

Stay Connected

With the COVID-19 pandemic affecting services, Southcentral Foundation wants to stay connected with customer-owners and offer information on activities, recipes, and much more. The Wellness Newsletter is a weekly newsletter providing information for customer-owners to help with health and wellness. The newsletter can be found at both the *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center Wellness Center and Anchorage Health Education websites.

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Garden Fun: Get Your Garden Growing

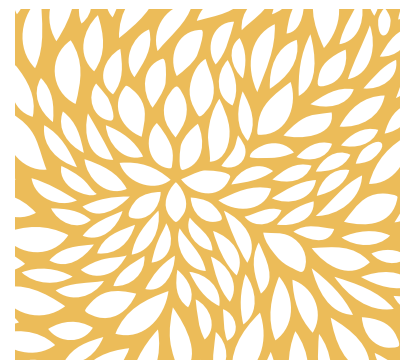
ASHLEY SCHROEDER

Gardening in Alaska has many benefits, including growing food that is local, fresh, nutritious, and an opportunity for physical activity. For some plants, seeds need to be started indoors approximately four to six weeks before intended outdoor planting. Some plants that should be started indoors are broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage. For other plants, seeds may be planted directly in the outdoor soil including potatoes, carrots, and beets. In general, outdoor planting should start after the danger of frost has passed. This is usually in late May for many places in Alaska.

When preparing your garden, soil health and water drainage are important to consider. Plants do best when seeded into loose, well-drained soil. The nutrients in soil can be amended by collecting and using natural compost. Another option is to allow last year's harvest remnants to decay in the soil until the next planting, then rotate the crops planted in each area of the garden. Rotating crop types alters the nutrients in the soil by allowing plants to replenish and/or consume different types of nutrients each year, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers. Rotating also decreases the risk of developing plant-specific pests or blights. It is best to rotate crops of different types in a three-year cycle. For example, grow broccoli or cabbage in the soil you grew peas or green beans; grow carrots in the soil you grew the broccoli or cabbage; grow lettuce in the soil used for potatoes; or grow potatoes in the soil used for lettuce. Each rotation cycle should allow for a bed of soil to be used for a specific vegetable type only once in a three-year period.

If there isn't an open area available for planting, container gardens are a great option. Many vegetables and herbs do well in containers. For root vegetables, such as potatoes and carrots, containers should be at least 12 inches deep and as wide as possible. Get creative with possible containers; anything from deep pots, plastic storage tubs to feed, or soil bags can be used.

Gardening produces nutritious food and provides an opportunity to get outside and get moving. Involve children throughout the process; they will enjoy learning about and eating food they have planted and cared for. As always, have fun with it!



Add Color to Boost Your Immune System

ANCHORAGE HEALTH EDUCATION

Grow your own immune boosting foods this season. Strengthen your immune system by growing and consuming your own vegetables and herbs such as broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, carrots, Brussels sprouts, kale, Swiss chard, tomatoes, and much more. Vegetables contain vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants. The American Heart Association recommends four to five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Here are a few seasonal tips to consider: purchase produce in its harvesting season to save money and ensure quality, buy in bulk, freeze fresh produce for smoothies or soups, and grow a garden to help increase your activity. Strive to make your plate colorful!



Break the Cycle of Tobacco

RUTHI BLATCHFORD

Alaska Native people are strong. This has been demonstrated over thousands of years of survival in the toughest of conditions. Elder members of the community take care in passing down traditions and culture to ensure the generations to come will have the best chance at a strong future. Sadly though, tobacco usage can be passed on as well. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states American Indian and Alaska Native people have the highest prevalence of smoking, in comparison to all other racial or ethnic groups in the U.S. It is time to break the cycle by changing this narrative. Our future generations deserve a strong and healthy future. If you use tobacco, consider quitting. Being tobacco-free is a legacy worth passing on.

If you are ready to quit, talk to your provider about how to get started and resources available.

REGIONAL RESOURCES

- SCF Quit Tobacco Program
 - Anchorage | Health Education | (907) 729-2689
 - Valley | *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Wellness Center | (907) 631-7630
- Alaska Tobacco Quitline | 1 (800) 784-8669

Source: Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/american-indians/index.htm>



Birdseed Ornaments

NICOLE NORDSTROM

MATERIALS:

- 2 1/2 cups birdseed
- 2 tablespoons unflavored gelatin
- 1 cup water
- Parchment paper
- Baking sheet
- 12 cookie cutters
- 3 drinking straws
- Twine

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pour 1/2 cup of cold water into a large bowl.
2. Add 2 tablespoons of unflavored gelatin on top of the water.
3. Add 1/2 cup of boiling water to the gelatin mixture and stir until dissolved.
4. Add corn syrup and stir until combined.
5. Add birdseed and mix well.
6. Place bowl in the refrigerator for about 10 minutes until the liquid firms up enough to form. Do not keep mixture in the refrigerator for too long.
7. Set cookie cutters onto a parchment-lined baking sheet, filling it with spoonful's of the refrigerated mixture. Using the back of a spoon, press the mixture down to fill in all the gaps. The cookie cutters should be filled to the top.
8. Press the drinking straws into each of the shapes, leaving at least 1/2 inch of space between the hole and the edge of the shape.
9. Place the ornaments in the refrigerator overnight.
10. To remove the cookie cutters, gently separate the metal from the edges on all sides, then gently push the birdseed ornaments out of the cookie cutters and pull the straws out.
11. Thread a piece of twine through the hole and tie the ends in a knot.
12. Hang the birdseed ornaments from tree branches, leaving room nearby for birds to perch on.

Source: <https://onelittleproject.com>

Moving When You Feel Stuck

NATALIE HEARN

Moving mindfully through life during this time can be a bit of a challenge. It is far too easy to be overwhelmed when we feel like we are stuck physically, mentally, or otherwise. If you are working from home, helping your kids with their schoolwork, or simply trying to accomplish your to-do list, these tips may help you feel empowered and inspired today:

1. Get out for a quick walk around your neighborhood (*maintaining 6 feet of physical distance*). This is a good way to clear your mind and reset the day. Walking for as little as five minutes is helpful!
 - According to Stanford University, creative thinking improves while a person is walking and shortly thereafter. Go for a walk and see how it can kick-start some creative thinking during your day.
 - Walking helps you to get moving, get exercise, fresh air, and potential education if you listen to an audio book or podcast. You will feel energized, more creative, and maybe even learn something new.
2. Instead of writing a lengthy to-do list and becoming overwhelmed, try writing an already-done list throughout the day. Keep track of all the tasks you've accomplished during the day. The feeling of accomplishment from this can be the boost in motivation you need to tackle the next task.
3. Deep breathing can improve your sense of calm and help your nervous system shift from fight-or-flight to rest-and-digest. You can do this by sitting, standing, lying on your back, or even on your hands and knees. Take a moment to close your eyes to minimize distractions around you before you begin.
 - Inhale softly through your nose for a slow count of three, round your lips and exhale through your mouth like you are blowing out birthday candles for a slow count of five.
 - Pay attention to where the air is going in your body. If it is all in your upper chest and your neck muscles are working hard, see if you can breathe more into the bottom of your ribs and let your belly relax. You can even place your hands on your chest and your belly, or wherever is comfortable for you.
 - Try this for 10 breaths in a row and notice what changes you feel in your body.
 - Practice this as many times a day as you need. By doing this breathing, you can improve your digestion, overall sense of calm, and send a signal to your deepest core muscles to help support your spine and improve your posture.

We hope these tips help you to move mindfully today. Whether you choose to walk around the neighborhood, take a moment to feel accomplishment in what you have done, or focus on your deep breathing, you are doing a great thing for both your mind and body. Keep moving!

Source: Stanford University. (2014, April 24). Stanford study finds walking improves creativity. Retrieved from <https://news.stanford.edu/2014/04/24/walking-vs-sitting-042414/>

Alaska Animals Word Scramble Answers

wolf	owl	puffin
moose	ptarmigan	walrus
caribou	whale	wolverine
salmon	eagle	
raven	otter	

Spirit Week

TAKE ACTION • SHARE A PICTURE • HAVE FUN!

Join the next Wellness Spirit Week by taking action according to the unique theme of the day during the week of May 11.

5/11 Workout Day

Share a photo of you doing yoga, dancing, hiking, walking, playing your favorite Native Youth Olympic game, or another activity.

5/12 Getting Crafty

Share a picture of you doing a craft, painting, drawing, or building something with Legos.

5/13 Reading and Music Day

Share a picture of what you're reading or of you playing your instrument of choice.

5/14 Plant, Grow, Harvest Day

Share a picture of you and your family prepping your garden, planting your seed starters, or harvesting traditional plant foods.

5/15 What's Cookin' Day

Share a picture of the nutritious foods you've prepared in your home.

Share your spirit with us by posting a picture of you and/or your family participating in any of these spirit days on Facebook. Be sure to check out Southcentral Foundation's Facebook page each day and share your photo in the comments of the daily post.

‘Thyme’ to Make a Big ‘Dill’ About Herbs

CALLIE BRAY

Whether your fresh herbs are from your garden, the local farmers market, or from the store, cooking with fresh herbs is an easy way to enhance flavor to any dish. Before cooking, some steps should be taken to maximize the lifespan of fresh herbs. This includes choosing or harvesting herbs that have fresh looking leaves without any brown spots, washing them thoroughly, and storing them appropriately. Here are some tips on how to properly prepare your fresh herbs:

HOW TO CLEAN:

Wash fresh herbs as soon as you pick or bring them home from the store. This will help them stay fresher longer and will help save time when cooking. To wash fresh herbs, fill a large bowl with cold water and gently move the herbs around to remove any dirt or debris. Shake off excess water and pat dry with paper towel.

HOW TO STORE: TWO METHODS

Towel Method:

1. Arrange herbs lengthwise in a single layer on a damp paper towel and loosely roll it.
2. Put wrapped herbs in a sealable plastic bag.
3. Store this bag in the refrigerator.

This technique works best for rosemary, thyme, oregano, marjoram, sage, and chives.

Water Method:

1. Trim the base of the stems.
2. Fill a jar or glass halfway with cold water.
3. Place the cut stems into the water.
4. Cover the jar with a plastic bag.
5. Place the jar in refrigerator.

Change the water as needed or if it discolors. Note that basil is too delicate for the refrigerator, so store it in a jar with water as described above, but leave jar uncovered and place it on the counter.

This technique works best for cilantro, parsley, mint, dill, and tarragon.

HOW LONG TO STORE:

If proper care is followed, fresh herbs can last up to two or three weeks. When herbs start to turn brown or black, brittle, or show signs of mold, it is time to toss them. Aim to buy or pick fresh herbs only as you need them to reduce food waste.

HOW TO COOK:

The National Institute of Health states that herbs have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Herbs help to reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, chronic inflammation, obesity, and some types of cancers. In addition, fresh herbs provide flavor to dishes, which tends to result in less sodium usage promoting heart health benefits. So, as a part of a healthy eating plan try to cook with fresh or dried herbs. Here are tips for cooking with fresh herbs:

1. Grow your own herbs – this can help keep grocery costs down.
2. Use a sharp knife or herb scissors when chopping to prevent the leaves from being crushed. Crushing can lead to bruised, blackened herbs.
3. If it is preferred to use fresh herbs instead of dried in a recipe, add 3 to 4 times more fresh herbs if a recipe calls for dried. For example, if a recipe calls for 1 teaspoon of a dried herb, use 1 tablespoon (*the equivalent of the teaspoon of the dried herb*) of the fresh herb in its place. Likewise, if a recipe calls for 1 tablespoon of a fresh herb, substitute it for 1 teaspoon dried.
4. Know when to use fresh herbs and when to use dried herbs. Fresh herbs have a more subtle taste than dried herbs, so they are best added to dishes with a shorter cooking time or no cooking time at all (*i.e. salsa, pesto, chimichurri, topping or dressings*). If a dish takes longer to prepare, add the fresh herb toward the end of cooking so it maintains its flavor. Dried herbs are ideal for longer cooking times (*i.e. soups, stews, casseroles*), because they release their flavors slowly throughout the cooking process.

Source: National Institute of Health (2019, May 22). Herbs and Spices – Biomarkers of intake Based on Human Interventions Studies – A Systematic Review. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6532192/>

Use fresh herbs in salads, salsas, to flavor meat, fish, poultry, in baking, or in infused water or tea.
Here are some fun recipes to help get you started cooking with fresh herbs:

Chimichurri

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/4 cups packed fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano or basil
- 1 shallot, peeled and quartered
- 3 - 4 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar or red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a food processor or blender, combine all ingredients. Cover and blend until chopped and few herb leaves are still visible. Cover and chill for two hours before serving.
2. Serve on top of toasted bread, hummus, roasted potatoes, grilled fish, shrimp, steak, or eggs.
3. To store: Transfer leftovers to a storage container. Cover and store in the fridge for up to a week.

Sautéed Zucchini and Carrots

INGREDIENTS: SERVES 6

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 medium zucchinis, thinly sliced into 1/2 inch rounds
- 2-3 medium carrots, thinly sliced into 1/2 inch rounds
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme, finely chopped

Source: Callie Bray, Valley Wellness Center

DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat large skillet over medium-high heat and add olive oil.
2. Add zucchini and carrots to skillet, season with salt and pepper, and sauté vegetables for 8 to 10 minutes or until tender and lightly browned. Add the minced garlic and fresh thyme near the end to prevent burning.
3. Transfer vegetables to a serving bowl and enjoy warm.

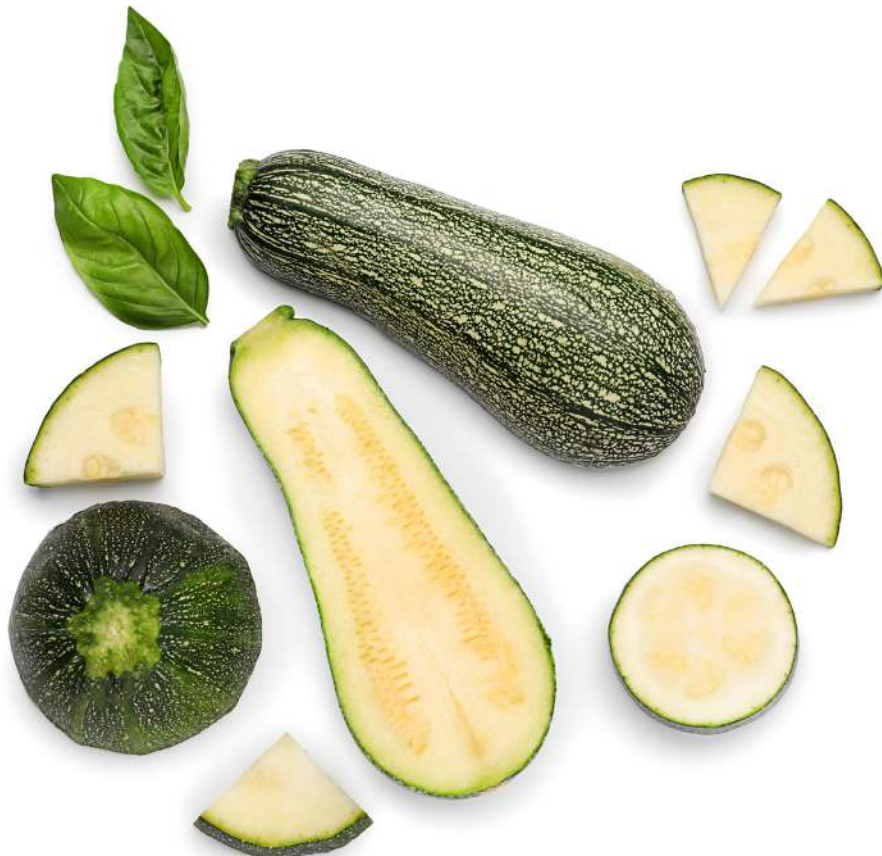
Dill and Chive Peas

INGREDIENTS: SEVERS 4

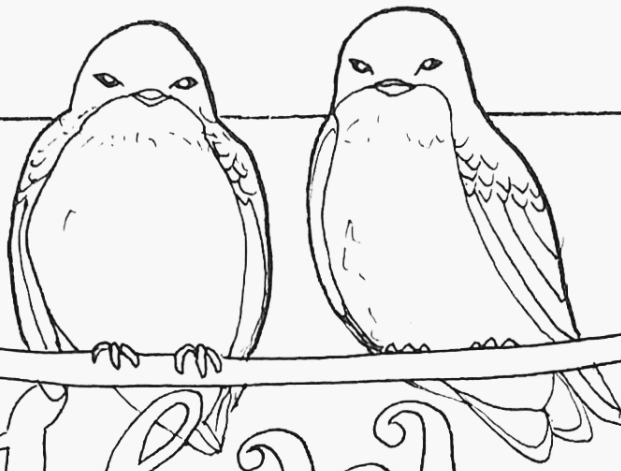
- 1 pound package frozen peas
- 1/4 cup fresh dill, snipped
- 2 tablespoons fresh chives, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon lemon-pepper seasoning
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cook peas according to package directions. Stir in remaining ingredients; serve immediately.



Source: tasteofhome.com



Happy
Mother's
Day

