

Saving Fresh Herbs

by Donna Ball

Ever blanch at the cost of fresh herbs out of season? Here's a way to save that freshness and money too. Traditionally herbs are preserved by drying but some flavor is lost and not all herbs dry well. Another alternative is freezing in plastic bags, but herbs often get freezer burn and lose flavor.

This method makes ice cubes from herbs. Even a small space on a refrigerator door is enough room for herb cubes. Not growing herbs? Try the farmers' markets. Dill, parsley, basil, sage, thyme and others are available. Some herb seeds like dill, cilantro, summer savory and even basil can still be planted.

Simply chop the herb and place in ice cube trays. Fill with broth if using for soup or sauce. Fill with butter or your favorite oil if you might be frying them first or using in a salad dressing or a dip for bread. When frozen, remove from the tray and pop into plastic bags. Remove as much air as possible then seal and place somewhere easy to reach.

Some ideas:

- Basil and olive oil for spaghetti sauce. Add garlic if you like.
- Garlic scapes in butter for omelets.
- Sage in butter for baked chicken.
- Mint in water or fruit juice for tea.
- Thyme, sage and parsley for turkey stuffing.

If you know what herbs you use for food you commonly prepare, freeze those herbs in the same cube, e.g., parsley, summer savory, and thyme for vegetable soup.



Asian Longhorned Beetle Pool Survey from PRISM

(Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management)

The NYSDEC is conducting its 5th annual Asian Longhorned Beetle Pool Survey. Having citizens check their pools for the Asian longhorned beetle means there is a better chance of finding early infestations. This survey will help the NYSDEC and other entities focus their efforts to limit the effects of an ALB infestation. Last year PRISM benefited from many new volunteers.

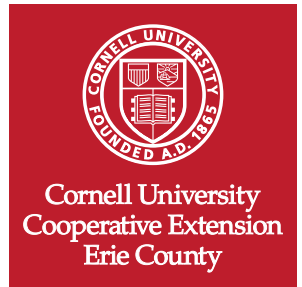
We hope to continue this year! If you have a pool, a camera and an email address you can help! Carefully and clearly photograph any suspected beetle. Send a photo to foresthealth@dec.ny.gov, and freeze the insect until DEC staff can respond. These surveys have detected new infestations in NY (Long Island) and near NY (Worcester, MA) recently, so please participate! No pool? No problem! Keep an eye out for this pest at all times and follow the steps listed above when a suspicious specimen is found.



Cover with vegetable broth, tomato juice, or even water and freeze. If freezing a larger quantity of herbs, fill small plastic freezer bags with herbs and cover with liquid or oil.

You can also make pesto from many herbs —not just basil, but that's more trouble than I personally want in the summer. Instead, freeze herbs with garlic and olive oil and make fresh pesto in December. Freeze a little in ice cube trays or a larger amount in plastic bags.

Remember to remove as much air a possible, however you store them. The oil or liquid keeps the herbs fresh by excluding air.



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