



From the Broker's Desk Nancy C. Rowe

With May and June hosting the holidays that celebrate our mothers and fathers, it raises the awareness of what happens as they age. Our parents provided for us as we grew up and gradually the roles are reversing and we are becoming caregivers for them. When the cost for assisted living facilities exceeds the financial capability of a parent and it isn't safe for them to continue living in the family home, children are faced with the possibility of moving a parent into their own home. If your house doesn't have a main level bedroom and bath or has lots of steps you might want to consider selling both your house and your parents' house and buy a house with a floor plan that would better accommodate the two households. To better determine when the time to move a parent has arrived, observe if hygiene or eating is declining,

are they neglecting housework or home maintenance, experiencing difficulty moving around or have fallen, have poor eyesight which could present a problem with reading prescription labels and memory loss is more prevalent. A visit to their physician might be the first order of business to determine if there might be health issues contributing to the change in their behavior. Often parents can stay in the family home a little longer if the house is better equipped with grab bars and a higher toilet in the bathroom, trip objects removed, brighter lighting installed and modifications made to better address arthritic hands and fingers. Assistance from a home care service or Meals on Wheels might extend your parent's independence. The improvements listed above can also be applied to your own home if moving in a parent has become a reality. Other considerations would be to install a ramp if access is up steps;

exchange kitchen and bath faucet knobs for lever style, likewise exchange door knobs for lever style handles; lighting is very important so add fixtures to darker areas and in closets, increase bulb wattage, install light switches that glow in the dark and consider motion sensors; move items that a parent might need to lower shelving; and remove anything that would be a trip hazard like slippery rugs or cords/wires and furniture or accessories that protrude into walkways. In time the need for a wheelchair may develop and doorways/hallways will need to be 32"-36", a chair lift installed to access an upper level bedroom, a tub exchanged for a walk-in shower and an alarm system installed to better monitor activity. Technology is available in the form of lifeline buttons that only require a push to summon help, wrist monitors to keep a check on health conditions and cameras linked to your computer for visual monitoring. While you are dis-

rupting your household to accommodate a parent, just remember that losing their independence and moving from their home is traumatic for your parent. Try to incorporate some of their furniture even if it's just in their bedroom so they have something familiar around them, if at all possible allow your parent's four legged companion to accompany them to your house, be sure that your parent has their own cell phone or a phone in their bedroom and encourage them to communicate with friends. Most cities have adult day care facilities and senior centers which would allow your parent to socialize with others in their age group. It will take cooperation on the part of all family members but having mom or dad around could provide untold benefits. If you need the assistance of a Realtor in buying or selling, don't hesitate to contact the experienced Agents of WILLOW Realty.

So Fresh and So Clean:

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How to Store Cut Vegetables- Part 1

Storing cut vegetables can streamline your cooking in many ways. After chopping the vegetables, it's easy to store them in the refrigerator, and these ready-to-go-veggies can make healthy meals and snacks a snap. Many cut vegetables also freeze well, which can help you preserve the bounty of seasons past and simply make your life easier by making your ingredients recipe-ready.

Follow these tips for storing cut vegetables of all sorts so they retain a perfect flavor and texture.

Vegetables, like birds of a feather, tend to flock together. So if there's a veggie you don't see on the list, chances are it can adhere to the steps for a similar vegetable. This isn't true 100% of the time, but often enough that it is a good starting point.

What is blanching?- As you read through the list, you'll notice that before freezing, many of the cut vegetables should be blanched. This means that the food in question should be submerged in boiling water for a very short period of time, 30 seconds to 5 or so minutes; you can taste the vegetables to determine your desired level of doneness. Once ready, transfer the vegetables to an ice bath immediately. Once they have cooled, transfer to paper towels and drain excess moisture.

Lettuce, spinach and similar greens- In the refrigerator: Cut or tear the leaves from the end of the head, if applicable. Wash and dry the leaves thoroughly (such as in a salad spinner). Remove any dead or wilted leaves.

Once dry, place in one or two thin layers on top of paper towels. Gently roll the towels, so that you have almost like a jelly roll cake, but the cake is the paper towel and the filling is the greens. Secure with a rubber band. In the freezer: Freezing leafy greens is not suggested, as they will soften too much and won't retain their crispy texture. "Wilted" greens, such as cooked kale, spinach or beet greens, can be frozen once cooked; drain thoroughly and store in freezer bags for up to a year.

Artichokes- Primarily, you will store the hearts. You can sprinkle the heart with a little lemon water and refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Asparagus- Trim the ends of asparagus, and place in a jar or container of water, almost as if the asparagus stalks are flowers in a vase. Place a plastic bag loosely on top of the stalks



to keep them from absorbing scents from other foods in the fridge. To freeze, blanch the cut asparagus, drain thoroughly, and store in freezer bags.

Beets - Be sure to remove the root first thing, leaving 1-2 inches of stem. The greens can be stored like lettuce and greens, but they have a short shelf life in the fridge. Cut beets can be stored in a container lined with a moist paper towel in the refrigerator. To freeze, place the cut, cooked or uncooked beet pieces in a freezer bag. Frozen beets that have been pre-cooked will retain more of their texture, but uncooked beet pieces are suitable as a component in recipes

where texture won't matter as much, such as to puree for either a flavorful soup or an ingredient in a creative cake.

Broccoli - Once cut, broccoli will maintain its moisture if you store it between lightly moistened paper towels and store in the refrigerator.

Do not put it in an airtight container, as it needs to breathe to maintain freshness.

To freeze, blanch broccoli, drain thoroughly, and store in freezer bags for up to a year.

Brussels sprouts - If you have halved or quartered your sprouts, store them as you would cut broccoli, following the same instructions for refrigeration and freezing.



Happy Mother's Day- Sunday, May 8th

When you are a mother, you are never really alone in your thoughts. A mother always has to think twice, once for herself and once for her child. ~ Sophia Loren



Black-Eyed Susan Cookies

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- 1 c butter, softened
- 1-1/4 c sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp orange extract
- 2-1/2 c all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt

- GLAZE:**
- 2 c confectioners' sugar
 - 1/4 c milk
 - 1/2 tsp orange extract
 - 2 to 3 drops yellow food coloring, optional
 - Additional confectioners' sugar
 - Black gumdrops



In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs and extract. Combine the flour, baking powder and salt; gradually add to creamed mixture. Divide dough in half so that one portion is slightly larger than the other; shape each into a disk. Wrap in plastic wrap; refrigerate for 1-2 hours or until easy to handle. On a lightly floured surface, roll larger portion of dough to 1/8-in. thickness. Cut with a floured 3-in. round or scalloped cookie cutter to make flower bottoms. Place 1 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Repeat with remaining dough using a floured 2-3/4-in. flower or scalloped cookie cutter to make an equal number of flower tops. Bake larger cookies at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until golden brown; bake smaller cookies for 5-7 minutes or until golden brown. Remove to wire racks to cool completely. In a small bowl, combine the confectioners' sugar, milk, extract and, if desired, food coloring; mix until smooth. Immediately spread over cooled cookies. Stir additional confectioners' sugar into remaining glaze to thicken; spread a small amount on bottom of smaller cookies; place over larger cookies. Top with gumdrops. Yield: 21 cookies.