

Canning and Preserving Resources from August 13th and 20th Extending the Harvest Workshops



HOW TO'S: Blanching, Freezing and Dehydrating

Blanching Beans

- Cut off ends of beans.
- Blanch in boiling water for 1 minute. This will both kill the ripening enzymes and fix the colour in the vegetable (if appropriate)
- Set beans in ice bath to stop the cooking.
- Place beans in Freezer Ziploc bags (or other containers that seal well).
- Minimize the air in the bags or fill the container until nearly full.
- Portion sizes should be appropriate to final usage (meal size or ingredient application)

Blanching Corn

- Remove corn husks.
- Blanch corn cobs in boiling water for 2 minutes.
- Set corn in ice bath to stop the cooking.
- Shave corn off cobs with regular knife or electric knife. There are also specialized gadgets that will assist in this process.
- Place beans in Freezer Ziploc bags (or other containers that seal well).
- Minimize the air in the bags or fill container until nearly full.
- Portion sizes should be appropriate to final usage.

Dehydration of Fruits, Vegetables, Other

- Cut fruit 1/4 inch thick (pears, bananas, mangos, etc).
- To prevent browning of fruit, treat with diluted lemon juice prior to dehydrating. Fruit/vegetables such as tomatoes, onions and beans do not need the lemon juice treatment.
- Store dehydrated food in an air tight jar with lid or freezer bag and keep in a dark location.
- Dehydrated item can be eaten dry (fruits), rehydrated for use (onions, mushrooms, fruits) or added directly into a pot (chili, soups and stews).

Cold Storage

- Root cellar guidelines for apples, potatoes: cellar should be 7-10 degrees Celsius, be dark, have good ventilation and be dry.
- Do not wash potatoes before you place them in cold storage.
- Once you take the potatoes out of the cold cellar, use them within 2-3 weeks. (Do not put potatoes in the fridge!, they will “sweeten” and turn dark when cooked)
- If potatoes are dark inside when you cut them open, the root cellar is too cold.
- Apples: Use mature fall apples (vs. earlier summer varieties). Leave stems on. Store away from potatoes (apples release ethylene gas which can cause the potatoes to sprout).
- Onions, garlic, pumpkin and squash do not belong in a root cellar but they can be kept well into the winter months. They should be stored somewhere cool and dry.
- Do not store potatoes and onions near each other, they will quickly degrade and rot.

Sterilization

- **4 methods to sterilize jars:**
 - Method 1: Saucepan, upside down and boil
 - Method 2: Saucepan, right-side up (full of water and covered with water) and boil.
 - Method 3: Heat jars in 200 degree Fahrenheit oven and hold for a minimum of 15 minutes until ready to use. (remember that water boils at 212 F)
 - Method 4: Sterilize in vinegar solution. Rinse and drain.
 - Use the sanitization cycle on your dishwasher. You need your dishwasher to achieve at minimum of 180 F for this option.

Canning Jams

- Recommended pectin: [Pomona's Universal Pectin](#) (pectin and mono calcium chlorate). Available at most health food stores.
 - With this pectin, you can reduce the sugar (e.g. $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar instead of 7 cups) The trade off is that your jams will need to be consumed more quickly (once opened) than other jams. Solutions can include using smaller jars, ensuring consumption before opening another type or using the jam to sweeten and flavour natural yoghurts or top frozen treats.
- Citro brand pectin works well, but require 55% sugar concentration or the jam will not set. For this reason freezer jams are gaining popularity.
- Making jams and jellies using honey (from [Ontario Bee's website](#)): Ontario honey may be substituted for sugar in most jam and jelly recipes. If a recipe calls for 4 cups sugar, use 2 cups honey. Cook the jam or jelly slightly longer than time stated in recipe using sugar. When substituting

- honey, use commercial liquid or powdered pectin. The consistency of the jam or jelly will be somewhat softer.
- Recipe for [jam without \(commercial\) pectin](#)
 - Recipe for [no sugar freezer jam](#)

Canning Tomatoes, Tomato Juice, Peaches, Dill Pickles

Note: These notes are a brief account of the steps to prepare canned tomatoes, tomato juice, peaches and dill pickles to give a general picture of how to can these items. Make sure to consult a recipe prior to canning these items.

- **Stewed tomatoes:** Used Roma tomatoes (as they are meatier).
 - Recipe: Tomatoes, lemon juice, garlic, water.
 - Scald tomatoes: Scald tomatoes for 45-60 seconds in small batches in a pot of boiling water.
 - Place in cold water bath, peel skins off tomatoes.
 - Pack tomatoes in sterilized jars as tightly as possible. Fill with water and remove any air bubbles in the jar.
 - Process jars for 15 minutes in water bath.
- **Tomato juice:** Used beefsteak tomatoes (other juicy tomatoes or unpretty/blemished fruits).
 - Recipe: Tomatoes, jalapeno peppers, garlic, salt, water.
 - Wash tomatoes and remove blemishes
 - Cut tomatoes into large chunks (halves if small or quarters if large)
 - Fill a large stock pot with tomato pieces, add 1 liter of water for every 5 kg of tomatoes. Bring tomatoes and water to a boil, stir the pot to ensure all tomato pieces are cooked. Tomatoes are ready when soft.
 - Juice tomatoes. Use a hand mill (multiple types available) or juicing machine.
 - Pour juice in sterilized jar (jar contained jalapeno pepper, garlic and salt).
 - Process juice in boiling water canner for ~15 minutes.
- **Canned peaches:** We used Clingstone peaches. *Shaun recommended Freestone peaches as well (the fruit doesn't cling to the stone, making them easy to pit).*
 - Recipe: Peaches, sugar, water (spices if desired).
 - Scald peaches in boiling water for 45-60 seconds (unripe fruits may take longer to release skins).
 - Place peaches in cold water bath. Peel skin off of peaches.
 - Make simple syrup using 1 cup sugar to 1 cup water. Roughly plan on 250 – 300 ml of syrup per 1 liter jar. (Shaun used 8 cups of water to 8 cups of sugar). To prepare syrup, while heating water, add sugar, stirring constantly to dissolve. Bring to a gentle boil and keep it simmering. Cut peaches into halves or quarters depending on the style of jars. Pack into jars and cover with boiling simple syrup.
 - Process the jars in the water bath for ~15 minutes.

- **Dill pickles:** (This product was not completed in the workshop due to a shortage of time, but the process was discussed and questions were answered).
 - Recipe: pickling cucumbers, pickling spice, garlic, vinegar, sugar, water, salt.
 - Make sure to slice off 1/8th of blossom end. The blossom end contains enzymes that cause softening of the final pickle product. (If possible leave the stem end on as it acts as a handle, but it is not vital)

Additional Helpful Canning Resources:

- Home Food Preservation (a wide range of resources):
<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/Preservation/>
- Simply Canning (a wide range of canning recipes and resources):
<http://www.simplycanning.com/>