

Cornell Cooperative Extension Erie County

Pressure Canner Dial Gauge Testing at Cornell Cooperative Extension

The manufacturers of pressure canners recommend that dial gauges be tested annually before canning. CCE of Saratoga County and Albany County will test dial gauges at no charge. Contact Diane Whitten at 518-885-8995, or dwhitten@cornell.edu.

Preserve Your Tomato Harvest

Diane Whitten, Food & Nutrition Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension Saratoga County

Maybe you planned for a large bounty of tomatoes to preserve or maybe you just planted more than you can eat before they go bad. Either way, plan to preserve your tomatoes to prevent wasting your time gardening and wasting your produce.

Freezing is Simple

When you've got too many tomatoes to process at the moment, you can put them in a freezer container or bag and put them in the freezer, however, that's not the recommended method of freezing tomatoes. For better quality blanch your tomatoes in boiling water and remove the skins, leave them whole or chop then place them in freezer containers or bags, remove as much as possible, and freeze. For the best quality, cook the peeled tomatoes for 10-20 minutes before freezing.

Canning to Save Freezer Space

Canning will not only save freezer space, it also saves energy. Tomatoes can be canned whole, halved, or quartered (crushed), as juice, salsa, or tomato sauce. Plain tomatoes with added lemon juice can be canned in a boiling water bath, if other vegetables or meat are added pressure canning is required to prevent botulism food poisoning. A tested salsa recipe has enough added vinegar or lemon juice (acid) to allow for boiling water canning.

Caution: Do not preserve tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines.

Drying is an Option

We're all familiar with sun-dried tomatoes, but sun-drying is not an option in the Northeast. Tomatoes will get moldy before drying due to the humidity level in New York. An oven can be used, but most ovens won't maintain a low enough temperature to allow for slow drying, so drying is best done in a dehydrator. Tomatoes can be sliced and dried (meaty varieties are best) or pureed then cooked into a thick sauce, spread on a dehydrator sheet, and dried.

Recommended Resource

For detailed directions on freezing, canning, or drying tomatoes go to The National Center for Home Food

Preservation at www.homefoodpreservation.net.



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Other home food preservation resources, including a recorded PowerPoint presentation on canning tomatoes, can be found at the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saratoga County website at

<http://ccesaratoga.org/nutrition-food/food-preservation>.



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