



# Northfork Sparks & Flashes

Supplement to Oklahoma Living

November

14

## Unwrap Energy Savings This Winter

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NFEC offices will be closed Thursday and Friday, Nov. 27 and 28 in recognition of Thanksgiving. Please call 1-800-668-6587 to report an outage or a safety hazard.



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The holidays are upon us! It's that special time of year when we spend a great deal of time with friends and family, either in the kitchen or out and about shopping for the perfect gift. As you find yourself wrapped up in the holiday excitement, NFEC reminds you of a few ways to be energy efficient during this busy time of year.

#### Cooking efficiently

- Be kind to your oven. Every time you open the oven door to check on that dish, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25 degrees. This forces the oven to use more energy in order to get back to the proper cooking temperature. Try keeping the door closed as much as possible. Also, remember to take advantage of residual heat for the last five to 10 minutes of baking time – this is another way to save energy use. If you're using a ceramic or glass dish, you can typically set your oven 25 degrees lower than stated, since these items hold more heat than metal pans.
- Give your burners some relief. The metal reflectors under your stovetop burners should

always be clean. If not, this will prevent your stove from working as effectively as it should.

- Utilize small appliances. During the holidays, the main appliances used are the oven and stovetop. Try using your slow cooker, microwave, toaster oven or warming plate more often. This will result in substantial energy savings.

#### Home efficiency

- Take advantage of heat from the sun. Open your curtains during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home, and close them at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.
- Find and seal all air leaks. Check areas near pipes, gaps around chimneys, cracks near doors and windows and any unfinished places.
- Maintain your heating system. Schedule services for your heating system before it gets too cold to find out what maintenance you may need to keep your system operating efficiently.
- Eliminate "vampire energy" waste. When you are not using an appliance or an elec-

tronic, unplug it to save energy. Power strips are definitely a good investment for your home.

#### Efficient shopping

- Purchase LED holiday lights. A string of traditional lights uses 36 Watts of power and a string of LED lights only uses 5 Watts. They can even last up to 10 times longer!
  - Ask for Energy Star-rated TVs and appliances. This will save you a lot of power use because the standby-mode is lower and the device will use less energy overall.
  - Combine errands to reduce the number of small trips. To-do lists seem to pile up around this time of the year. Believe it or not, several short trips in the winter can use twice as much fuel as one longer trip covering the same distance as all of the shorter ones.
- Being energy efficient is usually not top priority when celebrating the holidays, and most of us don't realize the lack of efficiency until the next bill comes in. Prevent your post-holiday shock this year by thinking creatively and remembering all of these tips!

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# Replace Windows Before Winter Weather Sneaks Indoors

If you turned the heat on a little bit earlier this fall and it wasn't because of unseasonably cool temperatures, your windows are probably at fault.

If you're dreading the high utility bills that start coming in once the mercury drops, blame your windows.

Windows cover up holes in your home's walls. If yours are made from just a single pane of glass, they're not going to keep winter outside.

Before it gets too awfully cold, consider replacing your energy-inefficient, older-model windows with new, double-pane versions that will work twice as hard to keep the cold weather from sneaking into your house.

A few tips as you shop for new windows:

- Choose windows with Low-E glass. The special coating helps reflect some of the interior heat back into the home and keep cold air out. A bonus: Some window brands don't charge extra for Low-E glass. Look for windows that offer the coating as a standard feature.

- Seriously, ditch your single-pane windows. The Department of Energy estimates that you could save up to \$500 a year on your energy bills if you replace them with Energy Star-rated, double-pane windows.

- When you get new windows, the installers will seal all around the glass and the window frames so cold air can't seep inside and warm air can't leak outdoors. 101-017 Still, that caulking won't last forever. Whether your windows are new or old, caulk around them every fall to keep the seal fresh.

- The same goes for doors. If yours isn't closing properly, or if you feel a cold draft when you walk near it, seal it, too. If it's really bad, think about getting a new one that isn't cracked, warped or poorly fitted. A snugly installed door also keeps energy bills lower.



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**(580) 928-3366**

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What is

# Thanksgiving

Without

## Cranberries?



### Soda Pop Cranberry Pecan Biscuits

- 1/4 cup sweetened dried cranberries**
- 1/4 cup pecans**
- 2 cups biscuit baking mix (such as Bisquick®), plus a little more for flouring the work surface**
- 1/2 cup sour cream**
- 1/4 cup carbonated lemon-lime soda (such as 7-Up® or Sprite®)**
- 1/4 (4 Tbsp. or 1/2 stick) cup melted butter, divided use**
- 2 tsp. white granulated sugar**
- Glaze:**
- 1/2 cup powdered confectioners' sugar**
- Heavy cream or milk**

Preheat oven to 425 F.

Place cranberries, pecans, and baking mix in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse until fruit and nuts are chopped. Add sour cream and soda, then pulse a few times until dough comes together. Do not over-process.

Lightly flour work surface with additional baking mix. Remove biscuit dough from processor to work surface. Sprinkle more of baking mix on top of dough. Fold in half, flour again, and

repeat one more time. Pat dough into a 9-inch square. Using a sharp knife, cut dough into 9 even square biscuits.

Pour half of the melted butter into a 9- x 9-inch square baking pan and swirl to coat evenly with butter. Sprinkle sugar on bottom of the pan. Arrange biscuits side-by-side (3 rows of 3) in pan. Drizzle remaining butter over the top of biscuits.

Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden.

While biscuits are baking, combine confectioners' sugar with enough heavy cream or milk to make a drizzling glaze. Drizzle the glaze over the warm biscuits.

Yield: 9 biscuits

### Apricot- Cranberry Relish

- 1 cup orange juice**
- 1/2 cup plus 2 Tbsp. honey, divided**
- 1 (12-oz.) package fresh or frozen cranberries**
- 1/2 cup finely chopped dried apricots**
- 1/3 cup finely chopped green onion**
- 1/4 cup finely chopped crystallized ginger**

### Cranberry-Yam Casserole

- 3 cups (12-oz.) fresh whole cranberries, picked over and washed**
- 1 small orange, washed, sliced (peel included), seeds removed**
- 1/4 cup orange juice**
- 1/2 cup pecan halves**
- 1-1/2 cups granulated white sugar**
- 1 tsp. cinnamon**
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground nutmeg**
- 1/8 tsp. ground ginger**
- 1 (40-oz.) can yams (or sweet potatoes), drained**

Preheat oven to 375.

Place cranberries, sliced orange, orange juice, pecans, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and ginger in a large bowl. Toss gently to combine. Pour into a 2-quart casserole dish. Bake, uncovered, for 30 minutes.

Remove from oven and stir in drained yams or sweet potatoes. Return to oven and bake an additional 15 minutes until heated through.

Yield: 8 servings



Combine orange juice and 1/2 cup honey in a saucepan; bring to a boil. Add cranberries, bring to a boil, and remove from heat. Drain and let cool.

Combine cranberries, 2 tablespoons honey, and remaining ingredients in a medium bowl.

# How to Get All Those Holiday Dishes Clean

If some of your dishes aren't clean when you unload your dishwasher in the morning, it could be because of the way you loaded them the night before.

Count the number of people who live in your house, and that's the number of different ways the dishwasher gets loaded.

Here are some dishwashing guidelines that you might be able to agree on:

- o Never load bronze, pewter, cast iron or wood into the dishwasher. They don't hold up well under heat. Exposure to hot water, for example, can cause the wood handle of a knife to split.

- o When placing plates and bowls between the tines on a dishwasher rack, don't double them up—even if the machine is getting full. The manufacturer has measured the spacing between tines so enough water can get between each dish to clean it well.

- o Maximize your space by placing similar items together. Interspersing glassware with plates, for example, means fewer plates will fit.

- o Long-handled spatulas and spoons go on the top rack, laid flat.

- o If you're hand-washing wine glasses and the "good" plates, you might be doing unnecessary work. Check the box the pieces came in to learn if they're dishwasher-safe.

- o Break fewer glasses and cups by placing them along the sides of the top rack so they rest along the rack's outer "wall."

- o If you use both stainless steel utensils and real sterling silverware, put them both in the

dishwasher—but far away from each other. Stainless steel knives and forks can dent the real silver.

- o When you place forks in the silverware basket, alternate them so some tines point up and some point down. They'll get cleaner that way.

- o Place pots and pans on the rack with the open side facing downward.

As long as you leave enough space in between dishes to allow the water to do its job, there's no need to pre-rinse them before loading them into the dishwasher.



## Warm Up Your Water Heater

You're not the only one who stays warmer when you zip up a fluffy winter jacket. Your water heater does, too.

Adding insulation to the outside of a water heater can reduce the amount of heat it loses by more than 25 percent. And because it will direct that extra heat to warming up your home's water, you could see a savings of 5 percent or more on your water heating bill. That's substantial, considering that water heating accounts for about 18 percent of an average home's utility bill.

For \$30 or so, you can buy a water heater blanket made from an insulating material that's easy to wrap around your device.

Brand-new water heaters come with a lot of insulation, so you might not need this if yours is new. The tank of an older water heater

that could benefit from an insulating blanket will feel hot to the touch. Or, if your water heater is in a spot that gets super-cold during the winter, the blanket will help it operate more efficiently.

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