



# University of Nevada Clark County Cooperative Extension

University of Nevada  
Cooperative Extension

July 2014

Community Connection

## Summer melons

Once it starts getting *warm* in the beautiful Mojave Desert, some gardeners throw their hands up in despair. Temperatures **will** rise well above 100°F and we probably **will not** see much rain until October. Summer looks like a tough time for southern Nevada horticulturists *and their plants*. Only a few edible plants thrive under these conditions. Some fruits and vegetables brave the heat, if the intrepid gardener gets water to the growing plants.

The list does not usually include tomatoes. Tomatoes do generally poorer when temperatures rise over 85°F.

Think about something different – like cantaloupe.



Melons and their cousins like warm, even hot, weather. You can seed these vines in the ground as soon as soil temperatures are consistently above 60°F. Any cooler, the little seedlings cannot take up water. Track nighttime temperatures; they are as cool as the soil gets.

When melons are fully ripe, they almost *slip* off the vine

**Tomatoes do generally poorer when temperatures rise over 85°F.**

into your hand. Even if a little overripe, who will complain? They are amazingly sweet.

Hard-shelled squash, like pumpkins, are related to melons. Starting them when the soil warms up should reap pumpkins by Halloween – convenient! All the members of this family need high soil fertility and suffer when they get dry. Irrigation, compost and slow release fertilizer are important.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Eating close to home



Now is the time to feast on fresh local produce!

Whether you shop at your local grocery store or a roadside farmers market, summer is the best time to enjoy fruits and vegetables grown close to home.

Since it doesn't need to travel as far, locally grown produce is usually fresher and has been handled less.

Large grocery chains often post “locally grown” signs. The produce manager will be able to tell you where the fruits and vegetables come from, and the tiny labels put on some produce also show where it was grown.

At roadside stands and farmers markets you can usually talk to the growers. If you're looking for a farmers market near you, visit [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org).

*HopeHealth–No. 10147*

### Inside this issue:

Sugar confusion	2
Patriotism & health	3
Gardening workshop	3
4-H Camp schedule	4

We're on the Web

[www.unce.unr.edu](http://www.unce.unr.edu)

[www.unce.unr.edu/blogs/southernarea](http://www.unce.unr.edu/blogs/southernarea)

[www.YouTube.com/UNRextension](http://www.YouTube.com/UNRextension)

## Summer melons

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(Continued from page 1)

As far as heat and drought tolerant plants go, okra is one of the best. You do not need many plants; a single one produces enough for a lot of gumbo. I am not enamored with its taste and texture, but the flowers are attractive, like its relative, hibiscus. They are related to *cotton*! While we do not *eat* cotton, the blossoms **are** pretty, and its package is a cotton boll!

Sweet potatoes are great in high temperatures. If you have one with some sprouts popping out, plant it in warm soil. They have lovely foliage; it can be a groundcover, or grown up a trellis. Through summer and fall, you have a sweet potato vine. Come Thanksgiving, you should have a little crop of sweets, which is perfect since the leaves die back in the winter. You will be digging up the



whole plant, so do not put them around anything that cannot tolerate disturbance.

Peppers **appear** to tolerate higher temperatures than their cousins, tomatoes, but even these are not hopeless. In the dead of summer, they are not as terrific as when temperatures were under 90°F. You can keep them growing through July and August if you provide shade and never let them get dry.

If you would rather use summer for melons and okra, cut tomato plants down to about five or six inches, water them, and cover the soil with a good layer of mulch. They will come back and by the beginning of October, you should have new tomatoes until the first frost. They may not be the fabulous fruits you had before, but will be more flavorful than the supermarket varieties.

Whenever outside in the summer garden, remember - drink fluids and use sunscreen.

*Angela O'Callaghan, Social Horticulture Specialist*

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## Sugar Confusion

**F**rom everything we read on the Internet and see on TV, it's easy to get the idea that sugar is bad. This is not the message we are trying to send. When someone eats foods that are high in *added* sugar they often miss out on nutrients that will help their body because foods with

they also contain many needed nutrients. And there are some foods, such as flavored milks, yogurt, and sweetened cereals that contain added sugars, but also contain many needed nutrients.

The American Dietetic Association states that "by increasing the palatability of nutrient-dense foods and beverages, sweeteners can promote diet healthfulness." Additionally, in their scientific statement on *Dietary Sugar Intake and Cardiovascular Health*, the American Heart Association states, "when sugars are added to otherwise nutrient-rich foods, such as sugar-sweetened dairy products like flavored milk and yogurt and sugar-sweetened cereals, the quality of children's and adolescents' diet improves, and in the case of flavored milks, no adverse effects on weight status were found."

As with all foods we eat, the key is MODERATION and COMMON SENSE. You don't have to eliminate sugar from your diet, just use common sense when eating. Serve fewer sweet treats as snacks, limit the size of the portions you are eating, and try

not to eat sugar-sweetened foods every day. Don't use sugary foods as rewards, but don't make them into "monsters" either. Using moderation and common sense you *can* "have your cake and eat it, too."

*Susan Lednicki, Nutritionist*



added sugar often lack nutrients found in other foods. This is not the case with foods that are high in nutrients but also contain sugar. Foods such as oranges, strawberries, and carrots contain sugar, but





## Patriotism & health

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July is commonly a favorite holiday for many people. Unlike the stress that comes along with Thanksgiving and other holidays, such as relatives and in-laws visiting, gift shopping and traveling, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is generally a middle of summer day off that screams fun and relaxation.

While celebrating the birth of our country, it is known for time off work, BBQ's, swimming and gathering with your favorite people, you know...the one's we *choose* to be with rather than feel obligated to be with. It drives up the happiness scale!

Being happy is part of being healthy. And while psychologists report that depression affects the immune system, increases the rate of diabetes, and increases our risk of experiencing a cardiac event by three times, happiness has been correlated with improved health. Barbequing, swimming and hanging out with good friends definitely raises the happiness scale up a notch or two. But some research even suggests that pure patriotism and waving the flag alone might be linked to happiness.

A Gallup poll conducted on people in 128 countries and reported in Psychological Science found that the more satisfied people are with their country, the happier they are with their lives. Respondents were polled about income, job satisfaction and opinions on their life and country. The association was particularly strong for people with low incomes and those living in poorer nations. Another study found that, regardless of ethnicity, civic pride was most linked to a general feeling of well-being. Maybe it's tied to a sense of belonging, similar to cheering on our favorite sports team at a home game or being part of a walking group or tennis club.

Born on an Air Force base in North Africa and raised in a military family, I knew the value of patriotism and love for my country. It's not about politics or choosing a voting party. It's not about candidates in office or conflicts related to war, economy or health care. It's about connecting with fellow Americans and that feel good, tear drop I always get when they play the Star-Spangled Banner before a baseball game or when the Olympian stands on the podium and the crowd shouts U-S-A! U-S-A!

So where are America's most patriotic cities? In a poll

conducted in 2011, Portland (OR) was number one on the list. So how do you gauge patriotism? It's not easy. This poll was based on the percentage of registered voters who turned out for state and federal elections, money spent on military veterans per capita, percentage of residents who volunteer, participate in civic activities or work with neighbors, and sales of fireworks and/or U.S. flags. Other cities making the top 10 included Seattle (WA), Hartford (CT) and Minneapolis (MN).

The American Fitness Index™ data report is a scientific snapshot of the state of health and fitness at the metropolitan level. It reports which states are healthy. Ironically, the four cities that made the top patriotic list also made the top healthy states list released last month. Is there really an association between patriotism, happiness and health? Maybe so, but sadly Las Vegas is number 39, the same score as last year! We are not improving and we're just one state away from making the top 10 states rated worst in health and fitness in America.

So Las Vegas, maybe you should try being just a little more patriotic. Do you fly the stars and stripes in your front yard? If you do, you just might be a little happier than your neighbors. If not, maybe you should start. Let's show some patriotism and wave our flag for the rest of the month. It might just make you a little bit happier and improve your overall health!

*[Anne Lindsay](#), Exercise Physiologist*

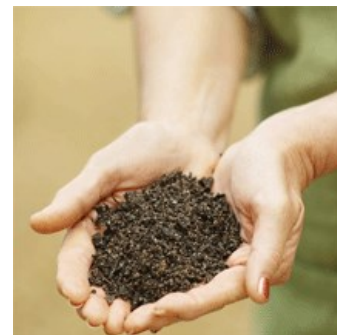


*Have a safe 4th of July!*

## Gardening workshop - July 19

*The Gardening in Small Places: the dirt on soil* workshop will be held on July 19 from 8 a.m. to noon. If you've gardened in other parts of the country and then tried to garden here, you've noticed that the soil is different. Our Mojave soils are infertile, salty and alkaline – fine for desert natives – but not good for much else. If you're curious about the soil in your yard, let Dr. Angela O'Callaghan teach you about it. For this hands-on class all participants are asked to bring a bag of soil from their yard to test. Due to the hands-on nature of this class, class size is limited. Homeowners and other interested parties are welcome to attend.

Class space is limited to 15 and pre-registration is required. There is a \$25 fee which includes class materials. [Email](#) or call Elaine Fagin at 702-257-5573



# Upcoming 4-H Camps

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## Day Camps

It's time to register for Cooperative Extension's 4-H Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (S.T.E.M.) day camp this summer. The day camp, open to youth ages 9-14, is scheduled from July 15-17. Camp starts at 9 a.m. and concludes at 4 p.m. and include activities in plant & animal sciences, health & nutrition, computer science, aerospace and more!

Every participant can expect to have fun doing a variety of hands-on activities such as cooking healthy snacks, viewing and handling some desert animals, launching paper rockets, exploring desert plant life, playing cooperative games and using computer programs. 4-H S.T.E.M. day camps remind youth that learning can be fun!

Cooperative Extension's Lifelong Learning Center is located at 8050 Paradise Road (at I-215 & Windmill Lane). Cost of the day camp is \$60 per person and includes snacks and activities. Sibling registration is \$45 per person per camp.

**Please note that previous 4-H experience is not required.**

## Overnight Camp

Cooperative Extension Southern Area's 4-H camp is being held at the Nevada State 4-H Camp at beautiful Lake Tahoe from July 27-August 1, 2014. Registration is open to campers between the ages of 9-15 until the camp is full.

This year's camp utilizes the 4-H Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (S.T.E.M.) program. During the six days, campers will participate in activities centering on nature, healthy lifestyles, alternative energy, Global Positioning Systems (GPS), rocketry, dramatic arts, leadership, creative arts, and much more.

Cost of the camp is \$385 and includes transportation, meals and activities. If you would like your child to attend camp, please [email](mailto:karen.best@unr.edu) Karen Best or call her at 702-257-5538.

**Please note that previous 4-H experience is not required.**



4-H is an organization that primarily focuses on positive youth development and is open to all youth ages 5 to 19. 4-H is a community of young people across America learning leadership, citizenship, life skills and technical skills through active participation in events, projects and community service. 4-H is the largest out-of-school youth organization in the United States with over 7 million members. There are over 49,000 young people engaged in 4-H programs across the state of Nevada. 4-H is delivered in many different settings including community and project clubs, military and 4-H afterschool programs; special interest groups; school enrichment; faith-based; camping and more.

### Cooperative Extension's mission:

*Discover:* by assessing community needs; understanding emerging issues; *Develop:* science-based programs to help resolve the needs of community residents; *Disseminate:* through evidence-based educational programs; classes and publications; *Preserve:* by publishing findings via curriculum and fact sheets and demonstrate knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of people.

Southern Area Cooperative Extension has offices and offers programming in Clark and Lincoln counties. Office locations and phone numbers are:

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