

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Garden Produce Perfect for Canning

Home gardeners and their families may enjoy the fruits of their labors in the summertime and long into the year by canning their bounty. Putting away that plentiful produce is easy if a few basic steps are followed.

Prepare by checking canning equipment. Waterbath canners should be free of rust or major dents. Jars should be checked for cracks or chips and should be washed and clean to use. Ring bands should be free of rust and dents. Washing ring bands and thoroughly drying them will help eliminate rust. While canning jars and ring bands can be used from year-to-year, flats should only be used once.

Pressure canner gaskets and safety plugs should be elastic and checked to fit properly in the gasket trough. Dial gauge pressure canners should be checked yearly for accuracy to assure food is processed to destroy the toxin producing botulism bacteria.

Free pressure canner testing is available through the Wildcat District offices in Independence, Girard, and Altamont. Pressure canner brands that can be tested include Presto, National, Maid of Honor, Magic Seal and Sears. Pressure canners should have a flat bottom if used on an electric stove and very few shallow pits on the inside. Check the vent to assure it is clear of any debris and make sure handles are secure and tight.

When canning foods, use recipes from recommended resources such as the National Center for Home Food Preservation, USDA Complete Guide to Home Food Preservation or your local Extension Office resources including the KSRE Rapid Response Center at <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu>. Food being canned should be at peak quality. Vegetables should be peeled to eliminate skin bacteria and free of all blemishes. Do not can produce from dead vines or vines with frostbite.

Allow processed jars to cool in an isolated area for 12-24 hours without being moved around. After this amount of time is up, double check that the lids sealed properly. If all jars are sealed, remove, wash, and dry the ring bands. Label the jars with the name of the food and date canned. Store jars in a cool dry area away from hot and cold fluctuation. For example, not in a

mechanical room or next to the furnace unit. Canned foods should be used in one year for best quality and to allow room for next year's garden bounty.

Waterbath and pressure canning methods of food preservation are available for adults and youth over age of 14 to learn in hands-on classes offered by the Wildcat District.

Classes will be held as follows:

- July 27th from 5:30 – 8:30pm at the Crawford County Extension Office
- August 22nd from 5:30 – 8:30pm at the Independence Community College Fab Food Lab
- August 24th from 5:30 – 8:30pm at the First National Bank in Fredonia 4-H Learning Center at Old Iron

Classes are open to adults and older youth. Due to grant funding, the class fee has been reduced to \$15 per participant. Please pre-register at www.bit.ly/Wildcatpay or by calling 620-331-2690 at least one week in advance to the class date.

Additional opportunities include:

August 29th at the Independence Public Library starting at 6 p.m. This class is FREE, and will focus on storage, drying and freezing, (not hands-on).

September 5th at Youth Community Garden in Parsons starting at 4:30 p.m. This class will focus on drying.

For more information about canning, nutrition, food safety or health, or if you would like a specific program in your area, contact Holly Miner at haminer@ksu.edu or call 620-331-2690.

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