



ALL ABOUT OLIVES

By Monique Wilber

UCCE El Dorado County Master Food Preserver

Preserving olives is mysterious for many of us. The mystery will be unveiled when you join the Master Food Preservers on Tuesday, October 29, for a free class. The MFPs will share recipes and techniques for preserving olives. This will be the MFPs' last public class for the season; but if you are interested in becoming a Master Food Preserver yourself and educating others about safe home food preservation, please contact us using the contact information at the bottom of this article. Our MFP volunteer training classes generally begin in February and end in May. Our regular free to the public information classes will resume at the end of June – and be sure to come visit us at the El Dorado County Fair in mid-June, as well!

Did you know that olives are a good source of monounsaturated fat? Olives also contain other flavonoids and phenolic compounds that serve as antioxidants and that may offer protective health benefits.

There are some olive varieties that are favorable for specific olives types. The Manzanillo variety is good for lye-cured olives and Spanish-style green olives; the Mission variety is preferred for dry salt cured ripe olives and California black ripe style olives; Kalamata variety is ideal for Kalamata-style water-cured olives; and the Sevillano variety is best for Sicilian-style fermented olives.

Fresh-picked olives contain a bitter compound and must be “cured” to remove the bitterness in order to make them edible. Olives can be cured by different processes including treatments using brine, dry salt, water, or lye treatments to leach out the bitter compound. You must be extremely careful when using lye. Lye is a corrosive chemical and you must follow exact instructions for safety. More information on olive-curing and lye safety can be found at <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/8267.pdf> .

The final class of this year's free UCCE El Dorado County Master Food Preservers classes is from 10 a.m. to noon in the Bethell-Delfino Agriculture Building, 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. (The El Dorado County Fairgrounds had generously donated their boardroom for the Master Food Preserver classes in 2013 – thank you!)

Master Food Preservers are available to answer home food preservation questions; leave a message at (530) 621-5506. For more information about future activities, go to our website at http://ceeldorado.ucdavis.edu/Master_Food_Preservers/. Sign up to receive our Master Food Preservers E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>. Find us on facebook too!