

Caswell County Center  
126 Court Square  
PO Box 220  
Yanceyville, NC 27379  
(PHONE) 336-694-4158  
(FAX) 336-694-5930  
<http://caswell.ces.ncsu.edu>  
[sonya\\_patterson@ncsu.edu](mailto:sonya_patterson@ncsu.edu)

To: Caswell ECA Club Members

*Sonya G. Patterson*

From: Sonya G. Patterson  
Associate Extension Agent  
Family & Consumer Sciences



## Some Food for Thought Newsletter December 2014

### **Greetings!**



Seasons greetings to everyone as the holiday season is in full swing! So gather the people you love most – your spouse, your kids, your grandchildren, or your friends – and enjoy the most wonderful time of the year. If you have any questions please give me a call at (336) 694-4158, or visit our county website at [caswell.ces.ncsu.edu](http://caswell.ces.ncsu.edu) for upcoming events and information. Also be sure to like us on Facebook at North Carolina Cooperative Extension-Caswell County.

### **ECA Achievement Night**

The 2014 Achievement Night program held on November 13<sup>th</sup> was a great evening of fun, fellowship and education. The theme was “Living Green and Living Great!” An educational program on green living was presented by Family and Consumer Sciences agent Sonya Patterson, and a fashion show hosted by

Anderson Club Member Karen Williamson was enjoyed by all. The ECA club members modeled clothing purchased from area thrift and consignment stores as a means to demonstrate the great treasures and money saving items available by repurposing the beautiful fashions.



Additional photos on page 5.



## **Healthy Eating for the Holidays**

How do you maintain your healthy eating habits during a family feast? How can you make sure that the turkey is the only one stuffed during the holiday season? These guidelines can help you make healthy food choices and limit tempting, high-calorie foods during the holidays and other special occasions.

### **Think About People, Not Food!**

Concentrate on socializing, making new acquaintances, and having fun. Spend time conversing with relatives or reminiscing with old friends. Think about what you are celebrating, not just about how great the food is!

### **Plan Before You Eat**

When you arrive at celebrations, check out all the food options and develop a plan which will enable you to sample foods you enjoy without abandoning the good habits you've formed. Remember, it is OK to have some holiday treats, just spend your calories wisely and then enjoy the foods you choose!

### **Holiday Food Choices**

Choose More Often:

- Turkey Breast
- Chicken Breast
- Mineral Water
- Plain Potatoes
- Tossed Salad
- Steamed vegetables
- Fresh fruit
- Plain rice



Choose Less Often:

- Beef prime rib
- Pie
- Cake
- Stuffing
- Sugar-sweetened beverages
- High calorie alcoholic beverages
- Gravy
- Bread Pudding
- Candy
- Eggnog

### **Eat Slowly**

Take time and enjoy the taste of the food. Pace yourself and try to be the last person to finish each course. Take small bites and chew slowly. It usually takes about 20 minutes for your brain to get the message from your stomach that you are full. By eating slowly, you might be less likely to raid the dessert table.

### **Leave the table when you are done!**

If you linger at the table, you may be tempted to continue eating even if you are not hungry. Stay long enough to enjoy the meal, but leave the table while you are still ahead of the calorie game. Offer to help with dishes, clear the table, or take a walk.

Source: ucla.edu

## **Plastic or Wooden Cutting Board?**

For years, there has been a debate about the use of wood or plastic cutting boards.

No matter what material they are made from, cutting boards can harbor bacteria in cracks and grooves caused from knives.

Plastic is less porous than wood, making it less likely to harbor bacteria and easier to clean. However, a wooden cutting board used exclusively for raw meat and poultry is acceptable.

## **Plastic or Wooden Cutting Board?**

cont'd.

A basic food safety principle is to use separate cutting boards for raw meats and fruits and vegetables, as well as breads. Using separate cutting boards for raw foods and ready-to-eat foods will prevent bacteria from a meat or poultry product from contaminating another ready-to-eat food, such as produce or bread.

Poisonous bacteria can exist in raw meats but can be killed if the meat is properly cooked. A possibility of food poisoning arises when cross-contamination happens. This is when bacteria is transferred to uncooked foods during the preparation of food.

Here's a likely scenario. Cross contamination could happen when vegetables for a salad are chopped up on a cutting board that was previously used for cutting up an infected chicken.

To keep all cutting boards clean, wash thoroughly with hot, soapy water after each use. A scrub brush can be used as an extra step to remove food and dirt particles from the surface of the board. Then thoroughly rinse and air dry or pat dry with fresh paper towels.

You can go one step further with food safety. After washing them, both wooden and plastic cutting boards can be sanitized with a solution of two teaspoons of liquid chlorine bleach to 1 gallon of water. You can keep such a solution handy in a spray bottle near the kitchen sink.

Factor in the price and durability of the

board, whether it is wood or plastic. If you're in the business for a new cutting board, buy what is the best quality for your money.

Keep in mind that any type of cutting board will eventually wear out over time. Once cutting boards become excessively worn or develop hard-to-clean grooves, they should be replaced.

## **How to Recycle Your Christmas**

There are simple, resourceful and easy ways to pack up all the holiday decorations, recycle unwanted gift wrap and bows, recycle holiday string lights, reuse delicious holiday candles and much more using everyday items you can repurpose and reuse.

### **How to store your holiday wreath:**

Many people have artificial wreaths and need to store them after the holiday season. Since an artificial wreath can get dusty very quickly and can be hard to clean, it's important to cover them with plastic to keep them protected.

Recycle a dry cleaning plastic bag and hanger into a quick and easy storage solution: hang the wreath on the hanger, wrap it in the existing plastic, tie a knot and hang on the back of a door or in a hallway closet.

### **How to save or recycle holiday candles:**

Holiday candles can look out of place after Christmas, especially if they are emblazoned with scenes of "Rudolph" and Christmas trees. To save them for next year, use a ripped nylon hosiery to protect them and pack them in a box with tissue paper from your gift bags and boxes.

## **How to Recycle Your Christmas**

cont'd.

If you enjoy the scent of a holiday candle, but not the look, you can also chip them up with a hammer and fill a tea strainer ball with the fragrant wax. Leave the strainer balls in your dresser drawers or hang it in the closet as an instant room fragrance freshener.

### **How to reuse your holiday lights:**

If you invested in energy efficient LED string lights, why not recycle your Christmas lights into a mini Time Square lit-up ball? Just plug the LED string lights together and wrap them into a tight ball and hang from the ceiling. Because LED lights do not get hot, they are safe to wrap onto themselves over and over. Plus, since LED lights do not have glass bulbs, they will not shatter if tightly wrapped, too.

If you want to store your holiday lights, recycle an empty coffee can into a storage solution by wrapping the lights on the outside of the coffee can; place extension cords inside the can so they are all handy and accessible for next year.

### **How to recycle bows:**

Holiday bows are one of the easiest gift wrapping materials to recycle. Just remove the box and add a piece of removable poster tape to the bottom of the bow. The next time you're wrapping a gift, just remove the waxy strip and you've got a brand new bow ready to go.

### **How to store ornaments, using recycled cups:**

Save paper coffee cups from friends, co-

workers, your own and family. Rinse them out to use as protective ornament holders. Place fragile ornaments inside and cap with the plastic lid; wrap the cardboard sleeve around larger, less-delicate ornaments as a protective sleeve too. You can also recycle cardboard and polystyrene egg cartons into ornament holders; place smaller ornaments in each compartment, close and secure tight with a rubber band.

Source: cbsnews.com







### Christmas Rice

#### Ingredients

½ cup finely chopped onion  
 3 celery ribs, finely chopped  
 ½ medium sweet red pepper, chopped  
 ½ medium green pepper, chopped  
 1 tablespoon butter  
 2 cups chicken broth  
 2 cups uncooked instant rice  
 ½ teaspoon salt, optional  
 ¼ teaspoon pepper

#### Directions:

1. In a skillet, saute onion, celery and peppers in butter over medium heat for 2 minutes or until crisp-tender. Remove from the heat; set aside.
2. In a saucepan, bring broth to a full boil. Remove from the heat. Quickly stir in the rice, celery mixture, salt if desired and pepper. Cover and let stand for 6-7 minutes. Stir before serving.

Yield: 6 servings


  
*Happy*
  
*Holidays*
  


2014 ECA Achievement Night Photos  
 by Von Wellington Photography

