

MFP Classes Wind Up For The Year

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UCCE El Dorado County Master Food Preservers

Cooler days and longer nights mark the turn of the season and the end of the El Dorado County Master Food Preservers public class schedule for 2012. From water bath canning to preserving game, from jams and jellies to cranberries and squash, the Master Food Preservers volunteer hundreds of hours to the community through their free classes. Many people benefit from the professional advice and easy to follow demonstrations of safe techniques for preserving food at home.

The final class, *Persimmons, Kiwi and Nuts*, held at the Marshall Grange, 4940 Marshall Road in Garden Valley, covers all the fun of preserving persimmons, that delicious fruit that will soon be available in the area. This last class is scheduled for Tuesday, October 23, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. In addition to instructions on persimmons, the class leader imparts the knowledge of many years of preserving to teach the class the best methods for drying and storing numerous types of nuts and for preserving those bright green kiwis. Most kiwis in California are harvested in October and early November, and kiwi jelly not only looks beautiful, it tastes great. Learn how to make jelly and jam with this spectacular fruit.

Persimmons make delicious fruit leathers, which may be used in recipes calling for dried fruit. Fruit leather is super simple to make; just begin with fully ripe fruit and puree it thoroughly. Spread the puree on a thin sheet of plastic wrap or on the fruit leather film which comes with the dehydrator. If using an electric dehydrator, set the machine to 145° for the first hour, then reduce the temperature to 130° to finish drying. The leather should show no spots of moisture and be dry and leathery when finished. Roll the leather into a log shape in plastic wrap and place in the freezer for 48 hours to insure safety and prevent damage from insect eggs. The leather may then be wrapped and stored in a cool, dry, dark place. That is, it may be stored if no one has already eaten it! Fruit leathers do not last long in some households, especially those with children.

In addition to instructions on how to make fruit leathers, learn how to properly massage the persimmons as these hang from strings attached to the stems. What? Yes, special secrets to wonderful methods of preserving persimmons will be shared with those attending the free, public education class on *Persimmons, Kiwi and Nuts*!

For questions about safe home food preservation, or to schedule a speaker for organizations or clubs on the topics of food safety or food preservation, call the Master Food Preservers at (530) 621-5506. For more information, be sure to go to the Master Food Preserver website at http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Food_Preservers/. Sign up to receive our Master Food Preservers E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>.