



It's over. Summer, that is. Regardless of the actual official calendar notice, summer is pretty much gone kaput.

Some dead-giveaway clues: the first lavender blooms on the early mums ... school buses back on the road ... having to dig out the sweat-pants for evening wear ... supermarket shelves empty of canning supplies.

That was the main reason I'd gone to the supermarket in the first place — my supply of canning-jar lids was dwindling. And the tomatoes were ripening, a bushel or better every few days.

Usually, I try to stock up a couple of boxes of jar lids earlier in the summer, before the demand crunch. Most of those were already used — and the tomatoes still merrily ripened. Only bare gaps and a few lids of less-popular size sat, lonely, on the store's shelves.

How many weeks of the year do local supermarkets run out of jar lids? Not many, I betcha. But late summer's bounty of wonderful produce — tomatoes, peaches, grapes, early apples — nearly always stirs a buying run on this

seasonal item. Or at least it does in our area of the country, where "puttin' up" is still a fairly widespread tradition.

Among my treasured worldly possessions are a couple of the blue-tinted antique canning jars, some with their galvanized, reusable lids. Their graceful shapes, delicate color and little bubbled flaws in their glass represent, to me, a wonderful freedom of choice.

To can or not to can? That is the question (with apologies to Shakespeare).

Consider our grandmothers and great-grandmothers, who had to "put up" virtually everything in those blue glass jars, including canning meats for the winter. If shelves weren't filled with canned fruits and vegetables as summer was drawing to a close, their families faced meager and monotonous winter eating. And, they had to fill those jars with the heat generated on a wood or coal-fired cookstove, no less. If lucky, they might have had a "summer kitchen" away from the main one to avoid over-

heating the entire house on heavy-duty food preserving days.

Today, with markets filled year-round with more foods than most of us will ever try, we can still choose to preserve our own food. Or choose to buy it, ready to open and pop into a pan.

Having the taste, texture, and convenience of my own home-canned specialties is a fair trade for working over a steaming stove on a 90-degree August day. Tomatoes, applesauce and apple butter, jellies and jams, peaches, plums and pears if they're readily available. Preserved and tasting exactly the way I like them for our use.

And the canning/preserving methods recommended today produce a safer product than Grandma often could. For instance, sealing jellies with paraffin — the method I grew up with — is now considered unsafe. The mold that sometimes formed under that paraffin never did appeal to me; neither did pitching out a product into which I poured pounds of sugar, a pack of pectin, and some sweat equity.

Besides, those pretty jelly jars with shiny lids and rings look much more appealing than old pickle jars or whatever sealed with wax.

With the supermarket empty of boxes of plain, standard size lids, I hauled home a box of combination sealing lids and the rings. Some of my canning-jar rings are getting rusty, anyway, and it was another dozen lids for the tomato marathon planned the next morning.

Summer's over. But several dozen jars of it are squirreled away in the basement.

## Foods And Nutrition Programs Offered

**LEESPORT (Berks Co.)** — Penn State Cooperative Extension of Berks County is pleased to offer the following foods and nutrition programs. All the programs will be held in the Agricultural Center.

**Workshop I — Sugar is Not Poison**  
Come and learn why sugar is not the forbidden substance for diabetics that you may have thought it was.

New information will be shared to help diabetics understand how sugar, sugar substitutes and foods that naturally contain sugar can be used in a diabetic diet that meets the dietary guidelines. An overview of the exchange system will also be given as well as new recipes.

**Sugar is Not a Poison** will be held on Thursday, September 7, from 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. and repeated again at 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. The cost per program will be \$1.

**Workshop II — New Weigh of Life Classes**

My New Weigh of Life (NWOL) is a Penn State University weight management program designed to help you make necessary choices to reach your desired body weight.

Come and learn how to: safely lose weight; maintain weight loss permanently; recognize your options; make appropriate choices and increase your level of physical

activity.  
New Weigh of Life will be held 12 consecutive Tuesdays starting September 5, from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. The cost for the program is \$55 which includes a participant's manual, instructional classes, and special incentives.

**Workshop III — Nutrition For Preschoolers**

Basic nutritional needs of the toddler will be discussed, plus tips for the caregiver on how to handle some common eating challenges.

Suggestions for creative menu planning, encouraging favorable food attitudes and good eating habits will be given as well as how mealtime can be a happy time for you and your children.

Nutrition for the Preschooler will be held on Wednesday, September 13, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The cost is \$5. Childcare providers and anyone else who cares for children are encouraged to attend. Credit will be offered for licensed childcare providers.

Susan Browning, Registered Dietitian, will be the instructor for the classes. To register for any of the classes (make check payable to: Berks County Cooperative Extension Special Account) or, to get more information, contact Fay B. Strickler, Berks County Cooperative Extension, Berks County Ag Center, PO Box 520, Leesport, PA 19533 or call (610) 378-1327.

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**Shady Maple Smorgasbord**

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