

March 30, 2016



Drought Tolerant Canning

By Sue Mosbacher

UCCE Master Food Preserver of El Dorado County

Are you planning your summer gardens? If so, you're probably including a low-water irrigation system. El Dorado County is still in a Stage 2 water warning; even though we've received lots of wonderful rain recently we are still in a drought. How can home canners help reduce their water usage? By using an atmospheric steam canner for high acid foods instead of a boiling water canner.

Atmospheric steam canners have a small base with a large lid. They use only several inches of water to create a steam environment to process naturally acidic or properly acidified foods, aka fruit and pickled products. The steam is released through one or more vent holes in the lid and some canners come with a temperature sensor on the top of the lid to help determine when to start the processing time.

You can use a steam canner with any reputable high acid canning recipe with a maximum total processing time of 45 minutes. (Anything longer and you'll probably run out of water!) Other than that, the product and jar prep and cool down procedure is the same as boiling water canning.

Want to try your hand at steam water canning under the guidance of experienced UCCE Master Food Preserver volunteers? Sign up for our April 9th full-day canning workshop in Placerville. You'll preserve jelly, mustard, citrus, and a tangy sauce. For more information, visit <http://ucanr.edu/edmfpclasses>.

Here's a recipe for a simple dressing from Ball (freshpreserving.com) you can make and preserve in a steam canner using the strawberries that will soon be in season.

Strawberry Vinaigrette Dressing

5 quarts (25 cups) fresh whole strawberries, washed and stemmed
1 quart (4 cups) white distilled vinegar
Sugar

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Place strawberries in a large stainless steel sauce-pot or plastic container. Pour vinegar over strawberries. Cover container tightly with plastic wrap and let stand overnight in a dark, cool place (70°F to 75°F). Strain liquid from strawberries, collecting in a large liquid measurer. Liquid should be red and clear (no pulp). Measure liquid. Place strawberry vinegar in a clean, large stainless steel saucepan. Add an equal amount of sugar, stirring to combine. Bring mixture just to a boil. Remove from heat and skim foam if necessary. Ladle hot vinaigrette into hot jars leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Wipe rim. Center lid on jar. Apply band until fit is fingertip tight. Process jars in a steam or boiling water canner for 10 minutes at 0-1000', 15 minutes at 1,001 - 3,000', 20 minutes at 3,001 - 6,000', 25 minutes above 6,000' elevation.

Steam canning is drought tolerant canning; give it a try!

Download the 2016 UCCE Master Food Preserver of El Dorado County schedule of classes and workshops on our main website. We offer some new events this year. In addition to our free preserving classes in Placerville and Auburn, we now provide classes in Cameron Park at the Cameron Park Community Center and several all day, hands-on workshops in Placerville.

UCCE Master Food Preservers are available to answer home food preservation questions; leave a message at (530) 621-5506 or email us at edmfp@ucanr.edu. For more information about our program and events, visit our website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmfp>. Sign up to receive our E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>. Find us on Facebook too (UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County)!