**“Can-Do Easy Canning”**

**Nan K. Chase,** [**drinktheharvest.com**](http://www.eatyouryardbook.com)**, for**

**Living Web Farms**

**July 19, 2016**

 **Resources -- *Consult the experts!***

* **National Center for Home Food Preservation, [www.uga.edu/nchfp/](http://nchfp.uga.edu/)**

The National Center for Home Food Preservation is a service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and provides current, research-based information on safe methods for home cooks. See this site for basic information as well as proven recipes.

* **USDA Cooperative Extension System, county offices,** [**http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/**](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/)

Use the "AgExtension" office nearest you for localized advice and support, including appropriate plant selections and pest control information, and food processing info.

* [***Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving***](http://www.freshpreservingstore.com/blue-book-guide-to-preserving/shop/229696/)**, THE reference book for methods and recipes**

Also see ***Drink the Harvest*** and ***Eat Your Yard!*** for stocking your pantry organically.

* **Ball products and information for canning,** **www.freshpreserving.com**

This excellent web site has the latest products, updates on technique, and more.

* **Dehydrators, NESCO/American Harvest,** [**www.nesco.com**](http://www.nesco.com/products/Dehydrators/Dehydrators/)

This Wisconsin company sells durable and easy-to-use dehydrators and accessories, as well as several useful dehydrator cookbook titles. Dehydrating stretches the harvest.

* **Vacuum sealers, Frisper by Oliso, [www.oliso.com](http://www.oliso.com/index.php/vacuum-sealer)**

Vacuum sealing extends shelf life for many processed foods. Camping friendly, too!

* **Lehman's,** **www.lehmans.com**

This Ohio mail-order company sells a huge range of useful, good quality implements for home food preservation, including crocks, fruit presses, food mills, and more.

* **Plant sources are endless. Look locally, or…**

I recommend One Green World – they have a useful catalog and ship plants carefully, [**www.onegreenworld.com**](https://www.onegreenworld.com/), also Raintree Nursery, [**www.raintreenursery.com**](http://www.raintreenursery.com/)

* **Consider joining or even starting a garden club!** [**www.gardenclub.org**](http://gardenclub.org/)

Today's garden clubs are all about YOUR interests. Membership in a garden club lets you learn more about gardening and food production, socialize, and enhance your community.

 (Turn the page for more important information)

**Basic rules for canning**

* **Use only clean, freshly picked produce without blemishes or bruising**

Don't be afraid to compost the rest

* **Sterilize all canning and fermentation equipment as specified**

Follow all temperature and time instructions for boiling water-bath canning,

***especially*** high altitude adjustments

**Basic equipment**

* **Bowls.** Non-reactive: glass, enamel, stainless steel (*not* aluminum or copper)
* **Strainers and sieves.** Nonreactive (plastic okay), large sizes best
* **Pots and pans.** Non-reactive for cooking, aluminum stockpot with basket okay for boiling water bath
* **Jars, lids, bands.** Jars and some bands may be re-used, lids must be new
* **Utensils for cooking and filling.** Big spoons, spatulas, specialty funnels
* **Utensils for canning.** Wide canning tongs, lid tool
* **Cheesecloth or netting.** Look for nylon strainers at any paint store
* **Cloths for wiping, cooling.** Tea towels are ideal
* **Labels, marking pens.** Buy decorative labels or make your own
* **Ascorbic acid, lemon juice.** To preserve color and guarantee acidity
* **Measuring spoons, cups, food scale.**

**Enjoy your organic produce all year by canning…**

**CANNING high-acid foods is safe, easy, and economical. Canning gives you stable long-term storage for large quantities of fruit and some vegetables, juices, sauces, jams and jellies, and pickles. No electricity? No problem!**

**CANNING requires a one-time investment for equipment. The equipment can last for generations, while yearly supplies are modestly priced and easy to find.**

**HIGH-ACID FOODS include orchard fruits, vine fruits and rhubarb, tomatoes, pickles**

**LOW-ACID FOODS require higher temperatures for safety…the pressure canning equipment is more expensive and difficult to use. Low-acids foods include green vegetables, corn, root crops, meat and poultry. \*This workshop does not include pressure canning. Consider freezing low-acid foods instead.**

**Here’s the process…**

* **Harvest at the peak of ripeness, never over-ripe**
* **Handle and clean your produce gently**
* **Have all ingredients and equipment assembled**
* **Clean the kitchen until it gleams, then wash and sterilize equipment**
* **Bring all foods and equipment up gradually to the same high temperature**
* **Fill jars – leaving specified head space – then apply lids and bands *lightly***
* **Lower jars into boiling water bath, process for specified time**
* **Remove jars, let cool on board or towels, 12-24 hours**
* **Remove bands, label jars with contents and date**
* **Store jars in a cupboard with stable temperature, rotate stock**
* **Shelf life: 1-2 years**

 (Turn the page for worksheet)

**Worksheet**

1. What crops, especially high-acid or herb, in your own yard or local market have the biggest harvest?

2. Which of these do you like to eat in a variety of ways?

3. What is your storage space like -- for freezing, fermenting, canning, dehydrating -- and for storage of equipment and utensils? Be realistic, or be willing to make some space.