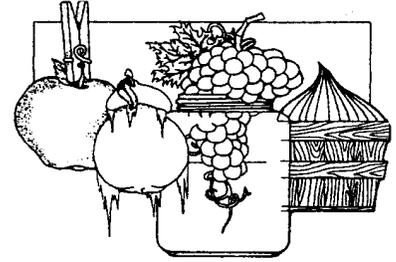


Quality for Keeps



Information for those who produce and preserve food

Peaches please the palate perfectly

*F*or the sweetest peaches, look for locally grown peaches that ripened on the tree. Unfortunately, this year's harsh winter has reduced the local peach crop. Most buds froze and many trees didn't bloom well. Therefore, a little searching may be necessary to find the juiciest local peach.

Popular local peach varieties include: Redhaven, Loring, Cresthaven, Jim Dandee and Elberta. A new, novelty peach is the donut peach, a yellow or white flattened variety that is easy to prepare.

Selection. For best quality, select peaches that are firm to slightly soft and free from bruises. The best sign of ripeness in a peach is a creamy or golden undertone, often called "ground color." The rosy "blush" on a peach is not a good indicator of ripeness and differs from one variety to the next. Fresh peach fragrance also indicates ripeness. Avoid peaches with a green ground color as they lack flavor and usually shrivel and become tough rather than ripen. Peaches that are picked green may develop more juice, but they will not become sweeter. Missouri peaches are available tree ripened and sweet. Choose:

- Slightly under-ripe peaches for pickling

- Firm-ripe peaches for canning and drying
- Fully-ripe peaches for freezing or eating fresh
- Very ripe peaches without any signs of mold or rot, for making sweet spreads.

Most peaches grown today are freestone (woody pit falls out easily when fruit is cut in half). In contrast, the fruit of clingstone must be cut off the fruit's pit. Early varieties tend to be clingstone, while later peaches tend to be freestone.

Canning peaches. Choose ripe and mature fruit of ideal quality. If harvesting, allow peaches to ripen one or more days between harvest and canning.

Quantity. For each 7-quart canner load, use about 17-1/2 pounds of fresh peaches. For each 9-pint canner load, use an average of 11 pounds of fresh peaches. A bushel weighs 48 pounds and yields 16 quarts to 24 quarts—an average of 2-1/2 pounds per quart.

(Cont'd on page 2)

Inside this issue:

New herb harvesting products ..	2
Smooth cook-top alternatives	3
Peach Jelly	4

Making peach sweets

A variety of sweet spreads can be made from peaches.

Peach Jelly – Made from peach juice. Should be a clear, firm product, but not tough.

Peach Jam – This is a less firm product made from crushed peaches.

Peach Preserves – Pieces of peaches are held in a thickened syrup. Similar to jam, but fruit is not crushed.

Peach Marmalade – A jellied product with slivers of peach throughout the product.

Peach Conserves – Similar to preserves, but can also contain pieces of other fruits, coconut, and even nuts.

Peach Butter – Peach pulp cooked with sugar until the right consistency is reached.

Peach Honey – A product made from extracted juices boiled with sugar until the consistency of honey is reached.



Pleasing peaches *(Cont'd from cover page)*

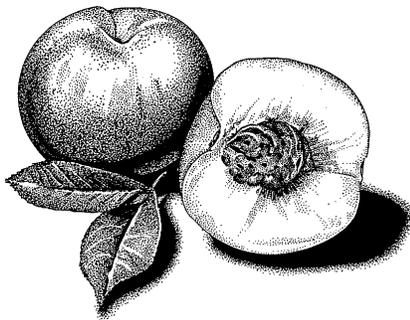
Peaches can be packed in syrup (very light, light or medium), water, apple juice or white grape juice. If packing in light syrup, combine 4-3/4 cups of water with 1 cup of sugar. Bring to a boil to dissolve sugar.

To peel peaches, dip peaches in boiling water for 30-60 seconds until the skin loosens. Quickly dip peaches in an ice bath and slip off skins. Cut peaches in half and remove pits. Slice peaches if desired.

Hold peaches in an anti-darkening solution of ascorbic acid and water.

Follow instructions on packages of commercial ascorbic acid to prepare anti-darkening solution, or combine one teaspoon of ascorbic acid per one gallon of water. If using tablets, crush thoroughly.

Hot pack. Remove peaches from anti-darkening solution and drain thoroughly. Heat fruit and syrup in a large saucepan, bring to a boil. Pack hot fruit and syrup in jars leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Pack with cut side down. Remove air bubbles and wipe jar rims. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water bath for 20 minutes for pints and 25 minutes for quarts at 0-1,00 feet of altitude. At 1,001-3,000 feet of altitude, increase processing time to 25 minutes for pints and 30 minutes for quarts in a boiling water bath canner.



Freezing peaches. Choose well-ripened fruit and handle with care to avoid bruising fruit. Sort, wash and peel. Peeling without boiling water leads to a better end product when freezing.

For a syrup pack, use 40% syrup. Add 1/2 teaspoon of ascorbic acid per quart of syrup for a better product. Starting with 1/2 cup of syrup per pint, put peaches directly into cold syrup. Press fruit down and continue to add syrup to cover fruit. Leave headspace of 1/2-inch per pint and 1-inch per quart. Place a small piece of crumpled water-resistant paper on top to hold fruit down, seal and freeze.

For a sugar pack, add 2/3 cup of sugar to each quart (1-1/3 pounds) of prepared peaches

and stir gently until the sugar has dissolved. Let stand for 15 minutes. To prevent darkening fruit, mix 1/4 teaspoon ascorbic acid with 3 tablespoons of water and sprinkle over fruit before adding sugar. Pack into containers, seal and freeze.

Source: GH1502, *Quality for Keeps: Freezer Fruits* <http://extension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/hesguide/foodnut/gh1502.pdf>.

GH1455, *Quality for Keeps: Food Preservation—Fruitful Canning* <http://extension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/hesguide/foodnut/gh1455.pdf>.

Katie Kammler, Horticulture Specialist and County Program Director, University of Missouri Extension, Ste. Genevieve County.

New products aid in herb harvesting and storing

Some new items have hit the shelves recently that will aid in harvesting, storing and preserving fresh herbs.

The Ball® 5-Blade Herb Scissors are designed to make quick work of harvesting fresh herbs. The five blade design works well for slicing herbs such as basil, parsley and cilantro. Chives can also be chopped with this gadget.

The Ball® Fresh Herb Keeper offers an alternative way to store fresh herbs in the refrigerator. This design keeps the stems and roots of herbs in water when closed.

Ball® Frozen Herb Starters are BPA free, flexible, silicone trays with lids that work for freezing herbs. For freezing in these trays, herbs are placed in water and frozen and take on an ice cube shape. The silicone design allows for easy removal.

Disclaimer: University of Missouri presents this information for education purposes only. It neither endorses nor rejects these products.



Smooth cook-top alternatives

Canning on a smooth cook-top can cause many issues. The cook-top itself may be damaged due to discoloration or even cracking of glass tops. Canned products may be under processed in canner if the stove contains an automatic shut-off when temperatures become too high.

It is highly recommended to check manufacturer's instructions to determine if smooth cook-tops are safe for canning. If manufacturer's instructions specify that the cook-top is not suitable for canning, several options can be tried to can at home. The first alternative would be to install a separate, permanent range-top with electric or gas coils (without the oven). This option can be expensive, would require adequate space in the kitchen, and would require proper utility connections.

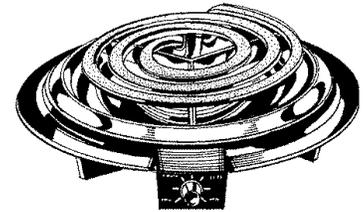
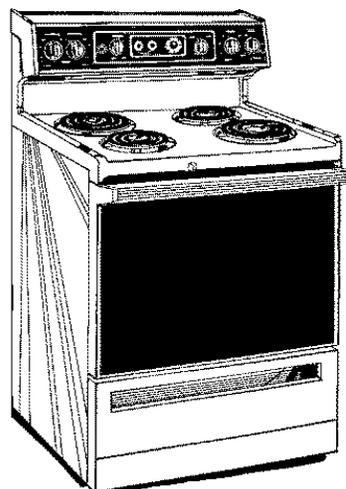
A more affordable option would be the purchase of portable electric or gas coil burners. Not all portable burners are appropriate for canning. Before buying or using a portable burner for canning, check the manufacturer's information or contact customer service department to determine if burner is suitable for canning.

If purchasing a portable burner, consider these tips:

- Choose a burner that is level, sturdy and secure. Proper airflow should occur under burner, but burner should not sit too high, which would cause it to be unsteady with a full canner on it.
- Canner should not have a diameter that is 4 inches more

than burner. In other words, canner should not extend more than 2 inches from burner on any side. This is a common recommendation for canning on any gas or electric burner. Check manufacturer instructions for any variations.

- If purchasing an electric burner, wattage should be equivalent to that of a household range burner. The National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) has successfully tested a boiling water canner on a burner that is about 1500W/120V, but household burners are usually around 1750W or higher. This higher wattage would actually be better if available. No testing has been tried yet with a pressure canner on a portable electric burner.
- The housing unit of burner should be able to hold up to the high heat under canner for long periods of time, without causing damage to counter



tops from reflected heat. While doing research, the NCHFP contacted a restaurant supply store and found a burner costing around \$150. During their testing, they use the burner to boil water, but have not yet used it for canning repeatedly.

- There is currently at least one pressure canner manufacturer that advises against canning on an outdoor gas burner/gas range burner over 12,000 BTU's. Pressure canners can be damaged if the burner gives off too much heat. The recommended come-up time for pressure canning can also be altered if the burner puts out too much heat, which can lead to an unsafe product.

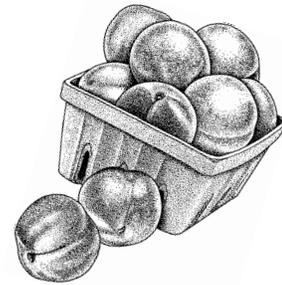
If uncertain about canning on a portable burner, read the manufacturer's guide with your canner or get in touch with the customer service department. Be sure to specify whether you are wanting to pressure can or use a boiling water bath canner.

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation Blog, Preserving Food at Home <http://preservingfoodathome.com/2014/05/06/do-you-have-a-smooth-cooktop-and-still-want-to-can-at-home/>.

THE RECIPE BOX



Peach Jelly with Powdered Pectin



- 3 cups peach juice (about 3-1/2 pounds peaches and 1/2 cup water)
- 5 cups sugar
- 1/2 cups lemon juice
- 1 box powdered pectin

Procedure: To prepare juice – Choose fully-ripe peaches. Wash and slice or chop. Do not remove pits or peels. Crush fruit. Add crushed fruit and 1/2 cup water to a saucepan. Cover, bring to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Fruit should be soft. Do not overcook.

To extract juice – Pour contents of saucepan into a damp jelly bag and suspend the bag to drain the juice. The clearest jelly comes from juice that is allowed to drip without pressing or squeezing. If juice is extracted through a fruit press, it should be restrained through a jelly bag.

To make jelly – Sterilize canning jars. Measure sugar and set aside. Place peach juice, lemon juice and powdered pectin in a large saucepot. Bring to a full boil stirring constantly.

Stir in sugar all at once. Bring back to a full rolling boil. Boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly.

Remove from heat and quickly skim foam from the top of the jelly. Pour jelly into hot canning jars, leave 1/4-inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process 5 minutes* in a boiling water bath.

*Processing times vary based on altitude.

Source: "So Easy to Preserve," fifth edition, Elizabeth Adress, PhD, Judy A. Harrison, PhD, Cooperative Extension/The University of Georgia/Athens.

Quality for Keeps, published monthly, April through October, is made available to residents of East Central, Southeast and Urban regions in Missouri by their Extension Council. Contact your county Extension office to subscribe, or visit our website: <http://missouri.extension.edu/franklin>. Questions may be directed to:

Mary Schroepfer

Mary Schroepfer
Nutrition & Health Specialist, Franklin County
116 W. Main
Union, MO 63084
Phone: 636-583-5141
Fax: 636-583-5145
Email: SchroepferM@missouri.edu

Bethany Bachmann

Bethany Bachmann
Nutrition and Health Specialist, Perry County
321 N. Main, Suite 1
Perryville, MO 63775
Phone: 573-547-4505
Fax: 573-547-4535
Email: schindlerb@missouri.edu

Linda A. Rellergert

Linda Rellergert
Nutrition and Health Education, St. Charles County
260 Brown Rd.
St. Peters, MO 63376
Phone: (636) 970-3000
Fax: (636) 279-3310
Email: RellergertL@missouri.edu

EAST CENTRAL MISSOURI OFFICES:

Callaway	573-642-0755
Cole	573-634-2824
Crawford	573-775-2135
Dent	573-729-3196
Franklin	636-583-5141
Gasconade	573-437-2165
Lincoln	636-528-4613
Maries	573-422-3359
Miller	573-369-2394
Montgomery	573-564-3733
Osage	573-897-3648
Phelps	573-458-6260
Pulaski	573-774-6177
St. Francois	573-756-4539
Ste. Genevieve	573-883-3548
Warren	636-456-3444
Washington	573-438-2671

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI OFFICES:

Bollinger	573-238-2420
Butler	573-686-8064
Cape Girardeau	573-243-3581
Carter	573-323-4418
Dunklin	573-888-4722
Iron	573-546-7515
Madison	573-783-3303
Mississippi	573-683-6129
New Madrid	573-748-5531
Oregon	417-778-7490
Pemiscot	573-333-0258
Perry	573-547-4504
Reynolds	573-648-1035
Ripley	573-996-2921
Scott	573-545-3516
Shannon	573-226-5544
Stoddard	573-568-3344
Wayne	573-224-3035

Mary E. Wissmann, MS, RD, LD

Mary Wissmann
Nutrition and Health Education, St. Louis County
10650 Gateway Blvd.
Creve Coeur, MO 63105
Phone: (314) 400-7287
Fax: (314) 569-4199
Email: WissmannM@missouri.edu

URBAN AREA OFFICES:

St. Charles	636-970-3000
St. Louis	314-615-2911
St. Louis City	314-367-2585
Jefferson	636-797-5391