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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jeffrey C. Silvertooth, Associate Dean & Director, Economic Development & Extension, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, The University of Arizona.

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Cooperative Extension, the outreach arm of the University of Arizona, brings the university to the people.

The faculty and staff in the Pinal County Extension office are part of a non-formal education network bringing research-based information into communities to help people improve their lives.

Cooperative Extension is committed to delivering high-quality, relevant educational programs and information to Pinal County citizens and communities.

As we head into the holiday season, all of us here at the Pinal County Cooperative Extension office wish each of you the very best during the holidays.

The articles shared here are just a few of the many programs that are helping people throughout the county address concerns and solve problems. We hope that you will find a tidbit here or a something there that will be of interest and, hopefully, of help to you.

2017 has been a busy year for us and we are excited about the many accomplishments that you have helped us achieve. As we finish out this program year and start laying plans to start up in 2018, we sincerely want to thank everyone for all that they do to help make Pinal County a wonderful place to live.

Rick Gibson

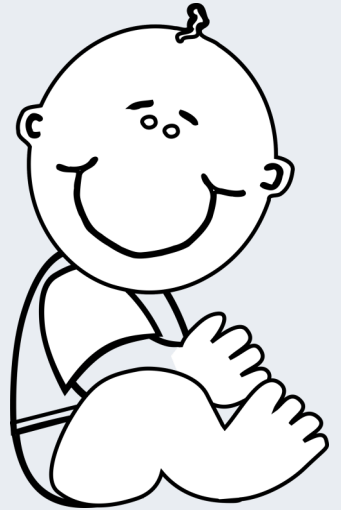
- Rick Gibson

Sing to your Baby: Create a Lullaby

As a parent, you can use the lullaby to express hopes and dreams for you and your family. Take pride in making something special just for your little one.

What is a Lullaby?

- A gentle song to help your child fall asleep
- A favorite song you want to share with your child at bedtime
- A special song you make up that is unique to you and your child



Now. . . What is your lullaby? Here's how to start creating one:

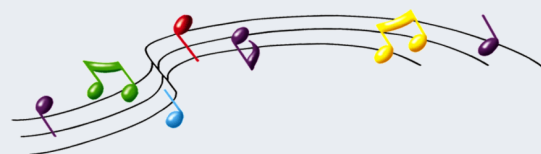
At bedtime, rock your baby and hum. A tune will probably come naturally. Let your mind wander, and when words pop into your head, try singing them to your tune. You can use any words that you want - if you can say it, you can sing it! And, even if you don't feel confident about your singing, know that your voice is special to your child, and is the voice that your baby will love the best.

Let's Sing: The Benefits of Music in Early Childhood

Listening to music and singing with your little one is not only fun but can play a powerful role in helping to support his/her early brain and language development.

Music introduces children to new words, sound patterns, and more which helps develop listening and comprehension skills. These skills help build the necessary foundation for learning how to read.

Babies don't care if you are a great singer—your baby loves to hear your voice, and singing together can also help strengthen the bond you share with him or her. When you engage in music activities together, you are also boosting your baby's communication and social skills.



Sing to your Baby: Create a Lullaby

Your child's name

We call you. . .

My nicknames for you are. . .

We gave you your name because. . .



Words of comfort (*pick a few, add others*)

safe. . .home. . .gentle

love. . .sweet. . .hush

night. . .moon. . .stars

Wishes and dreams you have for your child

I hope you. . .

My wish for you is. . .

In life you can. . .



[Watch this video for more information on how you can create your own lullaby:](#)

Resources:

www.toosmall.org/blog/lets-sing-the-benefits-of-music-in-early-childhood

www.toosmall.org/blog/sing-to-your-baby-create-your-own-lullaby

Colorful Flowers Add Interest to the Landscape

Flowers can add lots of color to any landscape.

The cold weather months is the time to grow our cool season flowers, like petunia, snapdragon, violets, Vinca, and others. They can brighten up a dreary corner or create a spectacular array to frame a walkway, highlight a planter, or fill in an empty space. They are easy to grow and simple to care for. With the nursery shelves filled to overflowing with many colorful choices, now is a really good time to put them in the ground.

For the lower elevations of Pinal County, cool season flowers can pretty much be planted through early March. After March, it will be important to begin the transition to warm weather flowers. If you would like a more complete list of annual flowers fit for the desert, our Cooperative Extension office has a pamphlet called, "Annual Flower Guide", which will give you more details about what flowers do best in our highly diverse environment.

Microclimates play a key role in plant success. South-facing walls and under east or west roof overhangs are generally the warmest winter locations. However, most flowers like full sun, particularly in the winter and gardens planted in front of an east or west wall might struggle a little because of the low light conditions either early or late in the day. Be sure to check the sales tag to learn the light requirements for that particular variety. When planning your flower garden, no matter what time of the year you may be planting, always think in terms of the next six months so that you can put the right plant in the right place.

Annual flowers grow best in a well-drained soil rich in plant nutrients. If the soil is mostly rocks or contains significant amounts of caliche, remove it to a depth of one and one-half to two feet and replace it with good soil.

Do not forget to add organic matter regularly to the garden bed as tender annual flowers need the extra nutrients and looseness of the soil that yearly applications provide. Spread a two to four inch layer of wood residue, peat moss or well rotted manure plus one pound of ammonium phosphate (16-20-0) per one hundred square feet and lightly dig or till the material into the soil.

If the plants are in a grow-pack or nursery flat, gently separate the root clump of each plant with your fingers. This causes less transplant shock and injury than using a knife or trowel to separate plant root clumps. Transplants can dry quickly after planting so do not set them into the soil, especially dry soil, more than four or five minutes before you can get water to them. Annuals need daily watering until established. As the plants begin to grow, water less often but apply more water each time to promote deeper rooting.

When seeding annual plants, be sure and follow the planting depth recommendations printed on the seed pack. Planted too shallow, seeds tend to dry out quickly between irrigations; too deep, and the seedlings will not be able to lift their heads out of the ground. In either case, the stand of plants will be reduced and weak. It also helps to place seeds on the sides of beds instead of on flat surfaces so that salt accumulations will not damage tender seedlings.

Water the garden area two or three days in advance of planting so the soil will be moist but not wet. Working a soil that is too wet will tend to seal the pores of the soil and make it difficult for tender roots to get water and air later on. If the weather is hot, set transplants out late in the day so that they will be less subject to moisture stress. Water transplants several hours before planting to prevent sudden wilting once they are removed from their containers.

Colorful Flowers Add Interest to the Landscape

Established annuals should be watered at three to six day intervals depending on soil characteristics and weather conditions. More frequent watering is necessary on sandy soils. Dry weather conditions will call for an increased irrigation frequency. Watch the plants and the weather carefully and do not let them begin to wilt between irrigations. The cooler weather places less stress on new plants than do the summer months but it is important to keep an eye on them any time of the year and to supply water when the soil at the six inch depth is still slightly moist but not sloppy wet

A monthly application of nitrogen fertilizer, such as ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) or ammonium phosphate (16-2-0) will help maintain the vigor of the plants and promote bloom. Make sure that the latter is gently worked into the soil so that the phosphate part of the fertilizer, which does not move with water, is incorporated into the root zone.

Weeds will be a worse problem than insects, generally. Weeds seem to spring up fast and can take over a flower garden quickly. I like to use a linoleum knife with its wooden handle and curved blade to work up close and personal with the flowers. By inserting the blade between the flower plant and the weed, I can easily slice through the weed just below the crown of the weed and gently remove it. The crown of the plant is the point where the roots meet the stem and is a source of many buds that can begin growing if the weed is simply cut or broken off above the crown. Pulling or chopping often times damages the neighboring flower plants. For safety, don't forget to wear a glove on the hand opposite to the one holding the knife.

Aphids can sometimes be a problem during the cooler weather months. Since they can multiply rapidly, do not let them get a head start on you. Most aphid problems can be solved by directing a strong stream of water towards the undersides of the leaves to wash them off.

Finally, an organic mulch placed on the surface of the soil during the growing season helps conserve soil moisture, prevent soil crusting and control weeds. In small beds and borders and in containers, remove faded flowers to encourage continued flowering.

Annual flowers do quite well in containers, especially during the cool season months. I like to grow snapdragons and Vinca in old tree box gardens because they are large plants that display their flowers well above the rim of the box. Some flower varieties are more like ground covers and rarely grow above the rim of the container. As a result, they are not too showy. A standard potting soil mix works very well in most containers as long as it drains excess water easily. Don't forget to fertilize them every so often just to keep the colors of the flowers vibrant.

I like annual flowers in a garden bed because the color provides an excellent backdrop for outdoor living activities and tends to draw hummingbirds and butterflies to the area. Many varieties have long stems which make them excellent for cutting. If you are into flower arranging, you can make your own bouquets and arrangements and enjoy the color indoors. Best of all, I like annual flowers because the many different varieties make it possible to enjoy a multitude of different color combinations almost year round.

Fun names can get your child to eat more vegetables



You want your little one to grow up healthy and strong, and that means eating their veggies.

Children should eat a variety of colorful vegetables prepared in healthy ways, but statistics show that most kids aren't getting enough.

The [USDA](#) suggests that 2- and 3-year-olds eat a cup a day, and 1 ½ cups for 4-8-year-olds.

Here's some hope:

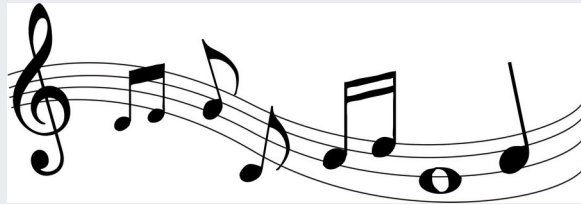
A [study](#) conducted by the Cornell University Food and Brand Lab showed that preschoolers ate more when their vegetables were given fun, catchy names. The kids ate about twice as many "X-ray Vision Carrots" at lunch than they did on the days when they were just labeled "carrots." And the effect continued over time, with kids eating about 50 percent more carrots even on the days when they were no longer given the cool name.

"Giving a food a fun name makes kids think it will be more fun to eat," said lead author Brian Wansink. "And it seems to keep working—even the next day."

Source: First Things First <http://www.firstthingsfirst.org/first-things/fun-names-can-get-your-child-to-eat-more-vegetables>

Auld Lang Syne

As you watch the New Year's Eve ball start to drop - "10, 9, 8," your thoughts may go to resolutions; "7, 6, 5," and you may ask yourself "will I be able to stick to them in 2018?"; "4, 3, 2, 1 - Happy New Year!" You hear the *Auld Lang Syne* song playing as you try to sing along but may not remember all of the words. Loosely translated, *Auld Lang Syne* may be a reflection on the past – how have we done in keeping to our resolution to lose weight, exercise more or just eat healthier? Old resolutions can be revived and **here are** 10-tips to help reach your nutrition and fitness goals in 2018.



*Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and old lang syne?*

CHORUS:

*For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.*

*And surely you'll buy your pint cup!
and surely I'll buy mine!
And we'll take a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.*

CHORUS

*We two have run about the slopes,
and picked the daisies fine;
But we've wandered many a weary foot,
since auld lang syne.*

CHORUS

*We two have paddled in the stream,
from morning sun till dine;
But seas between us broad have roared
since auld lang syne.*

CHORUS

*And there's a hand my trusty friend!
And give me a hand o' thine!
And we'll take a right good-will draught,
for auld lang syne.*

CHORUS

Auld Lang Syne



United States Department of Agriculture

**10
tips**
Nutrition
Education Series



**MyPlate
MyWins**

Based on the
Dietary
Guidelines
for Americans

SuperTracker My Foods, My Fitness, My Health

Need help reaching your nutrition and fitness goals? SuperTracker is an online food, physical activity, and weight tracking tool that's here to help. Use SuperTracker on your desktop, phone, or tablet to create your personalized plan and see how your choices stack up. Plus, get tips and support as you work toward your goals.

1 Get your personal plan

Enter information about yourself on the Create Profile page to get a personalized Plan—what and how much to eat within your calorie allowance; register to save your data and access it any time.

2 Compare foods

Check out Food-A-Pedia to look up nutrition info for over thousands of foods and compare foods side by side.



3 Track your foods and activities

Use Food Tracker and Physical Activity Tracker to see how your daily choices stack up against your plan; save favorites and copy meals and activities, and build combos for faster entry.

4 Analyze a recipe

Build, track, and analyze personal recipes with My Recipe. In-depth nutrition analysis includes calories, food groups, and 35 nutrients per portion.

5 Manage your weight

Visit My Weight Manager to enter your weight and track progress over time; compare your weight history to trends in your calorie intake and physical activity.



6 Measure progress

Go to My Reports to measure progress; choose from a variety of reports ranging from a simple meal summary to an in-depth analysis of food group and nutrient intakes over time.



7 Reach your goals

Choose up to five personal goals that you want to achieve using My Top 5 Goals. Sign up for My Coach Center to get tips and support as you work toward your goals.



8 Keep a journal

Use My Journal to record daily events and identify triggers that may be associated with changes in your health behaviors and weight.

9 Join or create a group

Use SuperTracker together with others by creating or joining a group, and participate in group challenges. Visit About Groups to learn more.

10 Participate in a group challenge

Earn points for healthy eating and physical activity and compete against others in a SuperTracker Group Challenge. Group leaders can choose from ready-made MyPlate Challenges or create their own custom challenge.

Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender

Go to ChooseMyPlate.gov
for more information.

DG TipSheet No. 17
December 2011
Revised October 2016



4-H Youth Development

Learn more through 4-H

about Gardening and Feeding your Family

Through efforts supported by 4-H donations, Pinal County 4-H has the opportunity to give youth and families a chance to explore the broad scope of plant sciences. The county gave us permission a few years ago to create a unique garden space outside our county building to demonstrate how to garden with raised beds, pallets, straw bales, containers and even a keyhole planter!

Concepts acquired involve basic seed to plate ideas for youth to learn about planning a garden space, planting, seasonal fruit and vegetable production, how to maintain a garden and how to cultivate plant life for beauty, health and cuisine. Plants play a vital role for animals and humans providing shelter, food, fiber, medicine, oxygen and beauty. Inside the 4-H office we have numerous curriculum pieces you can look at to share this program with your club members. Arizona 4-H offers the following curriculum: See them sprout, Let's get growing, Take your pick, Growing profits, and a Gardening Exhibits Guide.

Pinal County Fair Dates: March 21-25, 2018

Fair book and ShoWorks entry forms will be posted on the Pinal County 4-H webpage – <http://extension.arizona.edu/4h/pinal/>

All Pinal County 4-H fair entries must be pre-entered into our ShoWorks online program. We have been using this program for approximately 12 years. If you are entering building exhibits, shooting sports, small stock, goats, dogs or 4-H contests, you will need to enter online.



Pinal County 4-H Website & Facebook Page

4-H gives youth that extra edge for life success by offering numerous opportunities to develop leadership, responsibility, citizenship and other life skills. 4-H helps develop competent, caring and actively engaged citizens who strengthen Arizona communities. Through our research-based curriculum and university ties, 4-H opens a world of possibilities to youth and their parents who want to explore their interests — making the best better!

Go to <http://extension.arizona.edu/4h/pinal> to learn more or www.facebook.com/pinalcounty4h!

Foods That Are Choking Hazards

High-risk foods are those often implicated in choking incidents. Almost 90% of fatal choking occurs in children younger than four years of age. Parents, caregivers, and teachers should not offer children under four years of age foods that are associated with young children's choking incidents (round, hard, small, thick and sticky, smooth, compressible or dense, or slippery).

Examples:

- Hot dogs
- Chunks of large meat
- Raw carrot rounds
- Whole grapes
- Hard candy
- Nuts, peanuts, and seeds
- Hard pretzels
- Raw peas
- Chips
- Marshmallows
- Spoonful of peanut butter
- Popcorn
- Rice cakes



Peanuts may block the lower airway. A chunk of hot dog or a whole seedless grape may completely block the upper airway. The compressibility or density of a food item is what allows the food to conform to and completely block the airway. Hot dogs are the foods most commonly associated with fatal choking in children. To reduce the risk of choking, menus should reflect the development abilities of the age of children served. Children should also always be seated and supervised while eating, to monitor the size of food and that they are eating appropriately.

For this and other information, please contact a local Child Care Health Consultant at 520-836-5221. We offer services in Pinal, Gila and Yuma counties, as well as the Gila River Indian Reservation.

Pinal County Master Gardeners Program



2018 Garden & Landscape Short Course

Learn How to Garden in the Desert

The Garden & Landscape Short Course is a study of gardening and landscaping in Pinal County. Materials will include the course curriculum and handouts from each class.

The next short course will run from January - May, sessions in Casa Grande & Apache Junction, there is a registration fee. For more information, please contact our office at 520.836.5221, x202 or tellswor@cals.arizona.edu.

Registration form and payment must be submitted to the Pinal County, Cooperative Extension Office at 820 East Cottonwood Lane, #C, Casa Grande, AZ 85122. Checks must be made payable to The University of Arizona. We are not set-up to accept payment via credit or debit cards. **Pre-Registration is required!**

Instruction will be given by Rick Gibson, County Extension Agent and guest speakers who are recognized experts in their fields.

Topics include (class topics are subject to change without notice):

Basic Botany

Soils

Native Plants

Vegetables and Flowers

Irrigation

Citrus

Turf

Arboriculture/Pruning

Plant Pathology

Plant Diagnosis

Entomology

Integrated Pest Management

Registration for the Garden & Landscape Short Course

Name:		Phone:
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Email Address:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Casa Grande (820 East Cottonwood Lane, #C, Casa Grande, AZ 85122)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Apache Junction (805 S. Idaho Road, Apache Junction, AZ 85119)		

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Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.

Calendar of Events

January

6th - 4-H Livestock Veal Ear Tagging
16th - G&L Course (Apache Junction)
17th - G&L Course (Casa Grande)

February

8th - 4-H Scholarship Applications Deadline
12th - Statewide Service Challenge Deadline

March

8th - 4-H Online Entries Deadline
21st-25th - Pinal County Fair
22nd - Annual Faul 4-H Breakfast

FIND US. LIKE US. FOLLOW US.

Facebook Pages:

- [Pinal County Garden and Landscape Program](#)
- [Maricopa Master Gardeners](#)
- [Pinal County 4-H](#)
- [Child Care Health Consultation for Pinal County, AZ](#)
- [Sensory & Developmental Screening](#)

Webpage: [CALS, Pinal County](#)

Twitter: [@RickGibson4](#)

Blog: [ricksgardenspot.blogspot.com](#)



Richard D. Gibson, County Extension Director
Blase Evancho, Field Crops Systems Assistant in Extension
Kimberly Gressley, 4-H Youth Development Agent
Victor Jimenez, 4-H Youth Development Agent
Cathy L. Martinez, Family Consumer Health Science Agent

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4-H provides educational opportunities for youth to become capable and contributing members of a global community. Children, ages 5-19, learn about healthy lifestyles, animals, plant sciences, and leadership.
Contact: Kimberly Gressley at (520) 836-5221, x.213 or gressley@cals.arizona.edu

Agronomic Field Crops uses research and education efforts to work to improve field crop productivity and global food and fiber supply, farm economic viability, and protecting the environment.
Contact: Rick Gibson at (520) 836-5221, x.227 or gibsonrd@cals.arizona.edu

ASPIRE (Achieving Success by Promoting Readiness for Education and Employment) is a program designed to help foster independence in youths with disabilities between the ages of 14-16, and ultimately improve their educational and employment opportunities.
Contact: Sally Peoples at (520) 836-5221, x.224 or speoples@cals.arizona.edu

Child Care Health Consultations (CCHC) develops relationships with childcare facilities to provide training to staff that will improve their knowledge and practice in the childcare setting.
Contact: Janet Jepsen at (520) 836-4651 or janetj@cals.arizona.edu

Choose Health Action Teen (CHAT) is designed to recruit teens to teach younger children the benefits of healthy eating and active living. Teens also participate in community service events.
Contact: Esmeralda Castillo at (520) 836-5221 or ecastill@cals.arizona.edu

Developmental Program reaches out to families with children, ages 0-5, to screen for early developmental milestones such as gross and fine motor skills, communication, personal-social skills, and problem-solving capacities.
Contact: Esther Turner at (520) 836-5221, x.211 or eturner@cals.arizona.edu

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a nutrition education class designed to assist limited resource families in eating smart and being active and in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and behavioral changes necessary to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of the total family diet, nutritional and physical well-being.
Contact: Esmeralda Castillo at (520) 836-5221 or ecastill@cals.arizona.edu

First Smiles is an oral health program that provides preventative oral health education, oral screening, referral to dentists for children birth to age five and pregnant women; and fluoride varnishing for children with emergent teeth up to age five.
Contact: Greeta Mills at (520) 836-4651 or gmills@email.arizona.edu

MAC (Maricopa Agricultural Center) Farm Ag-Ventures educational programs include a combination of videos, educational presenters, hands-on learning experiences and tractor-trailer rides around their 2,200 acre farm for a close-up view of what makes a working farm operate.
Contact: Victor Jimenez at (520) 374-6216 or vicjimenez@yahoo.com

Master Gardener Program trains volunteers to provide up-to-date, locally tested practical information to those desiring to improve the quality and effectiveness of desert gardens and landscapes.
Contact: Rick Gibson at (520) 836-5221, x.227 or gibsonrd@cals.arizona.edu

Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) is a program designed to teach educators how to better integrate water education, water conservation, and best management practices for water use into their curriculums.
Contact: Chuck Dugan at (520) 836-5221, x.210 or clld1@email.arizona.edu

Sensory Program provides free screenings of children, ages 0-5, for vision and hearing impairments that could affect developmental growth.
Contact: Esther Turner at (520) 836-5221, x.211 or eturner@cals.arizona.edu

Soil Fertility Research and Education is a program that focuses on the development of research and education on soil testing, nutrient management, and fertilizer and animal waste best management practices.
Contact: Rick Gibson at (520) 836-5221, x.227 or gibsonrd@cals.arizona.edu

Strengthening Families Program is a parenting and family strengthening program for families with children ages 3-5, that focuses on strengthening parental bonds with their children and learning more effective parenting skills.
Contact: Esther Turner at (520) 836-5221, x.211 or eturner@cals.arizona.edu

University of Arizona Nutrition Network (UANN) is a program designed to influence healthy eating and active living in a positive way that promotes health and reduces disease among all people living in Arizona.
Contact: Lori Lieder at (520) 836-5221, x.216 or llieder@cals.arizona.edu