Do you share the newsletter or content with others?

With the renewed interest in home food preservation, we are pleased to see that 67% of you, (of the survey respondents), replied that you share the newsletter or the content with others.

Thank-you for helping get the research-based food preservation “word” out to friends and family who are both new and experienced preservers!

Which methods of food preservation would you like additional information? Your response is:

[Bar chart showing distribution of preferences]

Refrigerator Pickles

...are “a hot topic this summer” according to the National Food Preservation Center. Refrigerator pickles were identified as a point of interest on the survey. They are quick and easy to make and tasty too!

A key safety component of these pickles is as their name states—they MUST be stored in the REFRIGERATOR. There are recipes out and about that have directions for the pickles to sit on the cupboard for a week or more—NO, No, no.

Follow these guidelines when making refrigerator pickles:

- For best quality, pickle within 24 hours of harvest.
- Wash cucumbers under cool running water and scrub with a vegetable brush. Drain well.
- Use 5% acidity vinegar and new spices.

Because refrigerator pickles are not heat processed, they must be stored in the refrigerator. Allow cucumbers to marinate in the refrigerator for 2 weeks.

Suggested recipes are available in the Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving book.
Safe Pressure Canning

“Pressure canning scares me” was shared in the recent survey. Using a pressure canner for the first time can be unsettling. A pressure canner demands our attention and respect. Follow these guidelines:

- Whether you are a novice or experienced at pressure canning, begin each season with reviewing the instruction manual.
- Each canner is unique—know how YOUR canner works. Pay attention to the amount of water, the sound the canner makes, how to open or close the petcock, how to lock and open the canner lid, etc.
- Ask an experienced canner to guide you in using a pressure canner. Ask her/him to watch you use the canner.
- While jars are processing in the canner, stay in the room and be alert. Watch and listen to the canner. Do not choose this time to call or text, or be distracted by other activities/persons.

Match the Canner to the Food

The two types of canners are boiling water bath canner and pressure canner. The canner that you use should be based on the type of food that you are preserving.

High acid foods such as fruits, pickled foods, sauerkraut, fruit spreads except pumpkin butter, acidified tomatoes and salsa can be safely preserved using the boiling water bath. However, make sure you use a research-based recipe.

All other foods should be preserved using a pressure canner. This includes vegetables (except acidified tomatoes), meats, fish, and poultry, soups and combination foods.

Pressure Canning Resources

- Review step-by-step instructions (see University of Minnesota Extension) https://umconnect.umn.edu/p76985500/
- Watch someone use a pressure canner: National Center for Home Food Preservation http://www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/food/nchfp_videos/PressureCanningProcess.mp4
- Ball/Jarden Home Brands http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_gGlL11rc

Check Dial Gauges for Accuracy

Safe home canning of low-acid foods—vegetables or meats—require use of a pressure canner with either a dial gauge or weighted gauge.

Every year the dial gauge should be checked for accuracy. Pressure adjustments can be made if the gauge reads up to 2 pounds high or low. Replace gauges that differ by more than 2 pounds. (Weighted gauges do not require testing.)

Contact your County University of Minnesota Extension office to see if testing is done locally. If not, wrap Presto gauges securely and send to:

National Presto Industries, Inc.
3925 N Hastings Way
Eau Claire, WI 54703
(Phone: 1-800-877-0441)

Presto only charges for shipping but does not charge for checking the gauge.
To Blanch or Not to Blanch?

...the answer to your question is YES! For quality frozen vegetables—blanch!

Blanching vegetables in boiling water or steam inactivates enzymes. If not stopped, these enzymes could cause loss of nutrients, color, flavor and texture in the vegetable.

Peppers and tomatoes do not need to be blanched prior to freezing.

Follow recommended blanching (and cooling) times for the specific vegetable at: Blanching Vegetables.

Frozen vegetables maintain high quality for 8 to 12 months. Package in freezer containers and hold at 0°F or lower.

Freezing Green Beans

Rubbery, tough, mushy—are terms sometimes used to describe home preserved frozen green beans! For quality frozen green beans:

- Select a bean variety identified for “freezing” on seed packet
- Harvest young tender pods—freeze quickly
- Wash in cold water, cut into 2 to 4 inch lengths
- Water blanch 3 minutes—begin counting time when the water returns to boil
- Cool in ice water for 3 minutes, drain, package, freeze

Water is a factor in successful freezing of vegetables. Hard water contains larger amounts of minerals than soft water. However, large amounts of minerals can toughen peas and beans. An example of the water dilemma is green beans. When canning, very soft water can cause mushy green beans, hard water is preferred. But, when blanching green beans for freezing, hard water will toughen them—softer water is then preferred.

Liquid Loss or Siphoning

Siphoning is the loss of liquid from jars during processing or immediately after removal from the canner prior to sealing. This tends to happen more often with fruit because there is a lot of air in the fruit and because products high in sugar will spill over more quickly.

Causes of siphoning or liquid loss:
- Jars overfilled or packed too solidly with food
- Not enough headspace
- Lids not adjusted properly
- Air bubbles were not removed at time of packing
- Jars are not covered with 1-2 inches of water in the boiling water bath canner
- Using the raw pack method of filling jars with produce
- Uneven pressure from rapid temperature changes or drafts blowing on the canner
- Failure to allow the temperature of the jars to equalize before removing them from the canner

Pressure canner causes:
- Insufficient exhaust period
- A fluctuation of pressure during processing
- Removing or bumping the pressure regulator before pressure has completely dropped

Pressure canner tip: after removing the pressure regulator, allow canner to remain closed for 10 minutes after pressure has completely dropped.

Boiling water bath canner: after processing time is complete, remove lid and allow jars to sit in water 5 minutes before removing jars.

Loss of liquid does not mean that the food is unsafe to eat. However, food above the liquid may discolor during storage. Use those jars first. If the loss of liquid is excessive (i.e. at least half of the liquid is lost), refrigerate the jar(s) and use within 2-3 days.
NEW! Taking Your Pickles to the Next Level – From Home Canning to Commercial Production

August 27, 2013

If you make the best dill pickles, your friends rave about your BBQ sauce or jalapeno jelly, your salsa is a hot seller at the farmers’ market—plan to attend this workshop!

If you’ve wondered what the steps are for your product to be on the shelf at your local market—this workshop is for you!

If you have questions on Minnesota requirements for a commercial kitchen, food license, labeling, and more—we look forward to hearing from you at this workshop!

DATE: Tuesday, August 27, 2013
TIME: 1:00 – 4:00 pm
WHERE: Cabela’s, Rogers, MN
COST: $20.00

PRESENTERS:
• Michael Sparby AURI
• Marion Hinnenkamp MDA
• Deb Botzek-Linn U of M EXTENSION
• Marilyn Johnson MFVGA
• A panel will share their marketing stories.

REGISTRATION: MFVGA – Marilyn Johnson
Phone: 763-434-0400 mfvga@msn.com

Frequently Asked Questions

What can I process in half-gallon canning jars?

We know there are one or more canning jar manufacturers that are selling half-gallon canning jars. The manufacturers have a printed note on the jars that says the half-gallon jars should only be used for highly acidic foods in a boiling water canner and encourage canners to call a toll-free number for instructions. The only choices are grape juice and apple juice—not tomato juice. At this time, there are no other research-tested processes for half-gallon jars. In the past, there were recommendations for canning in half-gallon jars. However, these are not currently accepted or endorsed by the USDA, Cooperative Extension System or U.S. manufacturers of home canning jars.

Is it safe to process food in the oven?

No. This can be very dangerous because the temperature varies due to the oven regulators and the heat circulation. Dry heat is very slow in penetrating into jars of food. Also, jars tend to explode easily in the oven. There is no researched-based recommendation.

Photos from National Center for Food Preservation; squidoo.com; sbcanning.com

If you would like to stop receiving the Home Food Preservation newsletter, please email schmi374@umn.edu.

For more food safety information visit our website: www1.extension.umn.edu/food-safety/.