



# Preserve It Fresh, Preserve It Safe

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## Preparing and Planning for the Year Ahead



Welcome to 2025! Have you considered what you will be preserving later this year? While it seems early to think about this, it is the time to plan for your future needs. Different varieties of produce have different results in different home-processed products. So, it is important to consider what you will grow in your garden, based on your needs later in the year.

If you grow tomatoes, for example, do you wish to make juice, sauce, salsa, or whole tomatoes? Perhaps you need to grow several different varieties to meet all of your needs. Some varieties have a greater amount of juice and might not be as desirable for a product like salsa, for example.

If you are planning to make salsa, you can use a variety of different kinds of peppers. Do you wish to make a batch that has more heat, thus a need for something besides a green bell pepper in your garden?

When it comes to cucumbers, different varieties will impact the final product. If you are wanting to make pickles, then you will want to use a variety for pickling. Other varieties would be more suited for relishes.

While it seems early to think about what you will be processing later in the year, it really is not. As you review seeds to purchase, make sure the varieties meet your needs. Most seeds will have guidance on the best use. Happy planning and best wishes in your processing later this year!

Receive this newsletter electronically by signing up at [extension.missouri.edu/programs/food-preservation/](https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/food-preservation/)

Local contact information:



NORTH CENTRAL FOOD SAFETY EXTENSION NETWORK

**Celebrating 10 Years**



# North Central Food Safety Extension Network Resources

## Explore NCFSEN Resources

“I had an interesting question today. Can you help?” That line sometimes starts an email conversation with specialists and agents in the 12-state North Central Food Safety Extension Network (NCFSEN) in the upper Midwest. The states include Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

NCFSEN began its collaboration in 2016 at a meeting in Chicago as a way to share expertise and resources across state lines; 2025 begins our 10th year of working together. Our team includes three groups: consumer food preservation, food safety, and food entrepreneurship. We have developed handouts, webinars and answered many consumer and industry questions. We also interact with regulators, equipment manufacturers, researchers, and food industry professionals.

## Food Preservation

Whether you are a consumer or an Extension professional, we invite you to explore the variety of free food preservation resources that we have developed or are sharing with colleagues, including the following:

- Oops! Remaking Jams and Jellies.
- Play It Safe! Safe Changes and Substitutions to Tested Canning Recipes
- Pressure Can It Right
- Put a Lid on It
- Steam Can It Right



## Food Safety and Entrepreneurship

We also provide webinars and/or handouts for food entrepreneurs and the cottage food industry:

- Food Safety and Blessing Boxes
- Labeling Basics
- Cleaning and Sanitizing Basics
- Food Safety Best Practices for Local Food Entrepreneurs
- Vacuum-sealing Mason Jars: Are They Safe for My Cottage Foods?

## Building a Coalition

Explore these handouts and videos to learn more about the best practices we have learned:

- Working Regionally: 1) Getting Started, 2) Getting Organized, and 3) Getting Together.

Visit the NCFSEN website to learn more. <https://www.ncrfsma.org/north-central-food-safety-extension-network-ncfsen>