A Holiday Message to Our Volunteers

As we wrap up 2020, I wanted to take the time to wish all of you a wonderful and safe holiday season.

2020 was a year filled with both challenges and victories. How reassuring it’s been to know that we can count on our volunteers regardless of what faces us. On behalf of CCE Allegany, please allow me to extend my personal and genuine appreciation to each and every one you for your valuable contributions to this Association. Working with you this past year has been a pleasure and we’re proud to have you all with us.

As we set goals for 2021, please include us in your thoughts! Your excitement and energy matter to us. You always come up with new ideas, which help us. You add enthusiasm to our team. Your contribution inspires us. Your innovative ideas act as solutions to the hindrances faced by our Association.

Thank you once again for all your effort.

Laura K. Hunsberger
Executive Director
CCE-ALLEGANY

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CCE IS AN EMPLOYER AND EDUCATOR RECOGNIZED FOR VALUING AA/EEO, PROVIDING EQUAL PROGRAM AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.
THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

DAIRY OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

BY LYNN BLIVEN
AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES ISSUE LEADER

Developed out of the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program in 1983, the Dairy of Distinction Program recognizes the hard work and dedication of dairy owner and operators who have attractive, well-kept farms and promote a good dairy image. The Dairy of Distinction Program is based on the concept that attractive farmsteads enhance consumer confidence in the dairy industry.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Allegany County is proud to announce the newest Dairy of Distinction recipient in our county – Podonque Dairy. Owners Samuel and Monica Clark. In 1994 they purchased their 5 acre farm which is located in Rushford, NY and have been independently shipping milk since 2011. They milk between 20-25 cows, most staying in herd for 7-8 lactations. They also grow all of their forage crops on 100 rented acres of land.

The Clark’s pride themselves on growing quality forage and attribute that to the health and longevity of animals in their herd. In addition they raise beef along with sweet corn and vegetables sold seasonal at their Farm to Plate farm stand to compliment the dairy. Congratulations to Podonque Dairy Farm for being one of seven farms selected statewide in 2020 and the newest Allegany County recipient of this special award!

In addition to our 2020 winner we have 4 other Allegany farms recognized for milestone years in the program.

20 years in the program:
- Nickerson Farm in Scio, owned by Dan and Sue Nickerson.

10 years in the program:
- Barney Farms started in 2004 and located in Independence owned by Doug & Kelly Baneys.
- Sunny Cove owned by Gerry and Dorothy Snyder started their farm in 1978
- Mike and Barb Vosburg, located in Centerville, established their farm in 1989.

We appreciate their continued commitment to dairy farming.

Podonque Dairy owners Samuel & Monica Clark
SNOW CANDY
You only need a few materials for this activity, and the whole family will love making & eating snow candy! Are you ready to see how?

Materials
- 2 cups of 100% pure maple syrup
- Craft sticks
- A large pot
- Fresh fallen snow

Preparing the Snow
1. Find a patch of clean, fresh snow that hasn’t been contaminated by people or pets.
2. Prepare the snow by pressing it down until it is firm. The snow will essentially be acting as a baking sheet.
You could alternatively fill a shallow pan with fresh snow, pack it firmly, and head inside.
We wanted to make our candy outside because it feels more magical, but we still opted to fill a pan with snow and pack it firmly.

Preparing the Maple Syrup
1. Pour 2 cups of real maple syrup into a pot or saucepan.
2. Place the pot on medium-to high heat and bring the syrup to a boil, stirring often.
3. Boil the syrup for 4-5 minutes, stirring constantly.
4. Then, remove the syrup from the stove and head outside!

Making the Snow Candy
1. Quickly pour the maple syrup onto your fresh, pressed snow before it has time to cool.
2. Then, take craft sticks and use them to form the syrup into candy on the sticks.
3. Roll the maple syrup on the sticks in the snow until the syrup is hard like a lollipop.

That’s it! You now have delicious snow candy pops to eat & enjoy!

COLORED ICE SCULPTURES IN THE SNOW

Supplies
- Water
- Food coloring
- Ice cube trays and plastic containers
- Water bottle

Preparing the Colored Ice:
1. Gather up your ice cube trays and small food containers and storage containers.
2. Fill up all of the ice cube trays and containers with colored water, and then put in freezer, or if cold enough (below 32 f) outside overnight.
Once frozen, transferred all of the colored ice to a large bin in the freezer, and repeat the process.

Go easy on the color though! A jug of water with 5 or 6 drops of color is enough to fill several ice cube trays.

The Best Weather Conditions:
Once you’ve made enough ice, you just need to wait for a nice, cold day! You want it to be below 32ºf for your ice sculptures to work.

The Secret Ingredient:
A bottle of water is the secret to creating great ice sculptures in your own back yard.
Here’s how it works... Count to ten!
Every time you add an ice cube to your structure, dribble a bit of water from the water bottle over the ice cubes, and count to ten.
The water freezes quite quickly upon contact with the ice, and while you are counting, it forms a “glue” that holds the cubes together!

Be sure to share your creations with us, we LOVE to see what you are up to!
Please email pictures to the 4-H Office or tag us on Facebook Allegany County 4-H Program.
BE THE REASON SOMEONE SMILES

BY TRICIA HEARY
4-H COORDINATOR
ADAPTATION FROM HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN USA TODAY

Two things that everyone who lives in Allegany County have in common in January are cold weather and snow.

Cold weather and snow make it hard to do things and with the added threat of COVID-19 doesn’t make it any easier. Lots of people feel the weight of this and face depression or sad days. Instead of focusing on what you can’t do, focus on what you can do.

Here are few ideas to make your day brighter:

1. **Call and talk to a friend** instead of email or texting. Hearing a voice brings them closer then reading words.

2. **Be visual** - Use Skype, Face Time, Google Hangouts or Marco Polo to video chat. You can even take it up a notch and do a craft or cook, while utilizing these programs.

3. **Change your perspective** by re-arranging a room or changing up the art work on the wall.

4. **Start a journal.** It can be about anything you have an interest in or something that has happened to you. Your journal doesn’t have to be fancy it can a composite book you can get at the store and embellish it with new paper clippings or scrapbook paper.

5. **Recipe card exchange** through the mail. It’s always fun to see what others like and might be different from what you make now.

6. **Turn on a soap opera**, mute the sound and create your own dialogue.

7. **Take time to reflect** what have you accomplished in the last year. What goals are you setting for the upcoming months?

8. **Try a new healthy recipe**. Make a new drink with fruit juice and some sparkling water, Try and all veggie dish or whole grain you never tried before. Make it an adventure.

9. **Go for a walk** and cuddle up just enjoy the moment.

10. **Do something nice for a neighbor**, like baking some cookies and leave it on their porch with a cute note. Be the reason someone smiles

11. **Build a snowman** no age requirement necessary. You can even involve others and challenge your neighbors to make one too.

12. **Focus on the good** things in your life and write down what you are thankful for.
From your public library borrow “There’s A Giraffe in My Soup” by Ross Burach. As you read this book with your child, talk about your child’s favorite animals and foods.

If you or your organization are interested in scheduling classes, please call your local nutrition educator.
SPICE UP JANUARY!

After the holidays, filled with rich and decadent foods, many families are looking to get back to healthier options as the new year begins. Many spice blends you buy at the store are loaded with sodium. Diets high in sodium can effect your heart health and increase your blood pressure. Try making these salt-free spice blends at home to add new flavors to your favorite meals and snacks. These spice blend recipes are from North Dakota State University.

MEXICAN BLEND SEASONING

1½ teaspoons dried parsley
½ teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon onion powder
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 Tablespoon chili powder
1 teaspoon paprika
1½ teaspoons cumin

Add the parsley, garlic powder, onion powder, oregano, black pepper, chili powder, paprika and cumin to a bowl. Mix well. Store in an air tight container or zip bag.

Use in soups, ground beef for tacos or in enchiladas.

ITALIAN SPICE BLEND

2 Tablespoons dried basil
2 Tablespoons dried oregano
1 Tablespoon dried thyme
1 Tablespoon dried rosemary
1 Tablespoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon onion powder

Add the basil, oregano, thyme, rosemary, garlic powder and onion powder to a bowl. Mix well. Store in an air tight container or zip bag.

Use in yogurt as a dip with celery and carrots, or on baked chicken or popcorn.

RANCH BLEND

2 Tablespoons onion powder
2 Tablespoons onion flakes
2 Tablespoons dried parsley
1 Tablespoon garlic powder
1 Tablespoon dried dill weed
¼ teaspoon dried thyme
2 teaspoons ground black pepper

Add the onion powder, onion flakes, parsley, garlic powder, dill weed, thyme and black pepper to a bowl. Mix well. Store in an air tight container or zip bag.

Use in stuffed bell peppers or pasta, or on toasted garlic bread.
EFNEP RECIPE

SLOW COOKER CHICKEN TORTILLA SOUP

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breast
- 3 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 2 Tablespoons Mexican Seasoning Blend (or substitute low-sodium taco seasoning)
- 1 15-ounce can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 16-ounce package frozen corn
- 1 16-ounce jar salsa
- 1 teaspoon shredded cheese (as garnish per bowl), optional
- 1 6-ounce container low-fat, plain Greek yogurt, optional

Serving Size: 1 cup
Servings Per Recipe: 10
Prep Time: 15 minutes

NUTRITION FACTS

Serving Size – 1 cup, 210 Calories, 2.5g Total Fat, 23 calories from fat, 11% calories from Fat, -g Saturated Fat, 0g Trans Fat, -mg Cholesterol, 530mg Sodium, 30g Total Carbohydrate, 8g Dietary Fiber, -g Sugars, 19g Protein, -% Calcium, -% Iron, -% Vitamin A, -% Vitamin C

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut chicken breasts in half and place in 3-quart slow cooker.
2. Add chicken broth, Mexican Seasoning Blend, kidney beans, black beans, corn and salsa to the slow cooker.
3. Cook on low for six to seven hours or high for four hours.
4. Shred chicken into bite-sized pieces inside the slow cooker.
5. If desired, top individual servings with a pinch of shredded cheese and a dollop of yogurt.

Source: North Dakota State University
SNAP-ED TEACHES PEOPLE TO SHOP FOR AND COOK HEALTHY MEALS. SNAP-ED CAN HELP PEOPLE LEARN HOW TO MAKE THEIR SNAP DOLLARS STRETCH.

THE
SNAP
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

NUTRITION PROMOTION

MYPLATE
SNOWMAN SCENE

Ingredients:
- 2 slices whole grain bread
- Peanut butter
- 1 banana
- A handful of raisins
- 2-6 pretzel sticks
- 2 slices low-fat cheese
- Your favorite green veggie (we used a bell pepper)
- 1/2 cup air-popped popcorn (or light-colored cereal)

Directions:
1. Make a peanut butter and banana sandwich. Then cut out a snowman from the center.
2. Cut snowflakes from the cheese slices. (Top: Don’t have a snowflake cookie cutter? Use a plain circle and create snowballs instead!)
3. Now let’s create the scene! Move your snowman to the plate and give him a face, hat, buttons, and arms. If it is cold outside he may need a scarf too!
4. Add a background by covering the ground in “snow” and planting “trees.”

FOOD PLANNING
DURING COVID
PANDEMIC

First check your refrigerator, freezer and pantry – and expiration dates and best by dates. This can help you plan meals using what you have and help you limit trips to the grocery store.

Explore your shopping options, such as pickup or delivery, as well as third-party delivery options. If you’re older, check if your store has early shopping hours just for you.

Buy what you and your family need at this time, and resist the urge to buy in much larger quantities. Prepare a shopping list that will cover everyone in your household for two weeks.

Choose a mix of shelf-stable, frozen and fresh foods. Shelf-stable examples: pastas, rice, beans, nut butters, and dried or canned goods. Frozen food examples: breads, meats, vegetables, fruits, even milk. With fresh foods, buy a variety in quantities that you usually buy.

CONTACT YOUR SNAP-ED NUTRITIONIST
BECI LOEB
ral343@cornell.edu/ 585-268-7644 ext.19
RICE BOWL
SOUTHWESTERN STYLE

INGREDIENTS
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 cup chopped vegetables (Try a mixture—bell peppers, onion, corn, tomato, zucchini)
- 1 cup cooked meat (shredded or chopped), beans or tofu
- 1 cup brown rice
- 2 tablespoons salsa, shredded cheese or low-fat sour cream

DIRECTIONS
1. In a medium skillet, heat oil over medium heat (350 in an electric skillet). Add vegetables and cook for 3-5 minutes or until vegetables are tender-crisp.
2. Add cooked meat, beans, or tofu and cooked rice to skillet and heat through.
3. Divide rice mixture between two bowls. Top with salsa, cheese or sour cream and serve warm.
4. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

For a spicier dish, add chili powder, red pepper flakes or taco sauce in step 1. You can use any leftover grain in this recipe. Try white or wild rice, quinoa, barley or oatmeal.

NUTRITION FACTS
Serving size: 1 cup; 320 Calories, 12g Total Fat, 3.5g Saturated Fat, 410mg Sodium, 35g Total Carbohydrate, 3g Fiber, 3g Sugars; 15g Protein,
LEARN TO DO BY DOING.

PRUNING SUCCULENTS

BY JEREMY BAIER
HORTICULTURE COMMUNITY EDUCATOR

With winter on its way and along with most of my garden responsibilities now finished, I find myself sitting cozy in the warmth of my home with my succulents. Something interesting that I hadn’t picked up on, is that they’re beginning to get awkwardly long and leggy. This is a problem that we run into with just about all indoor succulents, some varieties maintain their nice, compact, rose-like state, but more often than not, we find ourselves with bare stems with the succulent’s decor growing primarily at the top of the plant.

The stretching out of succulents can be the result of the lack of proper lighting, also known as etiolation: when the plant becomes weak, stunts in growth or development due to the deprivation of light. However, certain species are known to grow leggy by nature: Graptopetalum (Copper Rose), Sedum nussbaumerianum (Coppertone Stonecrop) and Crassula perforata (String of Buttons, not to be confused with string of pearls); these are common varieties that you often find in succulent arrangements.

So, what’s to be done with these unappealing leggy succulents? It is time to prune, something that may at first seem terrifying, but like pruning your outdoor plants, will soon become a common practice.

You will start by lifting and completely un-rooting your plant, cutting the stem to the desired length. To how short you cut the stem from the leaflets is totally up to you. The Copper Rose, for example should be cut about an inch to a half an inch from the rosette. Whereas Sedum morganianum (Burro’s -tail) I would leave about 4” – 5”, where in most arrangements they tend to hang over the side of the pot and due to their weight need some lengthy stems to anchor them properly in your soil. There is more than one way to propagate a succulent. I like to propagate my succulents by allowing them to callus and heal in a dry, shaded area, ranging from about 2 weeks to 4 months, however you can also just take your beheaded rosette and pop it into some soil, eventually they will root. You can choose to toss the beheaded stem, but I would suggest leaving it rooted and in time you will see little babies emerging near the cut. During my time at SUNY Potsdam, I was gifted a cutting from an old gardener that had been saving a Hoya Hindu Rope plant for over a year. By placing the cut end of the stem in some water, within a few weeks roots began to emerge.

Though they seem very fragile, succulents are quite resilient. By nature, the leaflets drop from the mother plant and will root themselves. It may seem strange that these plants have a difficult time growing in the Northern Eastern part of the states, but these plants were meant to grow in hotter, drier climates, not our wet humid four seasons in New York.

Succulents are beautiful and can be very easily managed. Like many other plants, with the purchase of just one succulent or a cutting taken from a friend, can propagate a dozen more within a short amount of time. I hope you found this helpful, enjoy the holidays!

Until next time, enjoy!
CERTIFIED, ORGANIC, NATURAL...
What's it all mean to me?

BY LYNN BLIVEN
AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES ISSUE LEADER

Deciphering labels on food products has become quite a challenge. Wanting to buy the best quality for your family while balancing the family budget can be a daunting task especially with rising food costs. It may be difficult to determine if you're really getting the best buy for your money or just buying a marketing line.

Some of the recent phone calls I've received led me to believe many folks want to buy quality products, are willing to pay more for quality food, however, they don't want someone to take advantage of them. Another call brought forth the misconceptions about products; a consumer wanted to buy organic beef and commented "I don't want to purchase animals which have been fed grain; cows are not supposed to eat grain". I often hear "organic", "sustainable" and "local" used as synonymous terms. So I'll attempt to provide some facts to help you to decide what will fit your family's needs.

While certified organic has many requirements, it may not fit your image of animals roaming freely across green meadows. There are restrictions on the type of methods, practices and substances used in the production of both plants and animals at certified organic farms. In addition, there are standards for the labeling of these products which clearly prohibits the use of genetic engineering or the use of animal by-products in animal feeds.

Certified organic does not mean that animals are not confined or fed grain. There are 80 USDA accredited certifying agents, 47 domestic and 31 in foreign countries. Organic products can be label 100% Organic if the product contains only organic ingredients. A label stating “Organic” means that at least 95% of the ingredients are organic. Both 100% Organic and Organic products may display the “USDA Organic” seal on the package. A product “Made with Organic Ingredients” must contain more than 70% organic ingredients and may list up to 3 of the organic materials on the package. (Source: USDA National Organic Program)

So what about products labeled as “natural”? According to USDA the "all natural" label on meat means it is "minimally processed and contains no artificial ingredients", such as MSG or sodium phosphate. Most raw products sold in the grocery store qualify for this label. The term “Certified Naturally Grown” generally refers to products raised without artificial growth hormones, no antibiotics administered, and no animal proteins included in the diet. The “Certified Naturally Grown” is a certification program tailored for small-scale, direct-market farmers and beekeepers using natural methods. This standard does not allow for GMO seed to be used. Both are voluntary certification programs for livestock and plant production, applied for by individual farms which must outline their raising practices.

(Continued)
If you are looking for an animal raised on forage only, grass-fed/grass finished is the product for you. The pasture and forage may or may not be organic certified, the guarantee of these products is that the cattle, sheep or goats raised receive all of the nutrients from forages, are fed no grains.

If you are looking for an animal raised on forage only, grass-fed/grass finished is the product for you. The pasture and forage may or may not be organic certified, the guarantee of these products is that the cattle, sheep or goats raised receive all of the nutrients from forages, are fed no grains.

USDA allows claims, such as free-range, no added hormones, and natural, to appear on food labels. Watch out for negative labeling claims, as in the case of poultry and pork, federal regulation prohibit the use of hormones. Therefore, regardless of labeling, growth hormones are not present in these products. Some claim products are hormone-free; this is not true as there are naturally occurring hormones in food.

If you are more concerned about knowing where your food comes from rather than what type of label it has, you may find many opportunities locally to purchase both plant and animal products suited to your requirements. In fact, if you would like to support enterprises that raise livestock in an environment of minimal stress and crops using good agricultural practices which provide you with our incredibly good eating, look no further than across the valley. There are many farms in our area practicing environmentally sustainable methods without having obtained a certification.

Our local farms, regardless of size or type, follow good agricultural practices to provide wholesome food while protecting the environment. Many local farms may provide vegetables and meat grown without the use of genetically modified seed, herbicides or pesticides even though they do not have organic certification. In addition, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs offer consumers an opportunity for farm fresh products along with education about how food is produced.

I encourage you to consider buying locally. In addition to providing you with the foods produced in a manner you feel most comfortable, it helps to retain dollars within the community. In these challenging times supporting local business makes sense. There are approximately 18,000 household in Allegany County. If each household spent $15/month on local products, 3.25 million dollars in revenue would be generated annually for local farmers. These are dollars which can be re-circulated to other local businesses in our communities.

Grass fed & finished NY strip steaks from a local farm

Locally grown beets
SPOTTED LANTERNFLY

BY JULIET CARROLL, NICOLE MATTOOM, AND BRIAN ESHENAUR

NYS INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

The spotted lanternfly is a planthopper native to China and Southeastern Asia. Discovered in Pennsylvania in 2014, the spotted lanternfly presents a threat throughout much of the United States. While its list of hosts is large, the greatest agricultural concern falls on grapes, hops, apples, blueberries, and stone fruits.

Concern

There is great concern about its effect on vineyards, orchards, and hardwood trees. Its presence has led to crop loss, exporting issues, and increased management costs. Spotted lanternfly eggs are laid on practically any hard surface, including tree trunks, stones and metal. Because of this, egg masses may be transported unknowingly. Spotted lanternfly nymphs are able to feed on many hosts, while adults prefer certain trees such as Tree of Heaven (Ailanthus altissima), Black Walnut (Juglans nigra), Maples (Acer spp.), and Grapevines (Vitis spp.). Furthermore, abundant excretions of sticky honeydew by swarms feeding on shade trees, and the associated growth of sooty mold, can restrict people's enjoyment of parks and their own backyards.

Description

Spotted lanternfly adults are very colorful when their interior hind wings are displayed. The hind wings are red with black spots. They have a black head, and a yellow abdomen with black bands. Their beige-gray forewings have also black spots and a distinctive black brick-like pattern on the tips. There is one generation per year, with adults developing in the summer, laying eggs in the late summer through fall, and overwintering as eggs. Each egg mass normally contains 30-50 eggs which are laid in rows and usually covered in a waxy substance. The first nymphs to hatch from the eggs in the spring are wingless, black, and have white spots, while the final nymph stage turns red before becoming winged adults. Adult males are slightly smaller than the inch-long females, but are almost identical in appearance. Adults and nymphs commonly gather in large numbers on host plants to feed, and are easiest to see at dusk or at night.

Damage

This planthopper is able to feed using specialized mouthparts that can pierce the plant and suck up sap. Both nymphs and adults feed this way, on leaves, stems, and trunks. Spotted lanternflies also excrete honeydew while feeding, which, over time, may encourage the growth of sooty mold. Piercing the plant’s tissues and feeding on the sap weakens the plant, sometimes causing it to ooze and weep, which may result in a fermenting odor and a gray/black trail on the bark. The presence of the fermenting odor and honeydew may also attract other insects. Spotted lanternfly feeding can cause wilting, defoliation, flagging, yield loss, reduction in crop quality and cold hardiness, dieback and plant death.

(Continued)
NEW EXTENSION PODCAST NETWORK - NATURAL RESOURCES UNIVERSITY

We are excited to announce the launch of a new podcast network, Natural Resources University (https://naturalresourcesuniversity.libsyn.com). Natural Resources University is a podcast network focused on delivering science-based natural resources information to landowners and managers. This network builds off the successes of the Deer University podcast (Mississippi State) and is a result of a RREA Focus Grant.

The network includes 4 podcasts lead by various extension specialists. And each podcast focuses on natural resource topics relevant to landowners and managers.

**Deer University** - An educational podcast focusing on the science of deer – all topics center around deer ecology, biology, and management. Hosted by Bronson Strickland and Steve Demarais, Mississippi State University

**Fire University** - A science-based podcast covering the latest research in fire ecology and how it relates to management of wildlife and plant communities. Hosted by Marcus Lashley, University of Florida

**Habitat University** - A podcast about the science behind wildlife habitat management. Hosted by Jarred Brooke, Purdue University, and Adam Janke, Iowa State University

**Pond University** - A podcast that brings together aquatic scientists, landowners, and pond professionals to discuss topics such as pond habitat, fish stocking, vegetation control, and pond construction. Hosted by Mitch Zischke and Megan Gunn, Purdue University.

You can listen to any of the podcasts wherever you get your podcasts (Apple, Spotify, etc.). We are hoping to continue to grow the network to include various other natural resources topics relevant to landowners and managers. Many of you might see an email in your inbox in the near future about joining us on one of the shows as a guest.

FOUND A SPOTTED LANTERNFLY IN NEW YORK?

- Take pictures of the insect, egg masses, or infestation you see and, if possible, include something for size, such as a coin or ruler.
- If possible, collect the insect. Place in a bag and freeze, or in a jar with rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer.
- Note the location (street address and zip code, intersecting roads, landmarks, or GPS coordinates).
- Email pictures and location: spottedlanternfly@agriculture.ny.gov

![](Adult_Spotted_Lanternfly.jpg) ![Spotted_Lanternfly_Egg_Mass.jpg] ![Wing_Coloration_of_an_Adult_Spotted_Lanternfly.jpg]

Photo credit: NYS DEC
CASSANDRA BULL
FARM-TO-SCHOOL COORDINATOR

How do you grow plants year-round without any soil? If you ask a high school student in Scio Central School, they'll know the answer! As of this fall season, the district now has four Tower Gardens. These are vertical hydroponic systems can hold up to 28 plants which get their nutrients from enhanced water and use LED lights to help them grow. Hydroponic farming is one of the fastest growing sectors of the agricultural industry, and as of 2020, it is being taught at Scio Central School. “Our seedlings are started and we had electric outlets installed in the upstairs foyer of the school. These systems will be open for the entire student population to watch and interact with as the plants grow” states Kyle Canfield, High School Science Teacher, who spearheads this project. The district installed their first Tower Garden earlier this year before the COVID-19 shutdown, but didn’t have a chance to produce food for the school cafeteria. This Tower Garden was provided to the school by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Allegany County. In December 2019, Living Science teacher, Kyle Canfield, and I wrote a successful grant Grow with Us Grant for three additional Tower Gardens. They will grow vegetables like lettuce, cucumbers, and herbs which will be used as ingredients to enhance the school’s lunches.

Scio is not a stranger to Farm to School activities. For the last two school years, the district purchased 30% of their lunch ingredients from New York State Farms. Cafeteria Manager, Cindy Winchell, started a small school garden in the courtyard and works with students during the summer to grow vegetables in raised beds. Canfield is building on these cafeteria successes and is bringing agricultural concepts into his classroom. They have started a dendrology unit and will be tapping maple trees as a hands on maple syrup activity. Canfield has also enrolled in a Top Beef Contest, a multi-faceted project that teaches students about beef production, food science, and marketing. He has also expressed an interest in raising honey bees at the school. Scio is a textbook Farm to School success story. I’ve been working with Mrs. Winchell since 2018, and I am so happy to have added Mr. Canfield as one of my partner teachers last year. He is a true go-getter who is dedicated to creating a well-rounded program by incorporating the cafeteria, community, and classroom in these efforts.