

Food Preservation

Why we care

Summertime in Oregon means lots of fresh, local produce, and food preservation is a great way to make it last all year round. Food preservation helps us achieve greater self-reliance; supports local farmers and preserves green spaces around our cities; allows us to avoid sugars and added chemicals; saves us money by buying in bulk; and minimizes waste. Americans toss out more than 20 pounds of food per person per month, and about two-thirds of this is due to spoilage. Drying, canning, freezing, pickling, and fermenting are all ways to make seasonal food last, eat healthier, and lessen our impact on the environment.

Simple, positive steps

- **Drying.** Peaches, pears, and Italian plums are ideal for drying. Dehydrators work best: It takes twice as long to dry food in an oven as in a dehydrator, and your oven must be able to register 140°F.
- **Canning.** Fruits, tomatoes, berry and tomato sauces, and salsa can be safely canned using a boiling water canner. For vegetables, a pressure canner should be used to avoid botulism.
- **Freezing** is ideal for extra garden produce. Vegetables should be blanched before freezing.
- **Pickling** is ideal for cucumbers, beans, and beets.
- **Fermenting**, requiring the least energy of all preserving methods, is used mainly for cabbage and cucumbers.
- [OSU Extension](#) provides manuals on all the above preservation methods. You can also call the Food Preservation Hotline July 16 – October 12 at 1-800-354-7319.
- Kitchen Tool Libraries in [North](#), [Northeast](#) or [Southeast](#) offer food preservation equipment.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.