for free patterns that can be used when carving pumpkins or watermelons. Remember, a great pumpkin carving design stems from having a combination of proper carving saws, the appropriate transfer method and a fun pattern design.

You can help make your pumpkin last longer if you follow any of these steps:

- Wash your hands and tools with anti-bacterial soap before carving. This keeps out nasties that rot the pumpkin.
- Cut the bottom out of the pumpkin instead of the top. This helps retain moisture, and makes it easier to put on top of your light/candle.
- Spray the finished pumpkin with Lysol spray, also the kill off the nasties.
- Keep your pumpkin in a cool, dark place. A refrigerator is great if you have room...
- Keep the pumpkin covered in plastic wrap when not being displayed, or better yet, recycle a plastic grocery bag.
- Coat the cut and peeled areas of the pumpkin with Vaseline. Be careful not to get it too gooey, or picking up your pumpkin may be an adventure!

Don't keep your pumpkin lit unless you're using it. Otherwise the pumpkin can "cook" from the inside out from all the heat.

Source: [www.carvingpumpkins.com](http://www.carvingpumpkins.com)

Check out these internet sites or use a search engine for free, pumpkin carving patterns:

<http://www.carvingpumpkins.com>

<http://www.jack-o-lantern.com/>

[http://www.pumpkinmasters.com/free\\_patterns\\_main.asp](http://www.pumpkinmasters.com/free_patterns_main.asp)

<http://www.bhg.com/>

Visit the Beaver County Cooperative Extension Service online at:

<http://countyext.okstate.edu/beaver/>



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## SPINACH and Food Safety

The fresh spinach and spinach-containing products implicated in the current E. coli outbreak were from brands processed by Natural Selection Foods in California. It was sold to various firms that package and distribute fresh spinach and salad blends throughout the United States. Processed spinach (e.g., frozen and canned spinach) is not implicated in this outbreak.

E. coli is caused by exposure to contaminated water or animal or human waste. Given the widespread nature of the current outbreak, investigators suspect that the contamination happened early in the distribution chain.

E. coli refers to a group of bacteria normally found in the intestines of healthy humans and animals. Of the hundreds of types of E. coli, most are harmless. But a few strains of E. coli are responsible for serious food-borne infections — including E. coli O157:H7. This strain of the bacteria is responsible for the current outbreak. E. coli O157:H7 produces powerful toxins that can cause abdominal cramps and bloody diarrhea. Signs and symptoms of an E. coli infection usually develop within two to three days after exposure. It's possible to get sick up to one week later, however. Make sure that everyone in your family — including children — washes his or her hands after using the toilet or changing diapers and before eating.

### Is it safe to eat fresh spinach again?

Yes — if you're sure that the spinach was grown outside of Monterey, San Benito and Santa Clara counties in California. This information might be printed on the product label or available from store employees. For now, don't buy any fresh spinach with an unknown origin.

Washing produce under running water won't necessarily get rid of E. coli — especially in leafy greens, which provide so many spots for microorganisms to attach themselves to. But it's still important to wash all fresh produce under running water before eating, including produce that will be peeled before eating. Careful rinsing can remove dirt and reduce the amount of bacteria that may be clinging to the produce. Plain water is fine. There's no need to use soap or commercial cleaners to wash produce.

Many pre-cut, bagged produce items like lettuce are pre-washed. If so, it will be stated on the packaging. This pre-

washed, bagged produce can be used without further washing. As an extra measure of caution, you may want to rinse pre-washed bagged produce before eating. Drying produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel may help, too.

To kill the bacteria, you must thoroughly cook the produce. If consumers choose to cook the spinach, the E. coli can be killed by cooking at 160 degrees for 15 seconds. If spinach is cooked in a frying pan, and all parts do not reach 160° Fahrenheit, all bacteria may not be killed.

Cooks should also take steps to avoid cross-contamination of the fresh spinach with other foods and contact surfaces. Wash hands, utensils and preparation surfaces with hot, soapy water before and after handling the spinach. People should not try to make raw, fresh spinach safe to eat by washing it with bleach or dish detergent.

To correctly wash greens, Barbara Brown, OSU Extension Specialist says to wash hands with warm, soapy water before you begin to wash the greens. Separate the leaves and place them in a clean sink or deep bowl filled with cold water and swish the leaves around. Remove any stems if necessary. Lift the greens from the water and transfer to another bowl so dirt and grit remains in the water. Pour out the water and repeat the washing process in clean water until dirt and grit is gone and the water is clear. "It may take three or four washings for some greens to get clean," she said. "For harder to reach sections of salad greens, you may want to hold leaves under running water.

Consumers are advised that proper storage of fresh produce can affect both quality and safety. To maintain quality of fresh produce, certain perishable fresh fruits and vegetables (like strawberries, lettuce, herbs, and mushrooms) can be best maintained by storing in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40° F or below. All produce that is purchased pre-cut or peeled should be refrigerated to maintain both quality and safety. To avoid contaminating other foods and kitchen surfaces, wash your hands, utensils and kitchen surfaces with hot, soapy water before and after handling any fresh produce.

Sources:  
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/e-coli/ID00044> <http://www.cdc.gov/foodborne/ecolispinach/consumeradvice.htm>  
<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2006/NEW01474.html>  
Oklahoma State Univ. Cooperative Extension Service news release

## Plan ahead now for holiday spending



"Tis the season to be spending"; that's what retailers want you to think. This is the time of year to put your consumer knowledge and your budgeting and smart-shopping skills to use. Financial planners recommend spending no more than 1.5% of your annual income on holiday spending. This is a good guideline, however if you plan to spend more, you may need to dip into funds from other areas throughout the year.

The average American spends \$941 on the holiday season. Your big-ticket holiday items (e.g., travel to visit family) may have been allocated in your annual budget, but if not, don't forget to include these items in your holiday budget. Don't forget to include hidden expenses like wrapping paper and hostess gifts in your holiday budget.

You may want to start shopping in advance and spread the cost over the next couple of months. One option is to buy now and put things on layaway. Before you buy on layaway, know the terms of the layaway plan; the store's refund policy; the location, availability, and identification of layaway merchandise; and the store's reputation. Once you begin a layaway plan, keep good records of your payments.

The holiday season often finds us making shopping decisions in a hurry without having a definite plan. The result often leaves us with enormous credit card debt after the holidays, gifts that didn't really "fit" the recipient, and increased stress with last-minute shopping and preparations. It's not too late to take steps now to reduce some of these concerns:

- ✦ Set a holiday-spending budget NOW. Include gifts, decorations, entertaining, groceries, greeting cards and postage, special clothing, and cost of attending special events. Try to stay within budget; keep an account of actual spending so you can adjust your plan for next year.
  - ✦ Make your shopping list early, including recipients' names and type of suitable gift. Carry the list with you and purchase items over a period of time, spreading the cost out gradually. Avoid using credit cards to keep within your budget and minimize large bills later.
  - ✦ Consider gift items you already have, such as previous sales items, family heritage pieces, new plants started from yours, home-made preserves, baking or crafts, even re-cycled items--maybe with an added new touch.
  - ✦ Gradually purchase special baking ingredients, meats, and other grocery items within each week's shopping list. This way you can take advantage of sales products and spread the additional costs over several weeks. Freeze some items for later use, as appropriate.
- Include all family members in your plan; it's a great opportunity to teach better financial responsibility for all ages while working as a team. Childhood memories are often the "warm fuzzies of things we did together"--not a specific expensive gift.

Remember to keep holiday spending in perspective. Overspending and an overly-hecktic pace can take the joy out of these special occasions.

Sources: <http://www.practicalmoneyskills.com>  
<http://www.extension.umn.edu/extensionnews/2004/holiday.html###>

**Contact the Extension Office if you are interested in ordering  
Ginger Scissors. They are available at a discounted rate.  
Any of them would make great gifts.**



## Cleaning & Chilling Essential for Game Birds

My son enjoys hunting but I've been concerned about diseases from wild game. Research has shown that with proper handling, wild game and bird can be safe.



The new bird flu has not yet been found in North America, but scientists are monitoring migratory birds and hunters are encouraged to be watchful for distressed birds and to follow food safety steps in field dressing, storing and cooking game birds.

- Look for obvious signs that a bird is in distress.
- Field dress birds promptly.
- Do not pile warm birds in a mass.
- Remove the entrails and crop as soon as possible, as grain in the crop can ferment, if not removed.
- To save the heart and liver as giblets, transfer them to a re-sealable plastic bag. Label to identify the bird before placing the bag on ice in an ice chest.
- Birds can be plucked or skinned in the field and feathers stored in a plastic bag.
- Wipe out the cavity with a clean cloth or paper towel. Do not use grass or snow that may contaminate the carcass.
- Place birds in individual re-sealable plastic bags. Label the bag to identify the bird, date and location it was bagged before placing it on ice in an ice chest.
- Birds can be stored in the refrigerator (at temperature of 45 degrees F or less) for up to three days, or frozen, either as a whole, clean carcass or in parts, at 0 degrees F. for future meals.

- Wash hands in hot, soapy water before and after handling game. If water is unavailable, waterless hand sanitizers will work. Be sure hands do not have visible dirt before using hand sanitizers.
- To reduce the risk of cross contamination, don't eat, drink or smoke when field dressing game.
- Keep ice chest out of direct sun.
- Assemble a field dressing kit with soap, water jug and/or hand sanitizer, paper towels, cutting board(s), knives, sharpening stone, re-sealable plastic bags, plastic or latex gloves, trash bags, labels and a marker to field dress birds before transferring them to an ice chest.
- Follow the USDA recommendations to cook poultry to 165 degrees F and check doneness with a food thermometer.
- Cooking poultry and game birds to 165 degrees F will kill foodborne pathogens, Blakeslee said.
- To disinfect field dressing kit before storing, Blakeslee recommends sanitizing knives, cutting board(s), etc. with a solution of one teaspoon of unscented chlorine bleach mixed with one quart of water. Using a dishwasher will work, if utensils, etc. are dishwasher-safe.

"Simply washing your hands and keeping food preparation tools and workspaces clean can easily reduce the risk of foodborne illness and cross contamination." Additional food safety tips and game recipes also are available on the North Dakota State University Web site: <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/hunting/wildgame.htm>

## OHCE NEWS

### OHCE Fall Council

The annual Fall Council Meeting will be held in the Methodist Church in Beaver on Wed., October 11, 2006. Registration begins at 9:30 am with the meeting starting at 10:00 am. The offices of Chaplin, Song Leader, and Pianist are to be elected. There will be one more chance to vote on 2007 lessons too. Each large group is asked to provide 2 door prizes. Please bring a dish with an ethnic twist for an International Pot-Luck Lunch.

Our speaker for Fall Council will be Janet Cook, a Laverne elementary teacher. Her presentation "Oh, the Places You'll Go" will reveal to us her participation in "Strengthening Democracy through Project Citizen" in which was held in the Czech Republic January 11-17, 2006. Bring a friend, this will be a great presentation!

**Fair Exhibit Committee and Group Vice President** will meet about 2 pm on October 11th. Walk on over to the Extension Office following the Fall Council Meeting. One representative from each group is needed. OHCE Lessons and Fair Exhibits for 2007 will be finalized then.

"**Cook Up the Holidays**" will be the next Leaders' Lesson. It will be held at the Fair Building on Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup> beginning at Noon. This will be presented as a Lunch and Learn and the public is invited to attend.