

New processing times needed for safe preserving

NEWARK, DEL. — Canning fruits and vegetables is a science. As with any science, our collective knowledge keeps growing and changing.

Recent studies at the University of Minnesota and Pennsylvania State University indicate that previously recommended processing times for fruits, tomatoes, mushrooms and pumpkins are not long enough to destroy the microorganisms that cause food spoilage. New processing times have been set to ensure safe, high quality home canned foods, says University of Delaware extension home economist Sally Foulke.

Tomatoes should be hot-packed in jars and processed in a water bath. Allow 35 minutes for pint jars, 45 minutes for quarts. Jars of tomato juice should also be processed for 35 minutes in a water bath.

"Hot packing" means heating food and then placing it in sterilized jars, Foulke explains. It is the only safe method to use for canning tomatoes, some vegetables and meat. Heating food before packing helps destroy enzymes which cause loss of quality and nutrients.

Hot packing has several other advantages as well, Foulke says.

The heating process allows more food to fit in the jars. It also reduces jar breakage and minimizes problems such as floating fruit and liquid loss. Most important, it ensures adequate heat penetration of all the food during processing. This is important because the food must be maintained at a specific temperature for a specific length of time to destroy the microorganisms that cause food spoilage.

If instructions call for a processing time of less than 15 minutes, jars must be sterilized, Foulke says. To sterilize, wash jars in soap and water, rinse, and place in boiling water for 15 minutes. Hold the jars in the hot water until ready to fill. Fill and

seal the first jar before removing the second from the hot water.

Foulke says pickles, relishes, jams and preserves should be processed in a simmering hot water bath so that the lids will seal and keep harmful microorganisms from growing. Putting paraffin on top of jams and jellies is no longer recommended.

Jams and jellies should be placed in a water bath and processed for five minutes. Pickles should be processed for 10 minutes. Begin timing after the jars are in the water and the water begins to boil.

If some of your jams and jellies develop mold on the surface,

Foulke says to throw out the entire jar. Do not just remove the mold and the top quarter-inch of the jelly. Molds can produce mycotoxins, and also lower the acidity, or raise the pH, of a product allowing the growth of other organisms that like a high pH environment.

Don't rely on the canning methods your mother or grandmother used, Foulke cautions. They used the best information available at the time, but we've since learned the hazards of their techniques. If your canning instructions are over a year old, call your county extension office for an update.

Favorite pets

(Continued from Page B10)

among other animals, in research on combat wounds, the outcry was swift and vehement. As a result, the dogs won a reprieve, but the experiments are to continue—using other animals.

"There's no question that Americans are oriented to pets," says Dr. Stephen Kellert of Yale University, who has made a national study of attitudes about pets. Eighty-four percent of the 3,100 people surveyed said they had had a pet sometime in their lives. "Very few things in our society happen at such a high rate," Kellert says.

Scientists have determined that people who have pets tend to be healthier than those who don't. Studies have shown that pets can help reduce their owners' blood pressure and combat depression. Increasing numbers of them are finding their way into nursing homes and mental hospitals, sometimes helping patients who have not responded to treatment by fellow humans.

Recognizing the soothing potential of such animals, Congress passed a law last year stating that no federally assisted rental housing for the elderly or handicapped may bar pets.

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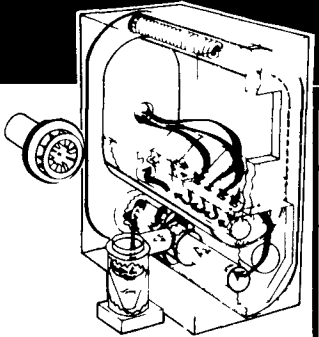
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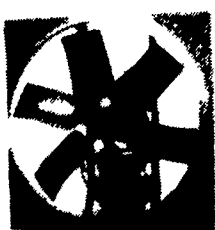
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