Cooperative Extension has been involved for 11 years with the Southern Nevada Christmas Tree Recycling Committee. The committee, consisting of local government agencies, volunteers and business entities, is asking southern Nevadans to give their community a gift and recycle their holiday tree this year.

The community has been recycling trees in southern Nevada for over 11 years and every year, a few more are recycled. Last year, southern Nevada residents recycled 15,000 trees. Yet, as impressive as that is, that’s a small percentage of the 250,000 trees sold in the community. Last year, over 235,000 trees went to the landfill. Make a difference this year and recycle your cut holiday tree.

The process is very simple! There are no fees to participate in this community effort; just a short amount of your time is all that is required. Everyone—residents, businesses and organizations—are asked to take their holiday tree to one of over 22 convenient drop sites between December 26 and January 15. Before dropping off your tree, please remove all non-organic objects such as lights, wire, tinsel, ornaments and nails. Foreign objects contaminate the mulch and damage the chipper. Flocked trees cannot be recycled.

For more information about the Christmas Tree Recycling Committee, drop-sites nearest you, and other ways that you can have sustainable holidays, visit www.unce.unr.edu/counties/clark. Give our community a gift...Recycle your holiday tree!

Join Cooperative Extension on Saturday, January 24 for a workshop on Gardening in Small Places: Pruning from 9 a.m. to noon. The class is designed to show you how to make the most of your small space. Topics for pruning workshop cover pruning fruit trees, ornamentals and desert plants. Homeowners and other interested parties are welcome to attend.

Class space is limited and pre-registration is required. There is a $25 fee for each class which includes class materials. To register for the workshop held at the Lifelong Learning Center (8050 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, Nev.), email Elaine Fagin, call 702-257-5573 or to register online, visit Eventbrite!

Upcoming Gardening in Small Places workshop dates are February 14, vegetables, March 14, composting, April 4, irrigation, May 9, what’s bugging your garden and June 13, organic gardening.

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Be fit for life

Being fit means eating right, exercising, and starting habits that will help you live a longer, healthier life. A healthy body can improve your energy level and give you an overall feeling of well-being. It can also help to prevent disease and premature aging. Fitness should be a part of everyone’s life-child, parent, or grandparent.

Part of being fit is eating right. Eating right means choosing a variety of healthy foods, limiting sweets and fatty foods, and including fresh fruits and vegetables in our daily routine. It also means starting every day with breakfast and not skipping meals throughout the day. Healthy snacks are an important part of eating right, too. Choosing foods from the five food groups as snacks keeps the body energized and strong.

Fitness also comes through enjoying regular exercise. Exercising can be any form of movement you like. You can increase your activity level without ever touching a ball! Try walking or riding a bike to the store instead of taking the car. When you must drive, park in the farthest spot from the door. Use stairs instead of elevators. Dance—even by yourself. Try turning off the TV for a little while every day. Go outside and do something active instead. Any form of active movement—30 minutes a day for adults and 60 minutes daily for children—has been shown to help lower the risk of heart disease.

Start or continue some healthy habits. Make sure you and your children get plenty of sleep each night. Start each day with a healthy breakfast. Teach children the importance of brushing their teeth after meals and of keeping themselves clean.

Total fitness has many parts. Choosing healthy foods, exercising, and improving lifestyle habits can increase your fitness. Remember that our children will mirror what they see in us. If we keep fitness as a priority in our lives, our children will benefit from it as well.

Susan Lednicky ~ Nutritionist

January is National Radon Action Month

January is National Radon Action Month and Cooperative Extension’s Radon Education Program offers Nevada residents free radon test kits from Dec 1 through Feb 28. Test kits are available for pick-up at the Cooperative Extension office located at 8050 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, Nev. Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas. It can accumulate in buildings and can cause lung cancer. Although radon problems can be in any building, most people receive the largest part of their exposure to radon while at home. In fact, about one fourth of Nevada homes tested have found radon concentrations at or above the EPA Action Level of 4 picoCuries per liter of air (pCi/l). A picoCurie per liter of air is measurement of radioactivity per one liter of air. Living in a home with an average radon level of 4 pCi/ l poses a similar risk of developing lung cancer to smoking half a pack of cigarettes a day. If radon problems are found, they can be fixed.

Radon can enter any home—old or new, well-sealed or drafty. Homes with slab on grade, crawlspace, or basement foundations have an equal chance for radon problems, as radon can enter any building with contact to the ground. The only way to know a building’s radon level is to test it. If high levels of radon are found, there is a way to reduce or mitigate radon levels.

One can’t predict which homes will have elevated radon levels, as neighboring homes can have vastly different radon levels. Nevada lacks any protective statutes or regulations concerning radon. The only way Nevadans will know about radon and its health effects is through self-education or through Cooperative Extension’s Radon Education Program. Radon education programs are being planned statewide for January and will be announced at a later date. Cooperative Extension offers radon presentations to schools, civic and community groups, homeowner associations, realtors, builders and the general public. To schedule a presentation, contact Jamie Roise-Gomes, education coordinator, at 775-336-0252 or roicej@unce.unr.edu.

Cooperative Extension, EPA and the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health urge all Nevadans to get their homes tested for radon. For more information about test kits and testing, visit the Nevada Radon Education Program website, www.RadonNV.com, or call the Radon Hotline, 888-RADON10 (888-723-6610). 

Free Radon Test Kits available until February 28.
Join the first 5K of the new year

Make plans now to ring in the New Year with the largest chef’s run ever done! The Chefs for Kids 5K Run/1 Mile Fun Walk is scheduled for Saturday, January 17, 2015. Each runner/walker receives a Chefs for Kids T-shirt, goodie bag and a free pancake breakfast! There will also be a raffle. The start time is 9 a.m. at Wayne Bunker Family Park (7351 West Alexander Road, LV 89129).

Las Vegas Track Club (LVTC) will provide race bibs and computerized timing. Trophies will be awarded in the 5K for the top three overall male and female, plaques for the top three (50+) male and female, certificates for the top three male and female in each category. Age categories begin at 12 and under through 80+.

Participant fees are: adults, $25 for 5K/$20 for Fun Walk; children 12 and under $20; and groups of 10 or more $20 per runner. Race day fee is $35. Register online at [Active.com](http://Active.com) or you can mail checks payable to LVTC at P.O. Box 30134, LV 89173. Packet pick-up is available at The Red Rock Running Company (7350 W. Cheyenne Ave., 89129) from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday, January 16 or on race day from 8-8:45 a.m.

For more information or sponsorship opportunities, please contact Sandi Boyer at 702-460-1852.

Handling holiday weight gain

Did you gain weight during the holidays? Well, you’re not alone. It seems the average American gains four to eight pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year’s. Here are some tips for trimming down and they won’t cost you a dime.

- **Eat less.** Sound too simple? However, it’s not easy to do. The fact is that in order to lose weight you must eat fewer calories than you expend.
- **Move every day.** Most of us forget this part of the weight loss equation. Make physical activity a part of your daily health routine, like brushing your teeth.
- **Eat more slowly.** It takes between 20-30 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain that you’re satisfied.
- **Eat your fruits and vegetables.** Satisfy your hunger with fewer calories and more nutrition by eating more fruits and vegetables.
- **Give your food the attention it deserves.** Don’t munch while watching TV, driving or doing chores.
Here are six tips to get holiday debt paid off:

- **Beat the minimum.** Save $1 a day plus loose change. After a month, you’ll have about $40 more to add to your monthly payment.

- **Use the snowball effect.** When a debt is repaid, add the previous payment amount to remaining debt payments. For a free debt repayment calendar, see [www.powerpay.org](http://www.powerpay.org).

- **Pare down.** “Find” money for credit-card bills by reducing spending to “bare essentials” for a week or two. Make it a family challenge with an inexpensive reward (e.g., pizza) at the end.

- **File taxes early.** Get your tax form in the mail by mid-February if you can, and earmark any possible refund for holiday bills.

- **Work it off.** If it doesn’t interfere with your primary job responsibilities, add a part-time job or take on a freelance project for a few months. If overtime is an option, you may want to check into that, too.

- **Transfer and consolidate.** Transfer credit-card balances to a low-interest-rate credit card if the interest savings is greater than the balance transfer fee.

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**South Valley Rose Society meetings**

Cooperative Extension and the South Valley Rose Society are collaborating and offering educational meetings. Free and open to the public, the January 22, 2015 meeting topic is *Winter Pruning, Soil Amending and Fertilizing*.

Join South Valley Rose Society Consulting Rosarians for a discussion on the different varieties of roses: Miniatures, Hybrid teas, Floribundas, Shrubs, and Old Garden Roses. The importance of amending soil and fertilizing in preparation for spring blooms will be stressed. Bring your gloves and pruners and any container rose you want to prune (optional).

All educational meetings are held at 7 p.m. at the Lifelong Learning Center located at 8050 Paradise Road, Las Vegas, Nev. (I-215 and Windmill Lane). For more information, please call or email the Master Gardener Help Desk at 702-257-5555.

*South Valley Rose Society meeting dates are February 26, Roses Only* Garden or Cottage Style Garden; March 26, Preparing for April 18, 2015 Las Vegas Rose Show; April 23, How Much Water is Enough; and May 28, Fun Things to do with Roses.

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