



Geary County

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION NEWS

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October 2021

Ask the Agent

Q: I have a couple of herbs planted in pots on my patio. My favorite fresh herb is Rosemary. Is there any way I can enjoy fresh Rosemary flavor in the upcoming winter months?

A: Rosemary is a strong fragrant herb that originates from the Mediterranean. Often used in French, Spanish, and Italian cooking, this herb is also known to have some medicinal properties. Due to the cold temperatures and often harsh weather of Kansas winters, rosemary is considered an annual plant. However, since your plant is already in a pot on your patio, you can move it in to a sunny location inside your home to extend its use into the winter months. The plant can thrive indoors in temperatures as low as 50°-55°F. The plant won't be as productive indoors, but with plenty of sunlight and good, well-drained soil, you will still have leaves to harvest. If you don't want to move the plant indoors, harvest and dry the leaves yourself. See the inside article for how to preserve your home grown herbs.

For more information call the Geary County K-State Research & Extension office at: **785-238-4161**

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Spice Up Your Fall Cleaning

My oldest son has been in the 4-H Foods & Nutrition project for 10 years. He loves to bake and prepare meals for the family. With this being his senior year in high school, I am keenly aware of the things I will miss when he moves out for college next fall. One of them is how he keeps my seasoning and spice rack fresh! He always checks for expiration dates and tosses out what is out of date and makes a list of what needs purchased.



Perhaps you don't have a 4-Her living in your home to help you keep your spice rack fresh. The Fall season usually brings in flavors, spices, and herbs that aren't as common during other times of the year. Fall and winter seasons are also characterized by holidays and events that are anchored by home cooked meals. As you do your fall cleaning in preparation for these events, spice up your efforts by looking at these ingredients for expiration dates.

Although dried spices and herbs do not spoil over time from a food safety perspective, they do lose their fresh flavor, potency and sometimes color over time. This will make them less pleasing to the palate and may give an off-taste to your final product.

Photo by [Christian Gruhn](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Typically spices last 2–3 years, but make sure to check the “best by” date. Try the fresh test:

- Smell: aroma should be strong
- Taste: flavor should be potent
- Color: should look vibrant and not dull

If you purchase a spice or dried herb that doesn't have a legible “best by” date, mark the purchase date on the outside of the container with a permanent marker. This will help you determine how long to keep the product on hand.

Keeping your spice rack fresh takes a concerted effort. Some seasonings and spices are used up sooner than others and most have a 2-3 year shelf life. However, spices can also be expensive. By cleaning out your spice rack each fall, you will have fewer to replace each year and the cost will be more manageable.

Source: University of Missouri Extension "*Growing Herbs at Home*" Use the chart on the next page, created from information found on the McCormick website (<https://www.mccormick.com/articles/mccormick/how-long-do-spices-last>), to guide you with your spice rack fall cleaning.

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Family & Consumer
Sciences

Spice Up Your Fall Cleaning

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Use the following chart, created from information found on the McCormick website (<https://www.mccormick.com/articles/mccormick/how-long-do-spices-last>), to guide you with your spice rack fall cleaning.

Average Shelf Life of Common Fresh, Ground, and Dried Household Spices

Spice	Fresh	Ground	Dried	Whole
Allspice	—	2-3 Years	2-3 Years	—
Basil	5-7 Days	2-3 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years
Bay Leaves	5-7 Days	2-3 Years	2-3 Years	3-4 Years
Black Pepper	—	2-3 Years	2-3 Years	5-6 Years
Cayenne Pepper	5-7 Days	2-3 Years	—	2-3 Years
Celery Seed	5-7 Days	2-3 Years	1-2 Years	2-3 Years
Chili Powder	—	2-3 Years	—	2-3 Years
Chives	7-10 Days	2-3 Years	—	2-3 Years
Cilantro	5-7 Days	2-3 Years	2-3 Years	4-5 Years
Cinnamon	—	2-3 Years	2-3 Years	4-5 Years
Cloves	5-7 Days	2-3 Years	2-3 Years	4-5 Years
Coriander	5-7 Days	2-3 Years	—	2-3 Years
Cumin	—	2-3 Years	—	—

The way herbs are prepared and used can vary widely and this influences their culinary use.

- For best flavor results, add dried herbs near the beginning of the cooking process to provide sufficient time for the herbs to rehydrate.
- Fresh herbs are usually added during the last part of cooking.
- Wrapping whole herbs in a cheesecloth bag before adding them to cooked dishes makes removal easy before serving.
- Herbs in uncooked foods, such as salad dressings, dips and fruit mixes, need time to blend flavors, so add them as far in advance of serving as possible.

Basil, cilantro, dill, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, savory, tarragon, and thyme add interest to salads; rosemary, thyme or basil may be added as a secondary flavor to sorbet or summer beverages. Some herbs are best used fresh—such as burnet, chervil, and parsley—because they have little flavor once dried or frozen. Source: Colorado State University Extension: Fact Sheet #9.335

Harvesting and Preserving Fresh Herb Leaves

To determine the best harvest time for each herb, you need some experience. However, a few general rules can lead you in the right direction for most herbs. Harvest the leaves when they contain the optimum amount of essential oils. These oils give herbs their special flavor or scent. Ideally you should cut herbs soon after the dew has evaporated from the leaves in the morning. Harvest on a dry day that has been preceded by at least two sunny days.

In most cases, cut stems for harvest when the flower buds are just beginning to open. Mints, however, have the most oil in the leaves when the spikes are in full bloom.

When gathering a large quantity of herbs, use an open-weave basket or containers that allow good air movement. Don't stuff herbs into plastic bags, which can heat up and cause rapid deterioration of herbs. Never cut more stems than you can conveniently dry at one time. You can cut back a perennial herb to about half its height and can cut down an annual to a few inches. You can also remove an annual completely near the end of the season.

Wash the plants in cool water immediately after gathering and spread them on towels. Pat them gently with a towel until dry. A dark, well-ventilated room where temperatures run between 70 and 90 degrees F is an excellent room for drying. Air conditioning is helpful, because it reduces humidity in the air. You can use frames covered with cheesecloth or other netting, or metal window screens with

cheesecloth laid on top for drying. Prepare the frames or screens before you cut the plants.

For some herbs, you strip the leaves from the stems before drying. Herbs in this group include basil, dill, lemon balm, lovage, mint, sage, lemon verbena and tarragon. Spread these leaves in single layers for quickest drying.

Herbs with smaller leaves can be dried on the stems. These herbs include thyme, summer and winter savory, rosemary, oregano and marjoram. Strip the leaves after drying is complete.

Herb leaves should dry in three to four days under proper conditions. In humid weather, you may need to spread the herbs on a cookie sheet and dry them in an oven at about 125 degrees F for a few minutes before placing them in an airtight container.

Some herbs do not dry well at home. Instead, you can freeze them. Handle them as you would for drying. Then after washing, blanch them in boiling, unsalted water for 50 seconds, cool quickly in ice water and blot dry. Spread them in a single layer on paper or cookie sheets and place them in the freezer.

You can freeze dill, chives and basil without blanching. After the herbs are frozen, place them in airtight plastic containers or bags. For best quality, use within 3-6 months.

Family Health

Fall Brings Medicare Open Enrollment

Each fall, the Medicare Open Enrollment Period (OEP) is offered to those who have a Part D Prescription Plan to look at the many plans available for the next contract year. The annual OEP dates are always set as October 15 thru December 7. Now is the time for Medicare beneficiaries to call our office and make an appointment to review your options for 2022.

In preparation for Open Enrollment, I am sharing some common questions and answers related to Part D prescription drug plans:

Q: I had a Part D Prescription Plan in 2021. Does my deductible start over in 2022?

A: YES. Your deductible will start over in 2022. Your deductible in 2022 may be up to \$485 depending on your prescription drug plan. When you have met your deductible, your prescription plan will start paying their share toward your prescriptions. Some plans waive the deductible for generics.

Q: I am happy with my Part D Prescription Plan. Do I have to enroll?

A: If you are happy with your Part D plan, have read all the correspondence that has come from the company so you know what your premium, deductibles, co-payments, and

formulary is for 2022 and are still pleased with your plan, you do not need to do anything.

Q: When will my coverage start?

A: If you enroll between October 15 and December 7, 2021, your coverage will begin January 1, 2022. This is an open enrollment time and the only time of the year that a Medicare beneficiary can change to a different prescription drug plan unless there is a circumstance of a special enrollment period.

Q: Which plan should I choose?

A: Choosing a plan is very much an individual decision which will need to be based on a few factors including cost, convenience, the medications that you take, and which plan will be accepted at your preferred pharmacy. Now is the time to comparison shop.

Q: Where is help available?

A: Unbiased assistance is available by a SHICK (Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas) counselor. In Geary County, contact us at 785-238-4161 to make an appointment to talk to Deb.

Source: River Valley District K-State Research & Extension October Newsletter (Vol. 16—#10)

Crustless Pumpkin Pie

Here's a trick for this awesome treat – no crust! Reduce the calorie and fat content while you still get the flavor satisfaction!

Ingredients

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice *or* 3/4 teaspoon each: ground cinnamon and ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin
- 1 can (5 ounces) fat free evaporated milk



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Lightly grease or spray a 9" pie plate and set aside.
2. Crack eggs in large bowl and beat with a fork or whisk. Add sugar, pumpkin pie spice, and salt. Stir until well mixed.
3. Stir in pumpkin and evaporated milk. Pour into prepared pie plate.
4. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until center is set.
5. Remove from oven and cool on wire rack. Serve immediately or refrigerate until serving time.

Trick and Treat

Nutrition Facts	
8 Servings Per Recipe	
Serving Size: 1 slice	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	100
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1.5g	2%
Saturated Fat .5g	3%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 45mg	15%
Sodium 115mg	5%
Total Carbohydrates 19g	6%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Total Sugars 17g	
Added Sugars	NA*
Protein 4g	
Vitamin D 0.7mcg	4%
Calcium 81mg	6%
Iron 1.1mg	6%
Potassium 195	4%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	
NA* - We are currently in the process of integrating the new FDA Nutrition Standards. Added Sugar information is not currently available for the recipe. We will be updating the information shortly.	

Recipe Source: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach: Spend Smart. Eat Smart. Program

Geary County

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Upcoming Geary County Extension Programs

****Requires pre-registration. Call 238-4161 to pre-register****

October 2021

15 Medicare Open Enrollment begins. See inside this newsletter for more information. Our office is currently taking appointments . Traci Hockett will be handling the scheduling again this year.

November 2021

- 1 Live Well Geary County—Healthy Together Senior Meals—This free meal program targets the senior citizen audience providing weekly healthy meals every Monday night from 5:30—7:30pm at the Larry Dixon Center at 920 W. 6th Street. Enter at the southeast double doors. Please wear a mask and maintain social distance. For more information and menus can be found at <https://www.livewellgearycounty.org>.
- 14 4-H Foundation Bingo and Soup Supper—5:30 Supper, 6:15 Bingo. 4-H/Senior Citizens Center, 1025 S. Spring Valley Road. Meal by donation includes choice of chili or chicken noodle soup and crackers, carrots, cinnamon roll. Bingo—\$1 per card (about 8 games will be played with fun prizes for the winners!)



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