



Autumn's Harvest

by Summer Brasuel, UCCE Master Food Preserver of El Dorado County

In our county, autumn's harvest always includes apples and pears. There are so many fun ways to preserve these fall fruits; pie filling, jams, jellies, chutneys, dehydrated cinnamon-spiced apples slices - the list is endless!

Maintaining the fresh color of apples and pears involves some science. Enzymes in these fruit can cause oxidative browning as soon as the fruit is peeled or cut, Browning can also cause a loss of vitamin C. To prevent this enzymatic browning, anti-browning agents are often used.

The most common treatment is ascorbic acid (vitamin C). Ascorbic acid may be used in its pure form or in commercial mixtures. Browning can also be halted temporarily by placing fruit in citric acid or lemon juice solutions or in sugar syrup. However, these measures are not as effective as treatment with ascorbic acid in its pure form.

To prevent browning, as you prepare the fruit for canning, place it in a holding solution made from ascorbic acid or vitamin C tablets. Tablets contain filler, which may turn the water cloudy, but it is not harmful. Use one of the following methods but do not soak the fruit too long as it can absorb the water and get mushy.

- Dissolve ½ teaspoon pure ascorbic acid powder in 3 Tablespoons of water. Sprinkle over the fruit.
- 1 teaspoon of pure ascorbic acid per 1 gallon of water or 6 vitamin C tablets per 1 gallon of water
- To use lemon juice: drop fruit into a solution of 2 Tablespoons lemon juice and two quarts water.

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To ensure your canned foods look their best follow these guidelines:

- Always use fresh, high-quality produce.
- Don't unnecessarily expose the fruit to the air. Can them as soon as possible.
- Use anti-browning agents.
- Do not leave the fruit soaking in an anti-browning solution too long.
- Hot pack method is recommended for canning apples and pears for the following reasons:
 - Quickly destroys the food enzymes which contribute to oxidative browning.
 - Removes oxygen from fruit tissues, which causes oxidative browning.
- Use tested recipes from reliable sources such as [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#) or [Ball](#).
- Use the correct headspace and processing times to remove as much air as possible from the jars and to obtain high jar vacuums and airtight jar seals.

You can learn more tips and tricks when preserving our local autumn produce by attending our free class, "[Fall Bounty - Apples & Pears](#)", on Saturday, October 21, 2017 from 9am to noon at the UC Cooperative Extension Office, 311 Fair Lane, Placerville, CA, 95667.

UCCE Master Food Preservers are available to answer home food preservation questions; leave a message on our helpline - (530) 621-5506. For more information about our public education classes and activities or to make a donation, go to the UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmf>. Sign up to receive our E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>. You can also find us on Facebook.