



GIFTS FOR THE FOOD PRESERVER

By Sue Hale

UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County

Do you have a food preserver in your life? You know you do if you are receiving tasty homemade treats in a jar from someone special! There are lots of great gifts to give them in return. Maybe I can help you with some ideas.

If your budget allows, go big – a new pressure canner or dehydrator are wonderful gifts for preserving many different foods. A vacuum food sealer with refill bags is great for preparing foods for the freezer or storing dehydrated foods. A stoneware crock is fantastic for fermenting many different foods to include making homemade sauerkraut, kimchee, pickles and olives. Or, how about a juice press or steam juice extractor? It is so nice to know exactly what is in your homemade vegetable and fruit juices! Before buying some of these items, you may want to do a little sleuthing to find out what their interests are before spending too much. And please note – a pressure cooker is not necessarily a pressure canner. The minimum size of a pressure canner that can be safely used at home will hold 4 quart jars. It needs a jar rack, dial or weighted gauge, automatic vent/cover lock and vent port.

Other great options that aren't too pricey include different gadgets for canning and preserving. There is the de-bubbler for removing air bubbles when filling jars, the funnel for jar filling, and a timer is very handy to have. I love the white plastic lids that I can put on jars after I have opened them, or for things I have dehydrated. And we can never have enough canning jars or freezer containers (makes it so much easier to give our homemade goodies away).

12-3-14

Most of these gift ideas can be picked up at your local hardware store or even the grocery store.

Cookbooks are great also – and the UCCE Master Food Preservers have 9 different low cost publications available on a variety of topics to include “Making Jams and Jellies”, “Sausage Meat & Fish” (great jerky recipes) and “All Things Pickled”, just to name a few. They range in price from \$2 to \$5 or get the whole set for \$34. Just swing by our office (311 Fair Lane, Placerville) and get some shopping done!

One of the best gifts you can give is your gift of time – create a little coupon for helping with food preserving next year. I just love it when my husband helps me with preparing things for the freezer, canner or dehydrator. We both have fun doing it, and it is much better than working alone. I can also say, the time I spent helping my mom and dad this summer making tomato juice was so special to me as well. I helped them out and I have great memories in return. We all win with a little extra willing help in the kitchen.

And while you are helping, maybe you will get bitten by that food preserving bug – then you can join us for our free classes starting up again in July!

While UCCE Master Food Preserver public classes have ended for the season in El Dorado County, monthly classes continue in Amador and Calaveras counties. Check out their schedule at <http://ucanr.edu/mfpcs>. UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County free public classes will resume in July – and be sure to come visit us at the El Dorado County Fair in mid-June, as well!

UCCE Master Food Preservers are available to answer home food preservation questions; leave a message on our hotline - (530) 621-5506. For more information about the public education classes and activities, go to the UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County website at http://ceeldorado.ucdavis.edu/Master_Food_Preservers/. Sign up to receive our E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpenews/>. You can also find us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/pages/El-Dorado-County-Master-Food-Preservers/456649991034665>.