

**WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for August 24, 2020**  
**Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.**

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll talk about the shortage of canning lids and some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

By April, the writing was on the wall. More people were gearing up to plant vegetable gardens than we'd seen in quite a while. And that meant that more people were planning how to preserve their abundance of produce.

So apparently as people were stocking up on toilet paper, hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes, they were also purchasing canning jars and lids. I actually don't know all the reasons why there is a shortage. There had not been much in the news about it at all until a Washington Post article this weekend. But it is true that canning lids, or flats, are very difficult to find right now.

It may remind some of you of a similar incident in 1975. A shortage of raw materials that year caused a great reduction in production. Lid manufacturers were even asked to testify before Congress about the reasons for the nationwide shortage. Instead of focusing on what we can't change, let's focus on what we can. (No pun intended there.) Here are some things to consider.

**How old are the lids you are using?** When I called every store I could think of in Coshocton and learned they were all out of lids, I then sent a text to the first hopeful source that popped in my mind – my Aunt Suse! I knew that she was freezing a lot more than canning these days, so I hoped she might have some. Sure enough, she had a variety on hand. Regular lids. Wide mouth lids. Ball lids. Completely unbranded lids.

I laughed when I looked at one of the price tags. It was a small ziptop bag with three dozen lids from an Amish bulk store for \$2.89. I had just been on Amazon a few hours earlier to see prices like \$13.25 for one dozen. There were some cheaper options, but delivery dates are about a month out.

According to our OSU Extension Fact Sheet "Canning Basics," lids will last for about 5 years. After that time, the gasket compound may fail to seal on jars. It is recommended to only buy what you will use within one year.

**Are you thinking of reusing lids?** The go-to authority on home food preservation is the National Center for Home Food Preservation. Their website says, “Lids should not be used a second time since the sealing compound becomes indented by the first use, preventing another airtight seal. Screw bands may be reused unless they are badly rusted or the top edge is pried up which would prevent a proper seal.” It is simply not safe to reuse a lid that has already been processed.

**Are you screwing those bands on too tight?** The last thing you want to do now is to process your jars and get a bad seal, resulting in a lost lid and the need to reprocess. So, once you have filled the jars to proper headspace, release any air bubbles with a flat plastic spatula. Then be sure to wipe the jar rims with a dampened paper towel. A clean jar surface is key for ensuring a good seal. The next important step is to screw on that metal band only until it is fingertip tight. This is critical so air can escape from the jar. Over tightening can cause lids to buckle and jars to break, especially with raw-packed, pressure processed foods like green beans.

**Have you considered freezing instead?** If you are short on lids, freezing is an excellent, alternate method of food preservation. Search [ohioline.osu.edu](http://ohioline.osu.edu) for “Food Preservation: Freezing Vegetables” for a fact sheet with all kinds of tips and recommendations for freezing.

Now we’ll take a look at some upcoming OSU Extension programs. I’ll be teaching two programs as part of the Coshocton Public Library adult education series. The first is “Declutter Your Life” on Facebook Live through the Coshocton Public Library Facebook Page on Thursday, September 10 at 7:00 pm. I’m also teaching an interactive workshop virtually on Zoom on Thursday, September 24 at noon called “Who Gets Grandma’s Yellow Pie Plate?” This program will give you strategies to jumpstart conversations about inheritance and some key decision-making factors in non-titled property transfer. You are asked to RSVP to the Coshocton Public Library at 740-622-0956.

Also, this year the Farm Science Review will offer virtual programs on Food Preservation topics, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday September 22-24. Be sure to check out these presentations on our Facebook page – OSU Extension Coshocton County.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at [coshocton.osu.edu](http://coshocton.osu.edu). Make it a healthy day!