

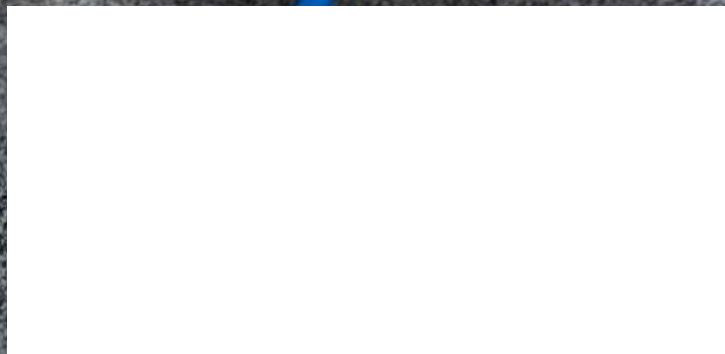
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■ COUNTRY LIFE

DECEMBER 2023



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Generosity



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If your tired, achy legs and feet are preventing you from moving easily...

Now, a prickly herb has been discovered to....

BOOST BLOOD FLOW TO YOUR LEGS, FEET, AND HANDS WITH A 95% SUCCESS RATE VERIFIED BY CLINICAL STUDY

A re-discovery from the 1600s is causing a frenzy within the medical system. A weird herb has been shown in six clinical studies (and by thousands of users) to be very effective for leg and feet pain, burning and numbness – with no side effects – at low cost – and with no doctor visit or prescription needed.

This weird herb comes from a 12-foot tall tree that grows in Greece and other countries in Europe. In the old days, people noticed that when their horses who had leg and feet problems ate this herb – it was almost like magic how quickly their problems got much better. They called it the “horse herb”. Then somehow with Europe’s ongoing wars, this herbal secret got lost in time.

“It works for people who’ve tried many other treatments before with little or no success. Other doctors and I are shocked at how effective it is. It has created a lot of excitement” says Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D.

Its active ingredient has been put into pill form and improved. It is being offered in the United States under the brand name Neuroflo.

WHY ALL THIS EXCITEMENT?

Researchers have found an herb originally from Greece that has been shown in six placebo-controlled medical studies (543 participants) to be effective and safe. This natural compound strengthens blood vessel walls and reduces swelling to stop the pain and suffering.

Poor blood flow in the legs and feet is

one of the common problems that develops as we age. Millions of Americans suffer from neuropathy and chronic venous insufficiency (CVI), edema, and other leg/feet problems – millions have these but are undiagnosed.

Today’s treatments don’t work for a high percentage of people – and they have side effects that make them hard to tolerate or that people do not want to risk. This includes prescription drugs, over the counter pain pills, surgery and compression.

HOW IT WORKS

Here’s why you have pain now: Your arteries have weakened. Your arteries can’t carry enough blood, nutrients and oxygen down to your legs and feet. This damages your nerves and causes your burning, tingling and numbness.



The herbs in the pill Neuroflo strengthen your arteries that carry blood, nutrients and oxygen to your feet and legs. It improves your circulation so oxygenated blood goes to the nerves and repairs them.

This makes your nerves grow stronger so your pain fades away and your legs and feet feel much younger again.

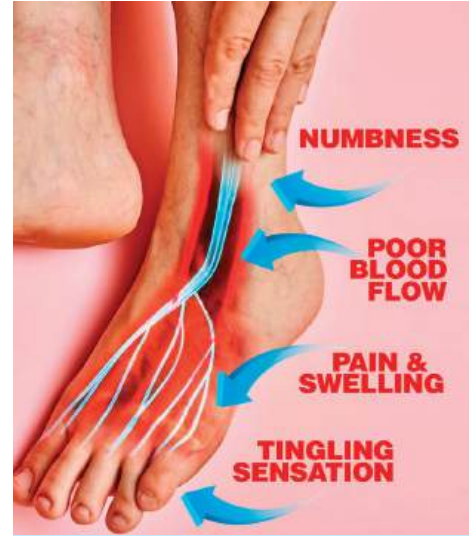
Katerina King from Murrieta, California says, “I had hands and feet tingling and snapping and burning feeling. It made my life very uncomfortable. I had a hard time walking, my legs felt like they each weighed 50 pounds. Once I got in my car and my feet felt so heavy I couldn’t even drive the car. With Neuroflo I have no more tingling, cold or burning painful legs and feet. It went away.”

WHAT DOCTORS ARE SAYING

“Now I finally have a natural solution I can recommend to my patients who suffer from leg and feet problems and pain. I’m delighted because previous treatments were not effective, but Neuroflo has worked for every one of my patients with no side effects” says Dr. Eric Wood, N.D.

Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D. says “This is new and different. It works for people who’ve tried many other things before. It is natural with no side effects. Don’t give up hope for your leg and feet pain, burning, tingling and numbing. This pill is working for countless people after other treatments have failed them. I highly recommend it!”

“Neuroflo is a terrific choice for people with leg and feet issues. The clinical trials in support of this herb show it is very effective for safe and fast relief,” said Dr. Wood, a Harvard trained



WORKS IN AMAZING WAY: A prickly plant was used in Europe in the 1600s to revitalize ailing legs. Lost over the centuries, it is now making a comeback as US doctors rediscover its impressive results – sending relief to thousands of users with:

- Burning, Tingling, Numbness
- Painful Legs & Feet
- Swollen, Achy Feet
- Varicose Veins

doctor who has appeared on award winning TV shows.

Now you can get a good night’s sleep - peaceful, restful sleep – with no pain, tingling, zinging, itching or zapping. Improve your balance and coordination. No side effects – safe to take with other medications. Enjoy your favorite activities and hobbies again. Be more active, have more fun, enjoy life more. Don’t risk irreversible damage to your feet and hands. Don’t get worse and wind up in the hospital or a nursing home.

Neuroflo is GUARANTEED to work for you – or you will get full refund with a 90-day unconditional money-back guarantee. It is NOT sold in stores or online. No prescription or doctor visit is required.

50% OFF FOR THE NEXT 10 DAYS

This is the official release of NeuroFlo in the state. Therefore, everyone who calls within the next 10 days will receive 50% OFF their first order. A toll-free hotline number has been set up for local readers to call for this 50% OFF savings. The number will be open starting at 7:00 am today and only for the next 10 days.

All you have to do is CALL TOLL FREE **1-888-250-8965** and provide the operator with the special 50% OFF discount approval code: **NEF158**.

Important: Due to Neuroflo’s popularity and recent media exposure on ABC, CBS and FOX NEWS, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not get through immediately, please be patient and call back. Those who miss the 10 day deadline for 50% OFF will have to pay more for Neuroflo.

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Says Dove Medical Press & Development and Therapy

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Swollen legs are a warning sign. They mean blood and fluid is forced out of the blood vessels into the surrounding tissue. This causes non-stop pain. This is where Neuroflo’s active ingredient is such a big help.

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FROM THE EDITOR

The Art of Baking

BY KYLEE COLEMAN EDITOR



KYLEE COLEMAN

Drawing and painting are not my forte. I'm crafty in a lot of ways (knitting, embroidery, and card making), but if you put a pen or brush in my hand, I can't even draw a basic stick figure.

Do you remember the game Pictionary? My family has adapted that game to be "Draw with Kylee," where I choose something to draw, and they guess what it is. This activity always elicits a bunch of laughs mostly because whatever is in my mind's eye just does not translate onto paper. "Elf with Football Feet" was a guess one night when I was trying to draw a leprechaun. And "Bacon Cat" was guessed after an earnest attempt to draw a tiger.

Despite my general artistic deficiencies, for whatever reason, something changes when I have bags of royal icing and a blank sugar cookie in front of me — they turn out pretty cute, if you ask me. This time of year, I pride myself on gifting trays full of fun, colorfully decorated (and delicious!) cookies to neighbors and friends.

On page 14 you'll find a collection of wonderful cookie recipes from our electric co-op friends across Colorado. A couple of the recipes are great to roll out, cut into shapes, and decorate with your frosting of choice.

My team and I here at *Colorado Country Life* wish you the happiest holiday season. Cheers to a joyful month of fun and laughter — and lots of cookies!



Decorating sugar cookies is a favorite holiday activity. Photo by Kylee Coleman

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ON THE COVER: A volunteer shows a little girl a pair of new shoes at a shoe giveaway event.

Photo by Kylee Coleman

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MONTHLY GIVEAWAY ENTER TO WIN



Win supplies to elevate your cookie baking. Enter our December giveaway for a handpicked collection of baking tools.

The giveaway includes:

- 1 cookie scoop
- 1 cookie dough log shaper
- 1 apron
- 1 pot holder
- 1 spatula
- a collection of holiday cookie cutters



Scan this QR code with your smartphone to enter or visit www.coloradocountrylife.coop.

CO-OP

The Twelve Days of Christmas

BY KENT SINGER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



KENT SINGER



With apologies to the lost-to-history poet who wrote the original words to this Christmas favorite, and with my best wishes to you and yours this holiday season, I give you the Twelve Days of Christmas (the electric co-op edition).

On the first day of Christmas, my true love sent to me: An electric self-propelled two-stage snowblower.

On the second day of Christmas, my true love sent to me: Two heat pump water heaters and an electric self-propelled two stage snowblower.

On the third day of Christmas, my true love sent to me: Three smart thermostats, two heat pump water heaters, and an electric self-propelled two stage snowblower.

On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me: Four solar flashlights, three smart thermostats, two heat pump water heaters, and an electric self-propelled two stage snowblower.

On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me: Five gold rings! Four solar flashlights, three smart thermostats, two heat pump water heaters, and an electric self-propelled two-stage snowblower.

On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me: Six EV charging station maps, five gold rings, four solar flashlights, three smart thermostats, two heat pump water heaters, and an electric self-propelled two-stage snowblower.

On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love sent to me: Seven solar-powered battery banks, six EV charging station maps, five gold rings, four solar flashlights, three smart thermostats, two heat pump water heaters, and an electric self-propelled two-stage snowblower.

On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me: Eight-kilowatt wind turbines, seven solar-powered battery banks, six EV charging station maps, five gold rings, four solar flashlights, three smart thermostats, two heat pump water heaters, and an electric self-propelled two-stage snowblower.

On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me: Nine multiprong charger cables, eight-kilowatt wind turbines, seven solar-powered battery banks, six EV charging station maps, five gold rings, four solar flashlights, three smart thermostats, two heat pump water heaters, and an electric self-propelled two-stage snowblower.

On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me: Ten insulating socket sealers, nine multiprong charger cables, eight-kilowatt wind turbines,

seven solar-powered battery banks, six EV charging station maps, five gold rings, four solar flashlights, three smart thermostats, two heat pump water heaters, and an electric self-propelled two-stage snowblower.

On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love sent to me: Eleven LED smart bulbs, ten insulating socket sealers, nine multiprong charger cables, eight-kilowatt wind turbines, seven solar-powered battery banks, six EV charging station maps, five gold rings, four solar flashlights, three smart thermostats, two heat pump water heaters, and an electric self-propelled two-stage snowblower.

On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love sent to me: Twelve StopWatt power savers, eleven LED smart bulbs, ten insulating socket sealers, nine multiprong charger cables, eight-kilowatt wind turbines, seven solar-powered battery banks, six EV charging station maps, five gold rings, four solar flashlights, three smart thermostats, two heat pump water heaters, and an electric self-propelled two-stage snowblower.

CO-OP
Happy Holidays to All!





Survive Just About Anything for Under \$20

On any outdoor adventure, Mother Nature's job is to present you with challenges. Some days she's more demanding than others. And on those days, you'd better come prepared. **The Stauer Survival Box is a near-guarantee you'll be up to the challenge.** The stainless steel multitool offers wire cutters, knife, bottle opener, file, a set of screwdrivers, a pair of pliers and much more. The powerful flashlight has three different settings, and the tactical loop watch is a reliable, water-resistant timepiece that clips to your hip and never leaves your side. All told, opening the Survival Box gives you instant access to nine different tools for **JUST \$19.50**.

Regularly sold for \$99, we're offering this collection of survival essentials to you for **A FIFTH OF THE NORMAL PRICE!** Why? Because we've had an incredible year and we feel like giving back to our valued customers. As this kit has proven to be one of our all-time best sellers, we can only extend this offer while supplies last. Of our initial run of 1,737, **more than half have already sold.** Your move, Mother Nature.

Survival Box Specifications:

- Multitool: 3 1/4" x 1" folded
- Flashlight: 3 1/2" x 1", 260 lumens, takes AA batteries (not included), three LED light modes: strong, medium and caution flashing
- Watch: 2 3/4" x 1", battery type SR626SW (included)

Survival Box ~~-\$99~~ \$19.50* + S+P **Save \$79.50**

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"[It] has everything!"

— Carol T.,
Anaheim, CA

Box includes flashlight, watch and multitool with wire cutters, knife, bottle opener, file, screwdrivers, pliers and more!

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BEAT THE PEAK AND CREATE A BETTER GRID

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q: What does “peak energy time” mean, and why should I use less energy at home?

A: “Beat the peak” has become a common message as the demand for electricity grows year after year. Your electric co-op must deliver around-the-clock electricity to power your life. To understand why it is important for everyone to use less energy when there is high demand for electricity (known as peak times), let’s start with the complex system that delivers electricity to your home.

How does the grid work?

The U.S. power grid is often considered one of the largest machines in the world. Some could argue it is our country’s greatest achievement because reliable electricity has become essential to our daily lives and our economy.

The U.S. has three main interconnected power grids: the Eastern Interconnection, the Western Interconnection, and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. Each interconnection has regional balancing authorities, which are organizations that ensure that electricity supply constantly matches electricity demand.

The interconnections are powered by electric generation in various sources, including hydropower, nuclear, coal, gas, wind, solar, and more. Some of these generation sources can supply power constantly or be ramped up or down depending on demand, while others supply intermittent power. The energy produced by these sources connects to the grid and moves along transmission lines that allow power to travel long distances.

Your electric co-op is known as a distribution utility, which operates the power infrastructure connecting transmission lines to the distribution power lines that bring electricity to your home.

This whole system and the more than 2 million people who operate it are continually working behind the scenes so we can take advantage of a 24/7 supply of electricity at the flip of a switch.

Throughout the day, demand for power supply fluctuates. If supply and demand fall out of balance, local or widespread black-outs can occur. To maintain reliable power, especially during peak times, there must be enough power supply to equal demand.

Due to supply and demand, the cost to buy power is higher during peak times. Peak times vary across the country but occur typically in the morning as we start our day and in the evening when we return home.

The demand for power increases every year. The U.S. Energy Information Administration projects that residential consumption of purchased electricity will increase between about 14% and 22% from 2022 to 2050. Industrial, transportation, and commercial consumption is also projected to experience increased demand.

As generation, transmission, and distribution utilities work to increase production and maintain and protect our grid, it’s important for all of us to take steps to use less energy every day. In turn, it will help you save on your monthly electric bill.

How do I beat the peak?

To beat the peak, think about how you can use less energy in the morning and evening. Start with the area that uses the most energy by adjusting your thermostat during peak hours, either up or down a few degrees depending on the season. A smart thermostat can do this for you automatically.



▲ To conserve energy, start with manageable changes around your house. Instead of running your dishwasher after dinner during peak hours, start it right before you go to bed. Photo by Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources.

Are there certain appliances or devices you can wait to run until after peak hours? For example, start the dishwasher or dryer before you go to bed. If you have an electric vehicle, program it to charge overnight instead of right when you return home in the evening. Smart power strips ensure that your devices are not pulling power when they are turned off. These devices work well for televisions and gaming devices.

If you have appliances that are 10-plus years old, consider replacing them with new, efficient Energy Star-rated appliances. Your electric cooperative may have rebates to help lower the initial cost.

By embracing energy conservation, we can all make small changes that have a big impact on our community and the intricate system that powers our lives. To learn more about your local peak times and how you can use less energy, contact your electric co-op.

Miranda Boutelle is the chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy-efficiency company.

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ELECTRIC CO-OPS PRIORITIZE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Colorado's electric co-ops practice the cooperative principle of Education, Training, and Information and invest in continuing education and career development. It's an investment that helps boards of directors, CEOs, and employees effectively contribute to their cooperative. CREA, the statewide association that supports 21 electric co-ops across Colorado, also operates under the seven cooperative principles and values education and training for its employees and for the co-ops it serves.

CREA Job Training and Safety Instructor Jesse Peeler recently earned his certified loss control professional credential. The CLCP program is co-sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the National Utility Training and Safety Education Association. The program consists of four, one-week seminars and teaches the skills and knowledge needed for safety professionals to prevent and successfully manage challenging safety issues.



Jesse Peeler

"The program taught me a lot about the intricacies of safety rules and regulations," Peeler says. "Networking with other safety professionals provided an opportunity to share best practices and problem-solve together. I've been able to share and apply what I learned to my work in Colorado and improve my training and communication with the co-ops."

CREA Director of Safety Jenna Hirsch supports continuing education and training, and thinks Peeler's certification comes at the right time. "Ensuring our instructors have the skills and knowledge to provide precise, quality services to our member co-ops is paramount to the strength of their programs," Hirsch says. "As the electric industry changes, so do safety regulations, rules, and standards. It's important for CREA to monitor new and proposed regulations, communicate them in a timely manner, and assist the co-ops in interpreting and understanding how to comply with those changes."

Congratulations to Peeler on this accomplishment.

Report Shows Electric Co-ops Contribute to Economic Development

A recent report, "Economic Powerhouses: The Economic Impacts of America's Electric Cooperatives," commissioned by NRECA and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corp., found that electric cooperatives have a wide-ranging economic impact in the United States and in their local community.

According to the analysis — conducted by an energy strategy consulting firm and NRECA associate member — co-ops' activity contributed \$554 billion to U.S. gross domestic product between 2018 and 2022 for an average of \$111 billion per year. Co-ops also generated \$135 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenue over this period.

Electric co-ops across the U.S. support nearly 623,000 jobs with \$51 billion in pay and benefits each year while contributing hundreds of billions of dollars to the economy over a five-year period. Between 2018 and 2022, electric co-ops invested nearly \$409 billion across the U.S. This figure includes \$75 billion on capital expenses and infrastructure, \$304 billion in operational costs, and \$24 billion toward maintenance activities. Another \$7 billion was disbursed to members in the form of retired capital credits.

Throughout its service territory, your electric co-op's contributions to the local economy reach beyond these statistics. Your local co-op donates to local nonprofit organizations, funds scholarships for students, sponsors community events, and hosts meetings and events for which they hire local restaurants for catering. Electric co-ops are a vital part of the communities they serve.

YOU CAN HELP POWER A COMMUNITY

With your help we can make a bigger impact in Guatemala.

This month, lineworkers and co-op crews will embark on a trip to north-central Guatemala to bring power to the people of Alta Verapaz. NRECA International will team up with Heifer International to wire nearly 200 homes. By improving electric service, internet access, and water supply, communities will be better equipped for local agricultural efforts and business productivity.

Show your support and help the local families by donating today.

To learn more: www.crea.coop/community-outreach/current-causes

To send a check: Make it payable to Colorado Electric Educational Institute with "Guatemala" written on the memo line and mail it to:

CREA/Guatemala
5400 Washington St.
Denver, CO 80216

Colorado's electric cooperatives established the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, CEEL, to support causes like this. All contributions are tax deductible. Visit www.crea.coop/community-outreach/current-causes to learn more. This project was made possible by NRECA International, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization, whose mission is to increase individual and community access to electricity in all parts of the world.

Power Pole Clutter

Flyers, satellite dishes, posters, basketball hoops, decorative lights, even hunting stands. You name it, someone has tried to staple, nail or tie it to a power pole. Here's a quick look at the dangers and pitfalls associated with unauthorized pole attachments.

Illegal

Many state and local laws and the National Electrical Safety Code prohibit any unauthorized items on poles. Utilities can face fines if these attachments aren't removed.



Pole Damage

Even small holes can allow moisture and insects past the pole sealant, which can shorten the life of the pole or weaken it and cause it to fall in a storm.



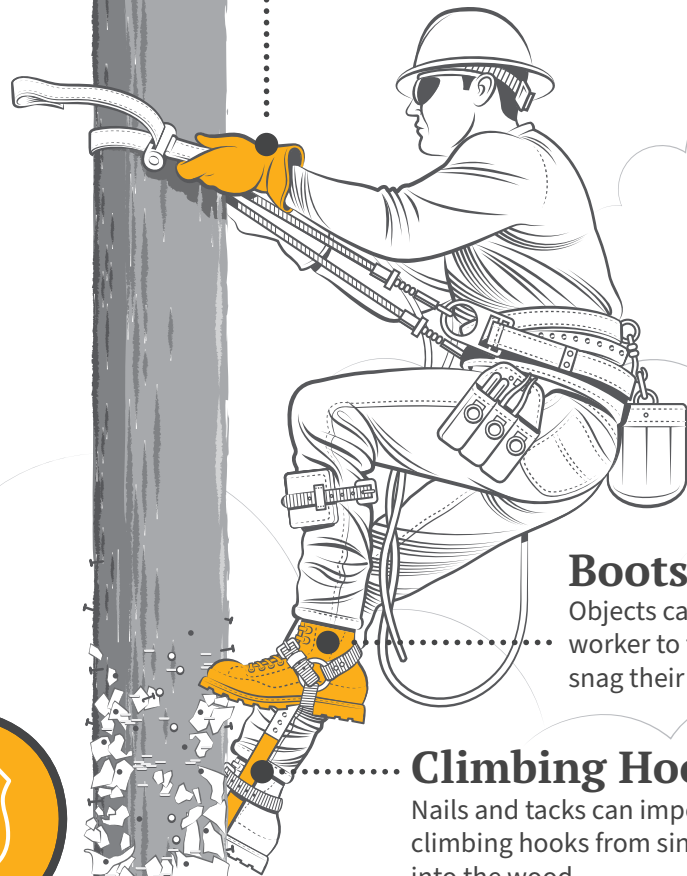
Hinders Repairs

Posters and flyers can hide identifying markers on poles and slow repair work.



Gloves

Staples, tacks and nails can puncture a lineworker's insulated rubber gloves and expose them to electric shock.



Boots

Objects can cause a worker to fall if they snag their boots.

Climbing Hooks

Nails and tacks can impede climbing hooks from sinking into the wood.



Dangerous

A person who gets too close to energized lines while attaching an object can be electrocuted.



Distraction

Some materials posted on poles, like mirrors or holiday decorations, can be a distraction to drivers.

CO-OP COOKIE SWAP

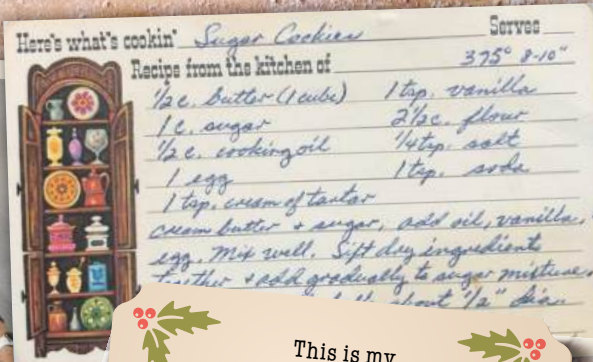
A holiday cookie swap is a fun and easy way to stock your kitchen with a variety of seasonal goodies without having to do all the baking yourself. This month we collaborated with Colorado electric co-op employees for a virtual cookie recipe swap. These tried-and-true recipes will get you started on your holiday baking and are a star choice for any cookie swap.

Elevate your cookie baking and enter our December giveaway for a handpicked collection of baking tools.

Visit us online and enter to win a cookie scoop, a cookie dough log shaper, an apron and pot holder, spatula, and cookie cutters.



Visit coloradocountrylife.coop and enter today!



This is my mother-in-law's recipe. She passed away when Harrison was about 5 months old, so we call them our "Grandma Doris" cookies when we make them.

Grandma Doris Cookies

From: Jessie Heath, Highline Electric Association

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup cooking oil
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp cream of tartar
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking soda

Cream butter and sugar, then add oil, egg, and vanilla. Mix well. Sift dry ingredients together and add gradually to sugar mixture. Roll into small balls about 1/2 inch in diameter. Place on cookie sheet and flatten with a spoon dipped in sugar, or roll out and cut with cookie cutters. Bake 8-10 minutes at 375°.



This is my mother's cookie recipe that she has made since I was a little kid. When she first learned to talk, my daughter named her MoMo and it stuck. Now my grandkids all call her MoMo, too. They all live in Kansas City, and we were just there for a visit. Mom made a big batch of cookies to take with us, and they were quickly gobbled up. They are light, crispy, and deliciously simple.

MoMo's Easy Sugar Cookies

From: Denise Moore, Empire Electric Association

Cream together:

- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 cup butter or Crisco®
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla

Add:

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp cream of tartar
- 1 tsp baking soda

Chill tightly covered for 1 1/2 to 2 hours (or overnight).

Cover baking sheets with parchment paper. Spoon out a heaping teaspoon of dough. Roll between hands to form a ball about the size of a walnut. Roll each ball in sugar and place on a cookie sheet.

Bake at 375° for 15 minutes or until light tan in color. Yield: about 5 dozen.





These Monster Cookies will be devoured by all the cookie monsters in your life. They are great for family gatherings, or parties with friends. They also freeze well. Bake a batch and enjoy!



This recipe from my grandmother, Helen Munson, is a childhood favorite!

No-Bake Special K® Cookies

From: Cassi Gloe, Colorado Country Life publisher

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 3 1/2 cups Special K® cereal

Bring sugar and corn syrup to a boil on the stove top. Stir in the peanut butter.

Measure the cereal into a large bowl.

Pour the sugar, syrup, and peanut butter mixture over the Special K cereal.

Gently mix it all together and then form into 2-inch balls. Place on parchment paper and let set.

Monster Cookies

From: Erica Meyer, Mountain View Electric

- 6 eggs
- 1/2 pound butter, softened (do not microwave)
- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 pound brown sugar
- 4 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 1 1/2 pounds peanut butter
- 9 cups oatmeal (quick oats, not old fashioned)
- 1/2 pound chocolate chips
- 2 cups M&M's® candies
- 1/2 tsp light Karo® syrup

Mix together all ingredients with a wooden spoon. (Do not use an electric mixer — it will emulsify everything and your cookies will turn out flat).

Use a three-tablespoon cookie scoop or measuring cup to scoop dough onto your cookie sheet.

Bake at 350° for 10–12 minutes. You can bake two sheets of cookies at a time, switching them on the racks after 6 minutes. Let cool on a cookie sheet.

Yield: about 3 dozen.

Spikalaas

From: Nikki Ricciardi, Mountain View Electric

- 1 pound butter
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 4 cups flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 3 tsp allspice
- 3 tsp ground nutmeg
- 3 tsp ground clove
- 5 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1–2 cups chopped walnuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 350°.

Cream together butter, eggs, and sugars. In a separate bowl sift together dry ingredients and then combine with the creamed ingredients. Shape dough into 8 cylinder rolls and wrap in plastic wrap or foil and freeze. Slice and bake on ungreased cookie sheet for approximately 10 minutes. Yield: about 15 dozen.



This is a recipe that was handed down to my mom, Eileen Ricciardi, by her Dutch grandmother ... who learned the recipe from her grandmother. Spikalaas (also spelled "speculaas" depending on region) is a traditional Dutch cookie with a warm holiday spice flavor and a crisp texture that is great for dunking in coffee or hot chocolate.

These cookies are a staple of the Christmas season in the Netherlands, Belgium, and parts of Germany. While this recipe calls for nuts, it is just as good without! An additional bonus is that both the dough and the baked cookies can be frozen without losing texture or flavor.





Step into Generosity

BY GAYLE GRESHAM
Photos by Kylee Coleman

Colorado foundation shares comfort and kindness

A group of preschoolers walked into the room at Head Start in Limon, Colorado, at the Shoes for Limon event sponsored by the Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Lincoln Early Childhood Council. Some kids bounced with excitement and others were more quiet and trepidatious. But all were welcomed with smiles from Share the Spirit volunteers. After being checked in, the children's feet were measured, and they chose a pair of new socks from a bin of colorful choices. The volunteers asked each child to pick a chair and removed the child's shoes while they chatted about what kind of shoes the child would like to wear. The volunteer who was paired with each child gathered two or three shoe boxes and helped the child put on the shoes.

Then the magic happened. The children walked around, ran to the wall, and jumped up and down trying out their new shoes. They'd say, "Yes, I love them!" Or they'd answer, "No, I don't like them," and try on another pair. When a child found the

perfect pair of shoes, the volunteer checked to be certain the shoes fit. Seventy-three children left with new socks and shoes (many the light-up variety), a snack, and, at this event, a stuffed animal. But more importantly, they walked out the door with smiles and eyes lit up with joy, excited to show off their brand-new shoes.

The Share the Spirit Foundation, founded in 2003, is the vision of sisters-in-law Karen Voepel of Lamar, Colorado, and Tonya Voepel of Arizona. This year, Karen and Tonya celebrate the 20th anniversary of providing shoes for underserved children and families through their foundation. And — in an even more impressive feat — they expect to have gifted 20,000 children with new shoes by the end of this year.

Share the Spirit is about more than giving away shoes. It offers an experience some of these children have never had — the simple act of walking into a shoe store (or a pop-up shoe store) to pick out the shoes they like. "We want to provide shoes

personally to kids," Karen says. "We want to look them in the eye, shake their hand, and take them to a shoe store."

Making Humankind Better

This dream was born out of the tragic events on September 11, 2001. "I wanted something to do to make mankind better," Karen says. In 2002, she invited Tonya to walk with her on the Susan G. Komen Walk for Breast Cancer from Boulder to Denver. Between the two of them, they raised \$5,000. "It was so easy to raise the money. We just sent out letters, and people would mail back checks. People were looking for something to give to."

"You've got three days to walk, and you meet a lot of people and have time to talk," says Karen. "We talked about starting our own nonprofit and raising money. We thought of shoes for kids because we went through a couple of pairs of shoes training for the walk."

◀ Share the Spirit volunteer Gracieana Smith helps a preschooler try on new shoes at a pop-up shoe giveaway event in Limon.

After researching organizations that gave new shoes to children and finding only one nonprofit, Karen and Tonya applied for a 501(c)(3) and started raising funds. They held an exclusive dinner party in Chicago (Tonya lived in Illinois at the time), charging \$100 per person, and raised \$1,000. “Then we bought shoes, and we had an event for six children at our local shoe store — J&N Shoes in Lamar. That was the kickoff.”

The success of the initial fundraising efforts became a key factor in realizing Karen and Tonya’s dream. Biannual fundraisers held in Lamar are themed events, which include food and drink options, live entertainment, and an auction. For example, the spring 2022 event, A Day at the Races, featured a dinner of prime rib, pulled pork, ribs, and brisket. Women wore their finest derby hats and fascinators. All enjoyed the event and listening to the live derby broadcast. Fundraising events are also held in Illinois and other states.

The organization works with shoe stores including J&N Shoes in Lamar, buying shoes at a discount, which allows Share the Spirit to support local businesses. Regular shoe events are held in rural areas of southern and eastern Colorado, along with city-based events in Illinois.

Executive Director Jessica Page explains how they find children who need new shoes. “We rely heavily on schoolteachers, counselors, principals, and directors of preschools. These are the people watching the kids. They are our ‘boots on the ground.’ When a first grade teacher tells us about a child who needs shoes, we will collaborate with the teachers of their older or younger brothers and sisters to make sure all of the siblings in the household get shoes. The school officials are phenomenal in getting the kids who

need help in touch with Share the Spirit.”

Outreach programs take Share the Spirit beyond Colorado and Illinois. “We have gone to Eagle Butte, South Dakota, twice to provide shoes to kids on the reservation, some of whom actually walked to the event barefoot,” Karen says. There have been events in Baltimore, Phoenix, California, and West Virginia. “In one day, we gave 500 children new shoes from a local shoe store in West Virginia — plus backpacks filled with pencils, crayons, and paper.”

The Christmas Spirit

During the holiday season, requests for children in dire need of shoes or clothing come to Share the Spirit. When they can help out, they will do so with outreach projects. The board decided to hold a Christmas giving campaign to help one family each year. Last year’s recipient was a family on a reservation in Montana. The grandmother had found their website and reached out asking for help for her daughter and grandchildren. Her daughter was in the hospital having a baby, and at home, the teenage grandson and granddaughter needed boots to wear in the snow and cold. Share the Spirit put together a box of warm boots and a few Christmas gifts including activities, brain games, socks, and fleece sweatshirts for the family.

Jessica shares a story about a multilingual sixth grade boy whose teacher reached out to her. The boy had recently moved to southern Colorado from Honduras, and the only shirt he owned was a basketball jersey without sleeves. The teacher, knowing he needed warm clothing for Colorado winters, asked Jessica if Share the Spirit could help.

When Jessica and the teacher pulled up in a car, the boy was shoveling snow in his driveway with a hockey stick. He had borrowed it from a neighbor and was trying to break up the ice for his guests. They went into the trailer house and found the boy lived



“

It’s amazing what \$30–\$40 will do for you on your feet and make you feel special. New shoes give kids and adults alike self-esteem and a sense of pride and confidence. New shoes give adults a reason to go out for a walk, play with their kids. And kids, a chance to play outside or play in the gym. New shoes have more of an effect on people than I ever realized.”

— Karen Voepel of Lamar, co-founder of Share the Spirit Foundation

▶ (left to right) Share the Spirit Executive Director Jessica Page, co-founder Karen Voepel, and Julie Witt, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Lincoln Early Childhood Council coordinator.



◀ Share the Spirit co-founder Karen Voepel shares a smile with a little boy while helping him try on a pair of new shoes at a preschool shoe giveaway event.

“Oh, no. This is for my niece and nephew.”

“This is also for you,” Jessica said and outfitted the girl with a pair of new Skecher work boots. When Jessica sees the girl at Walmart, the girl runs up to her and gives her a hug. And she still wears her Skecher boots.

Jessica says, “Share the Spirit is for children in need, but we also would never turn a blind eye to anyone in need.”

Jessica’s favorite events are for adults in need. Share the Spirit goes twice each year to a center in Fort Lyon operated by Colorado Coalition for Homelessness. “They offer drug and alcohol recovery classes, counseling, and job placement,” she says. “People can go for up to one year, and they gently nudge them to do something.”

She continues, “I love the kids, but adults are more able to understand and be thankful for what you are doing for them. At Fort Lyon, the adults are there at will; they have decided to change their lives, and they are extremely grateful for the shoes we have provided to them.”

When Karen reflects on what they do, she says, “It’s amazing what \$30–\$40 will do for you on your feet and make you feel special. New shoes give kids and adults alike self-esteem and a sense of pride and confidence. New shoes give adults a reason to go out for a walk, play with their kids. And kids, a chance to play outside or play in the gym. New shoes have more of an effect on people than I ever realized.”

She pauses, her voice full of emotion, “We have so many people to thank for this incredible journey. It’s truly a dream come true.”

Gayle Gresham lives in Elbert, Colorado. She is the 2023-2024 president of Women Writing the West, an international organization of writers who write about the West with an emphasis on women’s stories.

with his father and four other men. The men, who worked at a hog farm with long hours of physical work, were all sleeping when they arrived. Jessica and the teacher learned that the boy slept in a chair in the living room and another man slept on the couch. They gave the boy a winter coat, a sleeved hoodie, two pairs of jogging pants, and, of course, shoes and socks. There were tears all around. Jessica still sees the boy, a year later, walking to school in the coat, clothes, and shoes that Share the Spirit gave him.

More Than Kids’ Shoes

Jessica’s favorite story from the past year is about an 18-year-old aunt who was the

caregiver for her niece and nephew; she had been referred to Share the Spirit by their school. When the aunt brought the children to the event, she wanted the children to have shoes to make it through the winter.

“She was the most responsible young lady,” Jessica says. While talking with her, the girl told Jessica she was starting a job at Walmart that day. Jessica noticed the old, worn-out Crocs the girl wore.

“What size shoe do you wear?” Jessica asked.

“Oh, I don’t know,” the girl said. “A 6 or 7, I’m not sure.”


“Well, come sit down and I will measure your foot,” Jessica offered.



“

We rely heavily on schoolteachers, counselors, principals, and directors of preschools. These are the people watching the kids. They are our ‘boots on the ground.’ When a first grade teacher tells us about a child who needs shoes, we will collaborate with the teachers of their older or younger brothers and sisters to make sure all of the siblings in the household get shoes. The school officials are phenomenal in getting the kids who need help in touch with Share the Spirit.”

— Jessica Page, Share the Spirit Foundation executive director

 Share the Spirit Foundation Executive Director Jessica Page chats with a boy while fitting him for new shoes.





 Julie Witt puts the finishing touches on tying new shoes for a Share the Spirit program recipient.



PHOTO BY ASHLEY TAYLOR

 Volunteer Linda Jerome helps a little boy choose which shoes he wants to take home.



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Air Plants

Fun shapes and easy maintenance

BY VICKI SPENCER MASTER GARDENER | GARDENING@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

Air plants were popular in the 1970s when they hung in macrame plant hangers or were placed in terrariums, but the fad faded until a few years ago. Air plants made a comeback as more varieties began to fascinate us with unusual shapes and easy maintenance that fits our busy lives.

Growing up in the Rocky Mountain West, I had never seen tropical air plants in their natural environment. My first experience was in Houston. On a daily walk with my son, he suddenly plucked a small spiky growth from a low-hanging tree branch.

Tropical air plants are in the *bromeliad* family, genus *Tillandsia*, and are native to the Southern United States, Mexico, and Central and South America. They are epiphytes that attach their roots to other plants and don't require soil. You can place them in seashells, attach to driftwood, hang in the air, or put in a pot with rocks. Let your imagination go wild. Just don't plant in soil.

Although there are many species and varieties, *Tillandsia stricta* is most common. Its thick green or bluish-green spiky leaves

grow in a rosette pattern and point upward. It produces a flower that lasts for only one day. *Tillandsia ionantha* is beautiful with leaves changing color from green to brilliant red or pink before producing bright purple flowers.

Air plants with more silvery leaves tend to be more drought tolerant. *Tillandsia xerographica* is larger with beautiful silvery-green rosettes formed by thick, curly leaves spiraling from the center. Although it has adapted to dry environments, it still needs regular watering. Mist it occasionally and water once a week by submerging for half an hour, then gently shake excess water from leaves to avoid rot.

In nature, air plants get food from dead leaves, bark, and insect droppings that fall into rainwater stored in their centers. Since the decayed nutrients are absorbed by its leaves, rainwater is preferable to household chlorinated water. If you don't have rainwater, use filtered water and fertilize occasionally. Drop half-strength liquid fertilizer monthly or quarterly in the plant's center, but don't overfertilize.

Like all plants, air plants need the right amount of water and light and correct temperatures to thrive. If your plant feels mushy or has dark spots on the base, it may be rotting from too much water. (Overwatering may also attract pests). If leaf tips turn brown and crispy, it may be dehydrated. Bleached-looking leaves may indicate too much sun; losing leaves means too little sun.

You'll know if your plant is getting what it needs if it blossoms. Plants bloom to propagate, so after the flower dies, cut it off to promote new growth. You can separate the new "pups" from the mother or allow them to clump together. The mother plant (which lives two to five years) will eventually die as the offsets grow. By encouraging offshoots, your air plant can live indefinitely.

Master Gardener Vicki Spencer has an eclectic background in conservation, water, natural resources, and more.

CONTEST CLOSES THIS MONTH



Heart of COLORADO

2024 PHOTO CONTEST

It's time to share your best photos for the annual *Colorado Country Life* photo contest!

This year's photo contest theme is **Heart of Colorado**. We're asking you to share — in photos — what you love about Colorado and what makes our state special.

2024 Categories:

- Lovely Landscapes
- Activities You Adore
- A Fondness for People and Animals
- Smitten with the Seasons

Cash prizes: \$150 first place | \$75 second place | \$50 third place

Winning tips: 1. Use the highest resolution setting on your digital camera. 2. Capture scenes full of vivid color. 3. Make us feel something with your photo (awe, laughter).

Things to keep in mind:

- Each person may submit up to two photos per category.
- Digital JPEG photos only.
- Photos must be at least 300 dpi at 8 inches by 10 inches.
- All vertical photos will be considered for the cover photo. If you have a photo you think will make the perfect cover of *CCL*, it must be at least 300 dpi and 9 inches wide by 13 inches tall.
- Winners will be announced and published in a spring 2024 issue.
- The contest is open only to members of a Colorado electric co-op that is listed on the entry form.

CONTEST ENDS DECEMBER 31, 2023.

Enter today!

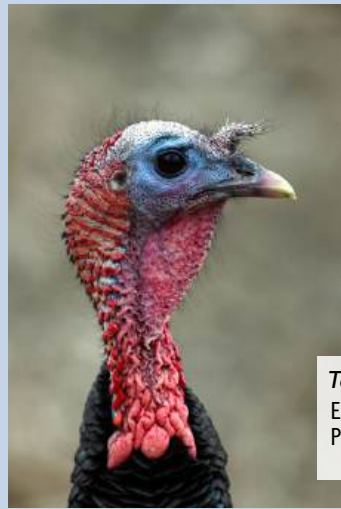
See full rules and enter online:

www.coloradocountrylife.coop/2024photocontest

Scan the QR code with your smartphone to go directly to the entry form on our website.



LAST YEAR'S
WINNERS



Talking Turkey

Emilie Gunderson, a
Poudre Valley REA member

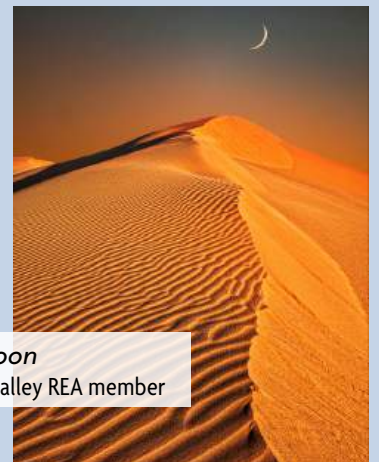
Frolicking Fox Kits

Connie Chamberlain, a Mountain
Parks Electric member



Sunrise Blues

Donnell Allen, a Mountain View
Electric Association member



Sand Dunes and Moon

JR Schnelzer, a Poudre Valley REA member



◀ A homeowner shows off his energy-efficient ductless heat pump. Photo by Marcela Gara, Resource Media.

Is it Time for an HVAC Upgrade?

Heat pump technology has improved a lot over the past 10–20 years and can be up to 20% more efficient than traditional HVAC systems. Today, heat pumps can operate effectively in subzero weather by switching to electric resistance mode. In extreme cold climates, it may be worth investing in a dual-fuel system where propane or another fuel provides supplemental heat on extremely cold days.

If you are considering upgrading your home heating and cooling system with a heat pump there are several options to consider.

DUCTED AIR-SOURCE HEAT PUMP

If your home has a forced-air furnace, a centralized air-source heat pump can work well. Outside your home, a compressor that looks like an air-conditioning unit is connected to your home's existing duct system. Like your furnace, the temperature is controlled through one main thermostat. This is a solid solution if your system has quality ductwork that heats and cools every room evenly, which is rare.

Ductwork in most homes is not designed to heat or cool every room evenly. Long supply runs provide little air to some rooms, and it's typical for some rooms to lack return air registers. Also, ductwork is often leaky, which creates comfort issues. If leaky ducts are in unheated areas such as crawl spaces or attics, it will increase your heating and cooling costs. Poor ductwork will render any

kind of central heating or cooling system much less effective. Some HVAC contractors can repair ductwork problems if the ductwork is accessible.

MINI-SPLIT HEAT PUMP

If your home does not have ductwork or the ductwork is poorly designed or leaky, a ductless mini-split heat pump might be your best bet. A ductless air conditioner, also referred to as a mini-split system, offers a variety of options for heating and cooling, particularly for older homes and buildings. Several years ago, mini-split models were thought to be inefficient for colder climates, but these systems have made great strides, making them a more viable option for most U.S. regions. In climates that don't experience extreme cold, a ductless heat pump could supply all the heating and cooling in a small home. Ductless mini-splits are an excellent option if you don't have central air ducts, if your ducts are leaking, or you want the new ductless heat pump to heat or cool only part of the home. According to Energy.gov, duct losses can account for more than 30% of energy consumption for space conditioning, especially if the ducts are in unconditioned spaces such as an attic.

With a mini-split heat pump, tubes connected to the outside compressor carry refrigerant to one or more air handlers, which are mounted high on a wall to distribute air. Thermostats regulate each air

handler, providing control of different zones in the home.

Installing a mini-split system can provide several benefits, but the capability to regulate temperatures in specific rooms or areas of the home is the most attractive feature.

An indoor air-handling unit (evaporator) and an outdoor compressor/condenser make up the two major components of a mini-split system. In many ways, mini-split air conditioners operate like conventional air-conditioning systems. In cooling mode, the system transfers heat from inside the home to the outside. Because a mini-split can blow air from up to six independent air handlers, it can regulate temperatures for different rooms or areas inside the home.

Mini-splits are a viable alternative to duct systems for home additions or for homes where a duct system may not be practical. When a duct system is too expensive to install, a mini-split system can efficiently heat and cool a space while keeping installation costs down.

A mini-split can also settle thermostat disagreements in a home or business for those with different comfort preferences. For example, mini-split systems are frequently installed in school classrooms to give teachers control over the temperature in their individual spaces.

Compared to conventional HVAC systems, mini splits can significantly reduce energy consumption and have the potential to save up to 30% on cooling costs and 50% on heating costs. Additionally, inverter technology, which enables variable-speed operation, is frequently included with mini-split systems. This results in increased energy efficiency and a cheaper cost of operation as the system adjusts its output based on the actual heating or cooling demand.

In addition to greater control over heating and cooling, mini-splits can also be



The cost of installing **mini-splits** can be higher than other heating/cooling systems. However, lower operating costs, rebates, and other financial incentives offered in some areas may help offset the initial expense.

If you make energy improvements to your home, tax credits may be available for a portion of qualifying expenses. The credit amounts and types of qualifying expenses were expanded by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.

managed with a mobile app, smart thermostat, or remote control. They provide better air quality, and homeowners can easily replace the filters themselves, saving money on the pricey duct cleanings needed for conventional air conditioners. Reheat dehumidification is a common feature of mini-split systems to maintain a steady room temperature while lowering humidity.

A few factors should be considered before installing a mini-split system. A mini-split should be installed where it will help maximize air distribution throughout the home. A



Installing a mini-split system can provide several benefits, but the capability to regulate temperatures in specific rooms or areas of the home is the most attractive feature. *Photo Source: Dennis Schroeder, NREL.*

qualified contractor can offer advice on these factors. Your home should be properly sealed or the mini-split system may not operate efficiently or properly.

Mini-split installers must correctly size each indoor unit and determine the best installation location. Short cycling can occur if the air handler is oversized for the space or not installed in the right spot in your house. Short cycling wastes energy and does not provide proper temperature or humidity control. Conversely, too large a system is more expensive to buy and operate.

Appearance may be another deterrent for some people, as they may not like the look of the indoor part of the system. It's less

obtrusive than a window air-conditioning unit, but mini-splits aren't built in like a central system. That said, there is some interior design flexibility — air handlers can be suspended from a ceiling, mounted flush into a drop ceiling, or hung on a wall. Energy.gov reports that many indoor units are only about seven inches deep and have a sleek, high-tech-looking jacket.

For many homeowners, a mini-split ductless heating and cooling system can be a fantastic alternative to traditional ducted and central heating and cooling. Contact your local electric cooperative if you have questions about mini-split systems.



The condenser for a mini-split is often mounted on an exterior wall. *Photo by Marcela Gara, Resource Media.*

DID YOU KNOW?

Heat pumps vary in efficiency, which is measured in two ways. The heating seasonal performance factor (HSPF) rating measures heating efficiency, and the seasonal energy efficiency ratio (SEER) rating measures cooling efficiency. The minimum ratings for a new heat pump are HSPF 8.2 and SEER 14. Heat pumps with the Energy Star rating are significantly more efficient than the minimum standard.

Hot Fishing on Cold Days

BY DENNIS SMITH | OUTDOORS@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG



I'm no longer surprised by the number of anglers who fly-fish through the winter, though I once was. It's not for the faint of heart or folks who like to stay warm, but still, winter fly-fishing has grown to the point where it's fairly commonplace. Even if the local freestone streams are iced over, there are plenty of tailwater rivers that remain ice-free year-round. Stretches of the Blue, Frying Pan, and South Platte Rivers are probably the most popular Colorado winter fly-fishing destinations, but there are others. They hold sizeable numbers

of trout — big ones, too. The fishing isn't necessarily easy, but it is fun, and there are fewer anglers competing for the best reaches than in summer.

The key to enjoying yourself on a winter stream centers on 1. Dressing properly, 2. Dressing properly, and 3. Dressing properly. Heavy neoprene waders are still used by some diehards for winter fly-fishing, but the lightweight, breathable types are much less restrictive, and their loose fit permits adding layers of heat-trapping polypropylene or fleece beneath without blowing

you up like the Pillsbury Doughboy. Up top, poly and fleece rule again, although goose down and high-quality wool are every bit as effective against the cold. The idea is to layer with undergarments that trap heat but wick moisture away from your skin, followed by heavier insulating layers that do the same. Top it all off with a tightly woven and water-proof windbreaker of some sort.

That'll keep your upper body warm but it will all be for naught if you neglect your head and hands. A stocking cap is still the best insurance for keeping your brain ticking along at 98.6 — wool or fleece will do the trick — but adding one of the new silk or polypropylene skull caps beneath a stocking cap can double its warmth. A neck gaiter will close up heat leaks from your torso. Heavy wool socks with silk or poly liners ensure warm feet in your wading shoes. I recently discovered socks made of alpaca underfur to be even warmer and unbelievably comfortable. No doubt they would be perfect for this or any other outdoor winter sport.

Keeping your hands warm, though, makes the ultimate, critical difference. Fingerless gloves will permit tying knots and changing flies, but they leave your fingertips exposed. And let's face it; your hands are going to get cold and wet even if you don't catch a fish. I highly recommend those neat little chemical heat packs. They're lifesavers. Keep one in each glove, one in each pocket of your windbreaker, and a few spares in your vest. You won't regret it.

Dennis Smith is a freelance outdoors writer and photographer whose work appears nationally. He lives in Loveland.



MISSED AN ISSUE?

Catch up at coloradocountrylife.coop.
Click on Outdoors.

REMEMBER. HONOR. TEACH.

Remember the fallen. Honor those who served. Teach the next generation the value of freedom. Three tenants of Wreaths Across America help support the main mission of the organization to ensure that no one is forgotten. Volunteers work year-round to share this mission and to inspire others to join. WAA coordinates wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, veterans' cemeteries, and other locations in all 50 states and beyond.

This year on December 16, volunteers will gather across the country to lay remembrance wreaths on the graves of our fallen heroes. With each wreath placement, the name of the veteran is said aloud, often with a message of thanks and gratitude for their service and sacrifice.

TO GET INVOLVED, VISIT [WREATHSACROSSAMERICA.ORG](https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org)

- In 1992, the first wreaths — 5,000 in total — were donated and a tradition started by Maine's Worcester Wreath Co.
- Since 2008, Congress annually proclaims a Saturday in December as National Wreaths Across America Day.
- In 2022, 2.7 million wreaths were placed at more than 3,700 locations nationwide and abroad. Two million volunteers participated to help make this happen.



Photo of Fort Lyon National Cemetery by Sue Keefer, a member of Southeast Colorado Power Association.



Life Pods

Nestled cozily within the ground debris,
pinecones safeguarding their seeds
until the time is right
for sprouting new life.

Pinecones, like loving parents,
do their job with wise intents.
Hard on the outside
but soft and warm on the inside.

Pinecones keeping hope alive,
for saplings to spread out wide
and carpet the forest floor
with vibrant green evermore.

Teresa Dower, Peyton
Mountain View Electric member

Winter Wondering

I careered into Science — it suited me quite well,
Worked in industry, research, teaching, did it all.
Then sudden came a hard ill which none
could foretell
But, thanks to Science and precious prayers, I still
stand here tall.

Yes, Science, it “knows some”; a bunch of “hows”
I would say:
Like “How snowflakes form ...” or “How light moves
through space,”
Yet, still, daunting questions remain at end of day,
And, so often I ponder the fate of our race ...

I just flip on the news for updates on “bad,”
But a glance out my window, I see our fragile,
friend, snow,
Whose twinkling rainbow-winks make my
heart warm and glad,
And so I pray, please, waft softly, stir in us
more love to show.

Yes, I wonder, frigid flakes, fluttering down from
heaven high:
Though Science may answer some “hows” ... can it
possibly answer “Why?”

William Penfield, Berthoud
Poudre Valley REA member

Breakfast Time in the Pine Forest

Chilly morning bundled in my sweats
wearing gloves against the cold, watching
a small, gray furry object
huddled on a dead branch stub,
Taking in, like me, the warmth of the morning sun.
Then, suddenly, in quick squirrely movements,
Making its way upward to another dry branch.
Now, nibbling at the loose bark, chewing for
a while.

Steadily upward to another tasty perch
and a crisp sliver of sweet, sappy bark.
A swift move, even higher, almost obscured
by needled branches.
The progressive breakfast journey through
the sunlit, cobwebbed arms of the evergreen.
Occasional, discarded, nibbled-chunks falling
to earth.

Losing sight, then again spying the flick of a tail
higher up than before.
Joined by winged friends near to the top,
debris drifting downward to mark its progress.
Excited chirping from a nearby tree.

A conversation.
Rapid downward movement,
a quick glance at me,
Then, to the ground
Into the tall grass
And away.

Beverly Thompson, Grand Junction
Grand Valley Power member

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Prevent Bruises



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- Prevents Cuts & Scratches
- Durable Soft Leather
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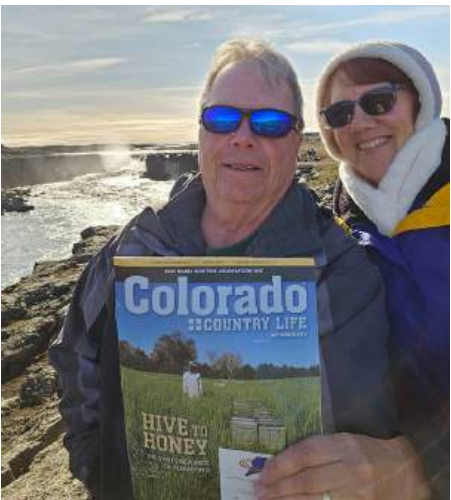
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 READERS' PHOTOS


Doug and Christa Lundberg take their copy of CCL to a waterfall in Iceland. The Lundbergs are Mountain View Electric members.



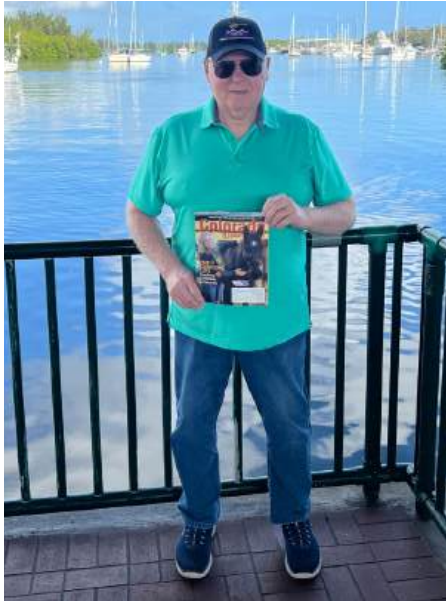
Hester Jackson-Roberts, a Mountain View Electric member, takes CCL to Nairobi, Kenya, with two of her daughters, TK and Nakia, on a girls trip this fall.



WINNER: Annette and John Madden — San Isabel Electric members — drive Ring Road in Iceland and stop for a photo with the magazine at Dettifos. “Beautiful country, great food, and friendly people,” Johns says. “Iceland has an abundance of natural power using steam heat from the many geothermal volcanic heat vents.”

Don't forget to pack a copy of CCL for your next trip!

Show us where you enjoy CCL for a chance to win! Simply take a photo of someone (or a selfie!) with the magazine and share it with us on the Reader Engagement page at www.coloradocountrylife.coop. Each month we'll draw one photo to win \$25. The next deadline is Friday, December 15.



Col. Swede Holmgren poses with the magazine in front of the historic City Marina on the Intercoastal Waterway in Vero Beach, Florida, while visiting his son and daughter-in-law. He was in Vero Beach both on vacation and as a guest lecturer in his son's American History class at Indian River State College, where he spoke about his experiences as a helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War. Col. Holmgren is a member of Poudre Valley REA.



Ward and Joan Marshall, members of Y-W Electric, take CCL on a trip to Portugal and Spain. Here they're pictured visiting the Arts and Science Park in Valencia, Spain


 FUNNY STORIES

I was making chocolate chip cookies with our 4-year-old granddaughter and 2 1/2-year-old grandson. I used dark chocolate chips instead of the typical milk chocolate chips.

After baking the cookies, both grandchildren enthusiastically bit into the cookies. While my grandson was happily eating away at his cookie, our granddaughter was not. “Grandma, I don't like these chocolate chips. I only like the swirly ones,” she commented as she threw her cookie in the trash. Our grandson looked up at her and said, “Can't you just eat the part of the cookie without the chocolate chips?”

Karen Briski, Loveland
Poudre Valley REA member

One day my 4-year-old Madi wanted to share her solitary gumdrop. First, she gave her daddy a nibble of her gumdrop. Then she held up the gumdrop for me to take a nibble. When I hesitated (thinking about where her little hands had been), she let me know that it was perfectly sanitary. “I licked Daddy's germs off,” she assured me.

Alicia Riley, Grand Junction
Grand Valley Power member

When our son Zakary was 5, we sent him to spend a week with his grandparents at their cabin in the mountains. My father and Zak were doing some odd jobs outside and discussing when and if you could use certain swear words. The overall consensus was that some swear words were OK if you hit your thumb with a hammer, but you should never swear when a lady is around.

So after about 30 minutes of discussion, my dad asks Zak if he wants to help him clean some beaver dams from the stream. Zakary says, “Grandpa, you said ‘dam!’” My dad tells Zakary that a dam is a beaver's home, so it is OK to say “dam” when you're talking about a beaver.

Zakary looks around to see if grandma is outside, and seeing that she's not, he says, “OK, Grandpa, let's go get those dam beavers!”

Christi Bocconcelli, Grand Junction
Grand Valley Power member

We pay \$15 to each person who submits a funny story that's printed in the magazine. At the end of the year we will draw one name from the published stories and that person will receive \$200. Send your stories to *Colorado Country Life*, 5400 Washington St., Denver, CO 80216, or email funnystories@coloradocountrylife.org. Don't forget to include your mailing address, so we can send you a check.



LAST MINUTE GIFT-GIVING

CCL staff gathered a short list of Colorado-made gifts that can help you complete your holiday shopping. Find the perfect present for everyone on your list.



BACKPACKS & OUTDOOR GEAR

Gear that has a “timeless look with modern functionality.” Started in Fort Collins and the along the Front Range.

topodesigns.com



DELICIOUS CHOCOLATE

Carbondale-based, chocolates made with ingredients from Colorado.

pollinatorchocolate.com



OUTDOOR APPAREL & STICKERS

Fun socks, hats, stickers, patches, and blankets — Colorado-inspired gifts based in Fort Collins.

atomicchild.com



HANDCRAFTED PUZZLES

Piece together family fun with an intricate and beautiful wooden jigsaw puzzle.

libertypuzzles.com



HAND-DRAWN ART & CARDS

Lovely ink renderings of architecture, botanicals, and commissioned work

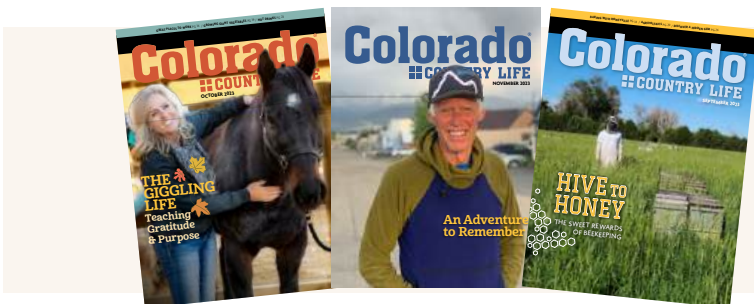
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Better than cannabis, better than CBD

New Joint-Supporting “Miracle Oil” Capsule Delivers Hip, Knee, and Shoulder Comfort in Just Days

Thousands of Americans are rediscovering normal freedom of movement thanks to a “miracle oil” capsule that’s outperforming hemp in promoting joint comfort.

According to the official figures from the CDC, more than 58 million Americans are living with joint discomfort. This epidemic has led to a search for alternative approaches – as many sufferers seek relief without the harmful side effects of conventional “solutions.”

Anti-aging specialist Dr. Al Sears is leading the way with a new formula he calls “the most significant breakthrough I’ve ever found for easing joint discomfort.”

The capsule is based on a “miracle oil” historically treasured for its joint health-supporting properties. Marco Polo prized it as he blazed the Silk Road. And to this day, Ayurvedic practitioners rely on it to promote optimal joint health.

Now, with a modern twist backed by science, Dr. Sears is making this natural solution for joint health available to the public.

Your Body’s Hidden “Soothing System”

Joint health research changed forever with the discovery of the endocannabinoid system (ECS) in 1992. Up until that point, research on cannabinoids focused on psychoactive effects. Now, scientists were looking at a new way to fight occasional aches and pains.

Your ECS serves as a central “signaling system” that tells your body how to react to things you do every day. It controls several critical bodily functions such as learning and memory, sleep, healthy immune responses – and your response to discomfort.

A recent study revealed a direct link between the ECS and creaky, sore joints. Researchers at the University of Edinburgh studied the aging of mice with endocannabinoid deficiencies versus “normal” mice.

As they aged, the deficient mice had a whopping 60% more joint degeneration than the mice with a healthy ECS.

As the name suggests, the ECS responds to cannabis. At the time it was discovered, scientists assumed that was the best way to support it. But thanks to Dr. Sears’ all-natural solution, you can power up your ECS without marijuana.

“Calling it the ‘endocannabinoid system’ was a misnomer from the very beginning,” Dr. Sears explained. “Modern research reveals that you don’t need cannabis to activate this incredible system. You don’t need to ‘get high’ to get joint relief.”

A scholarly review found that plants and herbs that don’t produce mind-altering effects can support the ECS and help it maintain its

BEFORE
Creaky,
aching
knee



AFTER
Soothing,
ache-free
knee



The active ingredient in Mobilify soothes aching joints in as little as 5 days

healthy functions.

This includes common foodstuffs, such as kava, chocolate, black pepper, and most significantly – the star ingredient to Dr. Sears’ own **Mobilify** formula - frankincense.

Modern scientists say this natural ingredient meets “cannabinoid tetrad” – the signs used to determine if something supports the ECS. While it doesn’t produce a “high” like cannabis does, it binds to the same receptors to support a healthy response to discomfort.

All the Benefits of CBD – Without Cannabis

Indian frankincense, the chief ingredient in **Mobilify**, has been shown to provide all the benefits of cannabis without any feelings of sluggishness or sleepiness.

And studies show that users don’t have to wait long for the comfort they’re looking for.

In a study published in the International Journal of Medical Sciences, 60 patients with stiff knees took 100 mg of Indian frankincense or a placebo daily for 30 days. Remarkably, Indian frankincense “significantly” supported healthy joint function and relieved discomfort in as little as five days.

Additional research linked regular use to lasting comfort.

In another study, 48 participants were given an extract made from frankincense for 120-days. When the results came in, researchers determined the extract strongly supported joint comfort – especially in the knees.

These results were all achieved without marijuana. Research continues to back up the idea that you can support smooth, strong, and healthy joints naturally – without tiredness or sluggishness.

Get Moving Again with Mobilify

Mobilify has already helped thousands of Americans stay on their feet and breeze through

their daily activities with ease.

One user even reported getting results the same day it was used.

“**Mobilify** really helps with soreness, stiffness, and mild temporary discomfort,” Joni D. said.

Larry M, another user, compared taking **Mobilify** to living a completely new life.

“After a week and a half of taking **Mobilify**, the discomfort, stiffness, and minor aches went away...it’s almost like being reborn,” he said.

Dennis H. said it helped him get back to his favorite hobby.

“I can attest to **Mobilify** easing discomfort to enable me to pursue my golfing days. Definitely one pill that works for me out of the many I have tried,” he said.

How to Get Mobilify

Right now, the only way to get this powerful, unique **Mobilify** formula that clobbers creaking joints without clobbering you is directly from Dr. Sears. It is not available in stores.

To secure your bottle of this breakthrough natural joint discomfort reliever, buyers should call with Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-329-8491**. “The Hotline allows us to ship the product directly to customers.”

Dr. Sears believes in this product so much, he offers a 100% money-back guarantee on every order. “Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days, and I’ll send you your money back,” said Dr. Sears.

The Hotline will be taking orders for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number may be shut down to allow them to restock. Call **1-800-329-8491** to secure your limited supply of **Mobilify**. If you are not able to get through due to extremely high call volume, please try again! Call NOW to qualify for a significant discount on this limited time offer. To take advantage of this exclusive offer use Promo Code: **COMB1223** when you call.



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