Spring is in the air, seeds are planted indoors, and the hope of a bumper crop this year is possible. What better time to prepare by updating or learning about home food preservation. Researchers continue to learn more about how to maximize the safety of home preserved foods.

Food preservation classes to help consumers learn how to avoid possible food-borne illness and to preserve their harvest safely will be offered in Ridgeway in April. These basic classes are available through a partnership between the Ridgeway school district, a 21st Century Learning grant and University of Missouri Extension.

The classes will provide step by step instructions on how to preserve food using the most current researched recipes and procedures. The classes will also include hands-on learning so participants will gain actual experience preserving food themselves. Each participant will receive a current set of guides so they can follow along on their own at home after the class.

In the first class, participants will safely pressure can green beans and learn the basics of home canning. The next week participants will learn to preserve salsa in a boiling water canner. And lastly, participants will discover effective ways to freeze and dehydrate produce. If you have never preserved fresh produce before, or if it has been a while, these workshops are for you.

Come learn why canning safely is more than just sealing food in a jar. Find out why some foods have to be pressure canned and others can be preserved in a boiling water canner and how flexible a preservation method freezing can be. Discover ways to dehydrate foods using principles of food preservation that date back a long way but with methods that are proven safe for today’s small world.

All three classes will be held at Ridgeway School kitchen/cafeteria at 305 Main Street, Ridgeway. The classes will be from 6-8:30 p.m. on April 8, 15 and 22.

Registration by Monday March 31 is required for the first class. Please contact me, Janet Hackert, at (660)425-6434 or e-mail at HackertJ@missouri.edu for more information or to register. The fee for each hands-on class is $15 per person per class. Parents of Ridgeway school students will receive a $5 discount per person per session through the 21st Century Learning grant. Class size is limited so register early. Sign up for one or for all three classes!

For more information on home food preservation or to arrange for a class for your group, or any other topic, contact me at 660-425-6434 or HackertJ@missouri.edu or your local University of Missouri Extension office.

Written on (3/21/14)