

Just Because It Seals -- Doesn't Mean It's Safe!

Submitted by: *Barbara Roths, Family Consumer Sciences Agent, K-State Research and Extension, Butler County.*

How's your garden growing? Have you been to visit your local farmer's market or a "pick your own" orchard recently? Enjoy that produce now – AND in the cold winter months to come—by following these tips to preserve the harvest SAFELY!

1. Are you going to home-can that produce? Use proper techniques and tested recipes. Use food preservation information that is up-to-date with scientifically tested guidelines. Don't use outdated publications or cookbooks, even if they were handed down to you from trusted family cooks. Any information prior to 1994 should not be used for home-canning. Go to our KSRE -- Butler County Extension web site:

<http://www.butler.k-state.edu/fcs/Food%20Preservation.html> or to the KSU Rapid Response Center web site: www.rrc.ksu.edu You can find in-depth, step-by-step directions from the following sources:

- K-State Research and Extension, as well as other university source
- The National Center for Home Food Preservation
- USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning

2. New Food Preservation Videos. Thanks to the K-State Research and Extension Video Production Team and the Kansas Health Foundation, new food preservation videos can help us learn how to preserve foods safely. Topics include: recommended recipes, canning salsa, water bath and pressure canning, maintenance of canners. Look for these videos on the KSRE YouTube channel: <http://bit.ly/1ZOTZnd>

3. Hands-on canning experience. These Food Preservation workshops are scheduled:

- July 12– 13—Wichita, contact Denise Dias, ddias@ksu.edu, 316-660-0116
- July 22 - Great Bend, contact Donna Krug, dkrug@ksu.edu, 620-793-1910

4. Use the right equipment for the kind of foods that you are canning. The boiling water-bath method can be used for high-acid foods, such as fruits, jams, jellies and pickles; or for tomatoes with an added acid such as bottled lemon juice or vinegar. With a boiling water bath, you use a large stockpot, rack and lid. It's simple, and you don't necessarily have to buy a specific water-bath canner. Make sure the stockpot is big enough to allow water to cover the tops of the jars by at least 1 to 2 inches.

Always use a pressure canner when canning low-acid vegetables (like green beans, potatoes and corn), meat, fish and poultry. Pressure canning is the ONLY recommended method for canning these foods because adding pressure will bring the food up to the 240 degree temperature needed to safely preserve them. The boiling water method will only reach 212 degrees and will NOT protect against botulism.

Home canning can be an excellent way to preserve garden produce and share it with family and friends. If you plan to be canning this summer, make sure you know how to ensure that all of your jars are SEALED AND SAFE.

*For more information contact K-State Research and Extension, Butler County at:
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