

Planning Now for Gardens and Food Preservation

Winter is here, but many people are planning now for gardening. While you study garden catalogs or websites, don't forget to plan how you will preserve the produce this summer. Your edible garden can be preserved in many ways including canning, freezing, dehydrating, and pickling.

What freezer space do you have? Be sure to use up last year's stash to make room for the new batch. Clean the freezer to remove stray food and spills from broken packages. To freeze food, follow freezing (<https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/freezing.html>) guidelines for each food and use bags or plastic containers designated for freezing to maintain best food quality.

Do you like to can your produce? If so, get up to date on current recipes and guidelines. For best safety and quality, follow tested recipes (<https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/recipes.html>) . Using older recipes and methods can lead to spoiled food, food waste, and foodborne illness.

Have you checked your equipment? Now is the time to get your dial gauge tested. Contact your local Extension office for testing. Testing can be done in all three of the Meadowlark Extension District Office---Oskaloosa, Holton or Seneca. There is no charge for this service. The canner brands we can test include National, Presto, Maid of Honor and Magic Seal. Inspect the canner for any wear and get parts replaced. Sources for replacement parts can be found at www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/canning.html (<https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/canning.html>).

Learn more about food preservation at www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/index.html (<https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/index.html>).