

## Produce Preservation September 2013

### TRAINER TIPS & TECHNIQUES #5 – Health and Safety

*Hello Produce Preservation trainers and followers!* Better late than never ... it is a busy time of year – as far as I am concerned September is the real start of the new year - school's back in and work goes into high gear!

Welcome to those of you we met at the Indigenous Foods conference last weekend!



Tips and Techniques include food preservation tips, resources and the opportunity to share your successful training methods, recipes, and/or preserving tips and techniques.

This edition will be a little different as I am going to focus on health and safety after having a few enquiries about low sodium recipes and making food gifts.

Tips and Techniques are posted under latest news on the [preserveproduce.ca](http://preserveproduce.ca) website. Send me your questions and preserving tips and I will share them in the next email and in our Facebook group [Food Skills BC](#).

### **What's Growing Now?**

A few things have survived the recent monsoons here on the south coast – I still have basil, beets, kale, pumpkins and squash to harvest.

### **Tips**

A neighbour recently asked me if you can make low sodium pickles – yes you can! You can use spices and/or sweeteners to create flavourful, safe canned pickles. The important thing is to never reduce the amount of vinegar nor add more water – it is the vinegar that keeps canned pickles safe. (Note that you cannot reduce the salt when making brined or fermented pickles) There are a number of reduced sodium recipes in the Bernardin Guide to Home Preserving on pages 90 -91. I have also included a recipe from the Oregon State University Extension Service below. Here is a link to information and recipes on [Low Salt Pickles](#).

**Recipe:** Low Salt Kosher Dills – you can put this one away for next year!  
(from Oregon State University extension services)

8 pounds pickling cucumbers (5 – 6 inch)  
1½ tsp. red pepper crushed  
12 heads dill  
4½ cups water

6 teaspoons dill seed  
4½ cups vinegar  
3 cloves garlic, finely cut  
¼ cup + 2 Tbsp. salt

Yield: 6 quarts

Wash cucumbers thoroughly, scrubbing with brush. Trim blossom ends. Drain. Slice lengthwise or into crosswise slices. Pack cucumbers into clean quart canning jars. To each jar, add 2 small heads fresh dill, 1 teaspoon dill seed, ½ clove garlic, and ¼ teaspoon red pepper. Pour boiling brine of water, vinegar and salt over cucumbers in sterile jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids. Process in a boiling water canner 5 minutes. After processing, take canner off heat. Remove lid. Wait 5 minutes before removing jars. Pickles should be ready to eat in 6 weeks or so.

Note: If more brine is needed, mix in same proportion. If brine is too tart, add sugar. Do not add water.

### Training Tip

Believe it or not Christmas is coming! – now would be a good time to start organizing workshops focussing on making food gifts ... use frozen berries for jams, make dried fruits and gift package them. Remember that herbs and vegetables in oil are unsafe. The combination of low acid products and oil creates an anaerobic environment (no oxygen) that can allow Clostridium Botulinum to grow. For more information check out this [article](#) from Oregon State University's Master Food Preserver Program.

Ivonne, Produce Preservation trainer in New Westminster has some great ideas for healthy gift giving!

All produce preservation trainers contact information is available on [www.preserveproduce.ca](http://www.preserveproduce.ca) under contact us.



### Sharing

LUSH Valley Food Action Society in Courtenay is hosting a Produce Preservation Train the Trainer workshop November 15 – 17<sup>th</sup>.

Contact Cynthia at 250-331-0152 or email her at [admin@lushvalley.org](mailto:admin@lushvalley.org)

### Questions

I had a few questions about floating fruit and tomatoes after canning. As long as you have processed for correct time and the jars seal all is ok. Fruit/tomatoes float sometimes and that's ok.

Check out Bernardin's Q&A's at <http://www.bernardin.ca/pages/fag/33.php#45>

I encourage you to send me your questions or share any preserving or workshop tips that may be helpful to fellow trainers. Tips and Techniques will be under latest news on the [preserveproduce.ca](http://www.preserveproduce.ca) website. Remember to join our facebook group [Food Skills BC](#)

**Happy Preserving!!!**

**Debra Hellbach, Produce Preservation Program, BC Food Processors Association**