

August 15, 2018

Safely Preserving Vegetables at Home

by Summer Brasuel

UCCE Master Food Preserver of El Dorado County

There are two ways to safely preserve vegetables at home - pickling and pressure canning. Because vegetables are naturally low in acid they cannot be canned using a boiling water or steam canner unless they are acidified. Pickling your vegetables fulfills this requirement. If you want to can vegetables without that vinegar flavor, then you must pressure can them in order to prevent botulism and other foodborne illnesses.

There are two methods of acidifying vegetables to create a pickle. One way is to use vinegar and the other way is to ferment them. During the fermentation process lactic acid is formed in the brine. This takes many days to occur, but once the fermentation process is complete there is enough lactic acid created to prevent the growth of the botulinum toxin, which causes botulism when eaten.

Pressure canning ensures a safe product if using a scientifically tested recipe and process from a reputable source. Never can vegetables or meats for which you do not have a research-tested processing time. Processing time is dependent upon many factors; the amount of starch in produce, type and size of pieces packed in the container, tightness of the packed food, the microorganisms which contaminate and grow in that particular type of food, the temperature at which the food is processed, and the amount of heat up and cool down time in the canner.

A safe internet source for recipes can be found at the National Center for Home Food Preservation at <http://nchfp.uga.edu>. Canning books available on the website are:

USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning. 2015.

http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications_usda.html

Also available in paper copy from Purdue Extension (online store is located at

https://mdc.itap.purdue.edu/item.asp?item_number=AIG-539)

So Easy to Preserve, Sixth Edition. 2014. Bulletin 989. Cooperative Extension/The University of Georgia/Athens

Mark your calendar! UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County will present a pressure canning class on Saturday August 18, 2018, 9am-noon, in the Bethel-Delfino Agriculture Bldg, 311 Fair Lane, Placerville, CA, 95667. See a live pressure canning demonstration, get good ideas and recipes, bring your questions and talk to our volunteers about pressure canning and other aspects of safe home food preservation.

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Download the 2018 UCCE Master Food Preserver of El Dorado County schedule of classes and workshops on our main website <http://ucanr.edu/edmfp>. We are offering some new events this year. In addition to our free preserving classes in Placerville, we now provide classes in Cameron Park at the Cameron Park Community Center and several hands-on workshops in Placerville.

UCCE Master Food Preservers are available to answer home food preservation questions; leave a message at (530) 621-5506 or email us at edmfp@ucanr.edu. For more information about our program and events, visit our website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmfp>. Sign up to receive our ENewsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>. Find us on Facebook, too (UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County)!