

Pueblo County Extension Agriculture Tribune



The Quarterly Pueblo County Extension Ag Newsletter



EASY BEEF POT PIE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 LB. BONELESS BEEF SIRLOIN STEAK, CUT INTO 1/2-IN. CUBES
- 2 TBSP. VEGETABLE OIL
- 1 1/2 CUPS PEELED DICED COOKED POTATO
- 10 OZ. FROZEN MIXED VEGETABLES
- 1 CAN CONDENSED GOLDEN MUSHROOM SOUP
- 1/3 C. WATER
- 1 TSP. WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE
- 1/2 TSP. DRIED THYME, CRUSHED
- 1 REFRIGERATED PIE CRUST, AT ROOM TEMPERATURE

RECIPE SOURCE: CAMPBELLS.COM

[HTTPS://WWW.CAMPBELLS.COM/RECIPES/EASY-BEEF-POT-PIE/](https://www.campbells.com/recipes/easy-beef-pot-pie/)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. HEAT OVEN TO 400°F. WHILE THE OVEN IS HEATING, SEASON THE BEEF WITH SALT AND PEPPER. HEAT THE OIL IN A SKILLET OVER MED-HIGH HEAT. ADD THE BEEF AND COOK UNTIL BROWN.
2. STIR IN THE POTATOES, VEGETABLES, SOUP, WATER, WORCESTERSHIRE, AND THYME. SPOON THE MIXTURE INTO A 9-IN. PIE PLATE. PLACE THE PIE CRUST OVER THE BEEF MIXTURE AND CRIMP THE EDGES TO SEAL. CUT SLITS IN THE TOP OF THE CRUST WITH A KNIFE.
3. BAKE FOR 35 MINUTES OR UNTIL THE BEEF MIXTURE IS HOT AND THE CRUST IS GOLDEN BROWN.

TIP!

YOU CAN COOK THE POTATO IN THE MICROWAVE. COOK 1 LARGE POTATO IN THE MICROWAVE FOR 7 MIN. LET COOL AND DICE.

Meet the Ag Team!

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Scan to access the digital version of this newsletter.



Look inside to view our highlighted community partners!





Fall Fire Mitigation

By: Beth De Lair, Ag & Natural Resources Coordinator

-Information obtained from <https://csfs.colostate.edu/>

As we enter into fall and early winter season here in Colorado, we urge Pueblo residents to prepare their outdoor spaces for fall and early spring fire mitigation. Our county has seen unusual precipitation this year, but many areas are starting to dry up. This dry effect along with strong winds and the additional vegetation that sprung up this year creates ideal fire-starting conditions.

The Colorado State Forest Service provides good practice guidelines when it comes to fire mitigation around your home. Creating a limited home ignition zone, which is the area around your primary dwelling that could be lost during a wildfire event, is the first step. To help create that space it is recommended you follow the items below to limit your homes' structural ignitability.

Top Priorities for Structural Ignitability

- Remove all leaves, needles and other debris from decks, roofs and gutters.
- Screen attic, roof, eaves, and foundation vents with 1/8-inch metal mesh.
- Create 6 inches of vertical clearance between the ground and side of home.

Additionally, you can look at creating a defensible space around a home or other structure to reduce fire hazards. The most impactful way to do this is to remove natural and manmade fuels around the structure. This will reduce the chance of fire spreading via direct contact with or exposure of radiant heat to the structure. It also helps limit the production of embers and reduces the chance of a structure fire spreading to your neighbor's home or property.



Creating an effective defensible space involves establishing a series of management zones.

Develop these zones around each building on your property, including detached garages, storage buildings, barns, and other structures.

- Zone 1 (0-5 feet from the home) is the area nearest the home and other structures. It requires the most vigilant work to reduce wildfire hazards.
- Zone 2 (5-30 feet from the home) is the area transitioning away from the home where fuels should be reduced.
- Zone 3 (30-100 feet from the home) is the area farthest from the home. It extends 100 feet from the home on relatively flat ground.

Top Priorities for Defensible Space

- Mow grass and weeds to a height of 4 inches or less.
- Rake and remove all pine needles and other flammable debris from a 5-foot radius around the foundation of your home and deck.
- Treat or mow shrubs that re-sprout aggressively (such as Gambel oak) every 3-5 years or more depending on growth rates.
- Remove branches that hang over the roof and chimney.
- Dispose of slash from thinning trees and shrubs by chipping, hauling to a disposal site, or piling in open areas for burning later. Any accumulation of slash that's chipped or otherwise should be isolated 30 feet or more from the home.
- Avoid creating continuous areas of wood chips on the ground when chipping logs and/or slash. Break up the layer of wood chips by adding nonflammable material, or allow for wide gaps of at least 3 feet between chip accumulations.



Long Term Storage of Crops

By: Kristi Bartolo, Agronomy Agent, Pueblo County



Once the harvest has been brought in, farmers are then tasked with long-term storage of some of their crops. Squashes, onions, potatoes, other root vegetables, beans and grains must all make it through the long winter and there are some do's and don'ts when storing crops long term; through the winter and into early spring. Dry beans and grain crops may be the easiest crops to store but do still require specific attention to details. Because these crops are maintained dry, silos and bins must maintain low relative humidity with temperatures being less of a concern. Good air flow through the bins and silos also ensures these crops remain dry and stable. Another component to consider is pests. Good pest management practices (excluding pests) can be most effective for this concern and maintaining an uncontaminated harvest.

Other crops such as squashes and potatoes can be stored through the winter by maintaining proper temperatures usually between 50- and 70-degrees Fahrenheit. Extra care should be taken to ensure that all stored produce are relatively disease free so rotting of the fruits does not occur prematurely. Good air flow is also critical to maintain and preserve squashes and potatoes through winter storage. In both potatoes and squashes, maintaining quality of these items also is dependent on maturity of the crop. Both potatoes and squashes should be fully mature before harvesting off of the vine from the field. This can be determined by the thickness and toughness of the skins and rinds. Avoid damaging the produce when harvesting, as well, so that pathogens cannot enter wounds and accelerate decay.

Garlic and onions must be "dried" for proper long-term storage. After digging up these vegetables, the tops (leafy, above ground parts) should be allowed to dry out completely and then can be trimmed off. This can be done in the field or in a dry warm location like a storage shed. Once the tops are trimmed, garlic and onions should be kept in a cool dry location with a temperature range of 32 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Good air flow ensures these crops will last in a range of 2 weeks to 6 months depending on the variety.

Other root vegetables like carrots and turnups and some fruits like apples should be kept in cool moist locations with relative humidity of up to 90% and at 32 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Proper storing of these crops ensures the community can enjoy local produce almost year-round.

-Information obtained from
<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/news/columns/dakota-gardener/dakota-gardener-storing-garden-produce>



Extending the Harvest Season

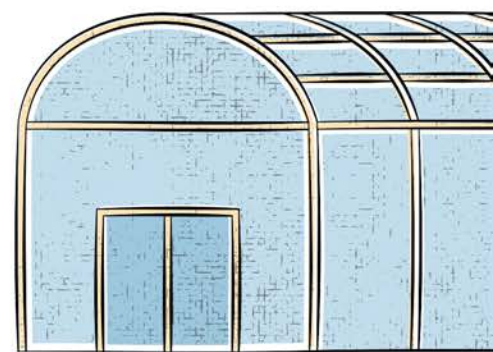
By: Kristi Bartolo, Agronomy Agent, Pueblo County

With the first frost right around the corner and autumn in the air, it seems like a time to wind down harvest and let all of the fields and farms go to sleep for winter. Some people, however, might not be ready for the “long winter’s nap” and so look to season-extension practices and methods. There are a variety of ways to extend the growing and harvest season for both the backyard garden and the multi-acre farm.



One strategy to lengthen the harvest season is to plant crops that grow best in cooler weather. Most of these crops can tolerate moderate frost providing fresh produce well into the winter. Some leafy greens such as spinach, swiss chard, arugula, some onion varieties, garlic, broccoli, and cabbages can tolerate longer more severe freezes and still remain productive. Planning for cool season crops starts at the beginning of the season because these crops will need to be planted in late summer and so space accommodations will need to be accounted for during spring planting. Having these crops not only extends the season, providing fresh produce longer, but also helps to maintain sales through the late fall and early winter within the community.

For more tender vegetables and crops, hoop houses and frost covers may be utilized to extend the growing and harvest season. Farmers and home gardeners alike should consider multiple aspects of hoop houses before using them for season extension. Size of farm, space availability and cost of construction are some of the most important aspects to consider when deciding to install or utilize hoop houses. Installing multiple hoop houses on large farm plots may not be cost effective due to the high cost of materials and labor but could be built on one or two smaller plots and still gain their benefits. On small garden plots, these structures can enhance crop production even in the summer, protecting the crop from extreme weather (heat, wind, hail). Also called high tunnels, hoop houses are permanent structures and require maintenance and up-keep especially in windy weather, to maintain their passive heating abilities. Though not practical for every cropping situation, hoop houses can greatly extend the produce harvest.



Though not as commonly thought of as a season extension practice, planting a fall cover crop can extend the growing season in a few unexpected ways. Especially in years of adequate moisture planting, a cover crop in the fall can help to improve the soil. These crops keep the ground covered through the winter and provide living roots for soil microbes to continue renovating the soil. Though no profitability may come from microbes in the soil, the benefits the cover crop roots can provide to the soil through the winter can make summer crops more productive. Cover crops can also extend the growing season when livestock are incorporated. The crop can be supplemental feed and grazing after the crop has gone through the first frost.

No matter the option for season extension, planning ahead and considering goals and expectations can help to make season extension more feasible, profitable and enjoyable.



~Grasshoppers~

By: Beth De Lair, Ag & Natural Resources Coordinator

This year was truly a thriving season for grasshoppers here in Pueblo. This took place for a variety of reasons that include a mild 2022 winter, a wet spring in 2023 and an overabundance of plant food sources. The other unique item that many people noticed in Pueblo was the explosion of the large Plains Lubber grasshoppers which are difficult to manage from an ecosystem perspective as only one type of bird known as the loggerhead shrike eat those large grasshoppers. This allowed their population numbers to increase quite rapidly in our area.



Colorado has over 100 different species of grasshoppers and typically have intense populations on a 22-year cycle. This can change due to factors such as climate, plant growth and predation levels. All grasshoppers reproduce via egg laying that happens in the fall, the adults die off with the first frost and then most species have eggs hatch in late March, early April. By disrupting the egg count or harming the young nymphs of the grasshoppers you can greatly limit the destruction level you see on your plants and rangeland areas. With grasshoppers, the goal is to manage and not eradicate as they do serve a role as decomposers in our ecosystems and as a food source for other insects and mammals. With the approach of winter, now is the perfect time to do a few things that can limit your grasshopper infestation for next year.



Grasshopper Management Tips

- Rake your soil and disturb leaf piles right before a frost or freeze to expose egg clutches on leaf litter and in the top layer of the soil
 - Encourage birds to your yard with bird houses and bird feeders
 - In the spring you can dust young plants with flour to prevent foliage destruction
 - Proper spring application of chemicals using the active ingredient Carbayl can be used (example: Sevin)
- Covering plants with cheesecloth barriers or other thin fabric can lessen the damage as well



To read more about Colorado grasshoppers check out our helpful CSU Extension fact sheet by clicking here: <https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/insect/05536.pdf>

Community Partner Highlights

Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District

The Fountain Creek Watershed District, established through legislation in 2000, consists of the counties of El Paso and Pueblo and is governed by a Board of Directors who come from the cities/ counties of Colorado Springs, Fountain, and Pueblo; small municipalities in El Paso County; the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District; and the FCW Citizens Advisory Group. The District is authorized to manage, administer and fund the capital improvements necessary in the Fountain Creek Watershed to mitigate flooding, erosion and sedimentation, address water quality issues, improve drainage, protect open space and develop public recreational opportunities including open space. Pueblo County Extension has partnered with the District for many events including the annual Creek Week gatherings.

Website:

<https://www.fountain-crk.org/>



Pueblo City-County Library District

The Library's mission is to serve as a foundation for the community by offering welcoming, well equipped and maintained facilities, outstanding collections, and well-trained employees who provide expert service encouraging the joy of reading, supporting lifelong learning and presenting access to information from around the world. There are 5 branch libraries along with the main Rawlins branch all throughout Pueblo making books and resources more readily available to all community members. The Pueblo County Extension Office utilizes the library facilities often and partners and collaborates with the library on many projects including the All Pueblo Grows Seed Lending Library, Pecha Kecha Events and more.

Website:

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/>



Upcoming Events

October Dates

- **Oct. 18, 2023**
 - CSSRM Rangeland and Soils Day
- **Oct. 21, 2023**
 - C.A.R.T. Drill
- **Oct. 27, 2023**
 - Rain Barrel Construction
- **Oct. 27 & 28, 2023**
 - Boo at the Zoo

November Dates

- **Nov. 17 & 18, 2023**
 - CO Women in Ag Conference
- **Nov. 28, 2023**
 - Fungal Inoculant Presentation
- **Nov. 29 & 30, 2023**
 - CO Ag Water Summit

December Dates

- **Dec. 6 & 7, 2023**
 - CO Weed Mang. Training
- **Dec. 7 & 8, 2023**
 - CO Food Summit
- **Dec. 12, 2023**
 - Ag Tech Class

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Full statements are available at: <https://col.st/1l0t3>