

## **Emergency Preparedness: Food Preservation at Salish Roots Farm**

Salish Roots Farm utilizes many methods of food preservation. Building up a stock of nutritious preserved foods that can be stored safely for a long time at room temperature is an important part of preparing for any type of emergency. The farm program plans to offer community courses in canning, pickling, and dehydrating in the coming year. Stay tuned!

### **Some Food Preservation Methods:**

#### **Dehydrating:**

Foods can be dehydrated using various methods, including an electric dehydrator, a conventional oven, and, in some cases, the sun/air. Dehydrating removes enough moisture to prevent the growth of yeast, mold, and bacteria. Dehydrated foods can be consumed dry or easily rehydrated with water.



Image: hawthorn berries and leaves dehydrated for medicine making later on

#### **Canning:**

Canning is a food preservation method for storing food at room temperature in glass jars. There are two ways of canning: water bath canning and pressure canning. Both methods use heat to destroy contaminants, remove air from the jar, and create a vacuum seal as the jar cools, preventing spoilage.

Water bath canning uses time and temperature to destroy mold, yeast, and enzymes that cause spoilage. It is best for foods and recipes high in acid, such as pickles, jams and jellies, some produce, tomato sauces, and salsas.

Pressure canning reaches a high enough temperature (240°F) to kill food-borne bacteria, and it is good for meat, seafood, beans, soups, and vegetables.



Image: tomatoes canned at the farm this season

### Salting:

Salting is one of the oldest food preservation methods, especially for meats and fish. It works because most contaminants cannot survive in a salty environment, and the salt helps to draw moisture out of the food to prevent the growth of yeast, mold, and bacteria.

### Smoking:

There are two ways of smoking meat: hot smoking and cold smoking. Hot smoking cooks the meat, and it is not for preservation. Cold smoking uses a low temperature for a long time (3 days to up to two weeks) to smoke salt-cured meat for longer preservation. Generally, the longer it is smoked, the better preserved it is. Smoked meat can be stored in a vacuum-sealed bag for increased shelf life.



Images: salt brining (left), smoking (right)

### **Vacuum Sealing:**

Vacuum sealing uses food-grade vacuum-sealed plastic bags and an electric vacuum sealer to store food without contact with air for increased preservation. This method will increase the shelf life of any food that can already be safely stored at room temperature. It can also be used for frozen or refrigerated foods but will not make them shelf stable.

### **Pickling:**

Pickling is a great method for preserving produce. Pickles can be made and stored in the fridge for a long time or canned using the water bath method for longer storage at room temperature. Pickling involves making brine (vinegar, water, salt, and sugar), packing the produce into glass jars with optional herbs and spices for flavor, and pouring in the brine to submerge. A common brine ratio is three parts vinegar, two parts water, and one part salt/sugar heated and stirred to dissolve.



Image: some pickles made at the farm this season