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Tips for Keeping a Christmas Tree Fresh

Would you like to put your Christmas Tree up earlier in the season but never do because they it never makes it to the end of the season.

Don Tapio shares with us tips on how we can keep our trees green through out the season.

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Best Business Practices presents...

BUYING OR SELLING YOUR BUSINESS

On a regular basis I work with buyers and sellers of businesses. In this article, I thought I would walk you through some considerations from an Advisor's point-of-view when helping you in buying/selling a business. As you read this, think about it as if you were in the position to buy or sell your business.

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4-H has a long history of helping youth "learn by doing". When youth are thoughtfully guided through the do-reflect-apply process, there is tremendous potential for positive youth development and growth. 4-H focuses on teaching new topics and life skills development. Trained 4-H volunteers facilitate the learning that occurs in non-formal settings like 4-H club meetings and activities. The 4-H result is a fun fulfilling learning experience.

<http://www.4-h.org/youth-development-programs/>

To Learn how you or your child can become involved in 4-H visit us at cowlitz.wsu.edu, call us at 360-577-3014, or send us an email

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WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension office.

Tips for Keeping the Christmas Tree Fresh



Question: We intend to purchase the family Christmas tree this weekend and are wondering how to keep it fresh through the holiday season?

For beginners, once you get the tree home, make a fresh cut to remove a $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick disk of wood from the butt end of the trunk before putting the tree in the stand. Make the cut perpendicular to the stem axis. Don't cut the trunk at an angle or into a V-shape, which makes it far more difficult to hold the tree in the stand and also reduces the amount of water available to the tree. Don't bruise the cut surface or get it dirty. After the cut is made, put the tree in water as soon as possible. The longer the time between when the tree is given a fresh cut and when it is put into water, the less ability the tree has to absorb water.

Does Water Temperature have any impact on keeping a tree fresh?

According to Dr. Gary Chatagneer, WSU Plant Pathologist who has done extensive research on Christmas tree keep ability, the temperature of water used to fill the stand is not important and does not affect water uptake. Dr. Chatagner adds however, that many tree stands do not provide adequate water holding capacity for the tree. As a general rule, the stand should provide 1 quart of water per inch of stem diameter. A 6 or 7 foot sheared Douglas Fir tree, common on today's market, can use up to four gallons of water the first week its in the house. The water level should be maintained above the base of the tree. If the water level drops below the cut end of the trunk, a seal will form and no more water will be absorbed by the tree unless another fresh cut is made. With many stands, there can still be water in the stand, even though the base of the tree is no longer submerged in water. Drilling a hole in the base of the tree or cutting the butt end at an angle does not increase water uptake.



What about tree preservatives which you add to the water---do they help?

Do not use additives in the after, including floral preservatives, commercial tree preservatives, molasses, sugar, bleach, soft drinks, aspirin, honey or other concoctions. Some additives can damage trees or increase the rebate of water uptake from the stand. Clean water is all that is needed to maintain freshness. By the

same token, the National Christmas tree Association recommends rinsing the water reservoir in the tree stand with a mixture of one capful of bleach and one cup of water before inserting the tree. This reduces the growth of microorganisms that can block the tree's ability to absorb water. Be careful to spill or splashing the bleach on carpeting etc.

What about film forming anti-transpirants?

Applying film-forming, anti-transpirants to the tree does not have a significant effect on the rate of moisture loss from the tree. These products supposedly block the evaporation of water from the surface of the foliage, but in reality they have little effect.

What's the best way to store a tree until we put it in the house?

If the tree is not going into the house soon after purchase, it should be stored in a bucket of warm water on a cool porch or patio away from wind and sun. and also protected from freezing temperatures.

Question: We have decided to have a live tree this year so we can plant it in our landscape after the holidays. How long can we leave it in the house without breaking dormancy?



Answer: Live trees should not remain indoors for more than three to five days. The plant's buds must remain dormant in order to avoid winter kill once it is moved outdoors. When the tree is indoors, don't let the soil and root ball dry out. The ball can be placed in a tub and kept moist with peat moss packed around it to retain the moisture and provide insulation. Sheet plastic may also be used. Keep the tree in a cool room away from hot or cold drafts, and water as needed to prevent the soil and root ball from drying.

Following the holidays, it is best to provide a gradual transition for the tree from indoors to outdoors. Let the tree spend a few days in a cool area protected from the wind such as a garage, rather than abruptly planting it outdoors.



Article written by Don Tapio

Submitted by Gary Fredricks

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The business purchase or sale situation presents an opportunity to educate the client to the reality of the situation. Among the issues I seek to assess and assist with are:

- Seller motivation and Goals
- Buyer capability and motivation
- Education on the business buy/sell process

SELLER MOTIVATION AND GOALS

For the seller, I want to know "why you are selling?" and we will almost always have to dig beyond the initial rationalization. Many times it is an act of desperation or surrender rather than a valid exit strategy. A rule of thumb in the M&A (mergers and acquisitions) game is that *sellers decide to sell two years after they should have.*

In small business, there is a huge *difference between exit and escape*, the latter being almost always at a loss. Businesses without revenues are generally only worth break-up value.

THE BUY/SELL PROCESS

The private sale of any business, regardless of size, follows a certain procedure. People think they can streamline the process for a very small business sale transaction and cut right to the sale. That is very dangerous.

The steps to successful business buy/sell are:

1. Seller chooses sale as exit strategy
2. Seller packages and markets business
3. Buyer does initial evaluation
4. Buyer submits conditional offer
5. Negotiation and acceptance
6. Due Diligence
7. Final negotiation
8. Execution of Purchase and Sale Agreement
9. Transition of ownership and operations

Skipping any of these essential processes may result in a sale, but it will always cause problems after the sale, likely for both parties.

The first 3 steps involve valuation of the business. First and foremost, a valuation provides a reality check on the feasibility of a purchase or sale so the overly optimistic buyer or seller is stopped before a lot of time and resources are wasted.

PACKAGING A BUSINESS FOR SALE

It may not be easy for an entrepreneur to *reorganize the business so that he or she is not essential to its operation*, but that is crucial if it is to be sold. Improving efficiency is also a good strategy to improve the valuation. Finally, cleaning up for a good presentation helps attract buyers.

The initial sales material includes a description of the business and a summary of assets included by category and sales and profit figures for the last 3 years. It should also include a mention of added value intangibles like leases, patents and contracts, again, without the details. Expense details and customer lists should never be disclosed at this point because they can be very damaging in the hands of a competitor and encourage a potential buyer to become one.

“When can I talk to the employees?” is a question buyers will ask and sellers should consider long before they do. It is part of that packaging for sale. Identifying key personnel and making them part of the transition plan is *must be done before the business can be marketed*.

A seller may be hesitant to put an asking price in the initial sales material for fear of precluding a higher offer but the buyer of anything wants to know the price early on. There is nothing wrong with the strategy of putting the asking price at the high end, leaving room to negotiate, but asking much more will shut out any potential buyer with the business savvy necessary to operate the business.

SBDC Advisors cannot act as agents and most brokers will not handle the smallest of business deals. Often the most likely buyers already have a relationship with the business – stakeholders like employees, competitors, customers and suppliers.

BUYER MOTIVATION AND GOALS

Buyers should also be alerted to seller “tricks” that appear to add to valuation but have a cost after the sale. Deferring maintenance or capitalizing it instead of expensing, buying sales by sacrificing margins, infusing owner cash and cutting necessary staff or owner salary below market are common tricks. Many of these do not show until due diligence - by historical comparison or measure against industry standards.

Remaining topics include: The Offer, For a business entity sale (versus asset sale)

[Click here to read the Full Article](#)



This article was prepared by Jerry Petrick, MBA, CGBP, SPHR, PMP and Certified Business Advisor with the WSU Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Longview, WA. Jerry provides no-cost, confidential business advisory services by appointment. He can be reached via email jerry.petrick@wsbdc.org



December 2014



Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

1

Have the kids look for red and green veggies.

2

Be fun and positive.

3

Teach your children about healthy foods from all the different food groups.

4

Raining outside? play a board game.

5

Limit TV to 2 hours a day.

6

Have a fresh salad or soup before you head out to that holiday bash

7

Cube cantaloupe melon and wrap with a thin strip of prosciutto for a healthy appetizer.

8

Cranberries are in season and a great source of vitamins and antioxidants!

9

Preschool is a time when of lifetime attitudes toward food are formed

10

Bundle up and go for a walk together.

11

Make time for family dinners to share your day.

12

Careful with the eggnog. 1 cup can be almost 350 calories

13

Try an ounce of nuts a day for some healthy oils.

14

Set a healthy goal for the next 12 days.

15

At a holiday event, indulge in your one favorite food.

16

Try substituting a few healthy ingredients in your favorite recipes.

17

Make cocoa for a cozy drink for the kids with low fat or nonfat milk.

18

Holiday season can be very hectic. Stay active

19

Increase activity by taking stairs instead of the escalator or elevators

20

Take a break from the stress of family togetherness for a brisk 10-minute walk

21

Try spray butter for your dinner rolls and veggies.

22

Slice a kiwi fruit in half and teach your child to use a spoon to scoop it out.

23

Children need a healthy snack between meals.

24

Happy Holiday. Enjoy family bonding time.

25

Happy Holiday. Enjoy family bonding time.

26

Children are more accepting of a new food if they've learned about it first

27

Plan a family activity.

28

Turn off the TV and play some family games.

29

Take a healthy snack on the road.

30

Talk as a family about healthy goals.

31

Decorate the table with the colors from veggies and fruits.





Ingredients: **Black Bean Jicama Salad**

3 cups	cooked or canned black beans	3 cloves	garlic, minced
2	tomatoes, chopped	2 tablespoons	chopped cilantro
1 cup	diced jicama	1 tablespoon	cumin
2	red bell peppers, finely chopped	1 tablespoon	olive oil
1 cup	yellow corn, canned or frozen	3 tablespoons	lime juice
2 tablespoons	canned chopped chilies	1 tablespoon	red wine vinegar

Directions:

1. In a large salad bowl, combine all ingredients.
2. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Makes 8 servings, 1 cup each

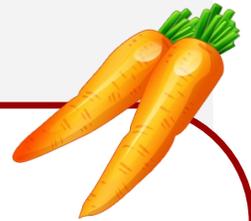
Per serving: 146 calories, 2 g total fat, 0 g saturated

fat,

0 mg cholesterol, 90 mg sodium, 27 g carbohydrate, 8 g dietary fiber, 5 g sugar, 7 g protein

Recipe from www.fabulousfoods.com

Carrots Au Gratin



Ingredients:

3 medium	carrots, sliced
2 tablespoons	chopped onion
5 teaspoons	butter or margarine, divided
1 tablespoon	all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon	salt
Dash	pepper
½ cup	milk
1/3 cup	shredded cheddar cheese
1 tablespoon	minced fresh parsley
2 tablespoons	crushed cornflakes

Directions:

Place 1 inch of water in a saucepan, add carrots. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 6-8 minutes or until carrots are almost tender.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, sauté onion in 3 teaspoons butter until tender. Stir in flour, salt and pepper; until blended. Gradually whisk in milk. Bring to a boil; cook and stir 1-2 minutes or until thickened. Remove from heat; stir in cheese and parsley until cheese is melted.

Drain carrots; add to sauce. Transfer to a greased 2-cup baking dish. Melt remaining butter, stir in cornflakes. Sprinkle over carrots. Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes or until bubbly and gold brown.

Serves 2

Gifts From The Kitchen



Presented by
WSU Extension



Classic Cocoa Mix

1 cup
1 cup
1 cup
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

Ingredients:

granulated sugar
unsweetened cocoa powder
powdered milk
salt
miniature chocolate chips
miniature marshmallows

Directions:

1. Layer ingredients into a wide mouth canning jar in the order given.
2. Attach the following information:

Pour contents into large bowl and mix well. For each cup of cocoa, place $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cocoa mix in a mug and stir in 1 cup boiling water. Stir well. Store the remainder of the mix back in the jar or any airtight container.

Peppermint Stick Cocoa

Ingredients:

1 cup granulated sugar
1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 cup powdered milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup miniature chocolate chips
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup crushed peppermint candy

Directions:

1. Layer ingredients into a wide mouth canning jar in the order given.
2. Attach the following information:

Pour contents into large bowl and mix well. For each cup of cocoa, place $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cocoa mix in a mug and stir in 1 cup boiling water. Stir well. Store the remainder of the mix back in the jar or any airtight container.

Makes 12 servings

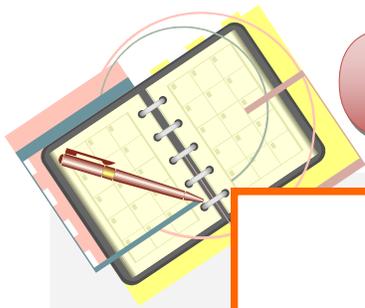


Scientists and consumers alike are asking, "What is the deal with fat?" Research has confirmed that the type of fat we eat is more important than how much we eat. But which fats are the healthiest? And we eat food, not just fats—so what should we eat?

[To read the full article click here](#)

Coconut Oil and Health





Coming Soon



4-H New Year Enrollment

The 4-H youth program is a partnership program with Washington State University Extension and Cowlitz County. Our 4-H year begins in October and ends in September. However, new clubs can start anytime between October and June. So... if you are interested in having your child or other children join 4-H... then please consider starting a 4-H club.

4-H teaches life skills that lead young people to become self-directing, positive, contributing members of our society.



WSU Master Composter Training

Beginning in the New Year 2015, Cowlitz County's WSU Extension Office will provide free Master Composter volunteer training classes to our community members. Supported by a grant with Cowlitz County Solid Waste and Washington Dept. of Ecology

WSU Leadership Academy

Do you aspire to a higher leadership potential, but recognize gaps in your skills. WSU Leadership Academy offers classes designed to help you engage and inspire others. Topics include influencing public policy, media relations, strategic planning, economic development, meeting facilitation, conflict management, and team building. For more information, contact our office.



Raised Bed Giveaway



If you would like a free 4 x 8 foot raised bed for gardening to be placed at your home, then consider this opportunity. Those interested should submit an application. Started in 2012, the Home VEG (Vegetable Educational Garden) Program goal is to promote vegetable gardening in Cowlitz County. Ten applicants will be selected to have a raised bed built for them that includes soil and seeds. Application can be downloaded at:

<http://ext100.wsu.edu/cowlitz/raised-bed-giveaway/>

To find out more about any of the above programs visit us online at

Cowlitz.wsu.edu or give us a call at 360-577-3014