Finding Reliable Recipes for Safe Food Preservation

The trend to use local resources is flourishing in South Carolina. There are numerous opportunities to purchase local fresh foods. Preserving these foods while they are at the peak of ripeness is an excellent way to benefit throughout the year.

The main methods of preserving are canning, freezing and drying. These methods have been used for many years but the failure to execute them properly can pose significant health risks. For example, incorrect canning can promote the growth of *Clostridium botulinum*, a bacterium that produces a highly toxic poison in low acid foods. Safely preserving food begins with the proper handling of fresh foods and depends on using tested recipes, strictly following instructions and working with equipment that is in proper operating condition.

There are numerous resources for preserving foods. Many of them are not safe and may include recipes passed down from previous generations and random internet searches. The following sources provide research-based information, procedures and instructions and may be relied upon for up-to-date, safe and accurate information:

- Clemson University Home and Garden Information Center - http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic
- National Center for Home Food Preservation at University of Georgia http://nchfp.uga.edu/index.html
- MacRae, Norma, 1996, Canning and Preserving Without Sugar, 4th Ed.
- University of Montana Extension, Quality for Keeps: Drying Food http://extension.missouri.edu/p/GH1562
- Extension Service Offices across the United States http://nchfp.uga.edu/links/links_home.html

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