Dear Extension Families,

I don’t know about you, but our staff wishes the weather would make up its mind! We were all used to short sleeves and sunshine when the weather decided to remind us of winter! As I sit here writing this letter, it is April and very cold. Some parts of the county had blowing snow and frost. Hopefully, everyone who had things planted was able to get them through the cold snap. Old timers say we have one more blast of cold heading our way in May! Maybe it won’t be quite as cold as this one!

You are invited to the Extension Open House on May 17, the anniversary of the 2010 fire, to see our remodeled office. The Open House lasts from 1:00-4:00 and we will have a brief program at 1:00. Refreshments will be served.

Summer is almost here and 4-H is planning lots of great activities. Many of the classes have limited enrollment, so sign-up early so you can get your spot.

Remember, our staff is here to help you with any gardening or food preservation questions. We hope you are enjoying the newsletter and that the information is helpful. If you would like to be removed from the mailing list or if you would like to receive the newsletter via email, please call Amy at 479-7979. If you have any suggestions for articles for upcoming newsletters or an article has been helpful to you, please tell one of the agents.

Please be an advocate for Extension this month. If you see a county commissioner, the county manager, or county clerk this month, tell them how important Extension is to local families and farmers. As always, thank you for your continuing support of NC Cooperative Extension in Graham County.

Regards,

Teresa Garland
County Extension Director

Randy Collins
Extension Agent
Agriculture

Eve Rogers
Extension Agent
Family & Consumer Science

Points of Interest:
- Happy trails to our 4-H senior!
- Learn how to successfully blend a step family.
- Organize your garage with a few simple steps.

Inside this issue:
- 4-H Activity Night
- Recipe
- Summer Adventures
- Important Dates
- Step Families
- Organizing the Garage
- Nitrogen in the Environment
- 4-H Calendar

May 2012
CJ Cody is the only 4-H'er graduating from Robbinsville High School this year. CJ has been a member of 4-H for many years. CJ’s carried on a family tradition because her mother, brother and uncle were also 4-H’ers in Graham County. Her grandparents - Carl and Denise Patterson - have been Extension volunteers for many years as well. CJ was also a member of the Crusaders Club and helped start RHS Ambassadors Club. CJ will be attending NC-Chapel Hill this fall. Congratulations, CJ!!

Basic Sewing Skills —Getting off to a great start. The next workshop will be May 10th. Call to sign up if you are interested!

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**EXTENSION NEWSPAPER ARTICLES**

Each month Extension markets our educational programs in the local newspaper. Recently, the Graham Star has been combining articles we have submitted. This has caused some confusion and made educational programs we offer more difficult to find in the paper. Our staff plans to work with the paper on this problem, but in the meantime, please share information about our classes with those you think might be interested. Thanks for your help and understanding as we address this issue.

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**4-H ACTIVITY DAY**

Project Awards, Presentations, Sewing Revues, and a Talent Show!!! WOW!!

Graham County 4-H Activity Night will be held on **Sunday, May 20th from 2:00-4:00** at the Extension Office.

**Presentations:** 5-9 minute talk on an approved topic with 2-6 posters

**Sewing Revue:** Any item sewn by a 4-H'er during the past year

**Talent Show:** Individual or group (2 entry maximum - 1 individual/1 group)

Sing, dance, recite a poem, put on a skit, do a magic show, etc.

4-H'ers will give presentation, display sewn items, and reveal their talents! Youth who completed project books and cumulative records in 2011 will be recognized. Prizes will be awarded and snacks will be served. Come join us for a day where 4-H'ers shine!! Please call Amy at 479-7979 to sign up for each event. We look forward to seeing presenters and spectators there!

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**Cooperative Extension OPEN HOUSE**

May 17
1:00-4:00

Smith Howell Building

Come by to see our newly renovated building!
FARM BUREAU DONATES TO 4-H

Graham County Farm Bureau recently donated $450 to help support 4-H youth programs. The money will be used to purchase supplies for youth agriculture education activities. This summer, 4-H’ers will participate in gardening, plant and soil science, raised beds, and a farm life workshop.

Farm Life: 1929-1945 will teach youth about farming in the period following Great Depression and through World War II. Youth will compare mountain life today with that of their great grandparents. Farm Bureau staff will also be helping with the Farm Life Day Camp. Thank you to Farm Bureau for supporting Graham County Cooperative Extension programs and promoting agriculture to our young people.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Root Veggie Stir-Fry
4 cups of mixed, peeled, sliced, bite-sized root vegetables (parsnips, potatoes, rutabagas, sweet potatoes, turnips, yams)
2 thinly sliced carrots
1 medium chopped onion
2 Tablespoons oil (such as canola)
½ teaspoon garlic salt
3 Tablespoons Parmesan cheese
1 medium beet, peeled & grated

1. Rinse and rub clean the vegetables in cool, running water.
2. Prepare vegetables and combine all except the grated beets.
3. Heat a skillet to medium temperature (about 350°F) with oil.
4. Stir-fry veggies (except beets) until tender.
5. Add garlic salt
6. Serve hot with Parmesan cheese and raw grated beets on

Tips:
- Use a variety of root veggies that you have available.
- Root vegetables are thick and cook slowly. Slice thin for faster cooking. A stir-fry takes about 10 to 15 minutes.
- Raw grated beets are sweet.
- Beet juice can stain your hands. Wash your hands when you finish grating before the dye can set.
- Did you know that beet juice is used as the color in some brands of pink lemonade?
4-H SUMMER ADVENTURES

4-H club meetings are not held during the summer. Instead, 4-H’ers are invited to attend summer enrichment activities from June to August. The county 4-H staff is busy working on the summer schedule and 4-H’ers will be receiving that information in a separate mailing. Please be on the lookout. 4-H’ers will be asked to turn in completed registration forms and pay for summer activities by May 29th.

FORECLOSURE PREVENTION

Do you qualify for Mortgage Payment Help from the NC Foreclosure Prevention Loan Fund? Join staff from OnTrack WNC to find out!

Monday, May 14th, 11-1 p.m.
Monday, June 19th, 11-1 p.m.
CSS Office of Economic Opportunity
27 Hatchett Street, Murphy NC 28906

Debt and Financial Counseling Sessions Also Available (by Appointment Only) the 3rd Wednesday & Thursday of the month. Registration is required. Call OnTrack WNC at 1-800-737-5485 to reserve your place at one of the sessions and find out what materials to bring with you.

PAM’S PERSPECTIVE

I can’t believe that May is here and this is the last month of club meetings for this school year. We did not have a Cloverbud meeting last month since school was out for Spring break.

Our Musketeer meeting was about water. Club members learned about how water pollution occurs, what they can do to keep their rivers, streams and lakes clean. They were able to work with a model of a water shed and learned about point source and non-point source pollution. Youth were also given a chart of the pollution tolerance of macro invertebrates; they found that the macro invertebrates that live in Tallulah Creek are a good indication of good water quality. Thanks Hollie and Briley for helping teach this class.

The Stitch and Stir Club prepared dinner for their parents for April’s club meeting. We had a wonderful breakfast supper made by club members. This included a breakfast casserole, biscuits, monkey bread, and fruit tray with dip, tea, juice, jellies, butter and honey. Good job girls!

Our office participated in the annual 7th grade field day. We did two booths this year, one was wildlife jeopardy and the other was about reducing, reusing and recycling. We always enjoy doing this field day with Soil and Water.

Remember to watch your calendars, our Shooting Sports club has started back up, Rick Parham is our leader for this club. Participants meet at our office on Wednesday right after school; we have a small snack then walk up to the Masonic Lodge to practice.

The 4-H Summer Adventures brochure is almost complete. Be sure to sign up! Hope to see you at a 4-H Summer program!
IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

4-H
May 2, 9, 16, 23  Shooting Sports
May 8  Cloverbuds
May 12  NC State Graduation
May 15  Musketeers
May 20  County Activity Day
May 22  Stitch N’ Stir
May 23  Speech Make-up Day
May 24  Balsam Mountain Preserve
May 29  Summer Adventures Deadline
May 31  Horse Day Camp

AGRICULTURE
May 1  Bio-Fuels Field Day

FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES
May 3-June 7 (Thursdays)  Parenting Classes
May 10  Sewing, Simple Project
June 14  Sewing, Learn to Read a Pattern

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
May 17  Extension Open House
May 11, 12, 18, 19  Community Meeting

If you are interested in any of these programs call 479-7979 for more information!

PSYCHOLOGY OF YOU
May 24  2:00-4:00
Ages: 12-18
Limit: 10
Cost: Pricless

SEWING, SIMPLE PROJECT
May 10  $5.00  5:00-7:30 pm
Make a Cute Purse/Bag
Must call to pre-register. Space is limited!

UPCOMING COMMUNITY MEETINGS
Friday, May 11  5-8 pm
Saturday, May 12  8:30am-4:00pm
Friday, May 18  5-8 pm
Saturday, May 19  8:30am-4:00pm

Help shape the future of Robbinsville and Graham County. These meetings will all take place at the Community Center. All who live, work, play or invest in Robbinsville are welcome!

4-H Stitch N’ Stir hosted a “Parent Dinner” and showed off their cooking skills. The group prepared a delicious breakfast for their families! Way to go girls! Thank you to all the family members who attended and showed your support!
The challenge of stepfamily life

In a newly-formed stepfamily, individuals face important challenges. Adults may wonder how they will ever find the time and energy to pull themselves and their children into a supportive stepfamily. They must build a marriage, support biological children, get to know stepchildren and help everyone get along. The fact that all this must take place between zig-zagging schedules, back-and-forth visits of children to former spouses and the daily stresses of life can feel overwhelming. Blending many individuals into a working stepfamily takes great effort.

It takes many years to develop a stepfamily into a strong family unit. The first several years of a stepfamily's existence are often the most difficult.

How exactly does a stepfamily go from being a group of strangers to a working unit? Patricia Papernow, a family-life specialist, has identified seven stages of stepfamily development. Recognizing the developmental process and keeping the final goal in mind can help stepfamily members weather all the changes.

Remember, a stepfamily will never be like a traditional nuclear family. It is a different type of family. However, stepfamilies can be first-rate families. Children and adults in stepfamilies can adapt and thrive.

### Early stages

**Fantasy:** In a new stepfamily, adults may fantasize about having a “whole” family again. Since they are happy about their new marriage, they expect everyone to be instantly in love. Stepparents may fantasize about saving children from the hurt they may have experienced. Children's fantasies are usually the opposite. They may believe in the myth of the wicked stepmother. They often want stepparents and stepsiblings to disappear. They may dream about going back to living alone with their single parents. They may hold onto the hope that their biological parents will reunite.

**Immersion:** It isn’t long before these fantasies come into conflict and the reality of trying to “blend” is apparent.

Frustrations usually start to build. Stepparents may feel lonely and jealous when children keep them from spending intimate time with new husbands or wives. They may feel rejected when they realize that stepchildren don’t want to be “saved” by them. Biological parents often don’t want to give up the dream of the perfect family.

**Awareness:** Hurt feelings, losses and differing needs must come into the open. Stepparents may feel responsible for family problems. Often, when they realize that other family members contribute to problems, they talk about their concerns.

When parents recognize that children and new spouses aren’t instantly in love, biological parents may fear that the marriage will fall apart. They feel torn between the new spouse and protecting their children from any more pain.

It’s hard to be open about negative feelings. Often stepfamilies get stuck in these early stages because they don’t know how to begin talking.
about their problems. These tips may help:

- Learn about the way stepfamilies function. This can help individuals let go of their fantasies and work toward realistic goals.
- Adults shouldn't talk negatively about absent parents in front of children. If a child feels his or her relationship with the absent parent is threatened, he or she may act out.
- Listen to children's feelings. Don't interrupt children or dismiss their feelings.
- To resolve conflicts, parents need to strategize and everyone must be open to change.

**Middle stages**

**Mobilization:** Those family members who feel most unhappy are usually the first to try to change the situation.

When family members address issues and talk about what bothers them, they are revealing their needs. For example, a child who complains about an early bedtime may need more quiet time with his or her biological parent in the evening. A stepparent may want the opposite, to reserve the evening for the couple. There is no wrong or right. Everyone's needs are important.

**Action:** Although conflicting needs may cause arguments, getting them out in the open can lead to change. The couple can begin to work together to find solutions and create new rituals. They may find better ways to meet their needs and their children's needs. For example, the biological parent will often step back and allow stepparents and stepchildren to work out problems among themselves. These tips may help stepfamilies work out their differences:

- Practice stating feelings in private before talking to a family member. This can help clarify true needs and feelings.
- Remind yourself to stop and consider the point of view of other family members.
- Sit down together and plan a strategy to meet family members' needs. This may require creative thinking and juggling of household routines. Remember that all family members' needs are equally important.

**The later stages**

**Contact:** As stepparents become more comfortable in their roles, they may enjoy spending time with their stepchildren. The family grows used to the different traditions and lifestyles. For example, a stepfather who used to sleep late on Saturday knows his stepchildren like to wake up for an early bike ride. Instead of being angry he sleeps late on Sunday.

**Resolution:** A stepparent can never replace a biological parent. He or she can, however, grow close to stepchildren as a friend or companion. Rules and routines that caused misunderstandings in the past are now normal parts of everyday life.

In some families, old fantasies are let go, intimacy grows among family members and a new family emerges. But not all families become close in this stage. Children who enter stepfamilies in their teen years may never feel connected to stepparents. They can reach an understanding about cooperation and respect, however.

For some families the process of stepfamily development will take only four years or less. For many, it can take seven or more years. Most families get stuck in the early stages for a time. Individual family members may move through the process at different rates. Some children will be quick to accept change. Others may hold onto dreams of a different family life for a long time.

**Sources:**


When starting to organize the garage, homeowners must answer some questions. What do you need to store, how often the items are used, what is the best type of storage for your needs, and how does the garage need to be arranged?

When deciding the best approach to organizing your garage take inventory of all the things you need to store. Rate each item for frequency of use, need and accessibility, level of hazard, weight requirements and other important factors when deciding where the best storage spots will be. For instance, if you are an avid bike rider, think about using hooks to store the bike and equipment on the wall, but make sure it’s more accessible near the garage door and not on the back wall of your garage.

On the other hand one time per year use items such as holiday decorations could reside in overhead racks or on high shelving systems. Likewise if you need easy access to hedge clippers, garden tools, rakes and hoses, consider storing those on walls close to the exit. While items that are meant for the house yet can’t find a home inside like vacuum cleaners, overstocks of cleaning supplies, or paper goods are better on racks, shelves and hooks near the entrance to the house.

Consider drawing a diagram and making a list of all the items you routinely store within your garage. This is almost like a treasure map that will serve you well in organizing before you purchase organizers or do the heavy lifting.

The following are some great organizing tips to de-clutter, clear and maximize your garage space.

**Hooks and Hangers:** Depending on the size of your garage, you may not want to give up valuable floor space to items that needs storing. By creating spaces with hooks, hangers and peg boards you can take care of organizing items from bicycles to garden tools and make them easy to grab, easy to locate, and easy to organize. You can create wall mounts for extension cords, garden hoses, and other items that otherwise can get out of place and out of control quickly. Larger hooks are available for hanging bicycles, ladders and wheelbarrows.

**Shelving Units:** One simple sturdy wall unit with adjustable shelving can allow stacking organizing and creating a better visual for seasonal boxes of decorations and clothing. You can create a shelving section for paint cans, and other hazardous materials such as propane, gasoline, and other products and place them well outside the reach of the children. Sturdy shelves are the key.

**Pegboard Organizer:** A pegboard organizes tools and brooms. Nail sections of pegboard to studs on the garage walls. Place wire hooks in various holes in the board. Hang shovels, rakes, string trimmers and other not-too-heavy tools on the hooks. Anything that has a hole or a hook can hang on the pegboard, which keeps smaller items from littering the garage floor. **Other Storage Ideas:** Gather similar screws, nuts and bolts together. Place each type of item in separate containers with lids. Label and place them in an orderly arrangement on a shelf. Place old rags, Christmas decorations or other items cluttering shelves in the garage in plastic containers. The containers stack easily and keep items from becoming wet, dirty or damaged.

**Overhead Storage:** Take back the area in your garage with space saving overhead storage systems. These are great for keeping items out of the reach of kids and pets and can provide a handy organization system of less used items that can be safely stored year round. With everything from electric hoists to fixed overhead storage.

There’s no reason why your car and all the things you need to store can’t share the space your garage has to offer. With careful planning and a little bit of ingenuity you will create an amazing storage environment.

Sources:
- http://www.bhg.com/home-improvement/garage/storage/ideas-for-garage-organization/
- http://www.monkeysee.com/play/18023-preparing-garden-tools-for-spring
- http://www.ideal-homes.com/blog/2012/03/how-to-tip-organizing-your-garage/

Martha Stewart Living, Volume 143 October 2005
Nitrogen is important for all plants to live, and it comes in many forms. Although the atmosphere is mostly made up of nitrogen, it is in the form of a gas known as dinitrogen \( \text{N}_2 \). Plants cannot use this form. Dinitrogen, or atmospheric nitrogen, can also be found in the soil. In addition to dinitrogen, other inorganic and organic forms exist in the soil as well. Organic forms of nitrogen make up a very high percentage of the total nitrogen found in the soil. However, plants are able to use only very specific inorganic forms of nitrogen. The table shows the most common forms found in the soil and the most common forms used by plants.

**Impact on water quality**

Nitrogen becomes a concern to water quality when nitrogen in the soil is converted to the nitrate (\( \text{NO}_3^- \)) form. This is because nitrate is very mobile and easily moves with water. The concern of nitrates and water quality is generally directed at groundwater. However, nitrates can also enter surface waters such as ponds, streams and rivers. Nitrates in the soil result from natural biological processes associated with the decomposition of plant residues and organic matter. Nitrates can also come from animal manure and nitrogen fertilizers. Whether nitrates actually enter groundwater depends on underlying soil and/or bedrock conditions, as well as depth to groundwater. If depth to groundwater is shallow and the underlying soil is sandy, the potential for nitrates to enter groundwater is relatively high. However, if depth to groundwater is deep and the underlying soil is heavy clay, groundwater contamination from nitrates is not likely. Once nitrates get into the groundwater, the greatest concerns are for infants less than one year old and for young or pregnant animals. High levels of nitrates can be toxic to newborns, causing anoxia, or internal suffocation. Seek alternative water sources if nitrate levels exceed the health standard of 10 ppm nitrate-N. Do not boil water to eliminate nitrates. It increases nitrate levels rather than decreasing them. The most common symptom of nitrate poisoning in babies is a bluish color to the skin, particularly around the baby’s eyes and mouth. These symptoms of nitrate toxicity are commonly referred to as the “blue-baby” syndrome.

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<th>Nitrogen form</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Use in soils and plants</th>
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<td>Dinitrogen (Atmospheric Nitrogen)</td>
<td>( \text{N}_2 )</td>
<td>Dinitrogen is the most common form. It makes up 78 percent of the atmosphere but cannot be used by plants. It is taken into the soil by bacteria, some algae, lightning, and other means.</td>
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<td>Nitrate</td>
<td>( \text{NO}_3^- )</td>
<td>Nitrate is the form of nitrogen most used by plants for growth and development. Nitrate is the form that can most easily be lost to groundwater.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ammonium Nitrogen</td>
<td>( \text{NH}_4 )</td>
<td>Ammonium taken in by plants is used directly in proteins. This form is not lost as easily from the soil.</td>
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<td>Organic Nitrogen ( \text{C-NH}_2 ) (where ( \text{C} ) is a complex organic group)</td>
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<td>Organic nitrogen exists in many different forms. It is changed into ammonium, then into nitrates, by microorganisms. Both of these inorganic forms can be used by the plant.</td>
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By:
Scott C. Killpack and Daryl Buchholz
University of Missouri
Department of Agronomy
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**MAY 2012**

- **2nd**: Shooting Sports at Extension Center
- **9th**: Cloverbuds at 3:15-4:30 at Methodist Church
- **10th**: Shooting Sports at Extension Center
- **15th**: Musketeers at 3:15-4:45
- **16th**: Shooting Sports at Extension Center
- **23rd**: Shooting Sports at Extension Center
- **24th**: Schools Out for Summer
- **25th**: Balsam Mountain Preserve or Nature Center
- **31st**: Horse Day Camp

**Join the Revolution of Responsibility**

North Carolina

- **13th**: County Activity Day at Extension Center
- **20th**: Country Activity Day at Extension Center