

## At Work

### Interest in Food Preservation High in Oregon's Metropolitan Areas

The desire to utilize seasonal, local produce; increased interest in home gardening and organically grown foods; and an increased desire to control ingredients in food have resulted in an explosion of interest in home food preservation. Easy access to farmers markets and farm stands make local produce widely available in the Portland metropolitan area in Oregon. In some areas, homeowners are converting yard space to garden space and the number of community garden spaces increase each season. Community assessments reveal widespread interest in food preservation in the urban area.

Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Service responded to the demands with intensive faculty training and ramping up programming and information dissemination across the state. With special attention to limited resources, youth, and tech-savvy audiences, efforts included volunteer training, website development, a state-wide toll-free hotline, eXtension, Facebook page, and countless classes in communities throughout the metropolitan area.

Master Food Preserver volunteers are trained each spring and after an 8-week hands-on training, return to complete 48 hours of volunteer time staffing information tables at weekly farmers markets and community events to provide hands-on food preservation classes. Classes are generally three hours long and focus on a specific method of food preservation such as jams and jellies, pressure canning, and salsas or pickles. Extension partners with local organizations and agencies to offer classes throughout the metropolitan area. Oregon Food Bank hosts many classes in their facilities. Portland Community College and Mount Hood Community College coordinate classes as part of their community education programs. Several churches host classes to ensure that residents in their area have access to current food preservation instruction. OSU Extension Service has no classroom or kitchen of their own in the Portland-Metro area, so we rely on community partners to provide teaching and kitchen space. Since 2012, 112 classes have been offered with attendance of over 1,800 community members. Volunteer Master Food Preservers have contributed over 1,600 hours in the Portland metropolitan area alone.

In a survey of community members who preserve foods, the top five responses included (1-5 scale):

1. It prevents food from going to waste 4.50



2. I can have a variety of foods to eat all year long 4.53
3. Home preserved food tastes better 4.47
4. I can control the amount of sugar, salt and additives 4.44
5. It gives me a sense of personal satisfaction 4.72

Follow-up surveys of food preservation class participants indicated participants increased their knowledge “a lot” to “very much” on the following topics:

1. The steps to follow to ensure that home canned foods are safe to eat
2. Importance of using current tested recipes and instructions for food preservation
3. Where to locate current recipes and instructions
4. What to do if jars do not seal properly
5. What products can be safely processed in a water bath canner versus a pressure canner
6. The difference between a water bath canner and a pressure canner

For more information and resources for the OSU Extension Service food preservation programs see:

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation>

<https://www.facebook.com/OSUExtensionFoodPres>

**For more information about this project, please contact:**

Jeanne Brandt

Family and Community Health  
 OSU Extension Service - Washington County  
 155 N 1st Avenue, #200 MS 48  
 Hillsboro, Oregon 97124  
 503-821-1117

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/washington/>

[jeanne.brandt@oregonstate.edu](mailto:jeanne.brandt@oregonstate.edu)