

What to do with your garden harvest

Do you have tomatoes, corn and zucchini taking over the counter and the refrigerator? All the fruits of your labor are now bountiful and wonderful but what to do with it all? Eating some of your fresh produce is enjoyable to a point. Try some of the following preservation techniques to save your garden produce to eat later.

Freezing: For the best quality, it is important to get your vegetables from the garden to the freezer as quickly as possible. The preserved vegetables will be great for your favorite soup, stew or chili. Frozen fruit is great in a fruit smoothie or as a topping on frozen yogurt.

Dehydrating: This process can be done in your oven, or for the best product, use a dehydrator. Dried fruits and vegetables make a tasty, nutritious snack.

Canning: From jams and salsa to pickled eggs, canning is making a comeback. However, remember to use a scientifically-sound process to prevent food spoilage and deterioration. Using a pressure cooker is the safest. A hot water bath can also be used but can be less food safe.

“Canning interrupts the normal spoilage and decaying cycle of food by heating the food contained in a home canning jar that has been closed with a two-piece vacuum sealing cap.” (Ball Blue Book of Preserving, 2006)

It is recommended to take a course on food preservation to ensure proper procedures to eliminate the possibility of foodborne illness. In addition, visit the Colorado State University Extension website for fact sheets to help safely guide you through your favorite home preservation techniques at <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/pubs.html#nutrition> .

Extension Corner

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