

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for August 21, 2023
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about food preservation, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

My garden is a jungle, which means that canning spaghetti sauce is soon in my future. Maybe it's the same for you. You've enjoyed the fresh produce from your garden and from the farmers' market all summer long. But the plants just keep producing! It is the time of year when more people than ever are thinking about ways to preserve the bounty.

Here are some questions I've been getting lately.

I would like to can beets from my garden, but I don't really want to pickle them. Are they safe to water bath can without adding acid?

Beets may be canned without adding vinegar, however, they must be pressure canned rather than processed in a boiling water bath canner. Beets are a low acid vegetable. Almost all the vegetables from our gardens need to be processed in a pressure canner. This is because low acid vegetables have the potential to support the growth of the bacteria that produces the botulism toxin. The only way to ensure this is destroyed is to raise the temperature to 240 degrees F. That is about 30 degrees higher than the temperature of boiling water. If you don't have or are not comfortable using a pressure canner, then freezing vegetables could be an excellent alternative.

I am canning tomatoes and am wondering whether it is better to use ascorbic acid or citric acid.

Though tomatoes are the most acidic vegetable in our gardens, some varieties are right on the border of the pH level that allows botulism to survive. Therefore, it is recommended to add either citric acid, bottled lemon juice or even vinegar (though this may affect the flavor). To ensure safe acidity in whole, crushed, or juiced tomatoes, add two tablespoons of bottled lemon juice or 1/2 teaspoon of citric acid per quart of tomatoes. For pints, use one tablespoon bottled lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon citric acid. Acid can be added directly to the jars before filling with product.

I have half a dozen different recipes for canning peaches that I have collected over the years.

How do I know which is the best to use?

Looking through old cookbooks can be a lot of fun. And trying recipes for casseroles and desserts can be a delight. But when it comes to preserving food in a jar that will remain at room temperature for several months, you want to make sure you are looking at the most current recommendations for a tested recipe. Our “go to” website for trusted recipes is the National Center for Home Food Preservation at the University of Georgia, College of Family and Consumer Sciences (nchfp.uga.edu).

Some of my jars of green beans did not seal when I checked them the next day. Are they safe to reprocess?

If a lid fails to seal on a jar, remove the lid and check the jar-sealing surface for tiny nicks. If necessary, change the jar, add a new flat lid, and reprocess within 24 hours using the same processing time. Other options are to freeze the jars or to store in the refrigerator and consume within several days.

I would like to can jalapeno peppers in the same manner that I can green beans. I plan to just put them in water with some salt and pressure can them, is that OK?

According to the National Center for Home Food Preservation, it is recommended to remove the skin from peppers before processing. This can be done by blanching in boiling water or by blistering under a broiler.

And now let's look at what's new from OSU Extension.

When you have extra money, it's easy to talk about all the responsible things you should do with it. But when you find yourself living from paycheck to paycheck, thinking about saving for future goals seems impossible.

Remove that stress by getting ahold of your finances! Join me at the Coshocton Public Library on Tuesday evening, August 29th, to learn and gain the tools to break down your challenges into smaller, manageable pieces of a plan that works! Register now by visiting coshoctonlibrary.org.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and 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. Make it a healthy day!