

## Family and Consumer Sciences Department Staff

Carolyn Gregov, Ph.D.  
Extension Director  
[cgregov@scgov.net](mailto:cgregov@scgov.net)

Mary Jo Oswald, MS, CFCS  
FCS Agent II  
[mjoswald@scgov.net](mailto:mjoswald@scgov.net)

Mary King  
Program Assistant  
[mking@scgov.net](mailto:mking@scgov.net)

Jodi Williams  
Senior Secretary  
[jdwillia@scgov.net](mailto:jdwillia@scgov.net)

website: [sarasota.extension.ufl.edu](http://sarasota.extension.ufl.edu)



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Family and Consumer  
Sciences Department  
University of Florida -  
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## Palatable Picnic Tables Clean and Germ-Free

Eating outdoors is one of summer's pleasures. But, we can get so engrossed in the surrounding scenery that we forget to look down and check out our eating surface! Picnic tables, particularly those in public parks and in outdoor dining areas where the workforce gathers, are busy places ... and busy breeding grounds for germs, warns The Soap and Detergent Association. Picnic tables at home, often exposed to birds and other elements of nature, may not fare much better.

### Wipe down

Even if the table appears clean, proceed with caution. Make disinfectant wipes your summer traveling companion. Stash them in your glove compartment, briefcase, backpack, beach tote or purse for quick swipe-and-wipe cleaning for picnic tables and benches. If you're picnicking at home, you can also clean picnic tables with soap and warm water.

### Hands up

Once the picnic table is clean, don't forget about your hands. If there's no soap and water nearby, use a disposable hand wipe or a hand sanitizer to clean your hands.

### Source

<http://www.cleaning101.com/cleaningmatters/newsletter>

# Avoid Getting Hooked by a Phishing Scam

Have you ever received an email message from what appears to be a reputable company asking you to verify your personal information? If so, beware ... this type of scam is called “Phishing.”

Phishing scams are becoming increasingly popular every day. According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), phishers send random emails or pop-up messages that claim to be from a business or organization that you may deal with — for example, an Internet service provider (ISP), bank, online payment service or even a government agency. The message may ask you to “update,” “validate” or “confirm” your account information. Some phishing emails threaten that your account(s) will be suspended or closed if you don’t respond. These authentic-looking messages are designed to fool you into revealing personal data such as account numbers, passwords, credit card numbers, Social Security numbers and other sensitive information, which is then used to steal your identity.

## **Use these tips to help you avoid getting hooked by a phishing scam:**

Don’t click on the link - If you get an email or pop-up message that asks for personal or financial information, do not reply. And don’t click on the link in the message, either. Legitimate companies don’t ask for this information via email. If you are concerned about your account, contact the organization mentioned in the email using a telephone number you know to be genuine (such as your monthly statement), or open a new Internet browser session and type in the company’s correct Web address yourself. In any case, do not cut and paste the link from the message into your Internet browser — phishers can make links look like they go to one place, but that actually send you to a different site altogether.

## **Don’t email personal or financial information**

Email is not a secure method of transmitting personal information. If you initiate a transaction and want to provide your personal or financial information through an organization’s website, look for indicators that the site is secure, like a lock icon on the browser’s status bar or a URL for a website that begins “https:” (the “s” stands for “secure”). Unfortunately, no indicator is completely foolproof; some phishers have learned how to forge security icons.

## **Review your financial data**

Be certain to review your credit card and bank account statements as soon as you receive them to check for unauthorized charges. If your statement is late by more than a few days, call your credit card issuer or bank to confirm your billing address and account balances.

## **Think before you open**

Be cautious about opening any attachment or downloading any files from emails you receive, regardless of who sent them. These files can contain viruses or other software that can compromise your computer’s security and personal information.

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**Report phishing**

Forward phishing emails to spam@uce.gov and to the company, bank, or organization impersonated in the phishing email. Most organizations have information on their websites about where to report instances of phishing.

**If you think you've been hooked**

If you have recently released your credit card or bank account information in response to an unsolicited email, you should notify your credit card issuer or bank immediately and discuss whether you should cancel your accounts. In any event, you should carefully monitor all your credit related accounts. If you provided your Social Security number, you should contact one of the three national consumer reporting agencies, ask that a fraud alert be placed on your accounts and obtain copies of your credit reports. You also should visit the FTC's Identity Theft Website at [www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft) to file a complaint.

For additional consumer information visit our website at <http://www.800helpfla.com>. You can also call our Consumer Assistance hotline at 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352) from within Florida, 850-488-2221 calling from outside Florida, or 1-800-FL-AYUDA (352-9832) in Español, and a consumer specialist will be happy to answer any questions you may have or forward you free consumer literature by mail.

**Source: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**

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## **Bad Fire vs. Good Fire**

**Did you know that wildfire (Bad Fire):**

- From 1998-2001 damaged or destroyed more than 760 homes and businesses in Florida.
- Destroyed more than 1.4 million acres of Florida wildlands in 1998-2001.
- Set maliciously by arsonists destroys an average of 65,000 acres in Florida each year.
- Increases as more homes are built in and around forested areas.

**Did you know that prescribed fire (Good Fire):**

- Reduces the risk of loss to homes, recreation areas and wood products when a wild fire does occur.
- Benefits many of Florida's native fire dependent species.
- Controls forest tree diseases and removes hazardous flammable fuels.

**Source: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**

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# Chill Out with the Lycopene Leader

## Florida watermelon season is here

Who says something that tastes good can't be good for you? Sweet, cool, crunchy watermelon is packed with vitamins, minerals, and health-enhancing phytochemicals. In fact, this popular treat contains more cancer-fighting lycopene than any other fresh produce item, even tomatoes.

"Watermelon is the lycopene leader among fresh fruits and vegetables," said Leslie Coleman of the National Watermelon Promotion Board. "Watermelon contains 15 to 20 milligrams of lycopene per two-cup serving."

Lycopene provides the natural pigment that makes watermelon red, and it has potent antioxidant capabilities. Antioxidants are important for good health because they neutralize free radicals — highly reactive, imbalanced molecules that can damage tissue cells and cause disease. Emerging science suggests that the lycopene found in watermelon may help reduce the risk of prostate cancer and heart disease.

In addition to lycopene, watermelon has plenty of vitamin A, which promotes eye and skin health, and vitamin C, which boosts the immune system and protects the body against the effects of aging. It is high in potassium and fiber, and the standard two-cup serving contains just 80 calories and virtually no fat.

"Watermelon is a very wholesome and inviting alternative to processed snacks and desserts," said Florida Agriculture Commissioner Charles H. Bronson. "Since it is 92 percent water, it's also a great way to keep the body hydrated following physical activity. Thankfully, you don't have to wait until summer to get your fill of this healthful food. You can find fresh Florida watermelons in your supermarket from April through July and in November and December."

Florida is one of the top producers of watermelon in the United States, along with California, Texas, and Georgia. Watermelon is grown throughout the state. In 2004, Florida's cash receipts for watermelon totaled over \$67 million

Native to Africa, watermelon is an edible gourd belonging to the same botanical family as squash and cucumbers. Ancestors of the modern watermelon grew wild in the Kalahari Desert and were valued by the local people as an important source of food and water. Archeological evidence suggests that watermelon was cultivated in ancient Egypt more than 5,000 years ago, but it is not believed to have reached Europe until the Moors conquered Spain. By the late 1500s, the Spanish were growing watermelons in Florida.

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In 2004, Florida farmers planted 27,000 acres of watermelon. Large "picnic" melons are still the most common type grown, but increasingly, producers are switching to the smaller "icebox" varieties; their name refers to the fact that they fit easily in most refrigerators. Seedless watermelon varieties are also gaining ground because they are easy to eat and even sweeter than traditional types; they also have a longer shelf life. The latest trend at gourmet markets is the softball-sized, seedless "personal" watermelon, which can be eaten in a single sitting.

Coleman offers this advice to shoppers: "Look the watermelon over carefully before buying," she said. "Choose a firm, symmetrical watermelon that is free of bruises, cuts, and dents."

Choosing a ripe watermelon is very important, since melons won't continue to ripen much after they've been picked. Selecting a ripe watermelon is easy if you know what to look for. Before buying, lift the melon. If it's ripe, it should feel heavy for its size. Next, turn it over. On the underbelly you should see a creamy yellow splotch. If the splotch is white or green, the watermelon was harvested too soon.

"Store watermelon on the warm side," Coleman said. "A thermometer reading of 55 degrees F is ideal. However, whole melons will keep for seven to 10 days at room temperature. Store them too long, and they'll lose flavor and texture."

Before cutting, wash your watermelon with soap and water. If the melon is a big one, you probably won't be able to fit it under the faucet and would be best off washing it with a damp cloth.

Every part of the watermelon is edible, including the rind and the seeds. The fiber-rich rind can be pickled, candied, or turned into jam or jelly. The seeds are highly nutritious, packed with protein, vitamin E, and potassium, and make a healthy, tasty snack if roasted in a low oven and salted.

Watermelon can be eaten plain, or with a light sprinkling of salt to accentuate its sweetness. It's a natural choice for fruit salads, smoothies, and ices. For "Fresh from Florida" cooking ideas, visit <http://www.Florida-Agriculture.com>.

**Source: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**

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## Washer and Dryer

Around 90 percent of the energy used to wash clothes is from heating the water. Therefore, to save energy and money, FPL recommends that you:

- Adjust the water level on your washing machine to match load size, especially when using hot water.
- Use cold water whenever possible and always use a cold rinse.

Efficiency tips for your dryer include:

- Clean the lint filter before every load.
- Don't overload the dryer.
- Use the auto sensor function on your dryer, if you have one, to avoid over-drying your clothes. If not, try setting the timer 15 minutes less than usual and see if they are dry.

When buying a new washer and dryer, here are some helpful hints:

- Buy a dryer that has an auto-dry sensor. This detects when your clothes are dry and automatically turns your dryer off to avoid over-drying clothes and wasting energy.
- Look for machines that offer several water temperature selections for the wash and rinse cycles. The most efficient new washers are front loading, which saves both energy and water. They also spin the clothes faster, which reduces drying time.

Compare prices and check the [Energy Guide label](#) for operating costs of the models you're considering. Dryers are not required to carry this label.

**Source:** [www.fpl.com](http://www.fpl.com), Energy Saving Tips

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## Tea Time

The use of tea for medicinal purposes can be traced back more than a thousand years. We still drink tea today for its health benefits, and science increasingly is supporting tea's medicinal claims.

Tea contains antioxidants known as catechins and flavonoids, which help fight a number of diseases such as certain types of cancer and heart disease.

Remember, tea is a source of caffeine. If that's a concern, drink decaffeinated tea or be moderate in your consumption of regular tea.

**Source:** American Dietetic Association

## How to Say “I Love You” to Your Partner

1. Tell them.
2. While they are showering, put a towel in the dryer so that it will be warm for them.
3. Leave them a note (under the pillow, in car, on refrigerator) with the letters SHMILY written on it. (See how much I love you.)
4. Make a CD with their favorite songs on it.
5. Create a scrapbook with pictures, events, items that represent your relationship.
6. Watch the sunrise/sunset together.
7. Have dinner by candlelight.
8. Create personal gift certificate or coupon redeemable for their favorite things (hugs, back rubs, dinners, etc.).
9. Wash their hair (or rub their scalp if no hair).
10. Send them an email greeting card.

**Source: Carolyn S. Wilken, Ph.D., M.P.H., Associate Professor, Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida**

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## Add Fruits and Vegetables to Your Grilled Cuisine

Tired of the same old barbeque? Add variety with fruits and vegetables. With the abundance of produce available this time of year, it's easy to consume the recommended 2 cups of fruits and 2 ½ cups of vegetables a day.

Add flavor to your outdoor meal by cooking vegetables right on the grill. Baste firm vegetables like peppers, corn, eggplant or onions. Season them with herbs and place on a hot grill until they are tender and brown, usually about 10 to 15 minutes. Or try sliced zucchini, tomatoes and carrots. Place them on heavy-duty foil and sprinkle with water and seasoning. Wrap the foil and grill six to eight minutes or until vegetables are tender.

Include fruit in your meal by grilling kabobs on low heat until the fruit is hot and slightly golden.

**Source: American Dietetic Association**

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## Cash or Credit

To pay cash or to use credit is a choice you have to make each time you buy. There are many good points as well as bad points to using credit.

### **Bad points of using credit are:**

- Credit costs money. You pay extra for the item you are buying because of the finance charges.
- You are tying up future income. You are living on money you expect to have in the future. If you lose your job or become ill this could cause a problem.
- You may overspend. It is easy to do this when the bills don't come for a month.

### **Good points of using credit are:**

- You can get goods and services before paying for them.
- You can use credit to take care of emergencies.
- You don't need to carry large amounts of cash.

### **Before you decide to use credit:**

- Figure out how much you can afford to repay each month.
- Remember that you are agreeing to pay back the money you owe and to make monthly payments.
- Ask yourself the following questions:
  1. Do I really need this item, do I need it now or can it wait?
  2. What will be the extra cost of using credit?
  3. Is having it now worth the extra costs?
  4. Can I make the monthly payments as scheduled?
  5. Will I have to give up something else that is more important in order to use credit now?
  6. Will I be able to handle an emergency if one comes up?

### **An Alternative to Credit:**

Instead of using credit, save money so you can pay cash for the item later. By saving money you can earn interest on the money you are saving and you will not have to pay the extra finance charges as you would if you used credit.

**Source: Nayda I. Torres, family & Consumer Sciences and Mary Harrison, Consumer Education, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL**

## Tips for Managing Stress

- Stress is the tension you feel when there are more demands than you can handle. These pressures may be from work, relationships or other responsibilities. The following are some simple tips to help you manage stress.
- Breathe in deeply through your nose and slowly breathe out through your mouth.
- Relax your muscles. Tense and relax each major muscle group, starting with your face and going down to your toes.
- Take time outs, allow yourself brief breaks or take a day off.
- Practice positive self talk, avoid negative thinking and reward yourself for managing stressful situations.
- Exercise. Be active at least 30 minutes on most days of the week and make lifestyle changes to increase your physical activity.
- Enjoy yourself, take time out for hobbies and friends and do something you enjoy.
- Take care of yourself....sleep well, eat well, live well !

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## Handwashing #1 Defense Against Infection

Handwashing with any soap is the No. 1 infection fighter---not because it kills germs, but because it removes them and they go down the drain. It's the vigorous rubbing with hot, soapy water that scrapes off the germs.

Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds before you eat or prepare food, after you use the bathroom, after you have handled garbage or money, or after playing with your pet. Also wash your hands after blowing your nose or changing the baby's diapers and after shopping.

**Source: Soap & Detergent Association**

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# Helping Children to Cope During a Hurricane

## Making Plans for the Family:

Families that work together to prepare for a hurricane will cope better than those who do not take precautions. Consider how your children might react in a disaster, what your own reactions might be, and how the crisis could affect each person's emotional and physical well-being.

- Involve children in emergency planning, such as reviewing a hurricane supplies check list and writing a shopping list.
- Follow the suggestions or public warnings by emergency services for the care and safety of your child.
- Plan in advance for a designated friend or relative in another state that your family can call to “check-in” with if necessary.
- Talk to children simply and matter-of-factly about the hurricane and how it is to be handled. Give them clear instructions.
- Play “Let’s pretend ...” games with young children to help them work out “what if” situations.
- Evacuating with your family:
  - Pack a small bag or box of supplies for meeting a variety of possible situations.
  - Remember diapers, food and drinks for children.
  - Include a few games, books and hobby material for sitting out emergencies.
  - Bring a favorite toy or stuffed animal to help children feel more secure.

## Coping with emotions:

Once families are out of physical danger, they may be surprised that children are still afraid. Research indicates that children's fears vary according to age, maturity, and previous learning experiences. Four major fears common in children are: death, darkness, animals, and abandonment. In the experience of a hurricane, children would have encountered three out of four major fears. Undoubtedly, this will have an impact on their ability to cope for quite some time. It is especially important for parents to continue to provide emotional support for their children even after the storm is over.

- Children mirror their parents' anxieties, so be calm to help reduce your children's fears.
- Reassure children often and repeatedly.
- Listen to your children express their fears.
- Encourage them to talk and ask questions.
- Spend extra time before bedtime.
- Leave a door open and nightlight on.
- Maintain close contact, hold and touch your child.
- Allow for mourning and grieving over the loss of a meaningful toy or blanket.

Another important aspect about children's fears indicated in current research is that fears may be intensified when adults back away from discussing the topic with children. Many families ban all painful topics from family conversations; yet, one of the most important steps adults can take is to share the time to talk with children.

In a crisis situation a child may show unusually "childish" behavior, such as bed wetting, thumb sucking and clinging to parents. These are signs of anxiety and are usually temporary. Try not to focus on these behaviors and don't punish children who act this way.

**If you must leave your child:**

Children who have been through a disaster are afraid of being separated from family and left alone. If at all possible, avoid any separations with your child, even to go to the store or the damaged area. If you must leave children with friends or relatives, follow the steps below to reassure them:

- Let your child know how long you will be away.
- Let your child know how often you will be in touch with him or her.
- Keep in touch with your child frequently and as regularly as you promised.
- Keep track of your child to be sure he or she is provided for.

**Stay tuned in to your child:**

Some children may need additional help in coping with a hurricane. Their behaviors may indicate additional problems. Following a disaster some children may:

- Be upset at the loss of a favorite toy, blanket, or pet.
- Be angry. They might hit, throw, kick to show their anger.
- Become more active and restless.
- Be afraid of the hurricane recurring.
- Want to sleep with a parent or other person.
- Have nightmares.
- Have symptoms of illness such as nausea, vomiting, headaches, lack of appetite.
- Be quiet and withdrawn.
- Become upset easily – crying and whining frequently.
- Feel guilty that they caused the disaster because of some previous behavior.
- Feel neglected by parents who are busy trying to clean up and rebuild.
- Refuse to go to school or to child care.
- Become afraid of loud noises, rain, storms.
- Not show any outward signs of being upset.

**Source: Diana Converse, M.S., Family Life Agent, Clemson University Extension**

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# Florida Food Fare

By Jean Meadows

## Jicama

Jicama (pronounced *hecama*) is also known as yam bean and Mexican turnip. It is not related to the true yam. The name jicama is also used in Spanish for any edible root. The plant is native to Central America and was probably introduced to Southeast Asia via the Philippines. It is a climbing legume with very long and large tuberous roots, which in five months of growth may reach 6 to 8 feet, weigh 50 pounds or more. More often, roots are round and beet-shaped with a distinctive taproot. The vining tops, which reach 10 to 20 feet in length, have compound leaves with pointed edges, and bear white flowers and green lima bean-shaped pods.

The starchy root tubers are usually round, 10-15 centimeters in diameter, with a light brown skin and a white flesh. The crisp white interior flesh, which may be eaten raw or cooked, tastes like a cross between a water chestnut and an apple. It is often used as a substitute for water chestnut in Oriental cooking. As a vegetable, it is very important and popular in Mexico. It is sometimes served raw with a spread of olive oil, paprika, or other seasoning. The tough brown skin is easily peeled. A word of caution: Eat only the roots. ***The leaves, stems, ripe pods, and seeds may be toxic.***

Jicama is grown only occasionally in Florida home gardens. Commercially, it is produced to some extent in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Mexico, and in warm regions of the Southwestern United States. Jicama does best in a warm climate with moderate rainfall and is sensitive to frost. When planted from seeds, five to nine months of warm weather are required to produce large roots. However, mature roots may be produced after just three months if started from whole small roots. Removing the flowers seems to enhance yields.

Also called a Mexican potato, good-quality jicama will be smooth-skinned, relatively free of blemishes, firm and heavy with moisture. Avoid any tuber that is soft, wrinkled, bruised, pock-marked or has spots of mold. Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Jicama mixes well with other vegetables and fruits in salads. It can also be used in stir-fries.

Nutritionally, jicama is a good source of dietary fiber and a fair source of potassium and vitamin C. A 100-gram portion or 1/2 cup of jicama contains: 85 percent water, 55 calories, 1.4 grams protein, and 12.8 grams carbohydrates.

### Orange-Jicama Salad

Butter lettuce leaves	3 tablespoons olive oil
1 large orange, peeled or sliced	1 tablespoon fresh orange juice
1 cup jicama, peeled and cut julienne style (the size of matchsticks)	1 teaspoon white wine vinegar
1/2 cup red onion, chopped	1 tablespoon fresh cilantro, minced
	Salt and freshly ground pepper

Line plates with lettuce. Top with orange slices. Mound with jicama. Sprinkle with chopped red onion.

Blend juice, vinegar, salt and pepper in small bowl.

Whisk in oil in thin stream. Spoon over salads.

Garnish with minced cilantro.