



Plan Ahead for Canning Season

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If you plan to preserve your harvest this year by canning, now's the time to plan ahead. In 2020 canning jars and lids were hard to find, so shop now for these items. Only buy what you need for this year, resist the urge to hoard equipment. The shortage last year was due in part to many people buying more than they needed.

Lids

The lid system that the USDA has tested extensively and stands by is the two-piece metal lid and screw band. The design of these lids has changed recently to be BPA-free. The new lids no longer require heating before applying to the jar which is an advantage. You may still have older lids, so check the direction on the package for preparing the lids for canning. This style of lid is meant for one-time use.

Reusable lids are made by a few companies, these lids may be easier to find. Both plastic and glass lids with rubber rings are marketed. Obviously, the advantage of using these is that they are reusable, so you don't have to buy more every year. Research done at the University of Georgia showed slightly more seal failures within 3 months of storage for the reusable lids compared to the two-piece system which in this study had no seal failures. (1)

Jars

Do an inventory of the jars you have noting the sizes and whether they're regular or wide-mouth jars. Make sure you have lids that match the jars. If you plan to make a lot of jam or jelly this year, be sure to have an appropriate amount of half-pint jars, and try to estimate how many pint and quart jars you'll need.

Pressure Canner Dial Gauge Testing at Cornell Cooperative Extension

The manufacturers of pressure canners recommend that dial gauges be tested annually before canning. CCE of Saratoga County and Albany County will test dial gauges at no charge. Contact Diane Whitten at 518-885-8995, or dwhitten@cornell.edu.

Last Season's Canned Goods

Take a look in your pantry for last summer's canned goods. Check the seals on the products, and discard any items if the seal is not intact. Make plans to use up last summer's products (including frozen) to make room for new products to prevent food waste. If you have a lot of canned beans left over from last year, maybe you should can fewer this year, or visa versa. Only can what you will reasonably use within a year for best quality.

HOME CANNER'S QUESTIONS

- Q. I have several peanut butter, pickle and quart-sized mayonnaise jars which I would like to be able to use for canning. Is it safe to use these jars in a boiling water bath canner or a pressure canner?
- A. NO! These jars are manufactured for single use. They make good refrigerator storage jars, are a perfect solution for your picnic packaging needs, or can be recycled at your local recycling center. Standard Mason type canning jars are made to be used many times and to withstand the heat necessary in the home canning process.
- Q. How long is it safe to store canned food?
- A. For optimum quality of food, plan to use home-canned food within one year. As the canned food ages, the quality of the food goes down, but it is still safe to consume as long as the seal is intact and there is no sign of spoilage.

Sources:

Research thesis: The Evaluation and Comparison of the Performance of Three Major Types of Jar Lids Available for Home Canning, by Geetha Sivanandam, Master of Science (MS), University of Georgia; Winter 2014; [Link to Research Here](#)

Home Canner's Column, *Food Preservation Things-To-Do*, It's Spring-Time to Get Ready, Cindy Shuster, Associate Professor, Extension Educator, Family & Consumer Sciences, Perry County, Ohio State University.