PRESERVING RHUBARB

Rhubarb, which looks like a pink or red celery stalk, is botanically a vegetable, but is used like a fruit. It is most often found in pies and sauces, but can also be added to muffins, fruit crisp and made into jams and jellies.

The stalks have an extremely tart flavor so require some sort of sweetener to make them palatable. Rhubarb also can be combined with sweet fruit such as strawberries to cut down on the sugar needed.

There are basically two types of rhubarb; 1) hot house-grown, which has pink or light red stalks with yellow leaves and 2) field-grown, which has dark red or green stalks with green leaves. The hot house varieties have a somewhat milder flavor and are less stringy.

Rhubarb can be canned as a sauce, frozen or dried. When combined with strawberries, peaches or other fruit, it can make a great fruit leather. Rhubarb can also be made into fruit spreads, relish or chutney.

**To Can:** (Hot pack only): Select young, tender, well-colored stalks from the spring or late fall crops. Trim off leaves. Wash stalks and cut into ½-1-inch pieces. In a large saucepan, add ½ cup sugar for each quart of rhubarb. Let stand until juice appears. Heat gently to boiling. Immediately pack mixture into hot jars, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process in a boiling water canner, 15 minutes for pints and quarts.

**To Freeze:** Choose firm, tender young stalks with few fibers. Wash, trim and cut into 1-inch pieces. Pack dry into freezer containers or bags. Rhubarb can also be cooked into sauce, cooled and frozen.

**To Dry:** Wash, trim and slice into 1-inch slices. Steam for 1-2 minutes or until slightly tender, but not soft. Dry on dehydrator trays until tough to crisp. Store dried rhubarb in a cool, dry, dark place in airtight containers.

**Microwave Rhubarb Chutney**

- 3 cup rhubarb, sliced
- 1 cup cider vinegar
- 1 cup sugar, dark brown
- ground ginger, allspice,
dry mustard (1/2 tsp. of each)
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder
- ½ cup chopped dates
- ½ cup raisins
- 2 medium apples, peeled and chopped

In a 2-quart glass bowl, combine rhubarb, vinegar, brown sugar, ginger, allspice, mustard, cinnamon and garlic powder. Microwave on high for 6 minutes or until boiling. Add dates, raisins and apples. Cover with a paper towel. Microwave on high 5 minutes. Stir and microwave 5 more minutes, stirring occasionally or until mixture thickens. Let stand to cool. Spoon into jars or refrigerator containers and refrigerate. Yield: 5 pints.
Rhubarb Relish

2 cups rhubarb, finely chopped fresh or frozen
2 cups onion, finely chopped
2½ cups brown sugar, packed
1 cup vinegar

1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. allspice
¼ tsp. ground cloves
¼ tsp. pepper

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat for 30 minutes or until thickened, stirring occasionally. Cool and store in the refrigerator. Makes a nice condiment for poultry, pork or beef. Yield: 2-3 pints.

Strawberry Rhubarb Leather

1 cup rhubarb
¼ cup water

2 cups strawberries, sliced
½ cup sugar

Combine finely chopped rhubarb and water. Simmer over medium heat for about 5 minutes. Add strawberries and sugar. Puree mixture in a blender or food processor until smooth.

To dry in dehydrator: Pour puree on fruit leather trays that have been lightly oiled. Dry until leathery and pliable. Remove from trays while still warm and roll.

To dry in oven: Pour puree on a cookie sheet that has been lined with wax paper, foil or parchment paper that has been lightly oiled. Set the oven temperature to the warm setting. Prop the door of electric ovens open with a potholder so the moisture can escape. Dry until fruit feels leathery and pliable. Rotate the trays every couple of hours until dry. When dry, remove from paper and roll. To store, wrap leather rolls in plastic wrap and store in a cool dry location.

Rhubarb Raspberry Freezer Jam

6 cups rhubarb, fresh or frozen chopped
3½ cups sugar

¼ cup water
1 3 oz. package raspberry gelatin

Chop rhubarb very finely. Combine all ingredients except gelatin. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to medium. Cover and cook until rhubarb is tender. Uncover and simmer for 12-15 minutes. Stir in gelatin and mix until gelatin is dissolved. Cool. When cool, package in freezer containers and freeze.

Rhubarb Carrot Marmalade

6 cups rhubarb, diced raw or frozen
3 cups carrots, peeled, ground, raw or frozen

2½ cups honey
1 cup walnut, broken pieces, optional
2 medium oranges, unpeeled

Combine rhubarb and carrots. Put oranges through food grinder or chop finely. Discard seeds. Add orange to rhubarb mixture; then add honey. Mix well and let stand over night. Heat to boiling, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and simmer until thickened, about 2 hours. Add walnut pieces. Put hot marmalade into hot jars. Process 5 minutes in a boiling water canner. Store jam in a cool dry dark location for best quality. Makes approximately 8 half pints.

Source: Family Food Education Program

Oregon state University Extension Service offers educational programs and material- without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age marital status, disability, and disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status – as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1064, State Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1073. Oregon University Extension Service is an Equal Opportunity Employer.