

Media Contact: Tracy Courage tcourage@uaex.edu 501-658-2044

Feb. 2, 2021

**DIY: Grow your own groceries — extension can teach you how**

By Tracy Courage

U of A System Division of Agriculture

**Fast Facts:**

* Extension agents teach how to grow, prepare fruit and veggies
* Single fruit or vegetable crop highlighted in each class
* Future topics: salad greens, strawberries, herbs, cucumber, mushrooms
* Registerat [www.uaex.edu/grow-groceries](http://www.uaex.edu/grow-groceries)

(386 words)

LITTLE ROCK — One trend that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic and has continued into 2021 is a greater interest among Arkansans in growing their own food.

In response to frequently-asked gardening questions, the Cooperative Extension Service has developed a series of online “Grow Your Own Groceries” presentations to share agents’ expertise in growing and preparing fruits and vegetables.

The one-hour live presentations are offered at noon on the first and third Thursday of each month. Each presentation highlights a different fruit or vegetable crop.

“We’re seeing a lot more people interested in edible gardening,” said Krista Quinn, agriculture agent with the Faulkner County Extension office, part of the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. “People who are interested in landscaping and flowers are getting into growing their own food, and we also are seeing people who have no experience gardening suddenly have an interest. I think it’s great. Part of the reason we wanted to do this program is to give people as much information as we can to help them be successful — whether they have a small suburban garden or a larger traditional garden.”

In each class, an agriculture agent or specialist will discuss selecting varieties, growing methods, and dealing with common pests and problems. Then, a family and consumer science agent will demonstrate how to prepare the produce in a healthy recipe. Agents and specialists from Benton, Conway, Crawford, Faulkner, Lonoke, Miller, Pulaski, Washington, White and Woodruff counties are involved in the series.

Upcoming classes include:

Feb. 18 — Potatoes

March 4 — Broccoli, Cauliflower and Cabbage

March 18 — Salad greens

April 1 — Strawberries

April 15 — Herbs

May 6 — Cucumbers

“Being able to concentrate on a single crop at a time is a nice opportunity to focus on all the details of that crop — everything from selecting varieties that do well in Arkansas to common problems that gardeners encounter,” Quinn said.

There is no cost to attend, but registration is required. The class schedule and registration are available at [www.uaex.edu/grow-groceries](http://www.uaex.edu/grow-groceries).

This year’s series began in January with classes about spring peas and blackberries. More than 500 people from Arkansas and neighboring states registered for each of those classes.

Most sessions include a 45-minute presentation with a question-and-answer. After the presentation, participants will receive relevant fact sheets on the fruit or vegetable and the featured recipe.

To learn more about extension programs in Arkansas, contact your local Cooperative Extension Service agent or visit [www.uaex.edu](http://www.uaex.edu). Follow us on Twitter at [@UAEX\_edu](http://www.twitter.com/uaex_edu).

**About the Division of Agriculture**

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture’s mission is to strengthen agriculture, communities, and families by connecting trusted research to the adoption of best practices. Through the Agricultural Experiment Station and the Cooperative Extension Service, the Division of Agriculture conducts research and extension work within the nation’s historic land grant education system.

The Division of Agriculture is one of 20 entities within the University of Arkansas System. It has offices in all 75 counties in Arkansas and faculty on five system campuses.

The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs and services without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

# # #