



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
EXTENSION

Farm, Family & 4-H

NESHOBA COUNTY

NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2021

Bug-proof Your House for Winter:



As cool weather approaches many insects will be looking for a place to spend the winter. Most insects overwinter outdoors. But some insects view our homes as potential overwintering sites.

Proactive Exclusion: The best way to keep lady beetles, paper wasps, and other pests from moving into your home this winter is to make sure your home is bug-tight before the insects get inside.

Every house is unique. Some take very little effort to bug-proof and can be done as a 'do-it-yourself project' with a tube of silicone caulking and a can of foam sealant. Other houses are more challenging and require extensive work by skilled carpenters. But the benefits go beyond just keeping insects out of the house. Properly sealed homes are also more energy efficient, and that saves money. Just don't over do it; be sure to maintain adequate ventilation for health and safety.

How small a crack do you need to seal? Insects can get through cracks larger than 1/16 inch. Sealing cracks this size and larger will keep out the bugs, as well as larger insects. The following list points out some of the key areas to focus on.

Gable Vents: Buildings with gable roofs usually have large vents into the attic at the gable ends. These are usually covered with window screening to prevent insects, as well as larger animals, like rats and squirrels, from getting into the attic. This is one area you definitely want to check.

Soffit Vents: Most buildings have numerous small vents installed in the soffit on the undersides of the eaves. Check these soffit vents to be sure they have intact insect screening and that there are no bug-sized cracks around the edges.

Ridge Vents: Many buildings have ridge vents along the roof peak. Check these for insect-sized cracks.

Chimneys: Around chimneys, water leaks are usually a greater concern than insect leaks. Water leaks are enough of a problem by themselves, but they can also eventually result in insect problems, especially with termites or carpenter ants. Check the flashing to be sure it is intact and properly sealed and check that cracks where the chimney and exterior siding meet are water and insect-proof. This is also a good time to check that the interior of the chimney is free of bird nests and other obstructions, and is otherwise clean and safe for winter use.

Windows: Check all window screens to be sure they fit tightly and are not torn. Also check for cracks or crevices around windows and window casings.

Doors: Check all exterior doors and use weather stripping, spring steel strips, door sweeps and thresholds, and appropriate sealants and caulking to keep insects from being able to get under or around the door.

Utility Entry Points: Check around plumbing and utility entry points and around dryer duct exits, air conditioners, and similar sites and seal these if necessary. Copper wool or steel wool is often useful for sealing such places, but various other types of sealants may also work, depending on the situation. Be sure to take appropriate precautions when working around electrical wiring.

Structural Cracks and Crevices: Check for cracks and crevices around eaves, corners, places where siding overlaps, and other such sites. Keep in mind that insects can enter cracks larger than 1/16 inch. Pay particular attention to cracks, crevices or holes in areas where insects are naturally funneled as they crawl up an exterior wall, such as where outside walls meet the undersides of eaves.

Keep up with the Neshoba Extension,
4-H, and Master Gardeners on Facebook!
Just type in the search bar:
"Neshoba County Extension Services"
"Neshoba County 4H" or
"Neshoba County Master Gardeners"



Save the Date

December 1: Livestock entry forms and possession of livestock animals are due for SW District and DNJR.



The Extension Office will be closed November 25-26 and December 23-31 in observance of the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday. We hope each of you and your families have a safe and happy holiday season!

Anna Byrd Windham
abw@msstate.edu
601-656-4011

Chase Domingue
ced388@msstate.edu
601-656-4011

12000 HWY 15 N. SUITE 2 PHILADELPHIA, MS 39350

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Chronic wasting disease in deer impacts hunters

Ms. Bonnie A. Coblenz



Posted instructions tell hunters how to leave a deer sample in a freezer for CWD testing. Hunters are encouraged to test deer before processing or eating the venison. (Photo by MSU Extension Service/Kevin Hudson)

The appearance of chronic wasting disease on the Mississippi landscape is making significant changes in the lives and hobbies of hunters, and many are ready to do what it takes to limit this disease. Chronic wasting disease, or CWD, is a prion disease of white-tailed deer that is easily transmissible to deer through saliva, feces, urine or a contaminated environment. A prion is a type of protein that can trigger normal proteins in the brain to fold abnormally. Prion diseases can affect both humans and animals and are sometimes spread to humans by infected meat. CWD is fatal to deer in every instance. If left unmanaged, it devastates the deer population. CWD has never been known to transmit to humans.

Arneal Tucker lives and hunts in north Benton County, which has the highest known concentration of CWD cases in the state. Fifty-six of the state's 83 positives have been reported from this county. Tucker harvested three of these positives. "I hunt to feed my family. We depend on it for the winter to get by," Tucker said. "It helps on the cost of the groceries when I have deer in the freezer." Tucker harvested four deer over the 2019-2021 deer hunting seasons. When he sent the meat to the processor, he also took the heads to testing sites. Tucker kept the venison separate until the test results came back, but he had to throw away the meat from three of his deer.

"CWD has had a great impact on me because no one expects to take your meat in and pay a lot of money to have it processed, and then when you get it back, you can't eat it," Tucker said. "I test every deer I harvest. I won't take the risk. My family is too important for that." Tucker, who has been hunting since he was about 8 years old, hunts on a friend's land. Nearly all the hunting he has ever done has happened in Benton County, which now has the state's highest reported incidence of CWD. When he harvests a deer, he shares his bounty with others. "My immediate family is older people in my neighborhood and such, and they can't go hunting, so I take it on myself to share what I get," Tucker said. "They have been calling me and expecting some more meat, but I don't have any now."

Wildlife specialists have determined that the best management practices to keep CWD numbers in check are to lower deer density and eliminate practices that encourage deer to congregate. "This is why the state's regulatory agency allows more deer to be harvested in CWD zones and why supplemental feeding is eliminated in these areas," said Bronson Strickland, wildlife specialist with the Mississippi State University Extension Service. "Supplemental feeding does not cause CWD, but it facilitates its spread as deer concentrate in certain areas, such as around a feeder," he said.

Jonathan Cooksey is another hunter in north Benton County. His family submitted several deer for testing in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 deer seasons, and three came back positive for CWD. He quit hunting in neighboring Hardeman County, Tennessee, after it became one of that state's top counties for CWD prevalence. "We give away the meat after the results come in, but we do not eat it anymore," Cooksey said. He has been trophy hunting in the same 4-mile radius his whole life.

"We always ate our venison when we killed a deer," Cooksey said. "I started for sport and food, then transitioned to more of trophy hunting and deer management."

When Mississippi first reported CWD and numbers began rising in Tennessee near where he hunts, Cooksey began to entertain the thought that CWD could be on his land, but he did not want to believe it.

"We harvested two nice bucks in the 2019-20 season, and both were positive for CWD. It was a shock," he said. "Every deer we harvested and tested was positive that year. I test anything I get now."

William McKinley, deer program coordinator with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, said monitoring for the presence of the disease is critical.

"Many areas of the state are not well sampled, so we cannot rule CWD out in those areas," McKinley said.

Hunters are encouraged to bring the heads of all deer harvested for free testing at one of 46 drop-off sites across the state. Store the meat in coolers before processing until CWD test results are back, a process that usually takes about a week.

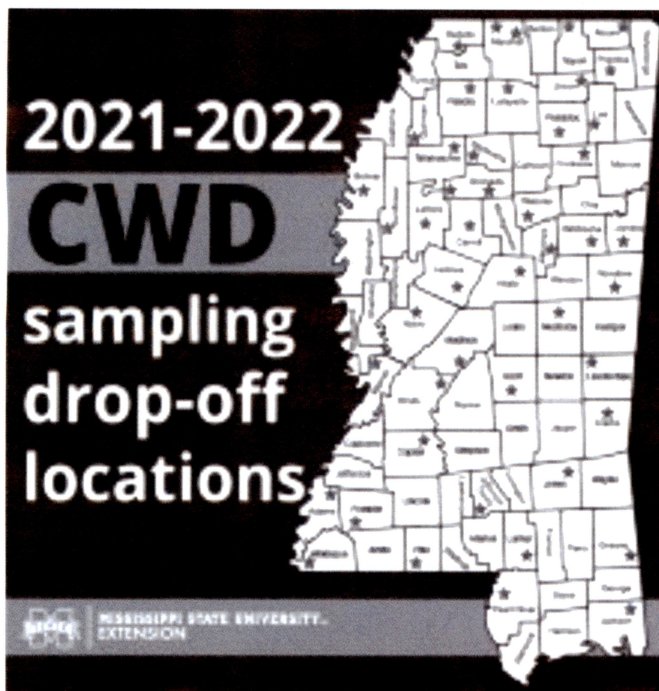
Cooksey said he has noticed an explosion in the deer population where he hunts, and population density is a major contributing factor in the spread of CWD among white-tailed deer.

"Before CWD, you could put out mineral licks and feed your deer and take care of them, but with CWD, we had to stop all that because you don't want deer congregating," Cooksey said. "Before, we fed them to keep them healthy; now, we have to do the exact opposite to keep them healthy."

Both Tucker and Cooksey said they are willing to participate in efforts to limit the spread of CWD in Mississippi's white-tailed deer population. They said a quicker test to detect CWD infection would allow hunters to know if meat is safe before they handle it too much and have it processed. Cooksey said he would also like to see more deer harvested each season to keep the population down.

"Maybe we can all get together to work on this problem," Tucker said. "If there's a plan to benefit everyone, I'd be more than glad to work with that toward a solution."

Find more information about CWD and its management and testing at <http://mdwfp.com/wildlife-hunting/chronic-wasting-disease>. A map shows drop-off locations and times. There is also an app to help hunters with this process.



The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks has established 46 locations across the state where hunters can drop off harvested deer heads to be tested for chronic wasting disease. The test is free, and results are typically back within a week. Find more information at :

<http://www.mdwfp.com/wildlife-hunting/chronic-wasting-disease/sample-collection/>

Location sites are listed below:

Neshoba County: Philadelphia Fire Station # 3
257 Gum Street
Philadelphia, MS 39350

Noxubee County: USDA Service Center
48 Millers Chapel Church Road
Macon, MS 39341

Lauderdale County: Collinsville VFD
11710 Nancy Drive
Collinsville, MS 39325

Attala County: Yockanookany WMA
28329 MS Hwy 12
McCool, MS 39108

Choctaw County: Choctaw WMA
2121 Webster Road
Ackerman, MS 39795

Space Heater Safety Tips

To keep yourself and your home safe while using a space heater:

- Review instructions and warning labels to ensure safe operation.
- Inspect your heater for damage.
- Place space heaters on low, flat surfaces.
- Keep out of high-traffic areas or doorways.
- Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from flammable items and objects, such as papers or curtains.
- Avoid leaving a space heater unattended -- especially for long periods of time.
- Do not plug space heaters into extension cords or power strips.
- Unplug space heaters when not in use.

When it's cold outside, a space heater can be the perfect way to create a warm, comfortable living area.

Although space heaters can be a hazard, when used correctly they are a convenient, affordable



MISSISSIPPI 4-H JUNIOR PHOTO SAFARI

When: November 23, 2021 10am -3pm

Where: Mississippi State University Bost Building B

Who: Ages 8-13 and limited to 20 Participants

Cost: \$10 to cover pizza lunch and MAFES Ice Cream

Requirements:

- Participants must have a digital camera to use
- Must bring their camera manual
- Wear weather appropriate clothing and comfortable walking shoes

Deadline to register is November 18, 2021

Register by scanning the QR code or visiting the following links:

https://reg.extension.msstate.edu/reg/event_page.aspx?ek=0081-0004-a49e96837d774812abd67ea1dc1c6156

For more information contact Leflore County Extension Agent

Christina Meriwether at cav4@msstate.edu



Winter conditions improve wild hog trapping results

Dr. Bronson Strickland



Wild hogs are a tremendous problem for farmers and landowners throughout the state of Mississippi. Wild hogs have a growth rate that exceeds any other large mammal in North America. An adult sow typically produces four to eight piglets per litter -- at least double that of white-tailed deer.

Currently, the best way to reduce hog populations is through trapping. Hunting and shooting have their place, but a well-organized trapping program will yield the best results relative to time and effort. The key to getting a hog in a trap is through its stomach. Wild hogs are classified as omnivores, which means they eat both plant and animal matter. About 90 percent of a hog's diet is plant matter, including roots, fruits, acorns and -- much to the chagrin of our Mississippi farmers -- crops like corn, soybeans, rice, peanuts and sweet potatoes. The remaining 10 percent of a hog's diet is meat, which it acquires opportunistically. This essentially means it eats any meat it can find, such as mice, salamanders, frogs, snakes, rabbits and deer fawns.

Winter is the best season for hog trapping because most of the foods that hogs relish are limited in cold months. Summer crops that hogs demolish have not yet been planted, and their favorite naturally occurring foods, such as blackberries, persimmons and muscadines, have already been eaten. Probably the most sought-after wintertime food is acorns, which is unfortunate for our native wildlife species, including deer, turkey and squirrels. When acorns are available, trapping can be difficult simply because hogs aren't nearly as attracted to bait when Mother Nature's candy is abundant on the forest floor. It may be best to wait until deer season has closed to minimize activity in the woods and to reduce any legal constraints when using grain-based foods for hog bait. Always check with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks at <http://www.mdwfp.com> for hog trapping regulations.

Here are a few tips for effectively trapping hogs.

The bigger the trap, the better. Small box traps are occasionally used to catch an individual hog, but that is not our goal. Instead, choose a corral-style trap to catch several hogs each time the trap is triggered. Also, because corral traps do not have a top or roof, non-target animals that may get trapped can escape without harm.

Do your homework. Pick a trapping location that has plenty of evidence that hogs routinely visit the area. Then, start the baiting process. Use a trail camera so you can determine how many hogs are routinely visiting the site and consuming the bait.

Construct the trap. It may take several days to convince the hogs to enter the corral to consume the bait. Trail-camera information becomes critically important. Don't set the trap or engage the triggered trap door until you have photographic evidence that all the hogs are entering and feeding in the trap. When you determine that all the hogs feel secure entering the trap, it's time to set the trap door trigger.

Technology is making this process even more efficient -- a camera at the trap site will send photographs to your cell phone. What's even cooler is that you can send a signal back to the camera to tell it to close the trap door! This technology improves trapping efficiency. Of course, this technology will cost more, so you will have to determine if this newer technology is right for your situation.

Unfortunately for our farms, forests and wildlife, we are in for a long fight if we are to control wild hogs and keep them from spreading. For more information about wild hogs and how to control this invasive pest, please visit our MSU Extension website at <http://www.WildPigInfo.com>.

November is Diabetes Awareness Month



Healthy choices in food and exercise can help prevent diabetes. Diabetes can be controlled by choosing healthy foods, staying physically active and knowing and managing blood sugar numbers.

More than 308,000 Mississippians live with diabetes, and approximately 600,000-750,000 Mississippians have prediabetes. Managing diabetes starts with maintaining healthy blood sugar levels. Balancing what you eat is a great place to start. Here are a few tips!

Start by filling half of your plate with non-starchy vegetables like leafy greens, green beans, peppers, and tomatoes each day.

Focus on creating a balance of

- vegetables, such as turnips, cabbage, and okra;
- proteins, such as lean meats, beans, and tofu; and
- high fiber carbohydrates, such as brown rice, whole wheat pasta, and quinoa.

The diabetes plate method is an excellent place to start. No counting or measuring necessary; all you need is a plate.

Watch your portions and added sugar. Read food labels and pay attention to carbohydrate content and portion sizes. While looking at food labels, also look at the added sugar. The American Heart Association recommends that men should try to stay under 9 teaspoons of added sugar per day and women 6 teaspoons per day. Remember, added sugar is not naturally occurring sugar; it is added during food processing.

Avoid skipping meals. If you have prediabetes or diabetes, you want to maintain a steady blood sugar. Eating regular meals and snacks will help with that. Skipping meals causes your blood sugar to fluctuate. Skipping meals also can make you hangry (hungry and angry). Providing your body with adequate nourishment not only promotes health, but it also supports good decision making. It's hard to say no to sugary, salty, high-fat foods if you are hangry.

Find a healthy eating approach that works for you. For some people with diabetes, carbohydrate counting works. For others, the diabetes plate method works. Nutrition and diabetes management is not one size fits all. Work with your doctor or registered dietitian to find an approach that works for you.

And remember to get moving! Nutrition is just one part of the wellness equation.

You can learn more about nutrition and diabetes by joining MSU Extension's Dining with Diabetes program.

ROASTED RED AND SWEET POTATOES

Ingredients

6 red potatoes
2 medium sweet potatoes
2 tablespoons oil

Directions

Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Wash your hands well with soap and hot water. Wash the potatoes under running water. Scrub off any dirt. Cut the potatoes into bite-sized pieces. Spread the potato pieces onto a large baking sheet. Pour the oil over the potatoes. Mix them with your hands until the potatoes are covered with oil. Spread the potatoes into a single layer on the baking sheet. Put the baking sheet in the oven. Bake until the potatoes are brown and tender, about 25-30 minutes. Turn them twice while

they are cooking. Serve the potatoes while they are hot. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.



Winter Holidays

No matter what's on your menu, food is always a central part of holiday festivities. Whether you're an experienced cook, a first-time party host, or bringing a dish to a potluck dinner check out these resources for ensuring that holiday buffets and mail-order food are free from the germs that cause foodborne illness

<https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/food-safety-by-events-and-seasons>

YOUR MAP TO A FOOD-SAFE HOLIDAY

Follow some simple food safety advice to keep you and your guests feeling festive this winter.

PROPER PREPPING

Just as you have a procedure for storing your holiday gifts when you get home, you should have a **system for storing your food.**

Make sure your fridge is set at or below **40 °F**
Chill perishable groceries within two hours of shopping

Store raw meats in a container or dish to prevent juices from leaking and set below ready-to-eat foods.

Wash your hands for **20 SECONDS**
with warm water and soap!

Be sure to separate raw meat from ready-to-eat foods and dishes.

Don't forget: You need two thermometers.

One for the fridge to ensure food is stored at 40 °F.

One for food, particularly meat, to ensure it's cooked to the right temperature.

WELCOME TO Roastville

Always use a food thermometer to check that different holiday meats have been cooked to the right internal temperature.

GROUND BEEF 160 °F

DUCK 165 °F

TURKEY 165 °F

GOOSE 165 °F

VEAL* 145 °F

PORK* 145 °F

LAMB* 145 °F

STEAK* 145 °F

YIELD

***Don't forget resting time!**
Beef, veal, lamb, and pork should rest for **3 MINUTES** before carving or consuming.

HITTING THE ROAD

If you're bringing a dish to a get-together with coworkers, family or friends this holiday season, make sure you are transporting food safely.

KEEP COLD FOOD COLD
When transporting cold dishes, place items in a cooler with ice or gel packs to keep food at or below **40 °F**

KEEP HOT FOOD HOT
Keep hot foods at or above **140 °F** by wrapping dishes in insulation bags or towels and newspaper.

DANGER ZONE

DO NOT ENTER

Perishable food kept in the Danger Zone (between 40 - 140 °F) for longer than 2 hours should be thrown out.

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EXCEPTIONS to Danger Zone include ready-to-eat items like:

cookies
 crackers
 bread
 whole fruit

Cooler temperatures mean it's campfire season!

There's nothing like spending time outside roasting marshmallows over an open fire. Whether you're in your back yard or on a camping trip, knowing how to build a campfire is a skill everyone needs to know! You never know when knowing how to build one will come in handy.

Prepare your area. It's recommended to select an area away from flammable materials. Choose an open area that's clear of trees. If you're building a campfire from the ground up, build a border around your campfire area with rocks or a water trench to ensure the fire doesn't spread.

Gather materials. To build a fire, you'll need a variety of dry items. Collect newspaper, wood shavings, pine straw, or dryer lint to get your fire started. You'll also need to gather twigs, sticks, and small limbs to keep your fire blazing.

Build your fire. To build your fire, you will want to arrange your starter materials, such as newspapers, wood shavings, pine straw, or dryer lint.

Combine the material into a pile, then place small twigs and limbs on top of it. Carefully light the starter materials on fire. Once you have a flame, add larger twigs and limbs to help build the fire. Add larger pieces of wood on top of your fire to maintain the fire. If the flames seem to be struggling, blow on the materials at the lowest level, or use newspaper to create air flow.

Extinguish your fire. When you're finished with your campfire, pour water on the fire to extinguish it. Do not leave your fire burning after you're finished.

As enjoyable as a campfire can be, it can also be dangerous when not handled with care. It's important to consider these three safety tips when building fires:

Never leave a fire unattended. Even with small fires, it can get out of control quickly. Keep your eye on your campfire to ensure your fire does not get out of hand.

Always be prepared for emergencies. Have a water source and shovel nearby to extinguish any flames that have spread out of your designated area.

Only use dry wood and wood products. Don't use items that are treated, including plastics, which can release chemicals when on fire.

If you'd like more information on how to properly build a campfire, check out Extension Publication 3277, "How to Build a Campfire."



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