CANNED TOMATOES require the addition of acid, in the form of lemon juice or vinegar. Bottled lemon juice should be used rather than fresh, to ensure the proper acidity (1 Tbsp. per pint/2 Tbsp. per quart). You may also use citric acid (1/4 tsp. pint/½ tsp. per quart) or vinegar (5% acidity—2 Tbsp. per pint/4 Tbsp. per quart). To mask the sour flavor imparted by the acid, you can add sugar (1 tsp. per pint or 2 per quart).

TUNA TIMES were changed several years ago. Tuna should be pressure canned for 100 minutes at 10 lbs. pressure with a weighted gauge, or 11 pounds on a dial gauge. DIAL GAUGES should be checked annually to ensure accuracy. That service is offered free of charge at the Extension Service in Myrtle Point, or at Farr’s in Coquille or Coos Bay.

HALF GALLON CANNING JARS are available in stores, but should only be used for fruit juices. No other foods have been tested to be safely canned in that size jar.
Flavored vinegars

Participants in our recent Pickles, Flavored Vinegars & Sauerkraut workshop enjoyed making their own bottle of herb flavored vinegar. This is a simple project that you can use for cooking in your own kitchen, or as a terrific gift idea.

Start by collecting suitable bottles to hold your flavored vinegar. Recycled salad dressing, sauce, marinade or drink bottles with screw on lids work well. Glass makes a nicer looking finished product, especially for gift giving, but plastic bottles can be used. Thoroughly wash the jars, then sanitize them by placing them in a large pan of hot water. Bring the water to a boil and boil gently for 10 minutes. Invert onto a clean towel to dry.

Select the vinegar you will use—from distilled white to rice vinegar—depending on the flavor you are trying to achieve. Next select some herbs, edible flowers, fruits or vegetables to flavor your vinegar. Herbs are a popular choice, but fruits, such as raspberries and blackberries, are also commonly used. Garlic, onion and hot peppers also work great for savory flavored vinegars.

Gently wash and pat dry the herbs, fruits or vegetables, then gently insert them into the bottles; then fill the bottles with the vinegar of choice. You can heat the vinegar before adding it to the bottle (to 190° to 195°F), but it’s not required for safety.

When the vinegar has “steeped” in a cool, dark place for three to four weeks, it’s ready to test for flavor development. Put a few drops on a piece of plain, white bread, or dip a sugar cube into the vinegar, then suck the vinegar from the cube. If the vinegar is too strong, you can dilute it by adding more of the “base” vinegar. If it’s too weak, let it steep longer. If the vinegar has developed the desired flavor, strain it, if necessary, then label it, and store it in a cool, dark place.

For more information on making flavored vinegars, see this publication: extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/sites/default/files/documents/sp_50_736_flavoredvinegars.pdf

DID YOU KNOW the Master Preservers sells a dense, quality cheesecloth that can be washed and reused multiple times. $5 for 2 yards. Ask at the Extension Service.

Not all vinegars are alike

Vinegar is a multi-purpose household “tool.” It is a key ingredient in pickling and home food preservation recipes, but it can also be used as an effective and inexpensive cleaning agent.

But not all vinegars are the same. Not only are there different varieties of vinegar (balsamic, cider, rice, wine, etc.) there are also different grades.

When you’re using vinegar in the kitchen, you should look for an acidity of 5%. This is especially important when using it for canning, as tested and approved recipes are based on that acidity level. Read the label carefully because some available on store shelves have an acidity level of only 4%.

White vinegar is commonly used for pickles. Apple cider might be your choice for preserved foods that have a somewhat sweeter flavor, like sweet or bread and butter pickles. Be aware that the amber color of apple cider vinegar will cause the pickled food to darken slightly. Apple cider “flavored” vinegar is distilled vinegar with flavor and color added.

Flavored vinegars can be used interchangeably in a recipe, as long as the 5% acidity is maintained. However, use them cautiously as they will impart their own flavors to the finished product.

If you make your own vinegar, do not use it for canning as you cannot be certain of the acidity. Likewise, do not use fresh squeezed lemon juice for canning—you need to use a bottled product that has a known acidity level.

When purchasing vinegar to use in cleaning, you might come across “cleaning” vinegars that may have a label that says “not food grade.” These vinegars typically are the white, distilled variety, and may have an acidity of 6%. Regular kitchen grade vinegars may also be used for cleaning, but cleaning vinegars cannot be used for cooking/food preservation.

A great handout on using vinegar, and other food-safe products, for cleaning can be found here: www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/kitchen-sanitize.pdf

Sweet Preservation

A newsletter of the Coos County Master Food Preserver Volunteer Program. This newsletter is published in compliance with Oregon State University Extension Service guidelines, by Coos County Extension Service’s Master Food Preserver Program.

Cindy Peterson, Publisher / Editor
ROASTING VEGETABLES

If you’ve never had roasted vegetables, you’ve been missing out on a delicious and easy-to-fix treat. Vegetables that are roasted take on a sweet, caramel flavor, and retain much of their nutrition because they’re not cooked in liquid, which can dissipate their nutrients.

The basic steps for roasting vegetables:
1. Preheat the oven to 450°F.
2. Line a shallow baking pan with foil or parchment paper. Spray with non-stick cooking spray.
3. Wash vegetables and cut into large, serving-sized pieces.
4. Scatter the vegetables on the baking pan and drizzle with olive or vegetable oil. Don’t crowd the vegetables or they will steam rather than roast.
5. Bake the vegetables in the preheated oven for 30 to 50 minutes, depending on the type and size of vegetables used. Toss occasionally so they stay coated and don’t dry out.
5. Add some fresh herbs while roasting, if desired. Season with salt and pepper and serve hot.

Canning Jar Lids?

If you’ve seen these “canning” jar lids in kitchen stores or online, be aware that they are not intended for sealing jars for food preservation. These silicone lids are intended to replace the two-part canning lids/rings once the jar has been opened and is going into the refrigerator for short-term storage.

These lids, and similar plastic, screw-on lids that can be purchased in local stores, are useful for jars of food being stored in the refrigerator because two-part lids can leak if they are tipped over.

Remember—metal, two-part lids are the only type currently recommended for home food preservation. Reusable lids, which are made of hard plastic with a rubber gasket, are currently being tested for safety and longevity by the University of Wisconsin. We’ll report the results of those tests as soon as they are made available.

Talkin’ about...

Here are some comments, tips/tricks shared and discussed at our Master Food Preserver workshops this year:
- Use an extra canning jar ring as a shield when packing tuna (or other meats) into jars. The ring protects the jar rim from the tuna as you’re packing it into the jar, and makes wiping with vinegar much quicker and easier.
- If you use a vacuum sealer for freezing low-acid foods like vegetables, meats, seafood & poultry, know that you need to break that seal when those foods begin to thaw. Because the air has been vacuumed out of the package, you have an anaerobic (oxygen-free) environment— the same as a sealed canning jar. As that food comes to room temperature, there’s potential for the botulism toxin to develop. So simply slit the package before letting the food thaw in the refrigerator.
- When packing food down into jars and/or getting out the air bubbles, use a plastic or wooden tool. A metal tool will potentially scratch the inside of the jar where it could cause a weak spot that might lead to the jar breaking during processing.
- Shared by a workshop participant: “Your knowledge and skills are precious treasures!” We love that comment! 😊

Have a question you need answered? The Oregon State University Extension Service Ask an Expert is there to help. Experts in family and health, community development, food and agriculture, coastal issues, forestry, programs for young people and gardening are ready to answer the question you submit online at http://extension.oregonstate.edu/coos/ask-an-expert

Ask an Expert has resolved 3,565 questions since its inception in March of 2011. Responses are generally provided within 2 to 3 days. For a fun read, see the questions and answered submitted by others at http://extension.oregonstate.edu/extension-ask-an-expert/featured-questions

Sweet Preservation Newsletter

What would you like to see in the Sweet Preservation newsletter? Recipes, nutrition information, up-to-date preservation methods...? Please provide us with your feedback. You can call 541-572-5263, ext. 299, write OSU Extension Service, 631 Alder Street, Myrtle Point, OR 97458 or email cindy.peterson@oregonstate.edu

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Canning on a smoothtop (glasstop, flattop) stove

Home preservers often ask if it’s safe to can on a smoothtop stove. Our first recommendation, of course, is to follow the manufacturer’s advice because some brands and styles are better suited to canning, some don’t recommend it, and some say it’s okay with certain precautions. Here are some things to consider:

1. A lot of heat is produced on the bottom of the canner while processing. That heat reflects back down to the surface of the stove, which can damage or discolor the surface or even cause the glass to crack. Also, because a full canner is extremely heavy, users might slide the canner across the stove surface which can cause scratches.

2. Some smoothtop stoves have an automatic shut-off on the burners to protect from excessive heat build up. Obviously it would not be good to have a burner shut down when you’re halfway through timing your canner load. If that were to happen, and your pressure dropped (or the water stopped boiling in boiling water canning) you would need to bring the canner back up to pressure and start the timing over. Potentially the stove will repeat that auto shut-off when you’re in the middle or reprocessing.

3. Smoothtop stoves require smooth-bottomed pots that can make full contact with the heating surface and produce the necessary heat inside the canner. Pressure canners generally have a smooth bottom, but you might need to use a stock pot or some other large pot, with a lid, in place of a standard boiling water canner. If you must go that route, remember that in canning, the pot should be no larger than 4” in diameter larger than the heating surface. So a 12” diameter pot should use a burner no less than 8” in diameter. Also, capacity is important. A pot used for canning must be able to hold at least four quart jars with room for water to flow freely between the jars, and at least 1” over the top of the jars.

All things considered, canning on a smoothtop stove has its challenges. The biggest concern is the auto shut-off. Read your owner’s manual, or ask about that feature if you’re considering purchasing a smoothtop. If you’re consulting the manufacturer, clearly explain how heavy the loaded canner is, and how long it will be on the burner, so they can fully advise you on your purchase.

If you already have a smoothtop and find that canning on it is not feasible, consider these alternatives for setting up a canning area in your home:

1. Purchase an electric coil top stove and locate it in a laundry room or garage area. Remember that electric stoves generally require a 220 plug, so factor that into the cost.

2. Purchase a portable burner that is large enough, and produces the right amount of heat (and not too much) for canning. These are difficult to find, and can be expensive. Electric is the best option as you don’t have to worry about ventilation issues. If you opt for propane you’ll want to set it up outdoors in an area protected from the breeze. Burners of this sort should be controllable, or not have an output of more than 12,000 BTU’s. We have a handout that fully explains what you need to consider. Contact Cindy Peterson (see contact info below) for more information.

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation

“Like” Us

If you’re a Facebook user, be sure to check out the Master Food Preserver and Master Gardener pages. We update them regularly to share upcoming classes and trainings, to post what our groups have been doing, and to share food and garden-related information.

Master Food Preservers: www.facebook.com/CoosCountyMasterFoodPreservers
Master Gardeners: www.facebook.com/CoosCountyMasterGardeners

Cashew Cabbage Salad

A popular recipe shared at our Master Food Preserver Training this spring:

1 head cabbage, chopped
2 pkgs. chicken ramen noodles
1 cup cashew or almonds
2 cups diced cooked chicken
3/4 cup oil (olive or vegetable)
6 Tbsp. sugar
2 Tbsp. white vinegar
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper
dash dry mustard
1 tsp. garlic powder

Brown noodles (crushed) and nuts in some butter. Add 1 to 1-1/2 pkgs. of seasoning mix from the ramen noodles. Combine all ingredients and mix well. Chill. Note: Make the night before so the flavors can blend. Use a small head of cabbage, or don’t use the entire head.
Can I Can ...?

**Butter? Cheese? Milk?**

There are no approved methods/recipes for home canning butter or cheese. There is no data to show that these products can be adequately heated in pressure canning to kill the spores that can produce botulism. For more information visit: [http://nchfp.uga.edu/questions/FAQ_canning.html#33](http://nchfp.uga.edu/questions/FAQ_canning.html#33)

**Bread or Cake?**

While recipes for canning bread and cake are plentiful, it is not recommended because a sealed jar containing a low-acid food, like bread or cake, is the ideal environment for botulism to develop. Bread or cake that is baked in jars—but not sealed—does not pose that hazard. However, jar manufacturers do not recommend this process because the canning jars are not designed to hold up to the dry heat required to bake the product. For more information see the handout: [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/sites/default/files/documents/sp_50_928_canningbreadscakes.pdf](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/sites/default/files/documents/sp_50_928_canningbreadscakes.pdf)

**My Own Salsa Recipe?**

Salsa is a fun condiment to experiment with, but NOT if you’re sealing it in a jar. Home canned salsa should be made with a tested and approved recipe to ensure it has a high enough acid level to prevent the development of botulism. If you want to experiment with creating your own recipe, eat it fresh, freeze it, or pressure can it (freezing & pressure canning will create a softer product). For more information see the handout: [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/sites/default/files/documents/pnw_395_salsarecipesforcanning.pdf](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/sites/default/files/documents/pnw_395_salsarecipesforcanning.pdf)

**Dried Beans?**

Dried beans can be canned, but they must be cooked first. This photo shows beans packed in a jar with water, which is not a safe method for canning dried beans. Cook them first, then pressure can them for an inexpensive, quick, delicious addition to soups, chilies, etc. For more information see the handout: [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/sites/default/files/documents/sp_50_955_driedbeans.pdf](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/sites/default/files/documents/sp_50_955_driedbeans.pdf)

The old adage, “Just because you can, doesn’t mean you should,” holds especially true for food preservation. Don’t assume that, just because you can find instructions/recipes, that the finished product will be safe. Here are some examples:
Top 5 Canning Mis“can”ceptions

If it seals — it’s good — Many believe that the only thing required to have a safe, home-canned product is a sealed lid. While it’s essential that a jar seals in order to keep the food inside from spoiling, if the food hasn’t been properly handled before going into the jar, and during processing, there is potential for bacteria in the jar to develop into the deadly botulism toxin. That toxin can develop when the bacteria is in an anaerobic—oxygen-free environment, like in a sealed jar. That’s why food that is low-acid (most vegetables, meats, seafood, poultry, etc.) must be pressure canned as that’s the only method home canners have available that will bring the food to the proper heat level to kill the Clostridium botulinum bacteria that can produce the botulism toxin.

Old recipes are good recipes — Probably the most common refrain we hear from home preservationists is, “I haven’t died yet.” They use that argument to defend using their handed down recipe from Great Aunt Bertha that is tried and true, but NOT tested and approved. But, tried and true has the potential to be deadly. You are gambling with people’s lives when you use recipes/methods that are not tested and approved because botulism is odorless, colorless and tasteless. You won’t know you’ve been exposed to it until you begin to develop symptoms. And, if you or a doctor don’t recognize the symptoms early enough and order the anti-toxin, you or a loved one could suffer horribly or even die. Read more about botulism here: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/sites/default/files/documents/sp_50_490_botulism.pdf

The times they are a changin’ — Recipes & instructions for canning state the pressure (weight or dial gauge numbers) and times required for safe canning. Most people know to look for that information and follow it. But there are two common mistakes people make:

1. They assume they can just process at a higher pressure and the time doesn’t matter.
2. They don’t notice that the starting temperature of the water in the canner is important.

The pressure and time required to safely home can food is carefully tested in a laboratory to determine if the food inside the jar reaches a high enough temperature to kill the Clostridium botulinum bacteria that can produce the botulism toxin. If you shorten that time, you run the risk of not having the food inside the jar reach that necessary temperature. So, for food that is raw packed (uncooked before you begin processing) the temperature of the water in the canner should be 140°F. For hot packed (food that is pre-cooked before going into the jar, following the recipe instructions) the temperature of the water in the canner should be 180°F. Those temperatures apply to both boiling water and pressure canning. The reason: the temperature of the water in the canner at the beginning of the canning process will impact the time the water takes to come to a boil (in boiling water canning) or build up the proper steam (in pressure canning) and will therefore impact the overall time that product is canned. If you change that “formula” by having the water too hot, or just run the canner at a higher pressure, you are potentially not heating the food hot enough and long enough to kill the bacteria. (Remember: you may need to adjust pressure and/or time if you are not canning here in Coos County, which is close to sea level.)

Someone said I could — There are a lot of recipes and techniques you see on the Internet, and in magazines and books, that give instructions for canning things that should not be canned at home. While you can buy canned cheese and milk, and similar items, it doesn’t mean those things can be safely canned at home. If in doubt, ask. Call our office (contact information on back page) or the Food Preservation Hotline at 1-800-354-7319 (until October 10).

I’ve always done it that way — Times change, and so do preservation recommendations. Even if you have a reliable resource (such as a Ball Blue Book) you need the most recent source available, or contact the Extension Service for up-to-date information. Research: in the late 1980s, Oregon State University research showed that it was necessary to increase the processing time for tuna from 90 to 100 minutes. Products: recent changes in canning jar lids has brought about the need to hold jars in the canner following processing in order to ensure a proper seal (more details on page 5 of this newsletter). That change came about because the rubber on jar lids changed and people were having a lot of seal failures. So use reliable resources, like those provided by your county Extension Service. When you’re searching online, try OneSearch (https://search.extension.org/) which searches extension publications from all across the nation.

Those Pesky Flies!

With harvest time upon us, so are those pesky fruit flies that seem impossible to eliminate. Those tiny, honey-colored flies, with reddish eyes, breed in overly ripe vegetables and fruit. They are attracted to processes associated with fermentation and breed in decaying fruits and vegetables. In the fermentation process, yeasts act on sugars, producing alcohol and carbon dioxide.

Try to prevent the infestation of fruit flies from the start by rinsing fresh fruit and vegetables under cold, running water when you bring them into the house. Then cover or refrigerate the produce, and keep all kitchen surfaces clean.

If you’re already infested with flies, it can take a couple of weeks for them to die a natural death after you’ve eliminated their breeding sources. To speed that process, you can create a fruit fly trap with some simple ingredients: baker’s yeast, warm water and sugar:

1. In a small jar, glass or bowl, mix 1/4 to 1/3 cup warm (not boiling) water with one package of dry yeast. Add 1 teaspoon sugar to feed the yeast. Swirl the liquid and wait for a few minutes for carbon dioxide (CO₂) to begin to develop.
2. Place a plastic baggie over the mouth of the jar with one corner down in the jar.
3. Using a pencil or toothpick, poke a small hole (no more than 1/8-inch diameter) in the corner of the bag in the mouth of the jar.
4. Secure the bag around the rim of the jar using a rubber band or some string.

The trap should immediately begin attracting flies which will crawl into the jar through the small hole in the plastic, but won’t be able to get back out. Note: fruit flies are generally more active during the daytime.

Be warned: the female fruit flies will lay eggs that will hatch into maggots which will feed on the yeast liquid in the jar and develop (in about 7 to 10 days) and crawl up the inside of the jar. To avoid dealing with that unsightly delight, empty, or throw out, the jar after about a week. If you dump the contents down the drain, run water for a minute or two to ensure the larvae are flushed into the sewer system.

If you still have fruit flies, make a new yeast trap, or try one of these other suggestions:

- Put a small amount of red wine, apple cider vinegar or fruit juice in an open jar or bowl on the counter. Put a drop of dishwashing soap in the liquid to break the surface tension. The flies will try to land on the surface and sink and drown.
- Put some apple cider vinegar, or a piece or ripe banana, in the bottom of a glass. Roll a piece of paper into a cone, with a small opening in the tip, and place it in the mouth of the glass. The cone acts as a funnel to lure the flies in. Make sure the rolled up paper cone fills the mouth of the glass so the flies can’t get out along the sides.
- Place a small dish filled with clove spice near the fruit or compost bin.

Fly trap information and photo source: http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest/resources/fruitflytrap.shtml

10 Minute Wait!

Due to changes in the rubber used on canning jar lids, it is now recommended that you wait after processing before removing jars from the canner. This extra time will help ensure a proper seal.

Boiling Water Canning: When the processing time is up, remove the canner from the burner, or just turn off the heat. Remove the canner lid and wait 5 minutes before removing jars to a rack to cool.

Pressure Canning: When the processing time is up, remove the canner from the burner, or just turn off the heat. Allow the canner to cool naturally. When the canner has depressurized (“0” on a dial gauge, or after 30 to 45 minutes with a weighted gauge), open the petcock or remove the weight. Wait 10 minutes, then remove the lid and move the jars to a rack to cool.

Did you know...

Canning nut meats is no longer recommended due to safety concerns. If you have a publication on how to can nut meats, please throw it out. If you have been canning your nuts, we recommend you switch to freezing them.

Exhausting?

Instructions with some pressure canners say it is not necessary to exhaust the canner before bringing it up to pressure. But OSU Extension recommends that you always exhaust (vent) for 10 minutes before bringing the canner up to pressure and processing.
Canning do’s & don’ts

Tilting the jars when removing from the canner—DON’T! You don’t want to tilt the jars when you remove them from the boiling water or pressure canner because the jar is likely not sealed yet, and tilting the jar may cause the contents to spill onto the rim of the jar which could prevent the jar from sealing as it cools. While it’s tempting to get that puddle of water off the lid, it will evaporate within a minute or two. So simply lift the jar straight up, straight over and place it down on a rack to cool.

Leave head space in the jar—DO! Head space is the amount of air space between the top of the food in the jar and the jar lid. Space is needed because the food expands as it heats. Different foods require different head space, but a general rule of thumb is: 1/4” for juices, jams/jellies, pickles & relishes; 1/2” for high-acid foods like fruits & tomatoes; 1” for low-acid foods like vegetables, meat, poultry and seafood. Too little head space and the food or liquid may bubble out from under the lid and interfere with the jar sealing properly. Too much head space and the processing time might not be enough to properly drive out the air to create a safe seal.

Tightening the rings after removing jars from the canner—DON’T! You should not tighten the rings after removing jars from the canner. Here’s how jars seal: the contents in the jar heat up and expand, and gases are vented from the jar. When processing is finished, the food begins to cool and contract which increases the pressure inside the jar and pulls the lid down to form a vacuum seal. If you screw your rings on too tight before processing, the air can’t escape during heating. If you screw the bands down after removing the jars from the canner, you’re interfering with that vacuum process. Likewise, don’t tap on the jar lid to check for a seal until the jar has completely cooled as tapping might cause a false seal to occur.

Sterilize jars—DO or DON’T! Sterilizing your jars is necessary if the processing time for the food you’re canning is less than 10 minutes, as in some jam/jelly recipes. Most foods require processing longer than 10 minutes, and in that case it is not necessary to sterilize the jars. They just need to be clean and warm, so washed and still warm right from the dishwasher is sufficient. Or you may put them in a pan of very hot water prior to filling. If your instructions say to process less than 10 minutes, follow these instructions to sterilize the jars: fill a large pot with water and bring it to a boil. Add the jars and boil gently for 10 minutes. Remove jars one at a time to fill. Alternatively—if the jam/jelly recipe has a processing time of just 5 minutes, you can increase the time to 10 minutes and skip the jar sterilizing step.

Master Food Preserver training next spring

Are you interested in participating in the 2015 Master Food Preserver training next spring? Held annually, this training provides a thorough foundation in home food preservation.

Participants will sign on for a series of Saturday practicums and a home-study course. The four Saturday classes are held over the course of two months and participants must also complete a series of learning modules to become certified Master Food Preservers.

The training covers the basics of food preservation, from boiling water and pressure canning to dehydrating, freezing and safe food handling techniques. Tested and approved recipes will be provided, as well as information on how to evaluate recipes and methods to ensure their safety. Participants will also receive their food handler’s certificate as part of the training.

In addition to participating in the training, trainees are expected to volunteer 40 hours of service to the program in the year following their training. Volunteer hours accumulate quickly as everything from helping with Saturday workshops to reading the newsletter can be counted, and there are plenty of opportunities throughout the year to get involved.

Tentative dates are May 9 and 30, and June 13 and 27. Cost of the training is $150, with $50 refunded upon completion of the volunteer hours. Payment can be made through credit card. For application information contact Samantha Clayburn (samantha.clayburn@oregonstate.edu) or Cindy Peterson (cindy.peterson@oregonstate.edu). Or call the Extension Service at 541-572-5263, ext. 292 or 299.
Master Food Preserver Fall Schedule

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<th>DATE</th>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>TIMES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 11</td>
<td><strong>COOKING W/GRAINS, NUTS, SEEDS &amp; LEGUMES WORKSHOP @ OSU EXTENSION</strong></td>
<td>10 - 2</td>
<td>$10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
<td><strong>HANDMADE HOLIDAYS: KITCHEN &amp; CRAFT ROOM GIFT IDEAS WORKSHOP @ OSU EXTENSION</strong></td>
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We would appreciate getting your feedback on what workshops you would like us to offer in 2015. Please take our online survey to give suggestions, rate your level of interest in past workshop topics, etc. Simply go to www.surveymonkey.com/s/QFWHK7T and fill in the survey. Your responses will direct our planning for 2015.

Pick the Perfect Pear and Other Produce Tips

**Question:** How do you know when your pears are ready to pick?

**Answer:** Pears should be picked before they're ripe. Don’t wait until they turn yellow or get soft; pick them before they mature. Here are some indicators that they are ready to pick:

1. The dark leaf-green skin color is beginning to turn lighter green or yellowish-green. 2. Small dots on the fruit begin to change from white to brown. 3. The skin takes on a waxy feel and the pebbly surface becomes smooth. 4. The fruit stem separates easily from the spur or twig with an upward twist of the pear. 5. The seeds have turned brown. 6. Pears that have fallen to the ground are ripening (don’t eat those as they have potentially been exposed to E. coli from animal feces).

Handle pears carefully as they bruise easily and then don’t store well. They should be stored in a cool, humid location such as a refrigerator. Remember—the longer the time between picking and storing, the shorter the storage life.

**RIPE NOW, OR RIPE LATER?** Fruits that you should pick or buy ripe and ready-to-eat include: apples, cherries, grapefruit, grapes, oranges, pineapple, strawberries, tangerines and watermelon. Apricots, bananas, cantaloupe, kiwi, nectarines, peaches, pears, plantains and plums continue to ripen after they’re picked. The tomato, which is actually a fruit, also continues to ripen after picking. To speed the ripening of fruits such as peaches, pears, and plums, put them in a ripening bowl or in a loosely closed brown paper bag at room temperature. Plastic bags don’t work for ripening.

**SEPARATE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN THE FRIDGE:** Fruits give off ethylene gas which can shorten the storage life of vegetables. Some vegetables give off odors that can be absorbed by fruits and affect their quality. So store them in separate drawers or areas of the refrigerator.

**FARMERS’ MARKETS GUIDE:** At home or on the road, you can enjoy fresh produce from a Farmers’ Market near you. Get a copy of the 2014 Guide to Oregon Farmers’ Markets: www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/2014-OFMA-Directory.pdf or ask for a copy at the OSU Extension Service in Myrtle Point. You can also use their Market Finder to map out a Farmers’ Market wherever you are traveling, or for your friends/family: www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org/market-finder/ Oregon Coast Community Action provides a local food guide on their website which lists Farmers’ Markets and restaurants: www.orcca.us/cooslocalfood/location/all.html

Sources: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/question-of-the-week/when-pick-perfect-pear and http://food.unl.edu/rnh/9bites
Coos County Master Food Preservers

Oregon State University Coos County Extension Service
631 Alder Street, Myrtle Point—541-572-5263, ext. 292 or 299
http://extension.oregonstate.edu/coos/family-food-education-ffe
Master Food Preservers Coordinator: cindy.peterson@oregonstate.edu

Food preservation publications available
online from OSU Family & Community Health
http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation

Food Safety & Preservation Hotline
1-800-354-7319
July 14 to October 17, 2014
Monday through Friday, 9 am to 4 pm