

Quick Bites

Offers Lunchtime Learning

Schedule for May 2008

May 1

How can I afford the high price of gas?

Don't let high fuel costs drive you nuts! Learn how to cope by learning about gas-saving tips that work and those that don't.

Susan Cosgrove, Area Family and Resource Development Agent and County Director

May 8

Covering Ground

This program will be from the Bulldog Gardens on the MSU campus. Take a tour of some of the new plantings and learn some great tips and techniques to use in your own yard.

Lelia Kelly, Consumer Horticulture Specialist

May 15

Floral Design Mechanics II, Bases for Fresh Floral Designs

This segment will cover the mechanics of making fresh floral arrangements for the home and for special occasions.

James DelPrince, Associate Professor of Floral Design

May 22

Growing Your Knowledge Using the Internet

During this Quick Bites, you will learn how to use interactive online resources to plan your garden or landscape before purchasing the materials.

Mariah Smith, Instructor, Computer Applications and Services, MSU-ES

May 29

Managing Vegetable Garden Pests

This session will focus on keeping insect pests from taking a bite out of your homegrown vegetables before you get a chance to.

Blake Layton, Extension Professor, Entomology and Plant Pathology

More information about Quick Bites is available online at msucares.com/distance_ed/schedule.html.



Jim Lytle

By Bob Ratliff

Any Mississippian can turn a sandwich and a trip to the county Extension office into a learning experience.

Each Thursday from noon until 1 p.m., county Extension offices receive Quick Bites live, interactive video feeds from Mississippi State University. There is a new topic each week, and the topics are as varied as the state of Mississippi, said Extension distance education coordinator Susan Seal.

"Not only do you have the opportunity to learn about topics ranging from herb gardening to Tai Chi, but participants also have the chance to ask questions and interact with the person teaching the class and with other participants," Seal said. "Most of the programs originate on the MSU campus and feature an Extension Service specialist or other university professional."

Extension offices in each of Mississippi's 82 counties are equipped to receive the interactive video feeds. Recent topics have included a cooking demonstration by MSU chef Roland Parry and lessons on floral design by university florist Lynette McDougald.

Each month's topics are sent to the county Extension offices in advance so they can be publicized locally. Warren County Extension Director John Cocco includes the Quick Bites schedule in the information he sends to the local paper. "The number of people who participate from week to week varies with the topic," Cocco said. "Our conference room seats 50 people, and it was almost full for the Tai Chi program."

Other popular Quick Bites program topics in Warren County have included genealogy and how to write a will. The program is attracting the attention of people who have never participated in other activities offered by Extension, Cocco said.

"Quick Bites programs are popular with retirees, but because they are offered during the noon hour, working people can bring a sandwich to eat while they watch the program and be back at work in an hour," he said.

Making university-based information available to the public is the mission of the Extension Service, and Seal said Quick Bites uses the latest technology to accomplish that mission.

"The program began in 2006 as an in-service training tool for Extension personnel, but we soon realized that some of the computer training and other classes could be of interest to the general public," she said. "By using the interactive video capability in each county office, our specialists and other presenters can reach a statewide audience without having to travel long distances."

Each program includes a presentation that lasts about 45 minutes, followed by a question and answer session the rest of the hour. The program is free to the public by calling the local Extension office to reserve a space.