



From Garden to Table

A newsletter for Trempealeau County Community Gardening Project participants



July

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Tips for Growing Tomatoes in Your Home Garden



Tomatoes are a popular crop in most home gardens in Wisconsin. They are a warm season crop, requiring a relatively long frost free growing season. Tomatoes are high in vitamin C, so they can be important nutritionally.

Here are a few tips on growing tomatoes. Cultivate no deeper than 2-3 inches around the plants weekly. To avoid spreading diseases, do not cultivate or work around the plants while they are wet with rain or dew. Irrigate or water during dry spells to insure better yields. When irrigating, soak the soil thoroughly 8-10 inches deep. Don't use light frequent sprinkling.

Caged tomatoes do not need pruning, and they yield higher quality later fruit. These fruit will be smaller and more numerous than those produced by stakes. They also have less cracking and sunscald. Tomato cages are made of lightweight fencing material. Cages are usually about 18-24 inches in diameter and 4 feet high. They can be made or purchased from a local hardware store.

Staked plants need to be pruned, but take up less space and yield larger and earlier fruit, with greater chance of sunscald and cracking.

Train and prune by setting a strong stake 6 feet long near each plant. When plants begin to branch, tie a strong cord firmly around the stake and loosely around the stem of the plant. Do this every week or so as the plant grows. Break off all shoots that develop between the leaves and the main stem.

Mulch can be added to keep down weeds and save soil moisture which will result in better quality fruit at harvest. Apply mulch several inches deep, close to the plants after the soil has warmed up.



Enjoy your fresh tomatoes!!!

Jon Zander, Ag Agent



Controlling Earwigs

by Pat Malone, Community Development Educator

An occasional visitor in our gardens this time of year is the earwig. Earwigs are omnivorous. They eat other insects and plants. This is helpful when they feed on aphids, mites, fleas, and insect eggs. On the down side, they also munch on a number of flowers, lettuce and potatoes.

These insects are active at night and hide during the day in dark, confined spaces. Earwigs eat small holes in plant leaves during the night. The damage can be confused with injuries caused by slugs, cutworms, or even rabbits. Larger plants can tolerate the feeding. Seedlings and flowering plants can be damaged or killed by large populations. Suspect earwigs if you find damage during the day, but can't spot any insects on your plants.

There are a number of biological, physical, and chemical controls available. Bulletin A3640 "Controlling Earwigs" has more information on how you can control this garden pest.

For more information on planting vegetables see the UWEX bulletin, **Vegetable cultivars and planting guide for Wisconsin (A1653)**

Special Points of Interest:

- Growing Tomatoes
- Earwigs
- Food Preservation

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Home Food Preservation Resources

By Cyndy Jacoby, Family Living Educator

Need resources to help you with your canning? It is important to use lab-tested and researched recipes to assure food safety. The following list provides a wide variety of recipes to either get you started or to add variety to your canned products. The second list gives both contact information and a variety of canning supplied to meet your every canning need and want.

RESEARCH TESTED RECIPES

Wisconsin Safe Food Preservation Series publications:

- Freezing Fruits and Vegetables B3278
- Canning Vegetables Safely B1159
- Canning Fruits Safely B0430
- Homemade Jams, Jellies and Fruit Preserves B2909
- Tomatoes Tart and Tasty B2605
- Canning Salsa Safely B3570
- Homemade Pickles and Relishes B2267
- Canning Meat, Wild Game, Poultry and Fish Safely B3345

Available from your county Extension office or on the web: <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/>

Ball Blue Book available for purchase at home canning supply stores or on the web: www.freshpreserving.com

So Easy to Preserve available for purchase from the National Center for Home Food Preservation, University of Georgia: <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/index.html>



HOME CANNING SUPPLIES



Consumer Call Center (Jarden Home Brands-Ball/Kerr) 1-800-240-3340 (8:30-4:30 M-F, eastern time) www.freshpreserving.com	Jars, lids, recipes, and more
National Presto Industries 1-800-877-0441 www.gopresto.com	Pressure canners, replacement parts, repairs
Mirro Corporation 1800-527-7727	Pressure canners and supplies
Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry 1-920-682-8286 www.wafco.com (consumer products)	All American pressure canners and parts
Kraft Foods 1-800-431-1001 (9am-9pm, eastern) www.kraftfoods.com	Questions regarding Sure-Jell, Certo and other pectins; recipes
Nasco Products 1-800-558-9595 www.enasco.com	Pressure canners, timers, scales
Kitchen Krafts 1-800-776-0575 www.kitchenkrafts.com	Clear Gel, pectin (bulk orders)