

May 18, 2016



### **Canning for Food & Fun!**

By Sue Mosbacher

UCCE Master Food Preserver of El Dorado County

Talk to someone about home canning and the topic will inevitably turn to jars of tomatoes because of prolific plants and jams from a home orchard's harvest. But what about those of us who only have room to grow enough to eat as we pick it, have tiny little gardens or no garden at all? Are we destined to listen politely until the conversation changes to a new topic?

Of course not! You don't need a garden to preserve food at home. You don't even need a specific season to can; it's a year-around activity.

Think beyond basic food staples when you think of home-canned food. Instead, associate canning with gourmet and special delicacies! It's almost summer; time for ice cream sundaes topped with a scrumptious home preserved **Praline Syrup**. Pick up strawberries at a farmers market or corner farm stand and make a **Strawberry Syrup** to drizzle on a dessert plate topped with angel food cake. Since you have those strawberries, can several small batches of **Strawberry Vinaigrette Dressing**; it has only three ingredients and will be ready for any last minute salads. For Sunday brunch make a puff pancake and drizzle on homemade **Blackberry Syrup** for a morning meal bursting with flavor. After a trip to Apple Hill this fall make an **Apple-Cinnamon Syrup** and add a spoonful of the golden goodness to hot tea or coffee.

Enough of the sweet stuff. Want to spend \$8 for a narrow jar of **Pickled Asparagus**? Go for it. Or can your own when asparagus is in season and enjoy it all year. **Bruschetta** on toasted baguettes? Yum! Buy bruschetta for \$5 a jar or can your own; even better. **Hot sauce** – fiery food – create your own signature blend of spices and can small jars of it. BBQ much? Bring home bottles of sauce from the store to make your meat taste like everyone else's, or make your own **BBQ sauce** using different styles of peppers, fruits, and vegetables.

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So many possibilities! With the plethora of fruits and vegetables available at so many locations this summer and fall, you can preserve these tastes to enjoy all year.

Are you ready to learn how to can these types of treats? Join the UCCE Master Food Preservers for a free introductory canning class on Wednesday, May 25 at the Cameron Park Community Center. The class is from 10-12 noon. Learn why research-based canning techniques safely preserve food. Watch demonstrations using both boiling water and atmospheric steam canners and glean tips from experienced food preservers. Leave inspired and excited to try your hand at canning at home!

Download the 2016 UCCE Master Food Preserver schedule of classes and workshops on our main website. In addition to our free preserving classes in Placerville and Auburn, we now provide classes in Cameron Park at the Cameron Park Community Center.

UCCE Master Food Preservers are available to answer home food preservation questions; leave a message at (530) 621-5506 or email us at [edmf@ucanr.edu](mailto:edmf@ucanr.edu). For more information about our program and events, visit our website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmf>. 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)!