

Produce Preservation October 2013

TRAINER TIPS & TECHNIQUES #6 – Pumpkins & Squash

Hello Produce Preservation trainers and followers!

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

I missed getting this out in time for Thanksgiving – hope it was a

great one for everybody. We celebrated with two delicious dinners – Turkey, Thanksgiving Salmon, Spaetzle (Homemade noodles) Beets and Squash from my garden and more! Fortunately Pumpkin Pie is great anytime ☺



Garden St. squash harvest

Tips and Techniques are posted under latest news on the 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?

Winter vegetables are doing well and my neighbour reminded me that there's still time to get garlic in. I hilled up my beets on the weekend (covered beets with dirt) to protect them from frost and started cleaning up my strawberry patch – I still had lots of berries that are sucking energy from the plants and rotting in the cold.

Tips

“Always stir the pot!” One of our Produce Preservation Trainers learned this the hard way ... while teaching students about low and high acid foods, unstirred applesauce burned on the bottom of the pot – putting a real damper on the canned apple sauce activity.

Assign “stirring” to one of your students, or set a timer to remind you.

If you have any tips to share – please pass them on – we all make mistakes and great solutions!

Recipe: Pumpkin Puree

You can make your own pumpkin puree for pumpkin pies and other baking. The small sugar or pie pumpkins are best as but you can use the large Hallowe'en Jack-o-Lantern pumpkin if you remove some of the moisture. This is what you do:

- Wash pumpkin, cut into smaller pieces, remove all the seeds (do not throw away – see below)
- Place flesh side down in a roaster or baking pan
- Bake at 350° until tender
- Cool. When cool enough to handle remove the skin (for large pumpkins, squeeze out some of the liquid at this time)
- Place into a food processor or blender and blend until smooth
- To remove more water you can place through a strainer with a cheesecloth or even a coffee filter and leave over night. This gives a thicker pumpkin puree
- The puree is now ready to be used in your favourite recipes

[Note: The puree can be frozen but because of its density it cannot be canned. If you want to can it you have to cut raw pumpkin into chunks and put in jars, fill with water, and pressure can then drain and puree it when you want to use it for pies and other products.]

Pumpkin (Squash work too) Seeds – a Tasty Snack

This is what I do:

- Rinse seeds. Use your fingers to remove all the pulp. Drain pumpkin seeds and discard pulp.
- Place in pot and cover with water. Add approximately 1 tsp salt/2 cups water (salt to your taste)
- Bring to a boil and simmer 10 minutes, drain
- Preheat the oven to 400°F. Coat the bottom of a roasting pan with olive oil, about a tablespoon. Spread the seeds out over the roasting pan in a single layer.
- Bake on the top rack until the seeds turn golden brown, 5-20 minutes, depending on the size of the seeds, stir occasionally. Take care that they don't get over toasted.
- Remove the pan from the oven when golden brown and let cool on a rack.

Baked Acorn Squash

- Wash squash, cut in half, remove seeds with spoon (my seeds were too small for roasting)
- Put ½ tsp butter (Julia Child would put in more) and salt and pepper in hollow
- Put in backing tray with thin layer of water on bottom
- Back 1 hour at 350 F, brush melted butter over squash occasionally while baking
- Sprinkle with bit of maple sugar, brown sugar or maple syrup before serving

Training Tip

You may find it tough to locate canning supplies in remote communities so check out [Wells Can](#). Ken at Wells Can is a great guy and offers all kinds of food preservation equipment and supplies including pressure canners, dehydrators, smokers, vacuum sealers and more.

<http://www.wellscan.ca/home.php>

Sharing

Thought I'd share an email I received:

“What a great newsletter you put out. I would love to get involved in one of your sessions. I always freeze my jam products and then make them on some nasty cold winter day where the smell makes the house feel more “homey”. K. Simpson.

Questions

Do we need to sterilize jars? I think the word sterilize is being used generically for cleaning and storing jars in hot water prior to filling as well as actually sterilizing. When we are pressure canning or processing for more than 10 minutes jars do not have to be sterilized as sterilization occurs during the actual process. The National Center for Home Food Preservation <http://preserveproduce.ca/resources> provides a good description about Sterilization of Empty Jars.

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 website. Remember to join our facebook group [Food Skills BC](#)

Happy Preserving!!!

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