

FALL/WINTER 2020

HAWWEATERS

Guide



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Preparing your home and property this autumn



Make quick work of yard cleaning with this high-performance and easy-to-use Craftsman cordless leaf blower. Equipped with a brushless motor and an axial fan design it delivers maximum efficiency at 600 CFM and 100 mph. The variable speed trigger procures more power or longer runtime. The light weight design of less than 10 lb decreased user fatigue. The unit is sold with a 60 V Max 2.5 AH battery pack and charger.

Winter weather can be harsh. Homeowners who spend much of the year tending to their lawns and gardens may worry that winter will undo all of their hard work. Though homeowners cannot do anything to prevent snow, wind and ice

from affecting their properties, they can take various steps to prepare their lawns, gardens and home exterior for whatever winter has in store and RONA Little Current Building Centre is here to help.

When leaves start to fall it

is time to rake or use a leaf blower. Ergonomic rakes are available at RONA Little Current Building Centre and can help prevent back and arm pain.

Using a rake is good exercise, but homeowners with large properties might want

to use a leaf blower. These machines can dislodge leaves from bushes and hard-to-reach crevices, and they work faster than rakes. RONA carries a variety of leaf blower options from top brands like Craftsman.

Consider composting leaves. Composted leaves creates a dark, rich and organic matter that can add nutrients to garden soil and loosen compacted earth.

You can also consider mulching leaves. It is a great way for homeowners to recycle a natural resource and enrich the soil of their lawns. Mulching leaves to dime-size pieces to a point where half an inch of grass can be seen through the mulched leaf layer using your lawn mower.

Winterizing fertilizers help lawns store food they need to survive through winter and also can help them bounce back strong in spring. Such fertilizers are typically formulated for cool-season grasses such as fescue and bluegrass and are often best applied after the final cut of fall. Warm-season grasses go dormant in winter, so homeowners whose lawns contain these types of grasses won't want

to apply a winterizing fertilizer.

Don't forget about your roof and gutters! Inspect your roof for shingles that are warped, damaged or even missing to prevent a future leak. Use roofing cement and a caulking gun to seal joints where water could penetrate, such as around the chimney, skylights or vent pipes. Make sure that your gutters and downspouts are securely fastened. Downspouts should extend at least five feet away from the home to prevent flooding and consider gutter guards. These

nifty devices help keep your gutters clean of leaves and debris.

Remove snow shovels and other winter gear from storage and make sure the items are easily accessible during the winter months. If you are in need of a new snow shovel, roof snow rake (think last winter!) and/or are considering a snow blower, stop by RONA Little Current Building Centre and speak with a sales associate. Shopping for these items early in the season ensures that you have the items you need to combat old man winter before he arrives.



Snow blowers such as this model from Craftsman make cleaning your driveway and walkways a breeze.

Keeping warm this winter with RONA

As the leaves start to change and the temperature drops, it's time to start thinking about your winter heat.

Fireplaces, wood-burning and pellet stoves are not only a beautiful focal point within a home, but they also provide an additional source of heat and can be used to keep rooms or entire homes comfortable without the need for additional and potentially costly heating

sources.

If you don't already have a wood-burning or pellet stove, stop by RONA Little Current Building Centre to see the selection and find the right product for your home or camp.

Just like more modern home heating systems, stoves and fireplaces need to be maintained, and that maintenance includes readying them before winter when they are used more

heavily. Ensuring a fireplace or stove is in good working order helps to guarantee efficiency of use and safety during the winter months.

Start with the chimney. Begin by thoroughly cleaning your chimney and stove. Creosote can build up inside of the chimney. Creosote is highly flammable and becomes more difficult and expensive to clean the longer it builds up inside your flue lining. RONA Little Current Building Centre has you covered with rods, brushes and other chimney cleaning supplies that you may need.

Install or check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Operational alarms are essential to preventing injury or death resulting from smoke or carbon monoxide inhalation. Such detectors are inexpensive safeguards that should be installed on every floor of the house. Batteries should be replaced every six months, and the alarms themselves should be changed every five to 10 years.

If you have a pellet stove, ensure you order your pellets before the cold temperatures hit. RONA has pellets available in a variety of woods both by the bag, starting at \$6.60/bag for softwood and \$6.99/bag for hardwood, or by the pallet.

If you have an HVAC or other heating system, don't forget to inspect your air fil-

ter at least once per month, as filters can quickly become dirty during a heavy-use season like winter. Dirty filters cause the system to work harder to keep a home warm, unnecessarily wasting energy as a result. New filters for a variety of systems are in stock at RONA Little Current Building Centre.

RONA Little Current Building Centre also has a variety of programmable thermostats which help you optimize your system and keep your home warm, but energy efficient. New Wi-Fi enabled programmable thermostats, from trusted brands such as Honeywell, allow homeowners to control their heating and cooling systems via their smartphones.

A fall inspection of your overall home is important as is addressing any leaks, drafts or lack of proper insulation.

Drafty windows and doorways can make the air inside homes feel warmer in the summer and colder in the winter. As autumn weather grows colder, homeowners can perform simple inspections around windows and doorways to determine if they have any leaks. On a cold and/or windy day, place a hand near all windows and doors to feel if there are any leaks. Use caulk or another type of sealant to address leaks so you can keep

cold air out and set your thermostat to a reasonable, eco-friendly temperature.

Consider inexpensive window insulation kits, starting at \$6.69 from Climaloc, along with reverse ceiling fans to push warm air back down.

Insulation can be inadequate in older homes. Over time, it can settle and compact, creating gaps. Topping up attic insulation will help keep the warm air in, reducing heating bills and preventing stress on your furnace. For easy installation, homeowners and professionals alike recommend

a stone wool batt insulation product called Roxul Comfortbatt. For attics, aim for an r-value of R-50 or a depth of 16 inches.

Did you know RONA Little Current Building Centre rents an insulation machine for blowing insulation in areas like attics? Call today to find out more information, 705-368-2090, or stop in.

When it comes to preventative maintenance, a little time and effort can save thousands in energy costs and repair bills over the lifetime of your home.



RONA Little Current Building Centre carries Drolet pellet and wood stoves such as the Drolet Eco-55 pellet stove. Designed to heat areas between 500 to 2,000 square feet, this pellet stove has a maximum input rate of 39,260 BTUs per hour and a 78.4 percent optimum efficiency. The hopper holds up to 80 pounds (36 kg) of pellets, and it has a maximum burn time of 69 hours so you don't have to constantly feed it fuel. The stove has an average particulate emissions rate of 0.96 g/h and is mobile home approved.



The Lyric 2.0 Wi-Fi Thermostat for air-forced heating system uses the Wi-Fi technology on your smartphone and automatically maintains comfort by considering the temperature, humidity and weather. No complex menu. Multifunction buttons on the thermostat and in the application to save time. You can control the thermostat from anywhere with a smart phone or a tablet. Compatible with Apple HomeKit.

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Great gift ideas for hunters

MANITOULIN—Millions of people across the globe have a passion for hunting. When the time comes to find gifts for the avid hunter in your life, indulging their passion for the great outdoors can make for the perfect present.

Hunters come in all shapes and sizes and from all walks of life. When shopping for gifts for hunters, it can be advantageous, particularly for consumers who don't hunt, to think of the ages and experience levels of their loved ones and then go from there.

Young and/or inexperienced hunters

Many areas have minimum age requirements for hunters, and nearly every region requires hunters to take courses on hunting safety before they can apply for hunting licences. Financing such educations can be an ideal gift for young hunters, ensuring they will have a strong foundation in firearm safety and other important aspects of hunting before they come of age and go on their first hunting trip.

A two-way radio makes another great gift for young

hunters, especially for those who don't yet have their own phones. Even those who have phones may find it more fun to speak with their fellow hunters over their special radios than on the phones they use every day.

Gear, which can include ev-



Two-way radios make a great gift for a new hunter.

Shutterstock

everything from attire to knives to compound bows and more, also can make for a great gift for young hunters or those just learning the ropes. However, consumers buying for youngsters who aren't their own children should first consult the child's parents to determine their readiness for certain gear.

Established hunters

Established hunters who have strong passions for the

sport may already have everything they need. And even those that don't may prefer certain manufacturers. It can be difficult to learn of such preferences without speaking directly to a loved one, which can spoil the surprise.

In such instances, consider gifting a hunting experience. Finance a trip to a hunting ground a loved one wants to visit but never has. Go along for the trip and you might just develop your own passion for hunting.

Some additional gifts that can be great for established hunters include a rifle case; ammo cans; a bore guide, which hunters use to clean their rifles; camping gear; headlamps; and other items hunters routinely use that could

be in need of an upgrade.

Of course, one of the best reasons to choose a hunting-related gift for the family outdoorsman is it might compel them to share their bounty when they return home from a successful trip. A cookbook that offers tips on butchering in addition to recipes can make for the perfect gift, and one that the whole family will ultimately enjoy at the dinner table.

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With Daylight Savings upon us, tips for beating the winter blues

MANITOULIN—Most areas in Europe and North America observe Daylight Saving Time. Daylight Saving Time (DST) is often welcomed in spring, as it helps to extend daylight hours well into the evening. But few may welcome turning the clocks back in fall.

Coupled with the natural shortening of daylight hours as winter ap-

proaches, the end of DST facilitates a sudden shift in the ratio of sunlight to darkness. As autumn transforms into winter, the number of available hours of daylight slowly dwindles. Some areas of Alaska and Canada see only about three or four hours of daylight per day in the winter months. Conversely, those who live in Key West, Florida, the southernmost

point of the contiguous United States, may enjoy around 10 hours of daylight.

Fewer daylight hours can adversely affect mood and productivity. Seasonal affective disorder, often referred to as “SAD: or “the winter blues,” has been recognized and included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders. Clinicians say

that as days become short and dark, a predictable set of symptoms of SAD may emerge. Individuals with SAD may experience a host of symptoms, including difficulty waking in the morning; diminished energy levels; a tendency to eat more; an inability to concentrate; and depression.

The Cleveland Clinic advises that approximately half a million people in the United States suffer from winter SAD, while 10 to 20 percent may suffer from more mild forms of winter blues. The Canadian Mental Health Association states that between two and three percent of Canadians will experience SAD in their lifetime. Another 15 percent will experience a mild form of SAD that leaves them only slightly depressed. Similar symptoms can occur for those people who live in cloudy regions or high latitudes.

Evidence strongly suggests SAD is linked to sunlight. This lack of sunlight may trigger production of melatonin in some individuals. Melatonin is a hormone made in the pineal gland that regulates



There are a number of ways to beat the winter blues this fall and winter.

sleep onset and sleeping patterns.

A combination of self-care strategies as well as professional medical treatment may help those with winter blues or more severe SAD. The following strategies can help people coping with SAD:

- Get out of the house into sunlight or brightly lit spaces early in the day when the sun is out
- Increase time spent outdoors. Take a break mid-day and enjoy lunch outside or take a walk, even if it's chilly
- Try to spend time with other people and chat with friends and relatives

- Avoid overloading on carbohydrates like cookies and candies

- Talk to a doctor about using light therapy, which is the first line of SAD treatment, according to the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

- Consider cognitive behavioural therapy or talk therapy with a licenced mental health provider. He or she also can make recommendations about the use of medication to alleviate symptoms if other treatments do not provide results.

There are many ways to mitigate the symptoms of winter blues.

If winter or COVID-19 is isolating you, make sure you hear your loved ones as clearly as possible.

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Find a home for your leftover apples by pressing cider

How an Island community let me “dance with wild nature”

Warren Schlote

MANITOULIN—Islanders who are fortunate enough to have apple trees on their property may be wondering what to do with their harvest that hasn't already ended up in pies, tarts or sauces. For a tasty treat that will help preserve the fruit for a bit longer, cider may be your answer.

This author is a self-professed lover of all things apple and when my father offered to bring up a 50-pound bushel of macs when he visited me for my birthday, I was all in. I have long wanted to make my own cider but my lack of knowledge intimidated me.

Apple cider can take many forms. It can be fresh-pressed and preserved in that state, it can become fizzy ‘lady cider,’ it can ferment into hard cider or a potent ‘apfelwein,’ or it can become a stable apple cider vinegar.

My goal is somewhere in the lady cider or hard cider range but I know I won't get there alone. I turn to Justin Tilson's Resilient Manitoulin community for support.

Just five hours later, I already have a handful of leads and offers from people willing to show me how it's done.

• • •

The first person who fits within my schedule is Jaime Rowntree, a member of the Northern Ontario Permaculture Research Institute (NOPRI) in Honora Bay, of which Mr. Tilson serves as executive director.

The institute's science director Mark Hamalainen has previously purchased some commercial equipment but the COVID-19 pandemic has him stuck in Califor-



Members of the Northern Ontario Permaculture Research Institute load the masticator with some of their fresh-harvested apples. This is the high tech version of making apple cider.

photos by Warren Schlote

nia, away from the gear at his parents' home in Little Current. He hopes to launch his small commercial cidery in the near future (tentatively called Wild Island), but in the meantime, NOPRI members are able to make use of his machinery.

Ms. Rowntree shows up at the Hamalainen house with a small crew from NOPRI on a cool September morning and begins to unload some of the equipment. Soon, a platoon of devices stands ready in the garage—a masticator to grind the apples into a pulp, a hydraulic press to extract all of the cider from the apples, plastic containers to hold the juice and a plastic tub of water to rinse the apples before they meet their grinder.

The team sanitizes any surface that will contact the fresh cider to make sure no contaminants taint the batch. “It's go time,” says Ms. Rowntree as the crew begins to wash and grind pail-

fuls of apples and load them into the press. Once full, the team attaches a hose to the contraption's bladder and water pressure squeezes the juice through a fine metal screen.

It takes about 10 minutes for these machines to make a gallon of cider and the team takes a celebratory swig. Ms. Rowntree adds two strains of wine yeast to ferment the batch in the way they want and then she and her teammates race off to harvest more apples.

As I enjoy my cider sample, I realize that I have more questions than answers. I don't have access to this fancy gear and wonder how I'll process my own bushel.

Enter Mary Yett.

• • •

Ms. Yett has lived in Tehkummah for 13 years and works as a veterinarian. Her background is in herbalism and microbiology.

She has been making her



Pails upon pails of fresh apples await the grinder.

Making cider doesn't have to be daunting, she says, and she's determined to prove that to me.

I'm in.

We eventually find a time that works in both of our busy schedules—a rainy, mid-October Sunday morning.

• • •

A few days before the trip, it occurs to me that I should have a carboy or two (also known as a demijohn), a sturdy glass jug to catch the fresh juice and hold it as it ferments.

It's back to Resilient Manitoulin in search of containers. I get a few offers to borrow gear and opt to look

at Richard Edwards' two carboys with rubber airlock stoppers, but as I start my car to drive over I learn that they're five gallons in size, likely too large for my single bushel.

The going estimates equate one bushel to roughly a gallon of juice.

I graciously accept them, just in case, and continue my quest for a pair of gallon-sized containers.

Paul Best then offers me a plastic carboy but it, too, is five gallons in size. However, it weighs a fraction of the glass units and so I agree to hold onto it for a week.

Gary Furhman then comes

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Be COVID-safe this hunting week on Manitoulin Island

Michael Erskine

MANITOULIN—Safety is and should be at the forefront of every hunter's mind when they take to the bush, but this season adds a whole new dimension to the mix with pandemic restrictions and protocols to consider. While the provincial government is recommending everyone stay close to home while the COVID-19 virus is still very much a concern, for Manitoulin Islanders the annual hunting season remains a strong draw.

While deer hunting itself is traditionally a fairly solitary engagement, allowing quite nicely for physical distancing, there are a host of ancillary activities that can be problematic: The close quarters of most hunt camps combined with the homecoming tradition aspects of the hunt. For many families and groups of old friends the annual hunt is a time to reengage and catch up with each other, renewing the bonds of a lifetime—a difficult thing to forgo.

Some regions of the province hard hit by pandemic restrictions will have a serious disrupting impact and travelling to places such as Manitoulin Island, where the virus has been largely



While the act of hunting lends itself well to physical distancing, it's the other hunting week activities, such as hanging out at the camp, that could lead to the spread of COVID-19.

absent, could have a devastating impact on Island communities.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) point out in their communications that the government is asking people to stay home as much as possible and advise every hunter to “take a hard look at their situation and determine if they can hunt within

the public health guidelines.” As the OFAH suggests, “the government recommends that anyone who is in an at-risk group, who thinks they have COVID-19 symptoms, or who might have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 should self-isolate. Hunting can wait until you are not putting yourself or the public at risk.”

That's great advice, but Is-

landers can be forgiven for thinking that hanging out at the hunt camp with your bubble folk does little to heighten risk.

Should hunters decide to make their way to the hunt camp and tree stand this season, the OFAH has a number of things to consider before you go.

First on the list are licences and permits. It will be

important to get these lined up well before hand, as the outlets that you normally depend on might not be as accessible as you are used to. If your traditional hunting area is some distance away it would be prudent to call ahead to avoid disappointment at the doorstep. A lot of the permits, licences and tags can be obtained through an online account.

Printing those licences before you pack your bags and head to your hunting grounds is highly advisable.

Some things remain the same, especially when it comes to firearms. If you are gun hunting this fall, you are required to carry your possession and acquisition licence (PAL) with you. Make sure it is up to date and don't leave renewal to the last minute. As the OFAH advises, “COVID-19 has led to lengthy delays in licence renewals, so if your PAL expires later this year, renew it as soon as possible (the online option is the quickest).”

While there is a six-month grace period for expired PALs, that only goes so far. There are strict restrictions during that time, advises the OFAH. They point out that the grace period only allows someone to legally store, but

not use, their firearms until the PAL has been renewed.

Getting things ready for camp often involves following a checklist, but this season that inventory taking is of increased importance, so take a more careful and detailed inventory of equipment. You may find buying or replacing something is a lot more difficult these days.

The pandemic has led to many shortages, some of them quite surprising. The OFAH advises hunters to not count on being able to pick up ammo or archery items on the way.

So much of life isn't “normal” this season and that includes butchers. So if you plan on using a particular butcher, call before the season to make sure they are still in operation and will accept wild game.

During the topsy-turvy world of the pandemic not all regions are as open or accessible as they have been in the past. You will want to confirm that where you are planning to hunt is still accessible.

The website www.ofah.org/covid19closures can be accessed to get up-to-date information. The OFAH advises that if you are plan-

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...Find a home for your leftover apples by pressing cider

...continued from page 5

to my rescue and I stop in at his off-grid home to gather a pair of glass gallon jugs that perfectly suit my needs.

I sanitize all of the containers that evening and begin the trek to Tehkummah in the morning.

It's easy to spot Ms. Yett's driveway. Resting there is an ancient-looking wooden and metal press that seems to weigh a ton or two—we discover this to be true as we try and fail to move it out of the rain.

The first step is again to wash the apples and run them through a hand-cranked grinder. I take on loading and cranking as Ms. Yett uses a stick to motivate the apples into the teeth of the grinder.

We grind the apples whole. Even ones with small blemishes or squirrel bites are okay, as long as there is no rot.

"We've been trained to look for produce that's visually perfect, but often the healthiest ones are the ones with little imperfections. Many of the apples here on the Island have evolved to be disease-resistant," says Ms. Yett.

Once the barrel is full of



Mary Yett of Tehkummah shows off her cider press.

pulp, it's on to the pressing stage.

The design of apple presses has not changed much through the years: a barrel to hold the pulp, a wooden lid to cover the apple bits and a metal rod to apply pressure for squeezing out the juicy goodness.

As we work, Ms. Yett shares factoids about the benefits of cider and other fermented foods.

"Every culture on the planet eats some sort of fermented product every day. We need that for our gut health, which is often weaker in our society," says

Ms. Yett, adding that gut microbes make up the vast majority of one's immune function. Imbalances in the gut can cause immune disorders, allergies and other health problems.

She asks what containers I've brought to hold the juice and I show her my sterilized bottles, as well as the airlocks that I've seen recommended online.

"This is all fine, but you really don't need all of this and you don't need to go through a big sterilization process," she says. I ask about the online articles I've read on the topic that warn

of molds and other contaminants ruining batches but she assures me that for most casual home experimenters, a hot soapy water wash should be sufficient.

Ms. Yett occasionally teaches classes about how to graft trees but says birds have naturally planted almost every tree on her 100-acre property. She tells me about the purpose of permaculture studies—to optimize plant growth and find companion species that can increase their natural food output and balance the ground's nutrient levels.

"Most cultures die off in



We filled a gallon jug full of cider with one bushel plus a litre left over.

hundreds or thousands of years because of bad soil practices. You need animals on farmland and regenerative agriculture practices to complete the nutrient cycle," she says.

In short order, we've ground and pressed my whole bushel, except for a couple of bad apples that land in her garden for fertilizer. The long handle on the press means it's not too challenging to squeeze out the juice, but every so often an apple mash projectile squeezes through a slat of the barrel.

By the time all of the pressing is done, my clothes are soaked both from the rain and the apple bits, but I'm unfazed. I hold up the gallon-and-a-bit of rich, brown cider that we've pressed, including a foamy head and the little bits of apple that slipped through into the jug, and smile.

We spend about 20 minutes hosing down the apple remnants off the press, then transfer the dried-out apple mash to a bucket. It, too, will go into the garden as fertilizer.

I'm thrilled but also rather

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...Find a home for your leftover apples by pressing cider

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chilly, so I invite myself into Ms. Yett's kitchen for a mug of tea so I can learn more about her background and gather tips for home cider makers.

The manual method is more accessible than the industrial equipment at NOPRI, but it still requires harder-to-find gear, unless a fellow Islander is willing to loan theirs out.

I mention this to Ms. Yett. She stands and brings over a tall metal contraption to the kitchen table.

"This is a steam-juicer," she says as she plunks it down and takes it apart. It has three chambers—a water reservoir at the base, a central component to hold the juice and a colander-type top to hold fresh fruit.

"You set this on the stove and let it cook down into juice, and then you can fill jars with this spigot," she says. "It'll be pasteurized so it won't ferment on its own, but for maybe a hundred dollars or two, this is the easiest way to get into making ciders and juices at home."

Those who prefer not to cook down their fruit can also grind, blend or finely chop their apples and press them through cheesecloth for the same effect, albeit with more effort.

Manitoulin Island hosts an abundance of apple trees

and Ms. Yett says aspiring cider-makers can likely find plenty of fruit either for free or in exchange for finished product.

"If you see a tree on someone's property, find the owner and ask if you can have some of them. It's a good way to make friends and you can always return the favour after you're done," she says.

Any kind of apples can make a nice cider but the best results come from a blend of bitter and sweet varieties, says Ms. Yett.

• • •

We opt to use the natural yeasts that grow on fruit skins to ferment my batch, but I've brought commercially harvested apples that have been sprayed to kill such organisms. Ms. Yett adds in a splash of her apple cider vinegar to help kick-start the process in my batch, as it is full of the natural fermenting lactobacillus micro-organisms.

The cider can pick these up from the air (because they exist everywhere) but it can also attract un-helpful organisms like molds. Ms. Yett says she has spent years 'inoculating' her home with lactobacillus so her own batches reliably pick up the helpful micro-organisms.

With my cider pressed and boosted with Ms. Yett's vinegar, now begins the hardest part—waiting. For people who choose to ferment their

cider without airlocks, she suggests leaving the cap loose to let out gas. Use a plate underneath to catch any drips and leave the jug at room temperature in a visible location, such as a kitchen.

"You'll want to taste it every day because it's easy to let it go skunky," she says. "It'll start foaming and bubbling; when the foam stops and it's still bubbling you have lady cider, which is like kombucha with a very slight alcohol content. It'll keep going to become harder cider and eventually turn into vinegar."

The key is to refrigerate the batch when it reaches the desired fermentation level to stop it from going any further. Ms. Yett doesn't have an answer to my question of how long the cider will keep in its fizzy state, only that most people consume it within a few weeks and never have to worry about that question.

I ask what pitfalls tend to strike first-timers. She says people can struggle with stepping back and allowing natural processes to unfold.

"This is dancing with wild nature, like making sour-dough bread. These are wild-caught organisms and you can never predict how things are going to go. You just need to be patient and give it time," says Ms. Yett.

To avoid losing a whole batch to a serious case of na-

ture-gone-wrong, she suggests using several smaller containers rather than one large jug. This way, if one bottle should spoil, you won't necessarily lose the rest.

"It's something you just have to experiment with. You might get the odd batch that goes funky; just don't drink it and you'll be fine. Trust me, your nose and your taste buds won't let you drink it if it's not good," she says with a laugh.

Still, the prospect of wasting a gallon of juice stresses me out. My father ingrained

an anti-wastage mindset into me as a child and I still believe in that principle. Ms. Yett offers reassurance.

She leads me back to her pantry and shows me a glass jug of an awful-looking yellow liquid that was, at one time, apple cider. She takes off the lid and invites me to take a whiff; its scent reminds me of vinegar that's made a series of bad choices.

"You wouldn't be able to even try to drink this, but it's one of the best window and floor cleaners you can find," she says.

In the balance of nature, even the things that don't work out have a place. This offers some comfort as I drive home but by midweek I'm already anxiously messaging Ms. Yett.

"Any guesses of how long it should be before I see bubbling? It's not really doing much yet and if it's going to spoil, I'd like to catch it and refrigerate it before it goes bad," I write.

"You asked me what the main impediment is for first-timers to try their hand at apple cider. You have dis-

...continued on page 11

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Plan to make your holiday party a low waste one

MANITOULIN—With music playing, beverages flowing and delicious food available, it's no wonder parties are highly anticipated events. Eco-conscious hosts often wonder how to strike a balance between convenience and keeping waste to a minimum.

Reusable products, such as hand towels, ceramic dishes, glasses and silverware, are convenient for everyday life

or when just a few people are coming over. But throw 20 or more guests into the equation (COVID rules apply, of course) and it is easy to understand why disposable products are so attractive.

Food waste also is a concern when hosting. According to Second Harvest, a Toronto agency that collects surplus food throughout the supply chain and distrib-

utes it to agencies, including here on Manitoulin, 58 percent of all food produced in Canada—that's 35.5 million tonnes—is lost or wasted.

This holiday season, consider ways to minimize waste when hosting a party.

- Clearly distinguish recycling pails from trash pails so that items that can be recycled will be collected and handled appropriately
- Choose disposable prod-

ucts wisely, opting for items that have been made from recycled materials. Have guests mark their names on cups and plates so they can be reused throughout the day instead of discarded after each helping

- Keep track of how much food and drink guests consume so that you can accurately plan for the right amount to satisfy the crowd at future parties
- Choose in-season foods

from local vendors to reduce your carbon footprint

• Offer keepsakes or edible treats instead of goodie bags. At kids' parties, a decorate-your-own cookie or cupcake is popular and less wasteful than a plastic bag full of trinkets

- Serve beverages from larger containers rather than single-serve cans or bottles. Keep a pitcher of filtered water on tables instead of bottled water

• Promptly wrap up leftovers so they can be turned into a meal for another day without the risk of spoilage

• Serve desserts that can be held in one's hand, such as cupcakes in an ice cream cone. This way no cake plates will be necessary

With a little ingenuity, it is possible to cut down on party waste and still have a good time while doing right by the environment.

...Be COVID-safe this hunting week

...continued from page 6

ning to hunt on public land, you should have a backup location sorted out just in case crowding at your first choice makes physical distancing not possible.

Keep an eye out for travel advisories if you normally hunt a good ways off-Island. Remember that physical distancing will make carpooling a challenge, especially with people outside your household, so keep that in mind as you plan your hunting trip logistics.

But the biggest challenge this hunting season is the hunt camp, given that it tends to involve being in very close quarters with other people, especially when it comes to sleeping quarters. Avoid the traditional buffet-style of meal and close contact activities such as card games. Try to plan out the hunt camp amenities so that maintaining space is easier. The OFAH suggests bringing an extra tent or renting a recreational vehicle.

As previously mentioned, most hunting is fairly solitary by its very nature, but blinds, tree stands, watercraft and vehicles such as

ATVs and side-by-sides will require extra precautions. Avoid sharing blinds and stands between hunts, especially if they are enclosed, and don't be afraid to sanitize.

As the OFAH points out, "physical distancing may not be feasible when a big animal is on the ground. Especially for moose, hunters have to work as a team to get the animal quartered and out of the bush. When working closely together can't be avoided, wearing a mask is a good idea." In fact, wearing a mask in any of the close quarter situations is a great idea. If it feels silly, get over it. COVID-19 can be present with no symptoms, but just as deadly to those who are infected by an asymptomatic carrier. And a reminder: conservation officers will be looking for COVID-19 infractions and can lay fines accordingly.

OFAH biologist Keith Munro's online information was invaluable when preparing this article and his suggestions, along with other useful information can be accessed at www.ofah.org.



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Cranberry-infused cocktail for autumn entertaining

Cranberry Margarita

Besides the ubiquitous “pumpkin spice,” nothing says “autumn” more than tart cranberries. Cranberries are a major component of holiday feasts, turning up alongside and atop turkey as well as in quick breads and desserts.

Cranberries are loaded with health benefits, which include reducing the risk for ulcers and preventing gum disease. Also, just eight ounces of cranberry juice cocktail contains 137 percent of the daily recommended value of vitamin C.

Cranberries can even be used to craft great cocktails. Move over mulled ciders, this crisp Cranberry Margarita from The Cape Cod Cranberry Growers’ Association makes a great autumn-inspired beverage.

- 1 1/2 shots of tequila
- 1 shot of cranberry juice cocktail
- 1/4 cup of whole berry cranberry sauce
- 1/2 shot of triple sec
- 10 ice cubes
- Sweetened dried cranberries, for garnish
- Lime, for garnish

Combine all ingredients except garnish in a blender. Blend on high until smooth and frosty. Serve in a margarita glass. Garnish with dried cranberries and a lime wheel. Serves 1.

...Find a home for your leftover apples

...continued from page 9

covered the answer to that question yourself. It is precisely that this is a natural process that is so unlike everything else that we can control,” she responds.

“It’s a lovely and charming dance. Humans are not actually in charge of nature, we are partners with nature,” she adds, and tells me that with the cooler weather, it could be weeks before I see any action.

...

The cider is still sitting in my apartment as this story goes to print and I anxiously stare at it every day as it fails to turn into a fun,

fizzy liquid overnight. It helps to remember Ms. Yett’s tales of mankind fermenting foods for millennia.

It also helps to think of the people who came together to allow me to chase my cider-making dreams. From my dad’s gift of 50 pounds of apples to the Islanders who offered me their gear, expertise and—most importantly—their time, it took a community support this aspiring friendly neighbourhood cider-man.

Even if the only outcome is a gallon of pungent household cleaner, I’m richer for having gone through the process.

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