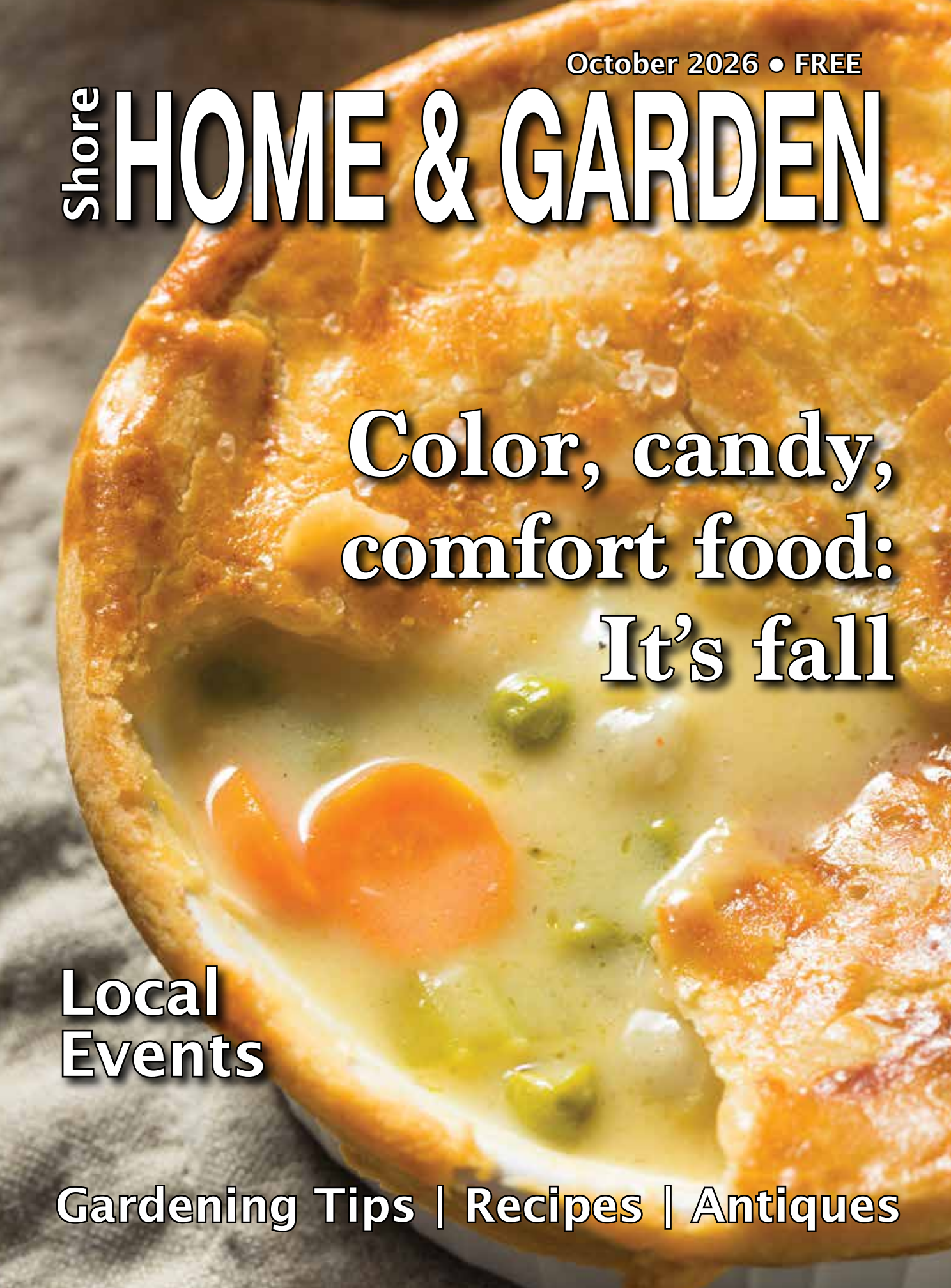




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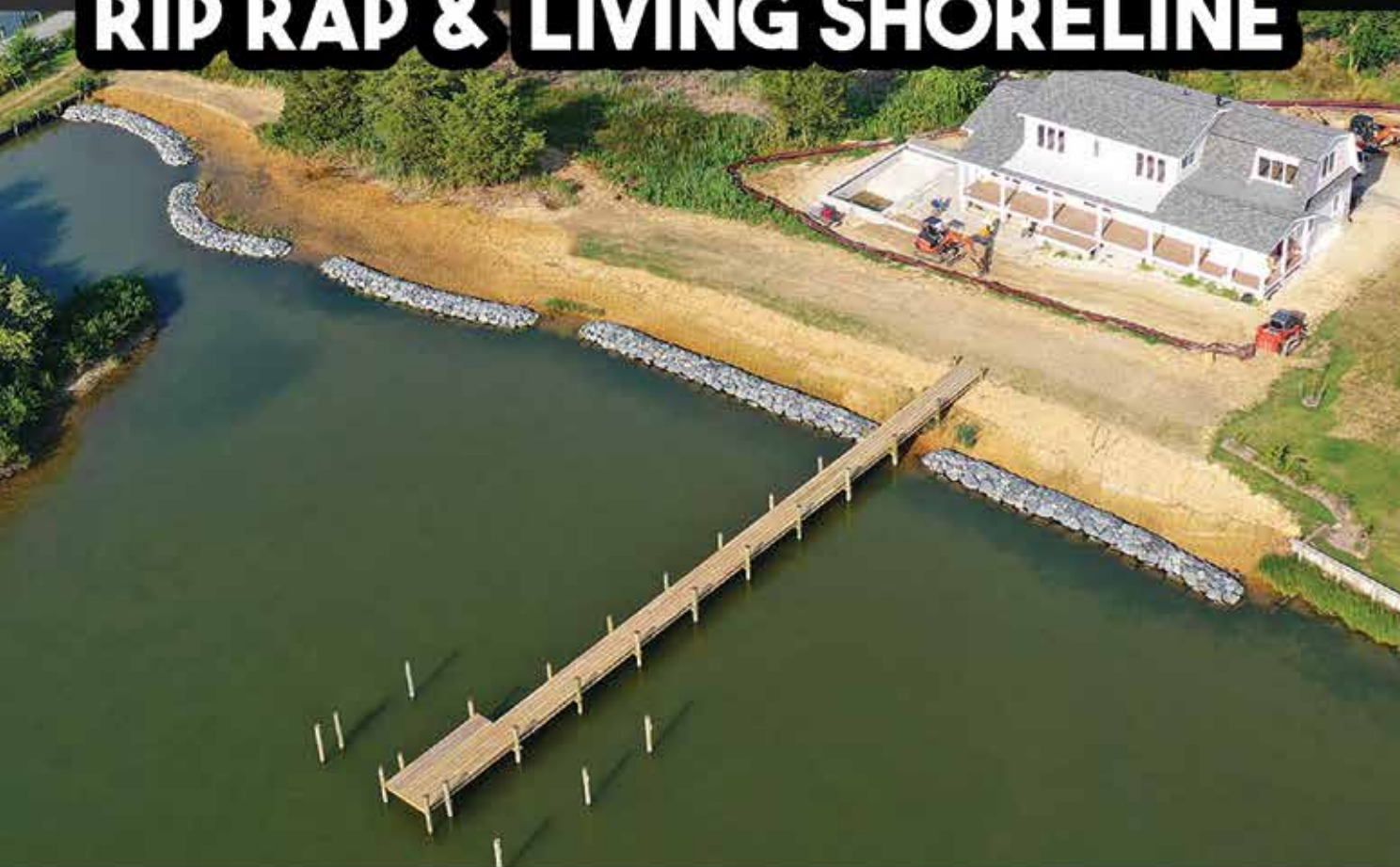
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Shore worth a trip

You can't bottle up crisp air and sunshine for winter, but you can soak it while it's here. If your weekends look busy, try to squeeze in some time after school and work to keep the winter blues away.

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Saving the oysters

Oyster gardening is a preservation practice used to help grow the oyster population in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Due to circumstances such as diseases and over-harvesting, the population of oysters has fluctuated over the years.

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Greetings to a boo

One of the latest trends for Halloween over the past few years is "Boo'ing" where little items are secretly left on a doorstep, office or wherever as a fun surprise for your neighbors, family and friends.

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Favorite comfort foods?

Fall and winter are often times when schedules might slow and the temperature has shifted so that a warm oven isn't minded, and many of these comfort foods are moving from daydreams to dinner.

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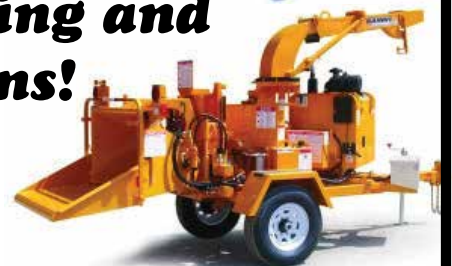
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Learn to cope with an emptying nest

There is a strange thing that happens when your children start leaving the house: You realize how much of your life has been organized around other people's calendars.

Practice, school events, dinners, rides, homework, activities — one child going one direction and another somewhere else. Now, with the kids spending more time out of the house and one away at school, I have something I haven't had in years: time to notice things.

Specifically, I have time to notice which of our household systems actually work and which have been held together with duct tape and wishful thinking.

Having fewer children underfoot doesn't automatically make

Sweet Simplicity



By Kristine George

life simple. It just gives you enough breathing room to see where it isn't. So I've been thinking about a few simple habits that could make everyday life run a little better. Nothing extreme.

No color-coded binders, 5 a.m. workouts or homemade sour-

dough starter required.

Just four non-negotiables that might make life a little easier — and leave more room for the things that matter.

Make dinner a decision, not a dilemma

One of the unexpected perks of having fewer people at home is that I can cook for the people who are actually going to eat the meal — and, in this case, that means two.

I recently tried a couple of meal-kit services, something that was considerably harder to do when I had two discerning eaters at home.

The meal kits reminded me that cooking for two can actually be fun again. They also gave me some new recipes (PAGE 52)

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This is an ideal time to plant new trees

Fall's fiery tree colors are one of nature's most stunning shows, but did you know those brilliant reds, oranges and yellows were hiding all summer long?

The vibrant hues you see when the leaves change isn't about the weather getting cooler, it's about a combination of sunlight, chemistry and the trees preparing for winter. After the autumnal equinox which happened on Sept. 22 this year, the days begin to shrink. The reduced sunlight tells deciduous trees and shrubs that it's time to stop gathering energy and get ready for the winter.

All leaves contain different types of chemicals, but the chemical chlorophyll is responsible for absorbing sunlight, which turns to energy

Ken-Do Attitude



By Ken Morgan

for the tree, and also gives leaves their green color. As the sunlight decreases, a chemical change begins to take place inside the plant where a corky wall of cells (called the abscission zone) forms between the twig and the leaf stalk. This corky

wall eventually causes the leaf to fall off in the breeze later in fall. But as the corky cells begin to multiply, they eventually seal off the vessels that supply the leaf with nutrients and water, and it also blocks the exit vessels to some extent, trapping the simple sugars in the leaves. The combination of reduced light, lack of nutrients, and less water triggers the tree to start the process of breaking down the chlorophyll and then the green color fades. The green was "masking" the other natural pigments and as the green fades, you begin to see the leaves change color.

Yellow carotenoids, which give leaves their brilliant yellow and orange colors, exist in the leaf all summer long. Red anthocyanins, which gives leaves their red and purple colors, are freshly produced by the plants as fall ramps up. As autumn carries on, the leaves will begin to turn brown once all their nutrients are re-absorbed by the tree. The brown color is a result of leftover tannins, another chemical found in many leaves, especially oak leaves. The amount of moisture during the growing season will dictate just how vivid the fall color will be.

October is still a great time to plant new trees and shrubs in the landscape.

Ground temperatures are still warm, which means the root systems of the plants will still grow and get prepared for winter, you are not fighting the weeds, fungus or insects as you would in the spring and summer. Be sure to protect new trees with wire cages or fencing to stop deer from rubbing antlers and browsing. Move all tender plants summering outdoors inside before the first frost. Be sure to spray these plants with insecticidal (PAGE 40)



As the sunlight decreases, a chemical change begins to take place inside the plant where a corky wall of cells (called the abscission zone) forms between the twig and the leaf stalk. This corky wall eventually causes the leaf to fall off in the breeze later in fall.

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Agastache saves its final show for October

Gardening Tips



By Ginny Rosenkranz

Summer is known for the flowers that brighten up the landscapes, and many gardeners think that there are not that many flowers that bloom in the autumn.

The good news is there are some wonderful ones that begin to bloom in June and continue to bloom until the end of October or the first frost.

Agastache, commonly called Giant Hyssop, is a native herbaceous perennial or a nativar that thrives in full sun and very well drained soils. Depending on the species or cultivar, plants generally grow in upright 2-3-foot-tall clumps of fragrant blue-green leaves. When the leaves are crushed, they may have a minty or anise-like fragrance. This aromatic foliage helps make Agastache less appealing to hungry deer and rabbits.

The showy, sometimes fragrant tiny two lipped tubular flowers are produced on terminal spikes. Depending on the species or cultivar, the flowers may be white, light pink, red, orange, blue, light and dark purple. Both the leaves and flowers are edible and can be dried to brew as an herbal tea.

The size and shape of the tiny flowers make Agastache especially attractive to hummingbirds, butterflies, moths and many other



There are many colorful Agastache cultivars to choose from. Some of the most popular blue and purple flowering selections include "Black Adder," which features reddish purple flowers.

beneficial pollinators. Once they go to seed the goldfinches' sparrows and other songbirds enjoy feeding on the seeds.. There are many colorful Agastache cultivars to choose from. Some of the most popular blue and purple flowering selections include 'Blue Fortune' which produces 4-inch-long periwinkle blue flower spikes, Black Adder' with reddish purple flowers and 'Honeybee Blue with

pale lavender blue flower spikes. "Purple Haze' produces hazy blueish-purple flowers, while 'Blue Bayou' has soft lavender-blue flowers.

For white flowers, gardeners can choose Agastache Mexicana White or Agastache rugosa Alba. Pink flowering selections include 'Pink Pearl' with light pink with dark pink buds, 'Ava' with rose pink flowers and (PAGE 52)

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As the seasons change, Adkins Arboretum has a way of being a different adventure each time.

(Photo courtesy Roadtrippers)

The color way: Follow fall trails to reach autumn wonderland

Story by Leslie Milby

You can't bottle up crisp air and sunshine for winter, but you can soak it in while it's here.

The same trails that were full of lush green foliage this summer are now an autumn wonderland of crunching leaves and color just

waiting for you to stroll through.

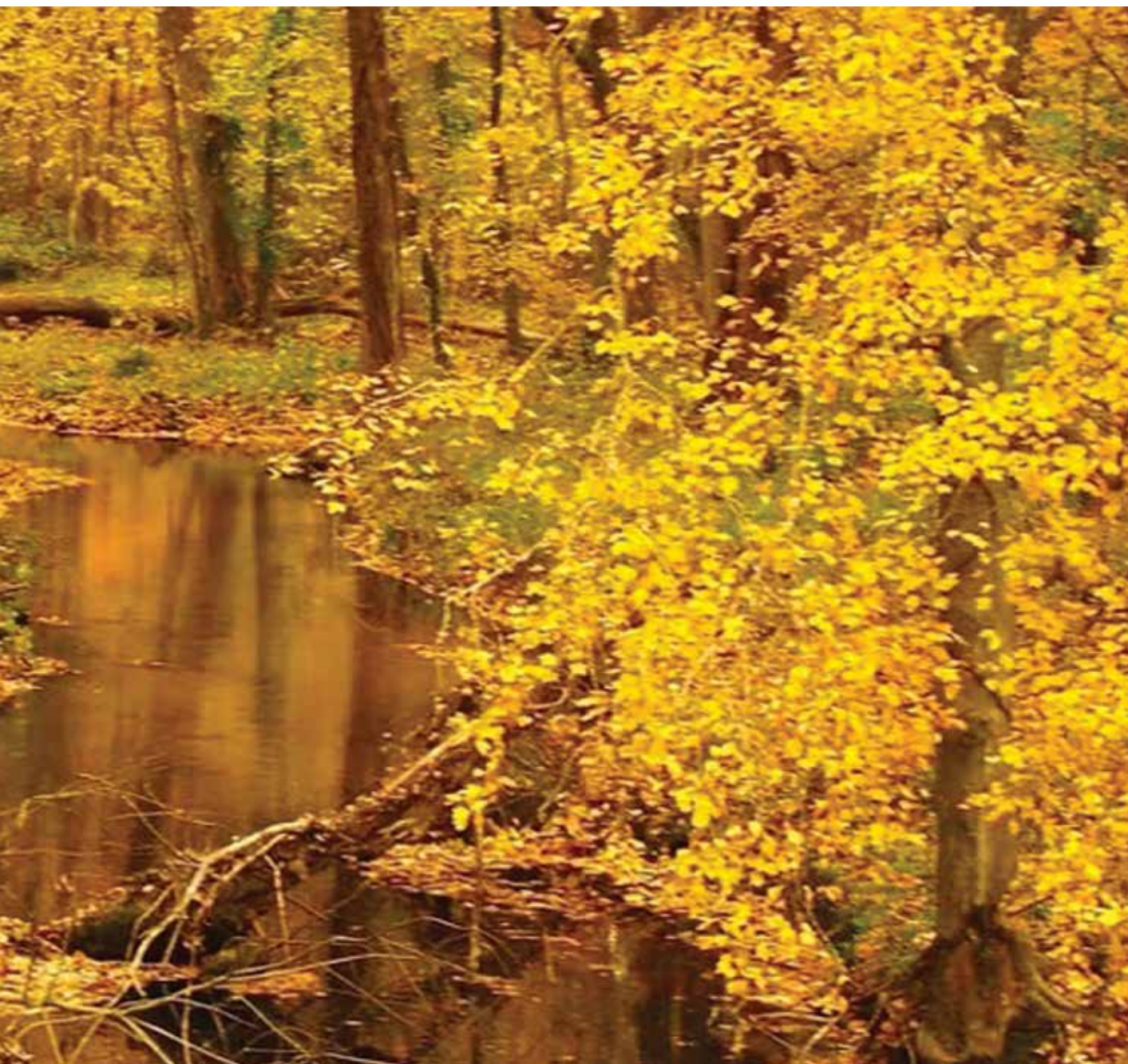
Adkin's Arboretum Ridgely

You've driven by it, and you've maybe even been there quite a bit, but as the seasons change, Adkins Arboretum has a way of being a different adventure each time.

Whether you are looking for a family getaway, are interested in native plants, or just like to take in

nature, Adkins is sure to be a hit.

The paths are well kept and several are stroller and wagon friendly, with bridges to peer over, benches to watch waterfowl coming in, and little adventure areas like their new zig zag boardwalk or "First Light Village" wigwams. Learn more about identifying the trees in your own yard by grab-



bing a “Native Tree Guide” at the Welcome Center.

If you miss their Fairyfest on Oct. 10, pencil in the Plein Air Adkins event on Nov. 7, to see several artists painting the landscape in the morning with their pieces being judged in the afternoon.

There will also be a kids event in the morning to create their own masterpieces.

Town of St. Michaels Trail St. Michaels

Grab your fanny pack and make like a tourist to take in all the fall color on the St. Michaels trail. At just over a mile and mostly paved, on this brisk trail you’ll come across a covered bridge over the San Domingo Creek, and end at the Clint S. Bradley Park with a playground, wooden playboat and gazebo to picnic.

You could also walk back through town and poke around the shops. (Steps are steps!)

Cross Kent Island Trail and Terrapin Nature Park. Stevensville & Grasonville

If you catch a sunny fall day, try the Cross Kent Island Trail.

The Terrapin Park trail portion will lead you to the beach overlooking the bay bridge. Head on the paved direction of the Trail,

rolling on skates, skateboards or scooters and visit the newish Terrapin Skate Park. Don't forget the helmet! Going further still on the six and a half mile stretch will take you past the Love Point Park playground, the library and the dog park. Further up near the Grasonville side, you can walk near the waterfront restaurants and finally, end at Long Point Park. Make your own adventure!

Pickering Creek, Easton

The wildlife doesn't slow at Pickering Creek and neither does their programming. Look online to see events like their Halloween Eve hike, Autumn Mushroom exploring and Turkey Tales. If you can't make those dates, get a copy of their autumn trail map to identify special fall delights like native persimmon and winged sumac.

As we head into these darker months, it is surely more difficult to get outside exploring even with so many trail options near us. If you enjoy challenges and goal setting, set a goal like the viral national '1000 Hours Outside' challenge. It averages out to around 2.7 hours a day which can be hard with, well, life. Start in the fall to get a good foundation to carry you through and set a steady pace in the colder, rainy, yucky or uh, maybe less ideal days, you can still hit the yearly goal. You can download a color in tracking sheet, make an online log, or write it all down in an old notebook.

If your weekends look busy, try to squeeze in some time after school and work to keep the winter blues away.

By the time you get home, it can be easy to get into the dinner



Pickering Creek is a popular place for guests to visit, especially in the fall.

(Photo courtesy Etsy)

making and/or a reset for the next day routine so plan ahead.

Go straight from your day duties with good shoes, outer layers, a good snack and water all in your car to head to a fun spot. Ease your stress of taking a breather by having a crockpot or easy meal waiting when you get home.

It's one of those things in life where even if you might not want to go at first, it sure feels good when you do!

As you would in the summer when you have the sunscreen, towels and bathing suits ready, you just need to put that same thought into your colder weather gear.

Double check everyone (including you!) has gloves, hats and jackets as it's much easier to be outside when you are comfortable.

While many of the trails are not challenging to navigate, challenge yourself to get out to some before the fall weather is gone. 🐾



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Oysters start as spat on shell, which will be put into cages or floats for growing in an aquaculture system, including oyster gardening.

Bay area relying on oyster preservation efforts

Story by Makayla Patterson
Photos courtesy John Consoli

As fall draws near, there is another season beginning for areas around the Chesapeake Bay as Oct. 1 marks the opening day of oyster season for commercial and recreational purposes.

Oyster gardening is a preservation practice used to help grow the oyster population in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Due to circumstances like diseases and overharvesting, the population of oysters in the bay has fluctuated over the years. According to the Oyster Recovery Partnership, 14-20 million bushels of oysters were harvested annually in Maryland in the late 1800s.



Cleaning is a crucial step in growing oysters, oyster gardener John Consoli said, adding it takes around 15-20 minutes to clean a float.

This number plummeted over the years, with only 430,000 bushels harvested from October 2023 to March 2024, according to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

While oyster preservation efforts have grown the oyster population in Maryland over the years, the decline in the oyster population compared to 200 years ago is still a threat to the health of the bay and to the watermen who harvest the oysters.

One adult oyster can filter 50 gallons of water per day and acts as a habitat for other aquatic life. Oysters also sustain the livelihood of watermen and are sought after by seafood lovers.

According to the Maryland Department of the Environment, “Oyster gardening is the practice of growing oysters at private piers for ecological benefits.”

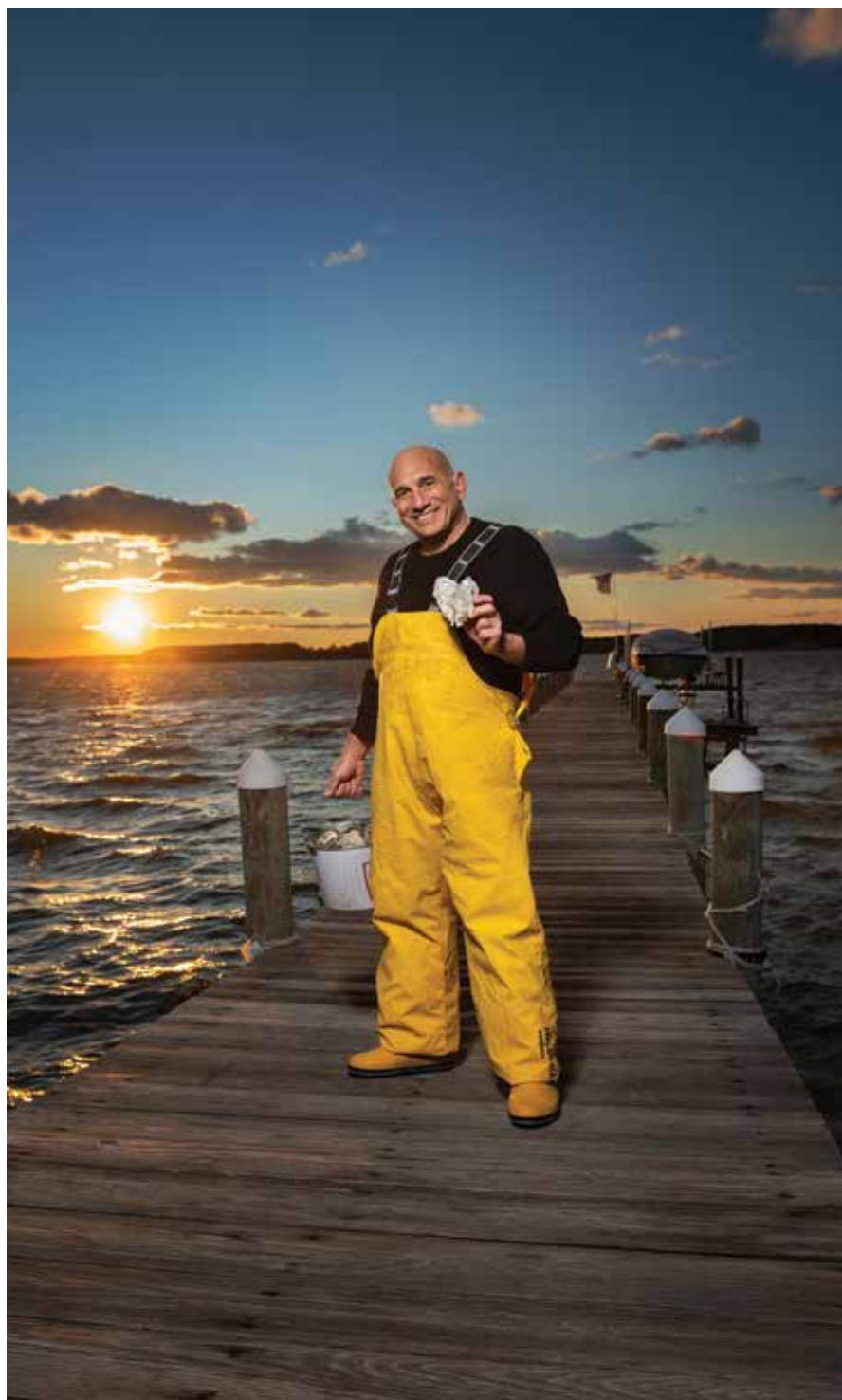
Participants use cages or floats filled with spat-on-shell (baby oysters) and submerge them to the bottom of the waterbody or float them on the water’s surface.

The process and time it takes the oysters to grow vary between floats and cages and their location.

The oysters are then kept or taken to a sanctuary reef to protect them from being harvested. The state requires recreational oyster gardeners to register with the Department of Natural Resources. Oysters grown for recreational use, like oyster gardening, cannot be sold and should not be eaten, according to Maryland DNR

John Consoli of Chester Md, is familiar with oyster gardening and grows oysters off his pier using floats.

He became interested in oyster



John Consoli has been oyster gardening since 2022.

gardening after meeting local watermen in 2022 who explained how they made a sustainable living harvesting and growing oysters.

The watermen would sell their oysters, then buy back the shells and put baby oysters on them.

The shells would then be placed in their oyster lease, and in two to three years there would be oysters to be harvested.

“I thought, oh my God, that’s so incredibly sustainable,” Consoli said. “You know, I was just

so impressed. I was like, they were guaranteeing their future business.”

Consoli started oyster gardening four years ago, and through trial and error, he worked out a successful system.

He said he prefers using floats over cages because the oysters grow faster.

Consoli said they clean the oysters every two to three weeks by using a low-pressure power washer.

“If it’s not so hot, you can let them sit in the sun for a couple of hours, let all the little micro marine growth on them burn off a little, and then you put them back in the water.”

Consoli estimated that it takes about 15-20 minutes to clean a float.

“What you are trying to do is get the marine growth and other things off of them so that they have better water flow and it actually promotes growth,” he said.

He added that’s also a good chance to check the zip ties and ropes on the floats and repair any damage.

Another issue oyster gardeners need to be aware of is the potential for oysters freezing and dying if they are in the cold open air. Consoli said that last year, due to extended days of cold weather during the winter, he had about a ten percent loss.

However, this event did not hinder Consoli from continuing to grow oysters and encouraging others to do so.

He said neighbors became interested in what he was doing — and through word of mouth, oyster gardening began to expand



After four months of growth, these oysters still have a lot of growth and water-filtering work to do.

in his area.

Starting oyster gardening is not a complicated process, and Maryland has several foundations and programs that help people get started. Marylanders Grow Oysters and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation are two options.

Their websites list what individuals need to be eligible to oyster garden and what supplies will be provided. Visit cbf.org or oysterrecovery.org for more information.

This form of gardening is a wonderful opportunity because people of all ages can do it and help preserve the oyster population in the Chesapeake Bay.

Consoli said he knows people who range from 40-85 years old who do it.

“They’re all excited about doing it,” he said. “They feel positive about it, and to me, that’s what energizes me, as I see people doing something positive for their environment.” 🐚



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In the season of trick or treat, choose to treat those close to you

Story by Leslie Milby

It's true, holidays demand more and more these days. Halloween is no longer just cutting eye holes in an old bedsheet!

One of the latest trends for Halloween and fall season in the past few years is "Boo'ing," where little items or baskets are secretly left on a doorstep, office or wherever as a fun surprise for your neighbors, family and friends.

You can either say, "It's all a bunch of Hocus-Pocus!" or you can join in the lighthearted fun by starting the holiday cheer a little early.

To "Boo" someone, make a tag that says, "You've been Boo'd!" and attach to the gift to make it official.

If you just want to give someone a small surprise, you simply just leave it for them to find.

For a group, draw names, almost like a Secret Santa where everyone gets picked and pick a day or week for the goodies to be left.

If kicking it off in a neighborhood or office, "Boo" a few to get the game going with a note challenging them to "Boo" another neighbor or person in the group.

Those who have already been "Boo'd" sometimes put a ghost on their mailbox/ door/ area to show they've already been picked.

If you want to join in on the fun, but struggle to get your ghoulish juices flowing, there are so many Halloween and holiday options in the stores.

It can be as simple as you'd like



"Boo'ing" is where little items or baskets are secretly left on a doorstep, office or wherever as a fun surprise for neighbors, family and friends.

(Photo courtesy Etsy)

it to be!

Boo'ing with books is another option. A board book for tiny ones, a Goosebumps for early readers and a good mystery book for a friend.

Add more with a festive blanket

and snack, or a pair of fuzzy socks.

Do they like to cook up some spooky fun? Grab a festive funfetti cake mix, icing, sprinkles and cupcake liners.

Looking for more of a fall vibe?

Pumpkin flavored mixes are also filling the shelves.

Get some fun-shaped pasta and jarred pumpkin pasta sauce. Gift the dry ingredients and spices with the recipe for a favorite fall dish like chili.

Maybe you'd like to gift a family on the go some items ready to snack on.

A quick stroll through the grocery store will help you quickly fill your cart from fall flavored cookies, cereals, trail mixes and granola — and surely some pumpkin spice items that sound too odd to be true.

There are also often Halloween branded and shaped fruit snacks, veggie sticks, and other classic snacks.

Farmers' market vendors will be on-trend and sure to have seasonal delights to add!

Coffee lovers would love a fun mug, coffee and festive creamer. For the on the go coffee drinker, add some canned pumpkin lattes and a travel mug.

Planning on gathering around the campfire this fall? Look for ghost shaped marshmallows to pair with candy and graham crackers.

Don't forget apple season! Easy grabs to buy or make are apple cider donuts or muffins, apple cider, or even a basket of fresh picked apples! Have extra time? Wrap up some caramel apples with a sweet note.

Boo'ing is a good alternative if the traditional Christmas or holiday season is too busy for you to do the baking you'd really like to do to share.

Aside from food, there are many little gifts to delight.

A glow in the dark theme is one option for a spooky fall night.



Don't forget apple season! Easy grabs to buy or make are apple cider donuts or muffins, apple cider, or even a basket of fresh picked apples! Have extra time? Wrap up some caramel apples with a sweet note.

(Photo by Getty Images)

Glow sticks, stickers and face paint should all be easy to find. Toss in a glow in the dark football or kickball. (Plus the glow in the dark can be great for trick or treating as well!)

Craft sets are fun for the young

and old. From a simple coloring craft and fresh markers, to a spooky crochet kit for the advanced crafters.

Try a small gem art kit that they can finish before the Santa comes down the chimney! Lego and build-



If boo'ing a crowd, think of a fun and easy item to batch. A trail mix with fall candies and flavors, a batch of muffins with fancy butter.

(Photo by Getty Images)

ing blocks also often come out with Halloween editions.

Even your teachers and other office loving friends could use a little “Boo.” Yes, there are even Halloween Post-it notes and paper clips out there.

Boring things like hand soap can even be fun in the fall as they smell so good!

Pair with a candle with some pretty matches or a new tea towel.

Pre-teens and mom friends? Find some fall -cented body wash, hand lotion, lip care, hand sanitizer — they are certainly making it all!

If boo'ing a crowd, think of a fun and easy item to batch.

A trail mix with fall candies and flavors, a batch of muffins with

fancy butter.

For a friend or playgroup, whip up some orange, black or green homemade Play-doh mixed in with some spiders and gems for sensory play. Throw in Halloween-shaped cookie cutters with it.

“Boo” your friends this season, and make them scream with delight!



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Comfort food can be enjoyed while cozying up on a nice day at home — often a warm and hearty dish.

'Tis the season for your favorite comfort food. ... What's yours?

Story by Leslie Milby

We are now entering the cozy season. The blankets, the comfy clothes, but perhaps the most exciting is the comfort food!

What exactly is “comfort food?” It's what we picture cozying up with on a nice day at home.

Usually it's warm and hearty, and even the thoughts of making the dish are part of the vision. One of those rare times where you can leisurely cook in a clean kitchen, taking in the experience of chopping and stirring, creating a food

so beloved you can smell it in your mind. You might even be picturing making it as a child in a loved one's kitchen.

Fall and winter are often times when schedules might slow and the temperature has shifted so that a warm oven isn't minded, and many of these comfort foods are moving from daydreams to dinner.

Having trouble pinpointing your comfort food? Start with your family's favorites.

Food that lives in my head and heart? My aunt's ham sliders that she makes by the actual 100 for family gatherings. The lasagna and

pastas at my cousin's barn wedding on a rainy, drizzly day with laughter and candlelight. Making reuben sandwiches as a child and wrapping them in foil to bake.

Heck, even Stouffer's lasagna has a special spot because those things take forever to bake but are worth the wait!

Want to know a food that's simple, beloved and prepared differently by everybody? Eggs. With three kids, we frequently have visitors over.

One day I was making our family's “cheesy eggs,” and one of our frequent flyers piped up and said,

“That’s not how my Paw Paw makes them!”

A few weeks later I found myself making eggs for their sibling, and there it was again, “Let me show you how Paw Paw does them.”

I laughed and mentioned it to their mom, and she said she didn’t even think there was much special about their eggs, but as it turns out, their Paw Paw is a heavy on the salt and pepper man.

My aunt, meanwhile, thinks fondly of her dad’s “Confetti eggs,” scrambled eggs with peppers, onion, ham, potatoes and all the goodies folded in. Another family member went to college in the southwest and brought back his roommate’s family huevos rancheros recipe.

Are your food memories starting to crank?

Perhaps the most buzzed-about food is macaroni and cheese. Warm, filling and with endless variations, with everyone swearing their loved one makes it the best.

It never seems to matter if the beloved cook hands over the cheese blend and recipe or not, it never seems to come out the same as when they make it.

And, well, not to be discouraging, but unless you are the crowned M&C queen, you’d be best just bringing another dish to the potluck!

Now, I don’t think I’ve ever made a dumpling in my life but the families that “do” dumplings are committed and dumplings rank high on the comfort food list.

A friend says her family pairs them with peas while another swears it must be chicken and dumplings.

Sometimes it comes down to ei-



Lemon ricotta pancakes

Ingredients

- 3/4-cup cold water or milk
- Half-teaspoon baking soda
- Half-cup ricotta cheese
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon white sugar
- 1/8-teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup self-rising flour
- 2 tablespoons self-rising flour
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

Instructions

1. Whisk cold water and baking soda in a mixing bowl. Add ricotta cheese, egg, lemon zest, vegetable oil, sugar, and vanilla; whisk until smooth, breaking up any lumps of

cheese as you mix.

2. Whisk in 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons self-rising flour, melted butter, and lemon juice until most of flour disappears into batter. Let batter sit at room temperature for 15 minutes.

3. Heat a lightly oiled griddle over medium-high heat.

4. Drop batter by large spoonfuls onto the hot griddle and cook until bubbles form and the edges are dry, 2 to 3 minutes. Flip and cook until browned on the other side, 2 to 3 minutes. Repeat with remaining batter.

(Note: To make 2 cups self-rising flour: Sift together 2 cups all-purpose flour with 2 teaspoons baking powder and 1 teaspoon fine salt.)

Confetti Eggs

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons fresh basil or cilantro
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- One-half small onion, chopped
- One half medium tomato, seeded and chopped
- 1 small zucchini, chopped
 - One half green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 4 eggs, any style

Instructions

1. Saute onions until transparent,

then add the minced garlic. Cook for another minute, being careful not to burn garlic.

2. Add vegetables all at once. Note - if substituting vegetables that require longer cooking times, add them in first and saute until almost finished THEN add quicker cooking ingredients.

3. When vegetables are almost done, prepare eggs however you like. Be careful not to finish them before the vegetables are ready to go.

4. Place cooked vegetables on plate and top with your eggs.

ther having time to make the meal or the time to enjoy the meal, so a friend going through her young family phase says frozen dumplings also work in this season of life.

Chili is a favorite filling supper for many.

But, of course, someone (me) could be picturing it in a bowl with corn chips (Scoops!) and sour cream during a hockey game, while another family might ladle it out for chili dogs in front of football.

Pinto beans, kidney beans, white beans, black beans — depending on whose table you are around, you'll see the difference! Rotate it into your family's routine if it isn't already.

Can you smell a certain muffin or bread in your sleep? Warm with a square of butter melted on top. Mmm! Baked goods — and of course, chocolate chip cookies — top lots of foodie lists.

There are Strawberry Pretzel Salad makers or and there are Strawberry Pretzel Salad partakers.

This favorite hits tables year round, though the jury's out on whether it belongs on the table with the meal or with the desserts! My neighbor swears her family's Christmas is not complete without it.

Speaking of which, "Christmas is not complete without ..." is another fill-in-the-blank question that can get a lot of answers.

I must admit, I do get a little teary making sausage gravy on Christmas without my dad around to eat seconds and maybe thirds with me, but it does still warm my heart.

Worried you haven't nailed down a holiday food tradition? It can be a lot of pressure if maybe you grew up having Citrus Cinnamon rolls on Christmas but now you find



Chili is a popular comfort food, and is a favorite — and filling — supper for many.

yourself traveling to your in-laws or maybe you had a full dinner spread that you can't pull off with the age or size of your family.

You can always start a new comfort food — it's allowed!

My daughter Lucy and I now like to make lemon ricotta pancakes for select special days throughout the year.

While it was a new recipe we saw online, we've made it our own special memory and the flavor is one we really look forward to. I do have my fingers crossed she'll come back and make them for me when she grows up and leaves me. (Luckily,

boys still have cooties for now!)

The Grinch got a lot of flack for stealing all the who-hash, but you should not be afraid of stealing other's comfort food ideas.

From a co-workers' tres leches cake to a hockey friend's tamales, a comfort food can be one you've never tasted. If it smells good, pipe up and ask for a taste and a recipe.

Chances are, they'll love sharing it with you.

If you are looking for a conversation starter — and not worried about your tummy rumbling — this fall, ask someone, "What's your favorite comfort food?" 🍴

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What's behind the name?



Berlin's pronunciation comes from a slurring of two different names

(Editor's note: When it comes to historical significance, Maryland's Eastern Shore can stand with just about any other area of the United States. It's carried through today in the names given to towns, rivers, streets and creeks, but more than 200 years later, their origins may not be so widely known. Drawing from "Discover Why It's Called ...," a 1990 booklet by John Dexter Nilsson, here is one of those stories.)

Berlin, halfway between the Worcester County line and Ocean City, was built on land patented and named Burleigh Plantation by Col. William Stevens, who also founded Rehoboth and Pocomoke City, in 1677.

The present name comes from a slurring of Burleigh and Burley Inn that stood there, and is pronounced with accent on the first syllable and not on the last like the German capital.

Born in Berlin in 1779 was Stephen Decatur.

His mother had come to the area from Philadelphia to escape the British occupation and protect her pregnancy.

Within a year, she returned to Philadelphia. Stephen grew to become a major naval hero, with successes against the pirates of the Barbary Coast and against the British during the War of 1812. 🐞



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there are plenty of beautiful, eye-catching and even unusual types available to home gardeners to make your fall garden stand out.

Beyond the classic cushion

A guide to choosing mums for the fall garden

Story by Jessica Damiano

September marks the beginning of the great summer-to-fall garden transition and, although most summer plants still have life left in them, many gar-

deners are turning their attention to the iconic chrysanthemum.

The majority of mums sold in pre-planted containers at the garden center are typical “cushion” mums. I wouldn’t garden without them, but there are plenty

of other interesting options for gardeners looking to branch out.

Botanists worldwide recognize approximately 40 species of wild chrysanthemums.

Over centuries, hundreds of thousands of varieties and culti-

vars have been bred from them, making the plant family one of the largest in the world.

The National Chrysanthemum Society has wrangled the whole lot into 13 exhibition-judging categories, each based on flower shape.

Many of those, however, are too delicate to grow outdoors or require specialized handling that is not easily attainable in the garden, so they are not offered by the horticultural trade.

Still, there are plenty of beautiful, eye-catching and even unusual types available to home gardeners to make your fall garden stand out.

Easy-to-find perennials

Many mums are perennial and will return year after year if planted early enough for their roots to become established before frost.

If you intend to plant perennial mums, beware of so-called florist mums, which are often sold in foil-wrapped pots at supermarkets and chain stores, as they are intended as a one-season fall decoration.

Always check plant tags for information about hardiness in your horticultural zone.

At the supermarket or garden center, you also will likely encounter perennial cushion mums. When in bloom, the compact, mounding plants resemble a cushion covered in small double flowers in white, yellow, lavender, pink, purple, red, orange, bronze or rust.

The plants usually begin blooming in late summer or early fall and continue for four to six weeks. Most cushion mums are hardy in zones 5-9, with some able to survive winters down to zones 3 or 4.



Many mums are perennial and will return year after year if planted early enough for their roots to become established before frost.

Unique standouts

Daisy chrysanthemum blooms resemble their namesake flower, with a flat, central “eye” surrounded by individual petals (sometimes in multiple rows). Like all “spray mums,” each stem branches at its end to hold several

white, gold, yellow, pink, lavender, violet, orange, rust, bronze or even two-tone flowers. Most mums of this type are suited for zones 5-9, but some exceptionally cold-tolerant varieties, such as Mammoth, are hardy down to zone 3.



You're less likely to find Fuji, or spider, mums at retail stores, but they're worth seeking out at specialty nurseries or catalogs.

You're less likely to find Fuji, or spider, mums at retail stores, but they're worth seeking out at specialty nurseries or catalogs.

Their exotic blooms, comprised of elongated, tube-like petals with curved ends, were named for their resemblance to spiders with spindly legs. Mostly hardy down to zone 5, the plants make wonderful additions to the mid- and late-fall garden, as their four- to eight-

week bloom period often doesn't begin until early November.

Homecoming, or Football, mums are the largest, showiest members of the Chrysanthemum family.

The plants grew in popularity in the first half of the 20th century because of their use as corsages at college homecoming parades and festivities. Today, the plants with huge, densely packed flow-

ers and inward-curved petals can be grown as perennials in home gardens in zones 5-9. You are most likely to find Homecoming mums at specialty nurseries or in mail-order catalogs.

When it comes to extraordinary fall plants, mum's the word. 🍷

(Editor's note: Jessica Damiano writes weekly gardening columns for the AP and publishes the award-winning Weekly Dirt Newsletter.)

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(FROM PAGE 8)

soap before bringing them inside, to kill any insect pests. Now is also the best time for planting spring bulbs like crocus, daffodils and tulips. Be sure to dig a hole three times as deep as the bulb is long and add a tablespoon of bulbstone or bonemeal in each hole and cover with soil.

Check pH levels and if you have not done so, do a soil test in all garden beds to make sure your soil is healthy, with the right amount of nutrients and organic matter.

Collect a zip-lock sandwich bag full of soil, and take to the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension service. You will pay a small fee, but it is well worth the piece of mind and knowing that your plants will be healthy and can thrive.

If you have a vegetable garden, consider planting a cover crop once all the summer vegetables are

finished. Crops like crimson clover or winter rye work well to prevent soil erosion and will add nutrients in the spring. Finally, apply compost, organic fertilizer and weed preventer as per package instructions. Put a thin layer of mulch, no more than 3 to 4 inches total to keep the additives in place and protect plant roots from winter damage.

Consider starting a compost pile with the fallen leaves from your yard. Composting leaves is one of the smartest things you can do for your garden. It's a great way to improve your soil and add much needed nutrients the plants may have used during the growing season. First gather up all the fallen leaves from your lawn and flower beds, and if you can shred or grind them. This will speed up the decomposition process. Also add a compost accelerator, such as green lawn clippings, organic waste and organic kitchen scraps. Build your

pile in layers by first putting down the shredded leaves, apply some garden lime, then add the green layer. Continue to build the layers until completed.

Turn the pile one or two times a week and continue to add green waste (grass clippings, kitchen waste, etc) as you turn. Turning the pile will introduce oxygen and will help it heat up and compost more quickly. Keep the pile moist, with the consistency of a damp sponge is optimum.

Then cover the pile with a plastic sheet, which will help retain the moisture and prevent it from drying out. By following these practices, especially turning and aerating the pile, you should have high-quality leaf compost by the following spring.

Happy Gardening! 🐦

(Editor's Note: Ken Morgan is the owner of Robin's Nest Floral and Garden Center in Easton, Md.)



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By Ron Ketter

Northern Flicker

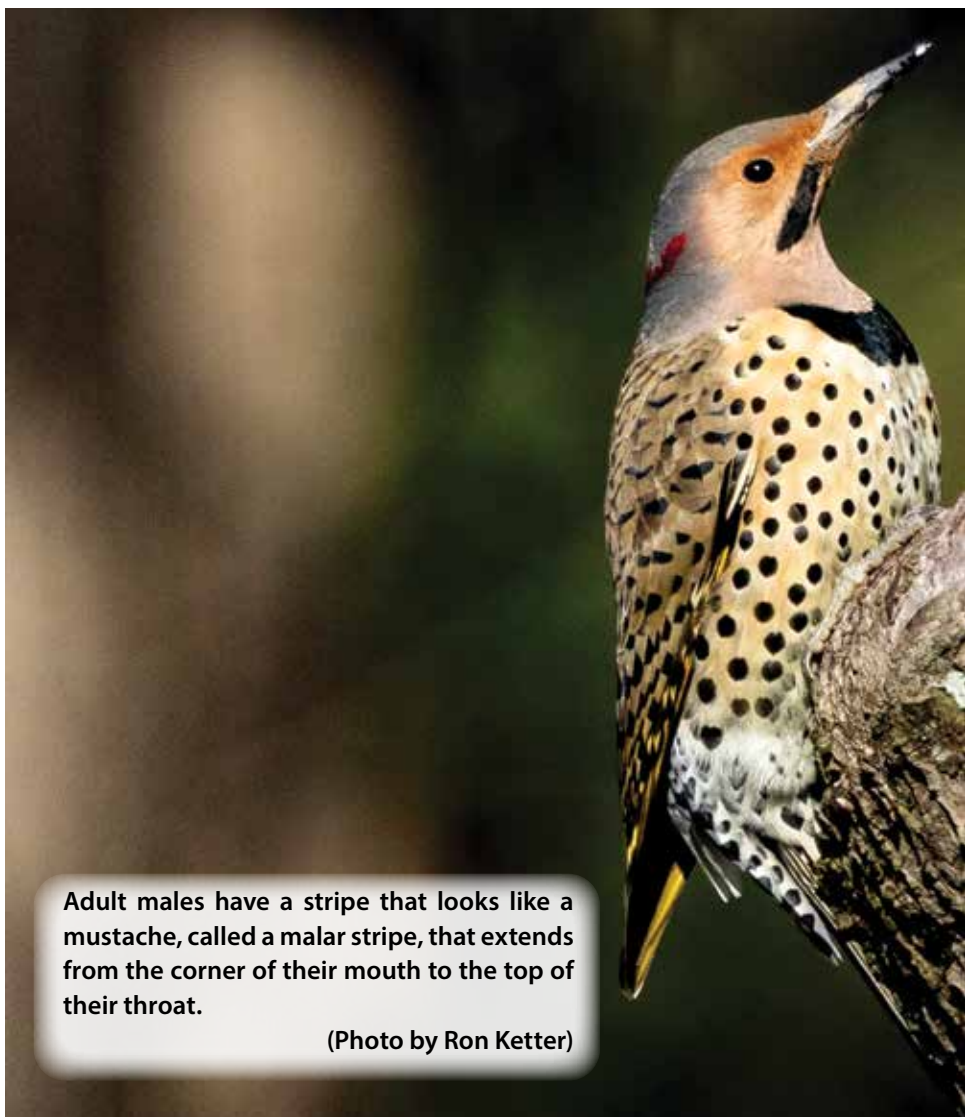
(Editor's note: Ron Ketter is a member of the Talbot Bird Club and a Maryland Ornithological Society board member.)

October brings a wide range of autumn colors, with trees turning all shades of red, yellow, orange and brown. The warm palette of Northern Flicker colors fits right in.

Our second largest woodpecker in the United States (only the Pileated Woodpecker is larger), Northern Flickers have an overall brown appearance. They have a white patch on their rump, conspicuous in flight and often visible when perched on the ground or a tree.

Other field marks include an off-white underside with bold black spots on their breast and belly. They have a black crescent on the upper breast.

Northern Flickers can be found year-round on the Eastern Shore. Their range expands across the entire continental United States., into most of Canada and interior Alaska. During the winter, those breeding in Canada and Alaska move into



Adult males have a stripe that looks like a mustache, called a malar stripe, that extends from the corner of their mouth to the top of their throat.

(Photo by Ron Ketter)

the lower 48 states and into Mexico. They can also be found in Cuba and the Grand Cayman Islands.

Ornithologists have identified four sub-species of Northern Flickers, with two found in the United States. The Yellow-Shafted Northern Flicker is found in the eastern United States. The shafts of its flight feathers are bright yellow.

The Red-Shafted subspecies is in the western United States, with bright red shafts on its flight feathers.

The other two subspecies are the Cuban Northern Flicker and the Grand Cayman Northern Flicker, found on their namesake islands.

Both are similar in appearance to the Yellow-Shafted subspecies.

The males and females are similar in appearance except for one major difference. Adult males have a stripe that looks like a mustache, called a malar stripe, that extends from the corner of their mouth to the top of their throat. The malar stripe is black on the Yellow-Shafted male and red on the Red-Shafted male.

Northern Flickers spend a lot of time on the ground. They mainly eat ants and beetles, using their long, slightly curved bill to dig through soil. They often hammer at the ground in a similar fashion as other woodpeckers drill into wood



in search of insects. During the winter, they supplement their diet with fruits and seeds.

During breeding season, Northern Flickers excavate nest cavities, selecting the trunks or large branches in dead or diseased trees.

Both sexes participate in the excavation, constructing an opening about 3 inches in diameter and a cavity about 15 inches deep. The cavity is widest at the bottom, making room for eggs and chicks. Unlike other woodpeckers, Northern Flickers may reuse nests.

Northern Flickers have several distinct calls. The first is the long call that can be described as a series

of evenly spaced, single “*kick, kick, kick, kick ...*” notes, repeated at a rate of about six to seven notes per second and lasting an average of about five seconds.

However, the call can extend much longer, with the maximum duration for a recorded call lasting over 19 seconds. These calls are most commonly heard in spring to establish territories and attract mates.

The second call is a single note peah call that lasts only a fraction of a second. This call is a quick note that descends downward. This call serves several purposes, such as signaling to a mate that it’s time to

switch nest care duties or summoning help to confront a predator or threat to the nest.

The third, and most complex, is the wicka call. It is more subdued and often given in unison when a pair, trio, or sometimes even a quartet of Northern Flickers are in close proximity. It is a series of alternating notes, modulated between a higher, louder note followed by a softer, quieter one. It is sometimes described as “wik-a, wik-a, wik-a” or “ta-week, ta-week, ta-week...” It lasts around 4 seconds.

Although still widespread and considered common, Northern Flickers’ numbers have been declining over the last half century, resulting in about a 50 percent decline since the mid-1960s. This decline is likely due to a combination of factors, including nest-site competition from European Starlings, habitat loss including the loss of large diameter dead and diseased trees, and pesticide use.

Their decline is particularly concerning because Northern Flickers are considered a keystone species where they nest.

Their nesting cavities are used by a variety of other species, so their decline can have a ripple effect on other birds.

While Northern Flickers don’t typically visit bird feeders, they often visit back yards and bird baths. During the winter months, they are abundant in areas where they flock up, including open grasslands near woods, city parks, and near flooded swamps and marsh edges. Ways to conserve Northern Flickers include protecting standing dead trees and providing native habitat that supports their diet of ants and beetles.





Historic Neall House ‘tuckpointing’ benefits from Talbot County Tour proceeds

EASTON — During their regular Tuesday morning workday in the Talbot Historical Society Garden on Sept. 15, members of the Talbot County Garden Club paused to officially present \$66,000 in proceeds from the 2026 Talbot County Tour of the Maryland House & Garden Pilgrimage to the local Historical Society.

This amount marks the largest contribution realized from ticket sales and sponsorships since the Tour’s inception in 1937.

While the pilgrimage is dedicated to the restoration and preservation of historic properties throughout the State of Maryland, the Talbot County Tour targets important local landmarks.

This year, the Tour focused on exterior needs of the Historical

Society’s Neall House, an eminent landmark at 29 South Washington Street in the heart of Easton.

The Neall House (1808-1810) recently underwent a complete repointing, or “tuckpointing,” of deteriorated mortar on its brick facade and garden wall to restore the integrity of the masonry and preserve the original brickwork.

Hughlett Kirby, Talbot Historical Society treasurer, called the presentation of Tour proceeds to cover a significant portion of the tuckpointing “a very generous gift to the Historical Society that could not have come at a more fortuitous moment!”

In expressing gratitude for the Garden Club’s “extraordinary generosity and unwavering dedication” Donald Casson, Jr., Talbot Histori-

cal Society president, said, “We are honored that our property was included in this year’s [MHGP] event and deeply touched that its success will so directly benefit the work of the Talbot Historical Society.”

He went on to laud the Garden Club’s 70-year commitment to creating and tending the gardens within the Historical Society campus:

“Quite simply, we could not maintain these gardens without [the Garden Club]. ... Your care for these historic gardens reflects a shared belief that preserving beauty and preserving history go hand in hand. Together, we help ensure that future generations experience the charm, character and stories that make Easton and Talbot County so special.” 🐾

Christ Episcopal Church to host Howl-O-Ween

CAMBRIDGE — Christ Episcopal Church is unleashing its annual Howl-O-Ween Fun Dog Show on Saturday, Oct. 17 at the American Legion in Cambridge.

From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., rain or shine, the American Legion will become the place to be for dogs who think they are stars — and owners who know they really are!

This year's show promises a

howling good time with costumes, contests, food, raffles, prizes, gift baskets, and enough wagging tails to keep the Halloween spirit flying high.

The Halloween theme isn't just for the dogs.

Dogs *and* their handlers are encouraged to dress up!

Whether the pup wants to be a princess, pirate, superhero, witch,

ghost, rock star—or perhaps something nobody has ever seen before.

The festivities begin with the Halloween Grand Parade at 10 a.m., when our costumed canine contestants will strut their stuff for the crowd.

Each contest category costs \$5 to enter, and winners will have the chance to compete for the ultimate honor, Best In Show. 🐾

Eastern Shore Witch Paddle scheduled for Oct. 15

ST. MICHAELS — Join us on Thursday, Oct. 15 at The Oaks Waterfront Hotel for the second Eastern Shore Witch Paddle, a fun-filled, family-friendly evening on the water. The three-hour event is slated to start at 4:30 p.m.

Dress up, decorate your vessel and paddle in honor of breast can-

cer survivors, thrivers and those we remember. Stand up paddleboards, kayaks and canoes are welcome!

Enjoy a scenic paddle through a peaceful cove, then join in festivities filled with costumes, contests and the community magic that makes this event a truly spellbinding event.

Your presence helps fuel the

mission to provide treatment and support to those affected by breast cancer.

All proceeds benefit the UM Shore Regional Health Clark Comprehensive Breast Center, supporting compassionate care, awareness and survivorship in our community. 🐾

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A bag of Halloween treats

- According to a 2021 YouGov poll, 23 percent of Americans say Halloween is their *favorite* holiday. More women than men say this (26 percent vs. 19 percent).

- Most pumpkin recipes — like pumpkin soup, pumpkin pie, and pumpkin muffins, to name a few — are made using *canned pumpkin*. And almost all of that comes from the Libby's Pumpkin canning plant in Morton, Ill. The facility produces more than 85 percent of the world's canned pumpkin.

- According to the National Retail Federation, Americans spent about \$700 million on *pet costumes* in 2024.

- *Candy corn* was originally called “chicken feed.” The Goelitz Confectionery Company originally sold the treat in boxes with a rooster on the front to appeal to U.S. ag roots, according to *National Geographic*.

- While most people might guess that pumpkins are vegetables, pumpkins are actually considered *fruit*! It's technically a fruit because anything that starts from a single flower — as a pumpkin does — is classified botanically as a “simple fruit.”

- According to a 2019 YouGov poll, 74 percent of parents with children younger than 18 years old confess that they usually *steal* and eat at least a few pieces of their children's Halloween candy.

- A 2021 YouGov poll found that about one in five adults (or 21 percent of participants) keep the porch lights off and *pretend not to be home* when the trick-or-treaters come knocking.

- The Library of Congress reports that the colors of *black and orange* trace back to the Celtic festival of Samhain, a Gaelic festival marking the end of the harvest season and beginning of winter — or the “darker half” of the year. Thus, black represents the “death” of summer while orange represents the life of the fall harvest.

(Information courtesy <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com>)

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Annual Gathering of the Guilds on Nov. 14

DENTON — The second annual Gathering of the Guilds event is scheduled for Nov. 14.

Organized by the Fiber Arts Center of the Eastern Shore, purpose is to bring together area artisan groups for networking and sharing of ideas.

This year's event is at a new location: the Caroline County 4-H Park at 8230 Detour Rd., and commercial vendors also a new component of the event.

Doors will open at 9 a.m. for set

up, light refreshments and networking.

Victoria McConnell, President of FACES will welcome the crowd at 10a.m., followed by the first speaker Polly Mello, a quilt historian and collector and has been collecting quilts for 40 years.

Each guild group and individual will have the opportunity to talk about their purpose and what projects they are working on.

Lunch will follow at noon, catered by the Farmer's Daughter.

Each attendee is encouraged to bring items to share and sell

At 1:15 p.m. Susanne Jones, author of "HERstory Quilts: A Celebration of Strong Women" will speak.

Registration cost is \$50 per person through Nov. 1 and \$55 after Nov. 1.

To enhance the networking experience, FACES has limited the registration to 120 people. For more information, call 443-448-4611 or visit fiberartscenter.com/. ➡

Jousting tournament scheduled for Oct. 3

QUEEN ANNE — The Maryland Jousting Tournament Association invites the public to come watch the 2026 Maryland State Jousting Tournament at the Tuckahoe Equestrian Center located at 619 Crouse Mill Road on Saturday, Oct. 3 starting at 11 a.m.

A traditional ring joust — a test of skill and horsemanship where riders pass through a series of arches, attempting to spear three dangling rings and present them to the judges.

There are three regulation rides for three rings, allowing a knight or maid to capture nine rings for a perfect score. Starting ring diameters range from one and three quarter

inches (1 3/4 inches) for novices to one inch (1 inch) for professional jousters. Tie-off rides can be conducted with rings as small as one quarter inch in diameter.

During the special February session of the Maryland legislature in 1962, the Honorable Henry J. Fowler Sr., Delegate from St. Mary's County, introduced a bill into the Maryland House of Delegates giving recognition to the sport of jousting as the Official State Sport of Maryland.

This bill passed both chambers of the Legislature by an overwhelming vote and was signed into law by Gov. J. Millard Tawes.

As of June 1, 1962, Maryland

became the first state in the United States to adopt an official state sport.

"We are proud of the honor and of the opportunity to present for the fine people of Maryland, as well as the tourists and visitors from other states, what we proudly hail as the Official State Sport of Maryland," said the MJTA in a statement.

Spectators are urged to bring a favorite chair, a pop-up or sun umbrella for shade, and sit back and watch one of the oldest equestrian sports around.

Food will be available for purchase.

For more information, contact Bob Enfield at 301-514-3577. ➡



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Antique Discovery 'Road Trip,' Part 3

Couple opens 'unique boutique'

(Editor's note: DeeDee Wood is the owner of Black Cat Curiosities, an online antiques research and sales venue.)

Since January 2026, there has been a unique vendor boutique store a few miles East from the Dover Bridge on Dover Bridge Road, named after a phrase Crystal Wyatt's grandfather would jokingly say to her grandmother after she'd buy a decoration or something he deemed had no practical us.

"Oh, you've brought home more sh!t you don't need." This little phrase her family found amusing stuck, and she tongue-in-cheek named her and her husband Cody's Vendor/Antique/Crafting Boutique Store after this saying.

The store is located on busy Dover Bridge Road, nestled between Easton and Preston, in Caroline County. Once a floral shop, the building, with ample parking in the front, now houses their store, which showcases antiques, vintage items, handmade goods, and resell items, featuring 30 vendor booths with many unique and interesting items. "We are big thrifters, and we kept driving past this space that was empty, and thought, let's open up a unique boutique market here, so we did it!" Crystal shares, smiling at the memory. Given the unique name of their establishment, she said many tourists and interested parties take their picture in front of the business's sign for selfies and social media posts, or to joke and send to friends.

The store is laid out as an an-

Antique Discovery



By DeeDee Wood

tique or resell small mall of sorts, with separate booths and displays for each vendor to showcase their wares. Cody Wyatt said he often gets positive comments from customers. "People often tell us that the prices are reasonable, and that the store is clean and very organized." The items are clearly marked, and the store is decorated in an appealing, upscale manner with jewelry, antiques, handmade



Cody and Crystal Watt's Sh!t You Don't Need store is located between Easton and Preston on Dover Road.

(Photos courtesy DeeDee Wood)

goods, seasonal ware and a bit of something for everyone. As fall rolls onto the calendar, on the day of my visit, pumpkins and fall décor were starting to grace the shelves in some booths. Their business cards states,

“Curated, Crafted, Consigned, Old, New, Crafty, Country...A Little Bit of Everything, Handpicked Just for You!”

Along with handmade goods, incredible crochet and knitted items, candles, and newer items, there are, of course, antiques tucked into the mix. Some interesting items observed today were antique vintage cookie jars, Murano glass sculptures, clocks, vintage jewelry, unique older books, neat and unique antique furniture pieces, and a printer’s wooden drawer with tiny compartments, which went home with me. Unique vintage jewelry is



The store is laid out as an antique or resell small mall of sorts, with separate booths and displays for each vendor to showcase their wares.

displayed in clean, organized cases, and everything has easy access for consideration.

The Wyatts mentioned that on Friday, October 16th, from 5-8pm, they are hosting “Witch’s Night Out: Booze, Brews and Boutique Shopping.” There will be Halloween candy, a gift card prize for best costume, vendors specials that evening, a “brew” drink station, and a ghost figurine hide and seek

game, with the finder/winner getting a prize.

Sh!t You Don’t Need, “Because Boring Stores Are Overrated” is open Tuesday-Friday from 10am-6pm, Saturday 9am-5pm, and closed Sundays and Mondays. They are located at 21804 Dover Bridge Rd. Their phone number for the store is (302) 258-9664. For more information, stop in, or visit their Facebook page. 🐾





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(FROM PAGE 6)

to add to my toolbox, which was needed after years of relying on a much more kid-friendly repertoire.

My new rule is simple: Have a plan for dinner before dinner is staring you in the face.

It doesn't have to mean Sunday meal prep or a complicated menu.

It can be a new recipe, whatever is in the refrigerator, or a rotisserie chicken picked up on the way home.

The point is to make the decision before you're hungry, tired and convinced takeout is the only reasonable option.

Try this: Pick five easy dinners you both enjoy and keep the ingredients on hand. When you don't feel like cooking, choose from the five instead of starting from scratch.

Clean it before it becomes a project

The other thing I've noticed now that the kids are around less is that I can no longer blame them for the mess. This is both liberating and deeply annoying.

If the kitchen is a mess, my husband and I did it. If the laundry is piled up, the suspects are limited. So my cleaning rule is simple: If it takes less than 10 minutes, do it now.

Wipe down the kitchen after dinner. Put the laundry away instead of moving it from the dryer to a chair. Clear the counter. Empty the dishwasher. Give the bathroom a quick once-over before toothpaste and whatever else accumulates in a bathroom turn into a weekend project.

The goal isn't a spotless house. It's preventing small messes from becoming big jobs. Ten minutes of

maintenance is a lot more appealing than spending half a Saturday cleaning. And at this point, if there's a mess, I know exactly who did it.

Try this: Set a 10-minute timer at the end of the day. Stop when the timer goes off. The goal is a reset, not perfection.

Stop negotiating with yourself

I still have plenty of excuses not to go to the gym. I'm tired. I have things to do. I should probably get some work done first. Maybe tomorrow would be a better day. The funny thing is, the excuses are still there — but they're becoming less convincing.

With the kids needing a lot less of my time, I have fewer legitimate reasons to put myself at the bottom of the list. That doesn't mean I suddenly love going to the gym or plan to become the person who talks enthusiastically about

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(FROM PAGE 8)

raspberry buds, 'Raspberry Summer' with raspberry pink flowers, and 'Red Happiness' with bright red flowers, 'Kudos Ambrosia' is especially interesting because its flower spikes change color as they mature, beginning cream-colored, then developing light orange tones before finishing in a lovely rose pink. Beelicious® produces light pink flowers accented by vibrant burgundy buds.

For gardeners who enjoy coral and orange flowers, 'Firebird' produces fragrant coral-orange flowers, and Poquito Orange™ has soft orange flowers along with licorice scented foliage.

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(Editor's Note: Ginny Rosenkranz is a commercial horticulture specialist with the University of Maryland Extension.)

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leg day. It means I'm trying to stop having the same debate with myself every time. Some days it's a workout. Some days it's a walk. Some days the goal is simply to show up and do something. And I'm trying to apply that thinking to the rest of my life, too.

This summer, I went on a cruise without my family. The guilt was there — because apparently mothers don't get a software update when their children get older that removes the guilt setting — but it wasn't enough to stop me from going. I had a wonderful time and came home relaxed, happy and refreshed. That reminded me that taking time for myself doesn't take anything away from the people I love. If you have young ones at home, learn this lesson earlier than I did!

Self-care doesn't have to involve a cruise ship. It can be exercise,

enough sleep, reading for pleasure or a long-overdue visit with a friend. The important part is making the time instead of waiting for it to magically appear.

Try this: Put your workout — or whatever your version of self-care is — on the calendar before the week fills up.

Treat it like an appointment rather than something you'll squeeze in if you have time.

Give everything a home

The simplest organizing rule may also be the most useful: Don't put it down. Put it away.

Keys, mail, shoes, chargers — give the things you use regularly to a designated home and keep them there. This sounds almost embarrassingly obvious, but it eliminates an enormous amount of daily friction. You're not organizing the house every weekend because you're maintaining it a bit

every day. The goal isn't to have a house that looks like nobody actually lives there.

Try this: Start with one trouble spot — the kitchen counter, entryway or junk drawer — and give every item that regularly lands there a home. Don't organize the whole house. Fix the place that annoys you most.

Maybe that's what this stage of life is giving me: the chance to trade some of the chaos of managing everyone else's schedules for a few simple systems of our own.

The kids may need us differently now, and I want to make the most of the time we do have together. If a cleaner house, more movement, a plan for dinner and fewer frantic searches for my keys can give me more mental space, I'll take it. 🐾

(Editor's Note: Kristine George is a freelance journalist who resides in Easton.)

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Chicken pot pies have come a long way

(Editor's note: Deborah Walker is the author of "An Eastern Shore Special: Recipes from the Heart." She has written about food and recipes for 15 years. She resides in Ocean City.)

As I continue the path of progression, I find myself peering in the window of reflection.

One cannot embrace the future without acknowledging the past.

Images of my Great Grandmother making mouthwatering pies comes to the forefront.

I was fascinated with her precision and attention to details. There were no written recipes, so the textures and flavors were her guide.

Wisdom is an insight that comes with maturity. At the age of 68, I finally realize Grandma's Sheiler's secret to cooking.

Whether her pies would have taken top honors is secondary. What's important is she cooked with love, and that is what made her meals memorable.

Cooking far exceeds the boundaries of a kitchen. Allow recollections, passion, and precision to be your guide. Uniqueness comes from within and is the secret ingredient for success.

That being said, savory pies have tipped the scales of popularity and are getting more trendy as time passes. Chicken pot pies are an American classic. The buttery, flaky crust pairs beautifully with the fragrant, creamy sauce and tender chunks of chicken.

But chicken pot pies have come a long way, and a new wave of creativity takes this humble dish to new levels of taste and texture.

Food For Thought



By Deborah Walker

Secret Ingredient: 'Uniqueness.'

"Dare to differ."

— Matthew Goldfinger

Let us deconstruct a traditional chicken pot pie and add a few modern twists so we can savor the deliciousness of comfort food at its finest.

History has taught us that savory pies originated as a way to use leftover meat.

However, adding a protein that has already been cooked and subject to a second heating process will yield a tough, dry consistency.

White or dark meat is the next discussion. Breast meat can be on the dry side, so dark or a combination of both is worth consideration.

Before we leave the subject of meat, partially poaching the meat in chicken broth enhances the essence of chicken.

Onions are an aromatic and necessary for chicken pot pie. Shallots, scallions, and leeks are another option which is always a good thing.

Frozen vegetables save time but

fresh is best whenever possible.

Wild mushrooms combined with chicken and adds sophistication.

Mushrooms have a tendency to shrink as they cook, so increase the amount so they do not get lost in the pie.

Butternut squash, parsnips, or turnips give the pie more heartiness and parlay with the theme of fall.

Dry sherry and a little Dijon mustard will perk up the sauce and give it more depth of flavor.

Choosing the right pastry is key for a successful pie. Contrary to popular belief there are no right answers, just an abundance of possibilities that depend on the individual chef.

Some cooks prefer a top and bottom layer of dough. There are those loyalists who will defend a drop biscuit topping till the very end.

There is a wave of modernism that embraces the convenience and embellishment of puff pastry.

Phyllo dough will add a contrast in consistency and still retain its lightness which will complement the rich filling.

In closing, mise en place is highly recommended.

There are a lot of steps, so if all of the ingredients are arranged in advance, the recipe flows faster.

Fall is around the corner and menus adjust accordingly.

A harvest chicken pot pie is yummy and packed with goodness. Enjoy! 🍴

(Editor's note: Deborah Walker is the author of "An Eastern Shore Special: Recipes from the Heart." She has written about food and recipes for 15 years. She resides in Ocean City, Md.)



Harvest Chicken Pot Pie

Ingredients

- 3 1/2 cups chicken broth, divided
- 2 pounds deboned chicken thighs
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Half leek, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Half-cup celery, chopped
- Half cup dry white wine
- 1 cup combined frozen peas and carrots
 - 1 cup butternut squash, peeled and cubed
 - 2 parsnips, peeled and coarsely chopped
 - 2 cup wild mushroom
 - 2 teaspoons dried sage
 - 1 tablespoon dried thyme
 - 1 teaspoon crushed dried rosemary
 - Pinch of cayenne pepper
 - 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
 - Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste
 - 6 tablespoons unsalted butter

plus extra for the phyllo dough

- 1/3 cup flour
- 2 cups half-and-half
- 2 cups milk
- Dry sherry to taste
- 18 sheets phyllo dough
- 6 (8-ounce) ramekins.

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. In a large saute pan over medium low heat, poach chicken in two cups of chicken broth until almost done. Coarsely shred with your hands and set aside.
3. Add olive oil to the saute pan, and increase heat to medium. Add onions, garlic, and celery, and saute for five minutes.
4. Add wine, peas, carrots, squash, parsnips, and mushrooms, and cook until squash and parsnips are fork tender. Stir in seasonings and Dijon mustard.

5. Add 6 tablespoons butter. Once it has melted, add flour until it is fully combined with pie mixture. Slowly pour in remaining chicken broth, cream and milk.

6. Simmer for five minutes or until thickened. Remove from heat and add chicken and dry sherry to taste. Taste again for salt and pepper.

7. Divide chicken mixture evenly among 6 oven proof bowls.

8. Measure phyllo dough so there is enough phyllo to cover bowls with a 3- inch overhang. Otherwise, you will end up with too much dough.

9. Lay three sheets of phyllo dough flat on your counter and liberally brush with melted butter. Scrunch up the dough and place on top of the bowl filled with pie mixture. Repeat this process for the five remaining bowls.

10. Bake for 30 minutes or until golden brown and filling is hot.

Now we're cooking!



Beef Breakfast Burritos

Beef for Breakfast

3 Savory Recipes for Protein-Packed Mornings

FEATURE IMPACT

People often think of beef as a dinner staple, but it deserves a spot at the breakfast table, too. Endlessly versatile and packed with protein, beef can turn everything from breakfast burritos to sandwiches into hearty, satisfying fuel for the day.

Breakfast is important even though mornings are busy, according to a study published in "Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine," which found children who eat breakfast tend to have higher math scores, fewer absences and better on-time attendance at school. That's why Beef Loving Texans is inviting families to join its free 30-Day Breakfast Challenge. You'll receive breakfast inspiration, nutrition and meal prep tips and encouragement to help your household start the day right.

If you need something you can grab on the way out the door, Beef Breakfast Burritos combine sautéed ground beef, peppers

and onions with scrambled eggs and flavorful sauces, all wrapped inside a warm tortilla.

For a make-ahead breakfast or brunch, whip up a Beef and Veggie Quiche, folding beef and vegetables into a savory mixture of eggs, cheese and cream before baking it in a flaky, buttery crust.

Or give leftover steak a second life with a Beef and Spinach Breakfast Sandwich, a portable take on the classic cowboy-style steak and eggs that combines leftover beef with spinach, cheese and eggs.

Whether you're feeding growing kids before school or trying to instill healthier habits for yourself, the challenge helps to make consistent, protein-rich breakfasts feel realistic, even on your busiest mornings.

Discover more recipes and join the 30-Day Breakfast Challenge at BeefLovingTexans.com/BreakfastChallenge.com.

Beef Breakfast Burritos

Recipe courtesy of Beef Loving Texans

Cook time: 30 minutes

Servings: 4

Lime-Cilantro Cream:

- 1/2 cup reduced-fat dairy sour cream
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro
- 12 ounces ground beef (93% lean or leaner)
- 1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons ground ancho chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro
- nonstick cooking spray
- 1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)
- 1/3 cup reduced-fat shredded Mexican cheese blend or shredded cheddar cheese
- 4 medium spinach or plain flour tortillas (10-inch diameter), warmed
- salsa (optional)

To make lime-cilantro cream: In small bowl, combine sour cream, lime juice and cilantro. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

To make burritos: Heat large nonstick skillet over medium heat until hot. Add ground beef, bell pepper, onion, chili powder and cumin; cook 8-10 minutes, or until internal temperature reaches 160 F, breaking into small crumbles and stirring occasionally. Pour off drippings, as necessary. Remove beef mixture from skillet; keep warm.

In medium bowl, combine eggs, water and cilantro. Spray same skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Pour into skillet; cook over medium heat 2-3 minutes, or until scrambled, stirring occasionally. Season with salt, if desired. Stir in beef mixture and cheese; cook 1 minute or until heated through, stirring occasionally.

Spoon beef mixture evenly in row across center of each tortilla, leaving 1-inch border on right and left sides. Fold right and left sides of tortilla over filling. Fold bottom edge up over filling and roll up; cut diagonally in half. Serve with lime-cilantro cream and salsa, if desired.

Cooking Tip: Cooking times are for fresh or thoroughly thawed ground beef. Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160 F. Color is not a reliable indicator of ground beef doneness.

Substitution: 1 cup egg substitute may be used in place of beaten eggs and water.



Beef and Veggie Quiche

Beef and Veggie Quiche

Recipe courtesy of Beef Loving Texans

Cook time: 59 minutes

Servings: 8

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 refrigerated pie crust (1/2 of 14.1-ounce package)
- 1/2 pound ground beef (80% lean or leaner)
- 1 tablespoon beef sausage seasoning mix
- 1 cup fresh baby spinach
- 1/4 cup cut fresh asparagus
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup chopped bell pepper
- 6 eggs
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream

Preheat oven to 350 F. Coat 9-inch pie plate with nonstick cooking

spray. Unfold pie crust on flat surface, pressing out fold lines with fingers. Place crust in pie plate, crimping edge as desired; set aside.

Heat large skillet over medium heat until hot. Add ground beef and seasoning mix; cook 4-5 minutes, breaking into small crumbles, stirring occasionally. Pour off drippings, as necessary.

Add spinach, asparagus, onion and bell pepper to skillet; cook 3-5 minutes, or until softened. Cool slightly.

In large mixing bowl, whisk eggs and cream. Gently stir in beef mixture. Pour into prepared pie crust; sprinkle with cheese. Bake 40-45 minutes, or until egg mixture is set and just beginning to brown. Cool 5-10 minutes; cut into wedges.

Beef and Spinach Breakfast Sandwich

Recipe courtesy of Beef Loving Texans

Cook time: 20 minutes

Servings: 4

- 4 eggs or 1 cup egg substitute
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh baby spinach
- 1/2 cup diced tomatoes
- nonstick cooking spray
- salt (optional)
- pepper (optional)
- 4 slices reduced-fat Swiss cheese
- 12 ounces leftover cooked beef (such as steak, prime rib roast, pot roast or deli roast beef), thinly sliced
- 4 whole-wheat round, thin sandwich breads, split and toasted

In medium bowl, combine eggs, spinach and tomatoes. Spray large nonstick skillet with nonstick cooking spray; heat over medium-high heat until hot. Add egg mixture; cook 2-4 minutes, or until eggs are almost set, stirring occasionally. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, if desired.

Divide egg mixture into four separate portions in pan. Evenly top with cheese and beef. Remove from heat and cover. Let stand 1-2 minutes, or until cheese is melted.

Place one egg portion on each bread bottom. Close sandwiches with bread tops; serve immediately.



Beef and Spinach Breakfast Sandwich

Boatyard Bash: Family fun along waterfront

CAMBRIDGE — Richardson Maritime Museum is gearing up for its major fundraiser, the “Boatyard Bash — “Where Heritage Drops Anchor,” an annual interactive waterfront event that brings together the boating community, maritime history enthusiasts, and families for a fun afternoon celebrating Chesapeake Bay maritime heritage.

On Saturday, Oct. 10, from noon to 6 p.m., visitors will enjoy live music by the bands “G Method” and “Jason Morton and the Chesapeake Sons,” tours of the museum’s maritime collections and the historic Ruark Boatworks, demonstrations, maritime history talks, competitions, local artisan vendors and nonprofits, food and beverages, fresh oysters, children’s and adult activities, and more.

In addition, there will be a display

of vintage boats from the Antique & Classic Boat Society-Chesapeake Bay Chapter, as well as antique cars from the Bay Country Region-Antique Auto Club of America.

One of the most anticipated new events is the inaugural “Boatyard Challenge — The Block Competition.”

Local boatyards will compete to determine which crew member can throw a traditional wooden boatyard block the farthest, earning the title of Dockyard Champion.

Once the champion is crowned, members of the public will have the opportunity to test their own skills by attempting to beat the winning throw.

The competition adds a fun fundraising element to the day, with participants making a donation to compete, and the overall audience

champion receiving a \$500 grand prize.

Throughout the afternoon, visitors can enjoy a series of engaging presentations by regional historians, including Jim Duffy, Bud Marseilles, Lou Hyman and Jaelon Maloney.

Beginning each hour, speakers will explore fascinating topics from Chesapeake Bay history, including Delmarva Tales, stories of Oyster Pirates, skipjack heritage, and the people who shaped Maryland’s working waterfront.

The Richardson Maritime Museum is located at 103 Hayward St.

Tickets for Boatyard Bash are \$20 for adults, \$10 for ages 13-20, and free for children 12 and under. For sponsor and vendor information, email office@richardsonmuseum.org or call 410-221-1871. ➡



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Indoor craft and yard sale on Oct. 24 to benefit Caroline County 4-H program

DENTON — An indoor craft and yard sale to benefit the Caroline County 4-H Program will be held on Saturday, Oct. 24 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Caroline County 4-H Park, located at 8230 Detour Road (off Rt 16W).

Multiple vendors will be on hand with 80-plus tables of goodies to be bought.

A variety of items from antiques, clothing, household, jewelry, woodworking, pet and equine items, Scentsy, Longaberger, and much much more!!

Food will available for sale at the event. The building is handicap accessible.

Proceeds from sale of table spaces will benefit the Caroline County 4-H Programs including scholarships, club needs, leadership and service learning activities.

For more information, call Joanne Wooters at 410-479-0565 or email caroco4hcraftshow@gmail.com.



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