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# saving summer in a jar

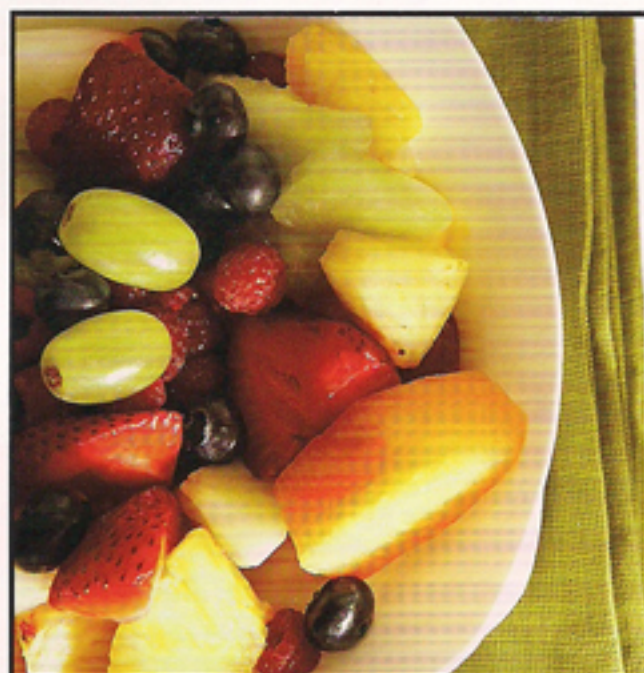
by Tamara D. Muldoon  
Master Gardener

As a child, whenever I wanted a treat I headed for our family's walk-in pantry. There I would find shelves loaded with gleaming jars of canned peaches, pears, cherries, apricots and other fruits. One of my favorites was canned raspberries, suspended in sweet ruby-colored juice that tasted like summer. When winter arrived, the freezer was full of pies, fruit and berries, vegetables and meat we had raised on our farm.

Our pioneer forefathers preserved the summer harvest out of necessity; to avoid starvation during the winter when fresh food was scarce. With the advent of modern food processing, few people bothered to preserve their own food any more. Now there is a trend toward healthier eating and buying more locally-grown seasonal foods. The last decade has seen the re-emergence of farmer's markets and the weak economy has encouraged more people to plant gardens and grow their own food.

Food preservation is not difficult and there are many resources available for beginners. Preservation methods include canning, freezing and drying. Canning is an excellent preservation method for a variety of fruits, vegetables, jams and jellies and especially for "blended" foods such as salsa or relish. Most vegetables, fruits and berries freeze well, but are best used for cooking when thawed. Drying works well for herbs, some vegetables such as peas, carrots, tomatoes, beans and for many fruits.

Food preservation requires little in terms of equipment. For canning, you need a pressure or "hot water bath" canner, jars, lids, sealing rings and a jar lifter for removing hot jars from the canner. A pressure canner is recommended for low-acid foods such as most vegetables. Freezing food requires a kettle or steamer for blanching, a sharp knife for slicing and freezer bags or containers. Drying food can be done in your oven although an electric dehydrator works best.



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I recommend buying a good food preservation reference book. These are handy for looking up the processing time for canning a particular item, or how to prepare certain foods for freezing, and many include recipes for making foods like jams, salsa or pickles. If you are a beginner, choose one that guides you step-by-step through the preserving process.

In this era of mass-processed foods, it is not necessarily less expensive to preserve your own food. You can, however, buy produce in bulk while the items are in season and, therefore, cheaper. Possibly the greatest benefit lies in knowing where your food came from, and the feeling of satisfaction you get from seeing your cupboard or freezer filled with preserved fruits and vegetables picked fresh from your garden or bought from a local farmer. Shopping at a farmer's market or U-pick farm stimulates the local economy; your money stays in the community instead of going to a distant producer who must ship their goods across the country.

There are many excellent books and websites available where you can get detailed information. In Oregon City, the OSU Extension Service provides publications and information on ways to preserve and store food. The Extension Service also trains volunteers who help to educate the public about safe food handling and preservation, by phone and at workshops and exhibits.

**Why not give it a try?** Preserve some of this summer's fresh bounty and enjoy it the rest of the year. ☺

Resources:  
Oregon Extension Service - Clackamas County  
200 Warner Milne Rd, Oregon City OR 97045 • 503-655-8631  
Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00am - 4:30pm

The National Center for Home Food Preservation at the University of Georgia • <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp>

About the author:  
Tamara Muldoon is a free-lance writer/photographer and member of the Three Rivers Artist Guild who has lived in Oregon City for over 15 years. Tamara enjoys using her training as a Master Gardener to grow and preserve food for her family. She can be contacted at [tmuldoon@ccwebster.net](mailto:tmuldoon@ccwebster.net).



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COMMUNITY (ka myoo'ni tee), n., pl. -ties. 1. a social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and have a common cultural and historical heritage. 2. a social, religious, occupational, or other group sharing common characteristics or interests (usage prec. by the): the business community; the community scholars. 3. a group of persons occupying a given area. 4. joint possession, enjoyment, liability, etc.: community of property. 5. similar character; agreement: community of interest. 6. the public social order of a community. [*com-* (Cognate with *com-*); *-muni-* (Cognate with *-muni-*); *-ty*]. *r. ME comunitate < ML*

—Syn. 1. COMMUNITY, HAMLET, VILLAGE, TOWN, CITY 2. terms for groups of people living in somewhat close association, and usually under common rules. COMMUNITY is general term, and town is often loosely applied. A common accepted set of connotations envisages HAMLET as a small group, VILLAGE as a somewhat larger one, TOWN still larger and CITY as very large. Size is, however, not the true basis of differentiation, but proximity to HAMLET. Incorporation, or the absence of government, determine the community likeness. 3. similar character. 4. agreement. 5. similarity.

commu'nity (com'yoo'ni tee), n. (U.S. and Canada) building in which community may gather for social, educational, or other activities.

commu'nity (com'yoo'ni tee), n. (U.S. and Canada) a fund for local welfare and improvement, usually involving voluntary contributions.

commu'nity prop'erty (com'yoo'ni tee'proh'pree), n. (in some states) property acquired by a wife, or both together, that is considered by law to be jointly owned and equally shared.

com-mu-ni-ty (com'yoo'ni tee), n. 1. make (a business) a community transfer from individual to community ownership. 2. make (a business) a community transfer from individual to community ownership. Also, esp. Brit., communise. [back formation from *communization* (Cognate with *communization*); *-ation*]. —*com-mu-ni-ty* (com'yoo'ni tee), n. [*com-* (Cognate with *com-*); *-muni-* (Cognate with *-muni-*); *-ty*].

com-mu-tate (kom'yoo'tayt), v.t., -tat-ed, -tat-ing. *Etymology* 1. to reverse the direction of (a current or currents), as by commutator. 2. to convert (alternating current) into direct current by use of a commutator. [back formation from *COMMUTATION*]

com-mu-tation (kom'yoo'tayshon), n. 1. the act of substituting one thing for another in exchange. 2. the substitution of one thing for another. 3. the act of making regular travel over some distance between home and work as from a suburb to a city. 4. the changing of a prison sentence or other penalty to another less severe. *Elect.* the act or process of commutating. [*< L commutatio* (s. of *commutare*); *-ation*].

com-mu-ta-tive (kom'yoo'taytiv), adj. of or pertaining to commutation; exchange; substitution; interchange. [*< L commutatio* (s. of *commutare*) having property that the sum of the product of the first and second is equal to the second operating on the first, as  $a \times b = b \times a$ . *b.* having reference to this property. [*< ML commutatio* (us) = *commutatio* (us) (ptp. of *commutare*; see *COMMUTE*, *-ATE*); *-ive*].

commu'tative law/, *Logic*, a law of commutation in which certain logical operations are indifferent.

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