

Family Living

Focus

by
Adams Co.
Extension Agent

Nina Redding



A quick trip to the compost pile with dinner scraps the other evening left my sneakers quite muddy. A glance at the garden as I dodged rain drops on the way back to the house reminded me that in another month I'll be canning green beans.

With the arrival of summer, consumers will begin calling the extension office with canning questions as they begin to harvest the bounty of gardens and orchards. Here are some common questions that I receive. If you're just learning and building your wealth of experience, tuck these questions and answers in the back of your mind for future reference. If you're a seasoned pro at canning, think about how you would

answer the question and then read on. Don't forget to take time to share your knowledge with those just learning.

• Can I safely use the older blue "antique" canning jars? Or do they seal properly with two-piece lids? Or can I use them in the pressure canner?

You can use blue jars designed with Mason jars threads. These seal easily with two-piece, self-sealing lids and may be processed in pressure canners. Bail-type closures, to be used with glass caps and rubber gaskets, are not recommended.

• What will happen if I use mayonnaise type jars for canning? I've heard they should not be used.

Mayonnaise type jars are ac-

ceptable for use when the food is processed in boiling water. Their breakage rate is about the same as for Mason jars when used for canning acid foods in boiling water. However, the breakage rate is normally higher when used for canning low-acid food in a pressure canner.

• The lids on a few of my jars came out of the canner all bent and deformed. What did I do wrong?

It's very likely that the screw bands were tightened too much. Deformation usually occurs with a raw-packed vegetable that was processed in a pressure canner.

• My jar lids weren't "down" when the jars were cool, but I pressed them down and they stayed down. Are these foods properly sealed?

Remove screw bands and wash jars. If the lids and jars remain sealed, mark, store, and re-examine the lids after a few days. If they lids remain concave and tightly attached, their seals are adequate for long-term storage.

• My canned food did not seal after the proper cooling time. What can I do with it?

Within 24 hours, remove screw bands and discard lids. Examine and discard screw bands if rusty, bent, or deformed. Examine and replace

each jar if its sealing surface is chipped or deformed. If necessary, place food in an acceptable jar; add prepared new lid; add a new screw band and tighten appropriately and re-process the jars the same as the first time.

• My home canned peaches floated. What did I do wrong?

It's probable that you raw-packed (meaning placed the fruit in the jar with out first heating) the prepared peaches. Hot packing helps eliminate air from the raw peaches and minimizes this problem. You may have also overtightened the screw bands. This practice would prevent the removal of air from jars while they are processing. Use of heavy syrup may also increase the tendency of peaches

or other fruit to float.

• Why did my applesauce get pink? It seems fine. Odor is normal.

It's possible the pink applesauce is due to the variety of apples used; failure to remove apple skin; failure to use the hot-pack procedure; or failure to use antidiscoloration recommendations to prevent browning while preparing apple slices for canning.

Of course, these are only a few of the many common questions consumers have about canning food at home. If you have a question or would like to request Penn State's free Let's Preserve series on a variety of fruits and vegetables, give your county extension family living agent a call.

Shirley Adams Sewing Seminar



Shirley Adams, nationally-known sewing expert, will demonstrate quick and easy tricks to embellish ready-made garments for both sewers and non-sewers at the Shirley Adams Sewing Seminar, Sept.12, at the Berks County Extension. On display will be more than 100 garments showing everything that can be made by using a 50-year-old machine without any computerized attachments. Register now for the seminar, which is expected to fill up quickly, by calling Penn State Berks County Extension (610) 378-1327.

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