



December 19, 2022

Volume 3 Issue 26

# The 4-H Horse Program in Saratoga County is Making a Comeback!

The 4-H Horse Program in Saratoga County has been a staple in the community for over 50 years. Youth, ages 6-18 years of age, can find a variety of opportunities connecting them to horses, and the equine industry. With a mission to provide hands-on experiences and develop leadership skills, its not surprising this national organization has endured the times. For the first time in 5 years, we have three active horse clubs, along with a complete Senior Horse Bowl team, and 15 new youth enrolled in the last month!

Horse lovers of all ages can enjoy educational contests, horse clubs, horse shows, overnight trips, and trips to Cornell University. A horse is not needed to participate in any event. Educational contests include: Horse Bowl, Hippology, Horse Communications and Horse Judging. All contests have competitions at the regional, state and national level. Horse clubs, run by a volunteer club leader, allow youth with similar interests to meet, conduct business meetings, and learn about all things horse. Throughout the year, 4-H offers horse shows for those with horses to ride, trips to various horse events, and connects with the NYS 4-H Horse program by visiting Cornell University regularly.

Currently, we have three horse clubs for youth to join: one for teens, one for younger youth, and a club with all ages! Typically, horse clubs meet once or twice a month, each meeting includes a project or equine related lesson, and a guided business meeting. Please inquire today!



## 2023 Saratoga County Ponies & Horses 4-H Clubs

**SIGN-UPS**  
January 13th  
6:30 PM

Saratoga 4-H Office  
50 West High Street, Ballston Spa

**Questions?**  
*Ginger Williams—518-796-1742*  
*Samantha Warren—518-564-1004*

## AGRICULTURAL LITERACY WEEK—MARCH 20-24

# Volunteers Wanted

In celebration of New York agriculture, Saratoga County 4-H partners with New York Agriculture in the Classroom to provide Agricultural Literacy Week to Schools in Saratoga County. Teachers that are interested have the opportunity to work with 4-H Educators and or volunteers to have a story read to their students and participate in an activity. Last year, we were able to donate 40 books to classrooms, reaching just under 800 students.

We are looking for volunteers for the 2022 Agricultural Literacy Week. If interested in becoming a 4-H Volunteer and joining us in local classrooms, please email Rylie at [rjl287@cornell.edu](mailto:rjl287@cornell.edu).

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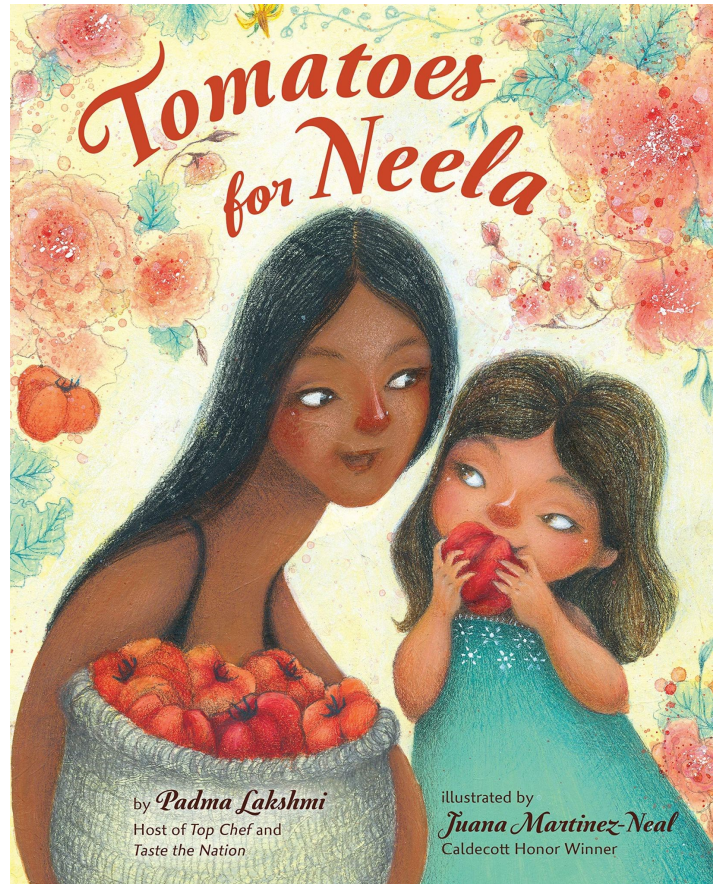
### ***Tomatoes for Neela***

Written by Padma Lakshmi

Illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal

Neela loves cooking with her amma and writing down the recipes in her notebook. It makes her feel closer to her paati who lives far away in India. On Saturdays, Neela and Amma go to the green market and today they are buying tomatoes to make Paati's famous sauce. But first, Neela needs to learn about all the different kinds of tomatoes they can pick from. And as Neela and Amma cook together, they find a way for Paati to share in both the love and the flavors of the day.

Author Padma Lakshmi takes young readers on an intergenerational journey full of delicious flavors and fun food facts that celebrates a family's treasured recipes and illustrator Juana Martinez-Neal brings this circle of women to life with vivid detail and warmth. Tomatoes for Neela lovingly affirms how we can connect to other cultures and build communities through food.



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### **CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY**

CCE Saratoga offers car seat education and correct installation by our Nationally Certified Child Passenger Safety Instructor. Please call our office at 518-885-8995 x 228 to schedule an appointment.

CCE also offers several other fitting station locations with certified technicians throughout Saratoga County for your convenience. (All fitting stations require an appointment, so please call in advance to schedule.)

### **DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP ONLINE**

CCE Saratoga hosts a monthly Online Diabetes. The first Friday of every month at noon, people with diabetes, prediabetes, and their loved ones are invited to join Diane Whitten, Community Nutrition Educator, for an informal Zoom meeting. There is no fee for the support group. Topics will vary and may be based on the interest of the group.

Individuals may contact Diane Whitten at 518-885-8995 or [dwhitten@cornell.edu](mailto:dwhitten@cornell.edu) to register or for any questions.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

The next Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 26, 2022 at 7:00 PM | Extension Office. If interest in attending, contact Wendy at 518-885-8995 or [wlm8@cornell.edu](mailto:wlm8@cornell.edu).



# Small Farms courses starting in the New Year

Learn with Cornell Small Farms, from farm business planning to production strategies



The Cornell Small Farms Program's online course season is almost halfway through, and now's the time to register for our upcoming block three courses which begin in the new year. This block of courses includes our new course on goats, plus farm business courses and production courses covering beekeeping, mushrooms, sheep and more.

Our suite of online courses is offered on a user-friendly platform. Which grants registrants permanent access to their course content. Also, courses have tiered pricing based on household size and income to make access to the courses more affordable and equitable for everyone.

## Access to Capital

Mondays: January 9—February 13, 2023

It can be very difficult to navigate the process of getting grants or loans, especially if you did not come to farming with a background in finance. This new course will cover the various aspects of seeking funding for a farm enterprise.

## Cómo Iniciar su Negocio Agrícola

Jueves: 12 de Enero hasta el 16 de Febrero del 2023

Con este nuevo curso usted podrá aprender en su propio idioma y con la Comunidad Latina sobre cómo iniciar un negocio agrícola. aprender de las experiencias de mujeres y hombres Latinos que ya tiene su negocio agrícola establecido en diferentes Estados y que aman hacer agricultura, encontrando en esta el estilo de vida que responde a sus valores, metas, habilidad y recursos.

## Exploring Markets and Profits

Thursdays: January 12—February 16, 2023

Have an idea for a farm enterprise but not sure if it's feasible? This course will help you explore the potential markets and profitability of your ideas, picking up where [BF 101: Starting at Square One](#) (*not a prerequisite*) left off.

## Goat Production

Wednesdays: January 11—February 15, 2023

This new course will guide beginning farmers through the production and marketing of goats for dairy, meat, and fiber. Goats can function as a profitable stand-alone enterprise or can be integrated into your existing farm structure to provide a variety of products and make use of marginal lands that would otherwise go unused.

## Holistic Financial Planning

Tuesdays: January 10—February 14, 2023

If you've been struggling to make your farm operation profitable without driving yourself into the ground, this financial planning course is for you. You will learn how to make financial decisions toward farm and family values and goals.

## Indoor Specialty Mushroom Production

Tuesdays: January 10—February 14, 2023

Mushrooms are an emerging niche crop and can easily be grown. This course trains new and experienced farmers in the background, techniques, marketing and economics of farm-scale indoor commercial production.

## Introduction to Beekeeping

Tuesday: January 10—February 28, 2023

Whether you are currently keeping honey bees or are considering them for your farm, a basic knowledge of bee biology, diseases, pests, and setting up your colony are essential for success. This 8-week course will give your real-world experiences paired with academic concepts.

## Season Extension with High Tunnels

Tuesdays: January 10—February 14, 2023

Adding weeks to your growing season can mean attaining a premium for having products available well before (or long after) other local growers. This course will introduce you to unheated plastic-covered "high tunnels," covering cost, management and more.

## Sheep Production

Thursdays: January 12—February 16, 2023

Have sheep or thinking about getting a flock? Producers of all experience levels will find something for them in this lively, wide-ranging course. There is no one right way to raise sheep—this course covers many of these different options.

## Social Media & Online Marketing

Thursdays: January 12—February 16, 2023

Are you struggling with questions like what do hashtags do, how to start selling online, are webpages still useful, and more? This new, 5-week course is designed to improve your understanding of social media, online marketing ideas, and tools that may increase sales and awareness about your business.

## Vegetable Production II

Wednesdays: January 11—February 15, 2023

This course continues where [BF 120: Vegetable Production I](#) (*not a prerequisite*) ends, covering vegetable production from transplanting to harvest, including: in-season fertility, integrated pest management, weed control, harvesting, and marketing.

## Writing a Business Plan

Mondays: January 9—February 13, 2022

Arm yourself with a business plan and you will have a guide to aid your farm decision-making and demonstrate to yourself and your family that your ideas are feasible. This course is designed to help you build your plan, including developing financial statements.

# 2023 Winter Cut Flower Webinar Series

January 10—February 14, 2023

Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Regional Capital Area Agriculture Program are pleased to present the 2023 Winter Cut Flower Webinar Series, which is being offered online, via Zoom.

The series features six sessions on topics of value to cut flower growers and will be presented from January 10 to February 14, 2023.

Residents of the CAAHP service area (Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady and Washington Counties) will pay \$15/session, or \$75 for all sessions.

Residents outside the CAAHP service area will pay \$20/session, or \$100 for all sessions.

NYSDEC pesticide application credits available, Categories: 1A, 3A, 3C, 24 & 25 after select sessions are completed by the participant.



Registration/information: <https://caahp.cceext.net/civCRM/event/info?reset=1&id=166>

For assistance with registration, (518)765-3518/[cce-caahp@cornell.edu](mailto:cce-caahp@cornell.edu).

Program questions, Jingjing Yin, (518)429-8608/[jj578@cornell.edu](mailto:jj578@cornell.edu).

## Farmland Conservation

With Rob Davies & Tori Roberts from Saratoga PLAN

January 10 | 12:30 pm—1:30 pm

HYBRID on Zoom or at Saratoga PLAN

112 Spring St., Saratoga Springs

To register, email [nvf5@cornell.edu](mailto:nvf5@cornell.edu)

This workshop will focus on the farmland conservation process, specifically agricultural conservation easements, providing a brief overview of the importance of farmland conservation and why landowners chose to conserve their land. The presentation will provide an overview of the process from initial inquiry and finding opportunities to stewardship of the conservation easement in perpetuity.



## Operations Managers Conference

January 31—February 1

DoubleTree by Hilton, 6301 State Route 298, East Syracuse

Join PRO-DAIRY and the Northeast Dairy Producers Association for this conference in East Syracuse. This year's conference theme and topics focus on managing for consistency while leading through change. A complete agenda with full session descriptions and speaker biographies is available here:

<https://cals.cornell.edu/.../operations-managers-conference>

Contact Heather Darrow at [hh96@cornell.edu](mailto:hh96@cornell.edu) or 607-255-4478 for more information.



# Reduce Cooler-Weather Colic Risk with Careful Management

By Paulick Report Staff

Cooler weather can increase the risk of colic in horses, at least anecdotally, reports [The Horse](#). However, it's not the weather that's increasing the risk of colic; it's the management and behavior changes the shift in weather causes that increase the risk of impaction colic.

Horses that shift from pasture to a more hay-based diet experience a decrease in water consumption. If a horse's diet is changed rapidly, he may not increase his water consumption enough to make up for the shift in diet. This could increase the risk for impaction colic. The shift from grass to hay should occur gradually.

Horses that generally spend the majority of their time on pasture that are brought into stalls don't move their bodies in the same way they do as when they're outside. Movement is important for many things, including gut motility, so reducing the horse's ability to move may also lead to an increased risk of impaction. Riding, lunging, hand walking, or turnout is beneficial no matter how cold the weather is.

Cooler weather can cause water in buckets and troughs to freeze; limited access to unfrozen water can negatively impact a horse's water consumption, which will also increase the risk of impaction colic. Care should be taken when using heated buckets or trough heaters to ensure the horse doesn't get shocked, which would



negatively affect his inclination to drink.

Adequate salt consumption will also encourage a horse to drink and further reduce the likelihood of impaction colic. While horses can lick and ingest salt from a salt block, adding it directly to the horse's feed can ensure that he's receiving adequate sodium.

## 2023 Advanced Equine Program application open

Must complete and submit an application via email by December 23, 2022

The NYS 4-H Horse Advance Equine Program was developed to create a bridge between the 4-H youth with equine interest and the Equine Industries in New York State. Participants will be expected to join monthly Zoom meetings to meet with equine professionals on certain topics, work independently on monthly projects, participated in the NYS 4-H Horse In-service, complete and interview with an equine professional, and attend an end-of-the-year trip.

### Yearly Learning Objectives

- Participants will work as a group or individually to complete a portfolio of 6 educational assignments that includes a variety of learning goals in areas such as: STEM Education, writing and leadership development.
- Participants will exhibit independent learning by sourcing, contacting, and arranging an interview with an individual in the equine industry (with the help of the NYS 4-H Equine Youth Specialist and other educators.)
- Participants will be prepared with skills needed to succeed in online or virtual learning such as video call etiquette, and understanding learning styles.

- Participants will attend a year-end, overnight trip that will focus on connecting youth to various aspects of equine industries to better understand the opportunities available for education and occupations.

### Participant Expectations

- Participants must be 14 years old (4-H age: Age as of Jan. 1)
- Must be enrolled in the NYS 4-H Program
- Must have a desire to learn about Equine Science and Equine Industries
- Must complete and submit an application via email by Dec. 23, 2022
- Must attend winter team building in Ithaca, NY (or participate as a volunteer at another State level competition).
- Must complete all 5 assignments given after each virtual meeting.

More information can be found [HERE](#)  
[Download Application Here](#)

## FIELD TO FORK

# Butcher Your Own Local Meat

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County along with the National Deer Association, Back Country Hunters & Anglers, and Slate River Farms collaborated to present Field to Fork: Butcher Your Own Local Meat. The first-time event was designed with new hunters in mind but provided unique insights into a variety of butchering techniques to entice long-time hunters. The educational opportunity was held in traditional pop-up fashion to ensure optimum freshness of the locally harvested product. The participants were notified three days prior to the Wednesday December 7<sup>th</sup> presentation held at Slate River Farms in Greenwich, NY. Thirteen of the fifteen confirmed attended. Brian Bird taught the live demonstration with contributions from various experts belonging to both the National Deer Association and Back Country Hunters & Anglers.

The partnership created such a successful event that discussions for future opportunities have already begun. Announcements, details, and further information may be found by visiting [www.ccesaratoga.org](http://www.ccesaratoga.org) or calling the CCE Saratoga County office 518-885-8995.

Slate River Farms, a local 4th generation family farm committed to agriculture and food production with a focus on regenerative farm practices, environmental responsibility, ethics and sustainability. Visit their virtual Farm Shop at <https://slateriverfarmsny.com/>

The National Deer Association (NDA) is a 501c3 non-profit, member-based conservation organization with a mission of "ensuring the future of wild deer, wildlife habitat and hunting". We have volunteer Branches positioned all over the country and our local group is the Upper Hudson River Valley (UHRV) Branch - which covers Saratoga, Washington, Rensselaer and Warren counties, has been in existence for over 18 years and has won several national awards, including NDA Branch of the Year. Please follow us at our local Facebook page and to learn more or consider joining as a member go to [www.deerassociation.com](http://www.deerassociation.com)

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers seeks to ensure North America's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting, through education and work on behalf of wild public lands, waters, and wildlife.

Check out our About Page at:

[https://www.backcountryhunters.org/mission\\_and\\_values](https://www.backcountryhunters.org/mission_and_values)



New York residents who sign up or renew a Backcountry Hunters & Anglers membership in December will not only help us continue our important work conserving public lands and waters and representing hunters and anglers, they will also receive a Gerber fixed blade knife with sheath and be entered into a random drawing to win a \$250 Sitka Gift Card.

[https://www.backcountryhunters.org/free?utm\\_campaign=ny\\_member\\_in\\_december&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=backcountryhunters](https://www.backcountryhunters.org/free?utm_campaign=ny_member_in_december&utm_medium=email&utm_source=backcountryhunters)

Email us at [newyork@backcountryhunters.org](mailto:newyork@backcountryhunters.org)

Follow us on Facebook at New York Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers and on Instagram @NewYorkBHA

# Winter Bird Feeding: The Basics

PennState Extension

Action, color, drama, song; it's all there at your backyard bird feeder. Feeding birds is a great way to brighten a dreary winter day. It's also a never-ending source of entertainment and enjoyment. You'll get to know the regulars and, if you're lucky, you'll be rewarded with surprise visits from birds not usually found in your area. This fact sheet provides the information you will need to begin.

## Who's Who at the Backyard Feeder

In winter approximately 35 species of bird may be seen at feeders. The type of habitat around your home influences the number of birds visiting your feeder. The greatest diversity appears at feeders in wooded rural areas, whereas the smallest comes to feeders in urban areas. This diversity no doubt was bolstered by an abundance of trees and shrubs and a heated birdbath, in addition to numerous feeders.

Below are the 10 species of birds most commonly observed at bird feeders in the winter. To learn to identify the species at your feeder, get a field guide to the birds. You can find good field guides at bookstores and libraries.

## Food and Feeders

There are many kinds of seeds and feeders, and the choice may seem overwhelming at times. Different species of birds prefer different types of seeds and feeders, and no one type is preferred by all birds. Where you set up your feeders and how much cover and water you have also affects feeder use. In the following sections we discuss what to consider in developing your feeding program.

## Bird Seed and Other Food for Birds

The type of seed you provide influences how many birds come to your feeder. Over 20 types of seeds are sold as birdseed. The best all-round is probably the small black-oil sunflower seed. It costs a little more but is preferred by many smaller species, including chickadees, nuthatches, and titmice. It has a high oil content that is nutritionally important for birds, and a thin seed coat that is easy for them to crack open. If you are going to provide one seed, this is the one to choose.

The striped sunflower seed, slightly larger, is very popular with blue jays and cardinals, but it is difficult for many smaller species to crack open. Sunflower seeds usually are provided in a hanging feeder. A disadvantage of sunflower seeds is that birds crack them open to eat the hearts and then drop the hulls on the ground, creating a mess under the feeder. You may instead opt to buy hulled sunflower seeds, which come without the seed coat. These are more expensive but leave no mess. If you want to attract a variety of species, try providing a variety of foods. Besides sunflower seeds, other popular seed types include white proso millet, niger, and peanuts. White proso millet is cheap and attracts many species, but it may also attract less desirables, such as house sparrows and brown-headed cowbirds. Niger or thistle seed is popular because of its attractiveness to goldfinches, house finches,



Pine Siskin

and purple finches. Niger seed is very small and usually offered in a special feeder with small holes for dispensing the seeds.

Peanuts attract blue jays, chickadees, titmice, and woodpeckers. They can be offered as shelled kernels, in the shell, or as peanut hearts—the small chips left when peanut halves are broken apart. The hearts are valuable because they are small and can be eaten by many smaller species of birds.

Many feed stores and specialty stores sell a birdseed mix whose content allows you to provide a variety of seed in one place. When purchasing a mix, look at the seed content. All seed is not alike, and birds can tell the difference among seeds. Some of the inexpensive commercial mixes contain items such as wheat, milo, hulled oats, rice, and rye seed that are not attractive to birds. If you have used these mixes in the past, you may have noticed how the birds sorted through the mix, selecting the seeds they preferred and discarding the rest.

Besides seed, you can offer other types of foods to enhance the attractiveness of your feeding station. Suet is a high-quality animal fat that is highly sought-after in winter. It is particularly attractive to woodpeckers, chickadees, nuthatches, and titmice, although some atypical feeder birds like Carolina wrens and brown creepers also like it. Suet is sold at grocery stores in the meat section. It can be hung in a mesh bag (often provided with the suet) or you can buy special suet feeders. Processed suet cakes are available at many stores that sell bird feeding supplies. These cakes may contain other pieces of seed and fruit and are processed so that they don't turn rancid in warmer weather.

"Marvel Meal," a mixture of peanut butter and other items, is fun for children to make and is a favorite of chickadees, titmice, wrens, and even bluebirds. It can be pressed into the holes of a log feeder or smeared directly onto the bark of trees. It can also be frozen into blocks and put in a suet feeder or sliced into chunks and placed on a feeder tray.

**RECIPE FOR MARVEL MEAL:** 1 cup peanut butter, 1 cup vegetable shortening, 4 cups cornmeal, 1 cup flour, and 1 handful of sunflower seeds (optional)

*continued on next page*

**Types of Feeders**

Just as different species prefer different types of seeds, so do they prefer different kinds of feeders. Consider providing a variety of feeder types to increase the diversity of visitors. The ideal feeder is sturdy and tight so that it stays put and does not allow water in. It is also easy to assemble and clean. The three main types of feeders are hopper or house feeders, tube feeders, and tray or platform feeders.

Species	Percentage of feeders visited
Dark-eyed junco	97
Mourning dove	94
Tufted titmouse	93
Northern cardinal	91
Blue jay	89
White-breasted nuthatch	89
Downy woodpecker	88
House finch	88
American goldfinch	87
Black-capped chickadee	77

Source: Project Feeder Watch, Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

A hopper feeder looks like a house with Plexiglass sides on top of a platform where the seed is dispensed as birds eat it. The Plexiglass makes it easy to tell when more seed needs to be added. The seed is protected against the weather but not so well against squirrels.

Tube feeders are hollow Plexiglass cylinders with multiple feeding ports and perches. These hanging feeders attract species that typically feed off the ground and perch size to some extent influences which species use them. Large birds need large perches, whereas small birds can feed on either large or small perches. You can attach a tray to the bottom to catch scattered seeds and to allow larger species to feed.

Tray or platform feeders are simply flat, raised surfaces on which you spread seed. Easy to make, They are one of the most popular feeders. Birds that typically feed on the ground are particularly attracted tot his type of feeder. A disadvantage of platform feeders is that they are not squirrel proof or weather resistant. They should have drainage holes for water and need to be cleaned often to remove bird droppings. Only one day’s worth of food should be put out at a time.



Besides the three primary types, there are various specialty feeders, including those designed specifically for suet, thistle, peanuts, mealworms, and fruit.

Species	Food Preference							Feeder Preference							
	Cracked Corn	Millet	Niger	Peanut Butter	Peanuts	Seed Mixes	Suet	Sunflower Seeds	Ground	Hanging Feeder	Hanging Tube Feeder	Niger Feeder	Platform Feeder	Suet Feeder	Tube Feeder with Tray
American goldfinch			x					x	x		x	x			
Black-capped chickadee					x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Blue jay					x		x	x					x		
Brown-headed cowbird		x											x		
Carolina wren				x			x							x	
Common grackle	x							x					x		x
Dark-eyed junco		x						x		x					x
Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers					x		x	x		x					x
European starling				x				x	x				x	x	
House finch		x	x					x	x		x	x			
House sparrow			x					x					x		x
Mourning dove	x	x						x	x				x		
Northern cardinal						x		x	x				x		x
Purple finch			x			x		x	x				x		
Red-bellied woodpecker					x		x	x		x					x
Song sparrow		x						x	x				x		
Tufted titmouse				x			x	x		x					x
White-breasted nuthatch							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
White-throated sparrow	x							x	x				x		

**Feeder Placement**

When selecting a site for establishing your feeding station, consider feeder placement from your point of view and that of the bird. Your feeders should be visible to you from inside your house while being safe and secure for the birds. With this in mind, place feeders near a favorite window and within 10 feet of protective cover, such as trees and shrubs. Most birds don’t like to venture far from cover that gives them protection from the elements, a safe retreat, and a place to perch while opening seeds or resting between feeder visits.

**Water**

Along with providing food for birds, it is a good idea to supply a source of water that birds can use for drinking and bathing. Water also attracts species that do not normally visit your feeder. Birdbaths come in a variety of sizes, shapes, and prices. You can buy them at most lawn and garden stores or make them at home with a variety of materials. All that is required is a non-slippery surface and a depth of no more than three inches. Terracotta saucers used under large plants make excellent birdbaths. You can also use a garbage can lid with a few stones placed inside.

Cold winter temperatures can mean a time of drought for birds. Thus, water becomes particularly attractive to birds in winter. Heaters to keep the water from freezing are available at stores that sell bird feeding supplies. Ideally, your birdbath should be placed near a tree with overhanging branches so that the birds have a place to sit and preen after bathing.



# Several holiday plants pose a risk to pets

Melody Hefner, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

Holiday plants are a great addition to the seasonal decorations in our home. Unfortunately, many of our pets, especially those that live indoors only, relish chewing on our living décor. If you have a cat or dog that loves to chew plants, you need to know which are safe, which need to be out of your pet's reach and which you should avoid entirely.

Poinsettia plants have gotten a bum rap as being highly toxic to pets and kids. The sap of the brightly colored leaves is very irritating to mouths and throats. If the leaves are ingested they can cause nausea and vomiting, but it would take a large amount of plant material to cause poisoning. However, remember that many of these plants are treated with pesticides. The pesticides can cause illness as well. How ill? Well, that depends on the amount ingested and the size of the pet. Puppies, kittens and smaller animals are at highest risk. To be safe, make sure your poinsettia is out of easy reach by your pet, especially the young ones.

Holly and mistletoe are popular holiday plants. Both the leaves and the berries of these plants have a higher toxicity level than poinsettia. Symptoms from ingesting these plants include intestinal upset (vomiting and diarrhea), excessive drooling and abdominal pain. If large amounts of mistletoe are ingested, even the dried plant, it can cause breathing problems, seizures and death. If you've got a cat or dog that loves to chew plant materials, make sure these materials are placed out of reach or avoid bringing them into your home altogether.

Amaryllis is a beautiful plant, but it is highly toxic to dogs and cats. Ingestion causes gastrointestinal distress (vomiting, diarrhea, and/or abdominal pain), lethargy and tremors. The bulb of the plant is more toxic than the leaves or flowers. If you have a plant-chewing pet, put this plant out of reach or avoid it all together.

Christmas cactus is not toxic to dogs or cats, but remember: If they ingest plant materials, it can cause intestinal distress (vomiting and diarrhea). If the plant was treated with pesticides, it can cause a more severe reaction, so try to place it out of the reach of your pets.

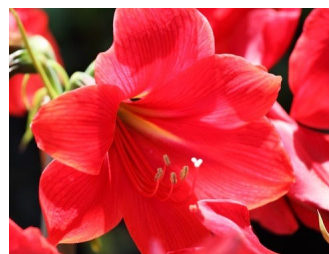
The Christmas tree can cause the usual problems of mixing pets with electrical cords, lights and ornaments. The oils from the tree needles can be irritating to a pet's mouth and stomach, causing excessive vomiting or drooling. If your pet ingests the tree needles it may cause gastrointestinal irritation, obstruction or puncture. Bacteria, molds and fertilizers or other chemicals added to the water can cause your pet to get sick if they decide to take a drink. If you can, prevent gaining access to the tree water.



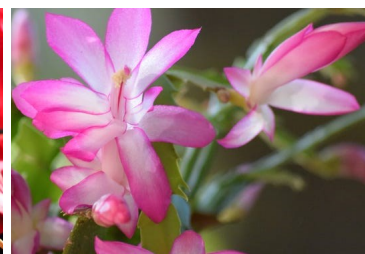
Pets are curious about plants, including poinsettia plants. If you have a plant-chewing pet, you need to limit their access to holiday plants. *Melody Hefner*



Both the leaves and berries of mistletoe are more toxic than poinsettia plants. *Getty Images/Stockphoto*



Amaryllis bulbs are more toxic than either its leaves or flowers. *Getty Images/Stockphoto*



Christmas cactus can be dangerous if it is treated with pesticides. *Getty Images/stockphoto*

If your dog or cat does manage to ingest any holiday plants, call your veterinarian or poison control center immediately to find out what you should do to limit the consequences to your pet.

# Hot Mulled Apple Cider

Written by Vicki Hayman, MS, University of Wyoming Extension Nutrition and Food Safety Educator

Mulled apple cider is a delicious way to kick off the chilly autumn season. To mull something means to heat and flavor it with spices. Cider can be mulled at a low temperature for a long time or at a simmer for about an hour, depending on your preference. To create mulled cider, apple cider is infused with a combination of cinnamon sticks, fresh ginger, clementines/oranges, and other fruits and spices, depending on personal taste preferences. Heat is added, which allows the flavors to infuse the apple cider. If an alcoholic version of mulled cider is what you desire, you can add bourbon and lime to the non-alcoholic recipe to create an easy fall favorite that includes spirits.

One of the easiest ways to make the mulled cider on a crisp fall day is to make it in a slow cooker. You can add all of the ingredients to the slow cooker in the morning before you go to work, simmer it all day, and when you get home, you will have perfectly mulled cider and a great smelling house!

There are some basic rules to follow when making homemade mulled cider. First of all, always start with a base of apple cider, not apple juice. But, why does this matter? Fresh apple cider is essentially unfiltered apple juice. Apple cider contains coarse pulp particles, as well as more vitamins and minerals. It may or may not be pasteurized, which is the process of heating the liquid to a specific temperature to kill bacteria. In contrast, apple juice does not contain any pulp and is pasteurized for longer freshness. If you can use fresh-pressed, unfiltered apple cider, the mulled cider you create will have the best flavor!

After choosing fresh cider or unfiltered apple juice for the base, the next aspect to consider is what ingredients you will add to mull the cider. Fresh fruit makes a great addition when mulling cider. Oranges, either sliced or even just the peels and juice, can add a nice flavor. For a unique variation when using fresh oranges, stud the outside of the orange with whole cloves before adding the orange into the cider. Whole apples can also be added to the mulling cider to add a flavor dimension. If you choose to add fresh apples, select apples such as Granny Smith or Pink Lady because they are sturdy and add sweet and tart flavors to the mix.

Adding spices to mulled cider creates even more complex and delicious flavors. Spices that naturally complement apples are cinnamon, coriander, clove, cardamom, and star anise. I highly recommend that you toast your spices before adding them to the cider. The toasting process deepens the spice flavor and will allow it to bring a higher level of flavor to the mulled cider. However, when mulling cider, feel free to experiment with spices and fruit you enjoy.

Some people may choose to add alcohol to their cider. If you desire a more robust potency of the alcohol, be sure to add the wine or spirits to the mulled cider after it has finished mulling; otherwise, the strength of the alcohol will cook off. Be sure the spiked cider is for adults only if there is alcohol in the recipe.



A homemade mulling spice mix makes a nice seasonal gift for family and friends. If you are giving spice bags as a present, be sure to include recipe instructions for how to use it. A general rule of thumb is to add 2 Tablespoons of mulled spices to 1/2 gallon of apple cider,

Mulled cider can also be made on a stovetop instead of the slow-cooker, and there are countless recipes online. Mulled cider makes the perfect fall beverage for your sipping pleasure.

## INSTANT MULLING SPICE MIX

### Ingredients:

- 6 cups (2 lbs.) brown sugar (measured loose, not packed)
- 3 Tablespoons ground cinnamon
- 2 Tablespoons ground allspice
- 2 Tablespoons ground dried orange peel
- 1-2 Tablespoons ground cloves
- 1 Tablespoon ground nutmeg

Optional: add to taste—ground anise, black pepper, ground cardamom; crystallized ginger, finely chopped or ground ginger, and/or ground dried lemon peel.

### Instructions:

Mix all ingredients with a whisk until well blended and store in an airtight container or baggie until needed.

For a single serving, add 3 Tablespoons of the mixture to 1 cup of hot cider, juice, black tea, or wine.

To serve a group, add 1/2 cup of mixture and 1 cup of water for every 2 cups of cider, juice, black tea, or wine. Bring mixture to a boil and stir until dissolved, then reduce to a simmer. Serve immediately or simmer until ready to serve.

# Holiday Punch Recipes

Liz Meimann, AnswerLine, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

Are you in search of beverages for your holiday party or dinner? The following punch recipes will go great with most foods. They will be delicious with both sweets and savory foods.

If using a punch bowl, you may want to make your own ice ring. We suggest that you use some of the punch to make the rings. Then, when the ring melts it does not water down your punch like a ring made of water. If you wish a clear water ice ring, allow the water to set 1-15 minutes before putting it into the freezer. Loosen your ice ring by running water over the metal ring. Then slip your ring into a plastic bag. This will make placing it into the bowl much easier, and less messy.

## CRANBERRY PUNCH

8 Servings

- 1¼ qt. cranberry juice cocktail
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 stick cinnamon, 2 inches
- 1 cup frozen orange juice concentrate
- 1 cup water
- 2 cups club soda

Heat 1 cup cranberry juice with spices. Simmer, covered 5 minutes. Remove spices. Add remaining cranberry, orange juice and water. Chill. Add club soda just before serving.

## RASPBERRY PUNCH

Yields 2½ quarts

- 2 pkgs. Frozen raspberries or strawberries
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 2 cups orange juice, fresh or frozen
- 1 can (6 oz.) frozen lemonade
- 1 quart ginger ale

Thaw the berries, sprinkle with sugar and mash a fork or potato masher. Mix with orange juice and reconstituted lemonade. To serve, pour fruit mixture over ice and add the ginger ale.

## CHRISTMAS PUNCH

Makes 3 quarts, serves 40

- 4 cups strained orange juice
- ½ lemon juice
- 1 quart cranberry juice cocktail
- 1 pint sparkling water
- 2 trays of mint ice cubes

Place juices and sparkling water in punch bowl. Add mint ice cubes. Let stand 10 minutes. Garnish with orange slices studded with whole cloves.

## PINK PUNCH

Serves 30-40 (5-6 oz. punch cup)

- 1 large box banana strawberry gelatin
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 cups cold water
- 8 oz. bottle lemon juice
- 48 oz. pineapple juice
- 2 quart 7-Up

Mix sugar, gelatin and boiling water till sugar and gelatin are dissolved. Add cold water and stir. Add lemon juice and pineapple juice; mix. Add 7-Up just before serving.

## CRANBERRY PUNCH

Serves 25-30

- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup water
- 2 cups cranberry juice cocktail
- 1 cup orange juice, frozen, fresh, or canned
- ½ cup lemon juice, frozen, fresh, or canned
- 1 quart ginger ale

Cook sugar and water together to the boiling point. Continue cooking for 5 more minutes. Cool slightly and mix with the three juices. Chill, and add ginger ale right before serving.



Remember to keep that milk cold or set it out less than two hours before you expect to see Santa. Happy Holidays!

# Holiday Exchange and Return Tips

Marlene Geiger, AnswerLine, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

It's an unavoidable fact of the holiday season—**gift returns**. Billions of dollars in gifts are returned each holiday season. Consumers rush back to the store or flock to online retailers to return or exchange gifts that they do not want for a variety of reasons—wrong size, duplicate, don't like it, can't use it, defective.

Recent retail news indicates that the traditional return or exchange may not be as easy as it's been in past years; 60% of retailers are said to be rolling out stricter policies for 2022. Due to rising transportation and other inflationary costs, companies have been updating their return policies in an effort to curb the costs and hassles of returns. Updates may include a shorter return window, required receipt or proof of purchase, and shipping or restocking fees.

To avoid surprises no matter where you shop, read the fine print or ask questions to familiarize yourself with the return or exchange options before purchase and include a gift receipt with your gifts to reduce hassles for the recipient. Consumer Reports has outlined the [current \(2022\) return guidelines](#) of popular retailers categorizing them as the “best and worst return policies.”

## Make your holiday returns go more smoothly with these tips:

- **Know the retailer's policies before making a purchase.** What is the return policy and how does it work? Restocking fee? Cash refunds? Exchanges only? Store credit? Return shipping? Can online purchase be returned to local store? Be aware of third-party sellers who may have a different return policy than the retailer (i.e., Amazon, Walmart, Best Buy, eBay, and Newegg).
- **Understand product warranty.** Most electronics and home appliances come with warranties that are to be fulfilled by the manufacturer, not the retailer. How are returns and repairs handled if an item does not work, stops working or needs replacement parts?
- **Keep your receipts and packaging.** Most retailers will only accept returns and exchanges with a receipt and in original packaging making it important to keep receipts or give gift receipts. Without a receipt, a retailer may refuse a return or offer store credit at the most recent lowest price of the item. Cash for a returned item is usually only offered with the original receipt and when cash was used at the same time of sale. Original packaging means keeping all tags in place; if the tag includes a price, mark it out or remove at the perforation. Also, it is best to not open the original package until you are sure you will be keeping the gift. Personalized gifts are usually nonreturnable.



- **Bring your ID.** To avoid holiday return scam, many stores may ask to see your ID when you return an item. Some chains use computerized return authorization systems to detect abuse and track your return history. Without a receipt, retailers may deny a return or exchange is history shows you are a frequent returner without receipt.
- **Return or exchange in a timely fashion.** The window for returns or exchanges varies by retailers. Some retailers are expanding their window while others are shortening it. Time is of the essence for ensuring that the chance to exchange or return an item is not missed.
- **Practice kindness and patience.** Waiting a few days after the holidays will reduce crowds at the return counter and clerks will be less frazzled. If you are not satisfied with the way the return or exchange was handled by the clerk, ask to speak to a manager and deal with the problem in a congenial manner—keep your cool!

For additional tips and to protect yourself from holiday scams and theft, visit the [BBB Holiday Tips page](#).

## *\*Refunds & Exchanges*

Original receipt, product and a valid reason are required upon request.

## YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

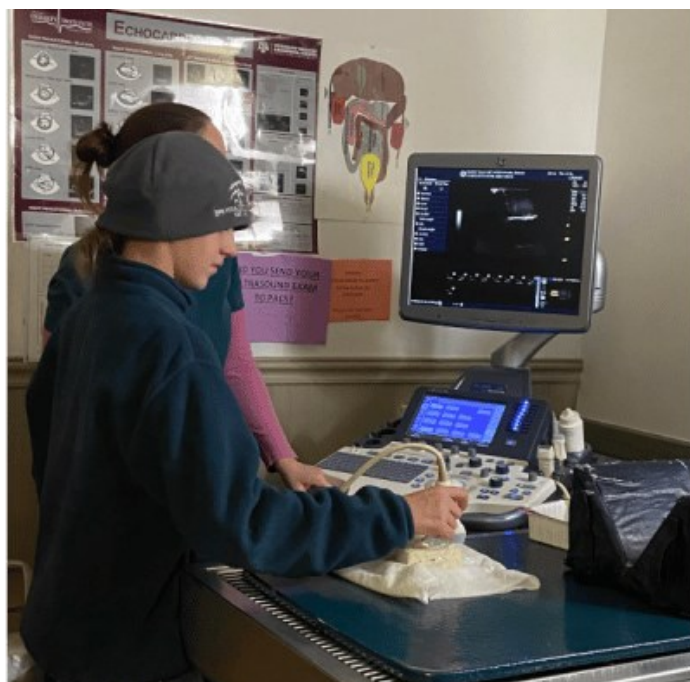
# Saratoga County 4-H Vet Science success

The Saratoga County 4-H Veterinarian Science Program has remained one of the most popular opportunities offered to its members. The 6 week “project” provides youth members aged 12-18 years old an introduction to veterinarian science. The annual course has consistently proved to be a sellout each spring with many youths participating year-after-year. The re-enrollments presented a unique challenge; the intention of the original curriculum is to be introductory with little changing from year to year, meaning youths would be learning similar things instead of expanding their knowledge. In 2022, a solution to the limitations was launched; Advanced Veterinarian Science Project!

Kicking off in the Fall, 12 excited participants attended a presentation from local professionals that delved further into the specialties of small and large animal veterinarian services. To begin, Pandora Davis, DVM of H&N Bovine guided youth through a calf necropsy. The in-person procedure allowed for hands-on learning of bovine anatomy and scientific practices for care. On a field trip to the Burnt Hills Veterinarian Hospital the group got real-time experience with canine triage and ultrasounds. On the third week, veterinarians Hisato Mizuno, DVM and Scott Ahlschwede, DVM from Rood and Riddle shared an enlightening presentation on x-ray machines while also detailing the unique demands of an equine-specific professional. The course closed out with Dr. Mary Kate Melcher of River Valley Veterinary Services. She shared her knowledge of small ruminant animals with the participants.

The Spring 2023 Veterinarian Science Program is in development and registration is open. Members 12 years and older, please call Rylie to sign-up; 518-885-8995 or [rjl287@cornell.edu](mailto:rjl287@cornell.edu). Members interested in taking the Fall Advanced Veterinarian Science project must first complete the Spring program. Both courses are for Saratoga County 4-H members only but new members are always being accepted.

The inaugural Advanced Veterinarian Project’s 12 participants were Jade Bradley, Julian Mangine, Thomas Frasier, Miriam Evans, Petra Gamage, Pilar Gamage, Avery Evers, Kenley Asmus, Annabelle Carrico, Julia Bodein, Colin Anderson, and Anna Venditti. They played an active role in developing the future of this project with invaluable feedback.



*Emily Falls, DVM, owner of Burnt Hills Hospital showing a 4-H youth how to use an ultrasound machine*

“Two key components that I learned were the variety and opportunity that the vet science field provides.” While another 4-Her explained “I learned a lot more about large animals which was fun and educational”.

4-H is the Youth Outreach component of Cornell Cooperative Extension that connects youth 5-18 years of age to hands-on learning opportunities that help them grow into competent, caring, contributing members of society. 4-H also looks to create healthy youth-adult partnerships with our network of caring and competent local volunteers. Saratoga County 4-H offers a diverse range of programming including veterinary science, robotics, shooting sports, public presentations, master gardener, market auction, wildlife & natural resources, nutrition, and more. To learn more about enrollment, please call the 4-H office 518-885-8995.

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## SARATOGA COUNTY 4-H HOLIDAY MITTEN TREE



The Saratoga County 4-H Mitten Tree will be set up at the Saratoga Springs Public Library, and the Ballston Spa Public Library.

Anyone who is in need of winter gear such as gloves, mittens, scarves and hats may stop by

the participating libraries to take what they need. Donations may be dropped off at the Cooperative Extension Office, 50 West High Street, Ballston Spa or at the participating libraries.

Questions? Contact Leland at 518-885-8995 or [glb76@cornell.edu](mailto:glb76@cornell.edu).

**Cornell Cooperative Extension**  
**Saratoga County**



**SARATOGA COUNTY**  
**MARKET ANIMAL PROJECT**

*Informational Meeting  
for Youth & Families*

**JANUARY 9TH**  
**@6:30PM**  
**CCE OFFICE, CORNELL ROOM**

*Introduction to the  
requirements and  
expectations of youth  
participating in a market  
animal project*

**MUST BE A SARATOGA COUNTY 4-H MEMBER**





**SARATOGA COUNTY 4-H**

# **VETERINARY SCIENCE PROJECT**

**TUESDAY NIGHTS: 6:00PM**

**6 WEEKS**

**FEBRUARY 21,28**

**MARCH 7,14,21,28**

**\$15 PER YOUTH  
AGES 12 & UP**



**EMAIL [RJL287@CORNELL.EDU](mailto:RJL287@CORNELL.EDU) OR  
CALL (518)885-8995 TO REGISTER**

**HANDS-ON OPPORTUNITIES WITH LOCAL  
VETERINARIANS & ON FARM EXPERIENCE**



# NEW SARATOGA COUNTY 4H HORSE CLUB

Meetings every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday 6pm



4H Training Center  
556 Middleline Road  
Ballston Spa NY 12020



### Contact Information:

Samantha Briggs

518-698-1814

[shermans@nycap.rr.com](mailto:shermans@nycap.rr.com)

Do not need to have a horse to join!

Pre-teen and Teens welcome

### 4-H Horses



### The 4-H Horses Project



### Club Goals:

- Club Equine Projects
- Line Dancing
- Public Present ations Preparation
- Community Service (ex: helping local horse recues and shelters)
- Club trips (ex: Equine Affaire, University of Vermont, SUNY Morrisville)
- Horse Bowl & Hippology preparation
- Ove night equine events at Saratoga County 4H facilities with movie night & games
- Club horseback trail rides
- Equine facility
- Volunteer to help at horse shows
- Local horse barn visits and education opportunities
- Wood working horse projects
- Equine related education clinics
- Open to all ideas, as a new club! Together we can do so much!



4-H HORSE





# WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

Click the photos to be navigated to each of our Facebook accounts:



CCE Saratoga



4-H



CCE Equine



Agriculture  
Economic  
Development



Capital Region  
PRISM

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