



# Country Living

Provided to you by the  
OSU Extension Service Columbia County  
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Office hours: Please call to check availability.

To visit [links to external articles](#), please view this newsletter online  
at our Website: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia/>

## July 2021

## Programs for you . . .

Listen to the Gardening Spot on KOHI (1600 am) radio: Every Saturday, 8:05 to 8:15 a.m.

### \* Office Hours for July 2021 \*

Monday - Thursday 10:00 am-4:00 pm

*Please call ahead to ensure staff availability or to schedule an appointment: 503-397-3462*

*Use the phone directory to reach a staff member directly.*

*We anticipate resuming full-time office hours in August.*

*Thank you for your patience while staff transition back after our long closure.*

[Columbia County Beekeepers Virtual Meeting](#) July 1<sup>st</sup> at 6pm. Guest presentation by Certified Honey Judge, Marjie Ehry. Email for information: [columbiacountyoregonbeekeepers@gmail.com](mailto:columbiacountyoregonbeekeepers@gmail.com)

**It's Farmers Market Season!** Use the "[farmers market finder](#)" to find one nearby!

**OSU resources & publications:** <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/>

[Columbia County Fair:](#) July 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>... From Wagon Wheels to Ferris Wheels!



**Oregon State University**  
Extension Service  
Columbia County

*Chip Bubl*

Chip Bubl, OSU Extension Faculty, Agriculture



Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources, Family and Community Health, 4-H Youth, Forestry & Natural Resources, and Extension Sea Grant programs. Oregon State University, United States Department of Agriculture, and Columbia County cooperating. The Extension Service offers its programs and materials equally to all people.

## In the garden

### It was really hot!

The extreme three day heat wave has left its mark on gardens, landscapes, farms, and forests. South Columbia County had temperatures around 114° on the worst day. Location did seem to make some difference with slightly lower temperatures in the higher elevations. Wind was also fierce on several of the days. Vegetable plants had higher leaf moisture loss and thus more damage unless watering was well-managed.

Shade made a big difference, especially shade in the late afternoon. Much of the damage occurred when intense direct sun exposure combined with the hottest time of the day. This is why damage was most common on the south to southwest facing parts of a tree or shrub.

This has been a disaster for the berry industry. Strawberries turned to mush. Raspberry and blackberry harvest was just getting underway. Ready to harvest fruit turned to jam and under-ripe fruit showed sunken tan areas. Those fruit will ripen but are now unsaleable for fresh or whole frozen market and only usable in



processing at a big discount.

Based on limited direct observation

and some industry reports, Christmas trees experienced some damage. Some of the damage may be able to be managed by shaping and pruning, possibly delaying their sale for a year. On others, the damage may be too severe and the tree will be a loss. It is not yet clear how newly plant trees fared.

The biggest visible impact in neighborhoods were the Douglas fir trees with severe SW side damage. Some were lightly singed, others looked like a blowtorch had been pointed directly at them. The slightly singed trees will recover. The hardest hit will live but if the sunburn took out all the needles back to the portion of the limb that no longer had needles, that branch is likely now dead. A whole section of dead branches does not make for an attractive tree so some firs will probably be removed for aesthetic reasons.

Broadleaf evergreens (camellias, rhododendrons, azaleas, and the like) got a lot of sunburn but they will also survive. Damaged portions can be pruned now since this is the time they are normally shaped. Recently pruned landscape shrubs that put on new growth just before the heat blast show a lot of sunburn on the new shoots.

But the plants should recover.

The “burnt” shoots can be cut out.



Some damage may not show up for some time. Trunks of young trees are very susceptible to sunburn. Years ago, people whitewashed young tree trunks to prevent damage but that practice has fallen out of favor. This event may revive the practice. Injured trees will eventually show cracking on the southwest side and/or sunken areas under the bark. The smaller the trunk, the more serious is the damage. Fungi that feed on dead tissue will invade if the wound is large enough. But none of this will be visible for several months to a year or more.

Some dahlias and hostas in full sun took the heat hard, other cultivars were fine.

Most vegetables seemed to get through if adequately watered. New transplants or seeds just emerging were the most likely to suffer. Corn loved the heat. Tomatoes lost some flower clusters and a few leaves were crisped but otherwise were fine. Peppers loved the heat, mostly. Lettuce became somewhat bitter but that is the normal course for them as they mature. Large green bean leaves were vulnerable but the plants are still growing. Slugs disappeared but, trust me, they will emerge from their hidey holes to cause more damage. Moles were the pain moles always are, digging tunnels that make even watering a challenge.



unlike other plant nutrients, and can move from the soil surface to the root zone if it is irrigated in.

Gardeners often side dress their crops in mid-summer with a cup of ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) or about half that amount of urea (46-0-0) per ten feet of row. Scatter the fertilizer close to the growing plant and water it in. It is amazing how fast crops will respond to this treatment. It is not uncommon to see a major change in crop color within two weeks. In the picture, the corn in the middle was fully supplied with

nitrogen. Corn, onions, the cabbage family, and the squashes are particularly responsive.

The original long term weather forecast was for a cooler than normal June and hotter than normal July and August. Maybe, with the June forecast demolished, July and August will be nice, normal summers. Happy gardening and take care in the heat, please.

Some organic fertilizers like blood meal will also work well though it will take longer to see the response.

In general, it is not a good idea to apply extra nitrogen to peas and tomatoes.

## Summer feeding

Most vegetable gardeners start their crops with a balanced fertilizer that is worked into the soil prior to planting. For light-feeding crops, this will be enough to carry them through to maturity.

Nitrogen is the plant nutrient that is most often re-applied after the crop is up and growing. There are several reasons for doing this. First, nitrogen is crucial for vigorous plant growth. A lack of nitrogen produces pale green to yellowish plants that often are stunted. Second, nitrogen is readily soluble,



## Lady beetle larvae don't look like lady beetles

Lady beetles are great predators with an appetite for aphids and other soft-bodied insects. But the larvae don't look like adults and are sometimes unknowingly killed by gardeners who mistake them for something noxious. They have a somewhat sinister appearance, especially when found in large numbers. They are usually found on trees or shrubs, but can be on lawn furniture.

Don't panic. Escort these fearsome allies to some aphid-infested shrub and watch the feast.



## Blossom end rot of tomatoes

It is finally hot (!! ) and warm enough to push tomatoes, so it is time for the annual review of blossom end rot. This is a poorly named problem in one respect – it is not a disease but rather a nutritional disorder. The symptoms are dark, leathery sunken spots on the bottom of your rapidly ripening tomatoes or peppers or zucchini. What misery!



Blossom end rot results from a shortage of calcium in growing fruits. **Practically speaking, however, the cause is usually inadequate irrigation.** Soil moisture is essential for roots to absorb and move calcium through the plant.

To avoid blossom end rot:

- Keep your tomato bed well limed to keep the soil calcium level up.
- Keep plants evenly watered so calcium will be available.
- Use an organic mulch to help keep soil evenly moist. Great fluctuations in soil moisture seem to aggravate the problem.
- Avoid heavy nitrogen fertilization.
- Trap moles, whose tunnels may make even watering impossible.
- Pinch out some of the excess shoots, since shoots and fruit compete for calcium within the plant. The shoots capture much of the calcium, leaving the fruits short leading to

that brown patch on the bottom (calcium poor cells that break open).

- Avoid pinching during very hot weather since you can expose fruits to more sunlight that can lead to sunburned fruits.

## Winter gardening starts now

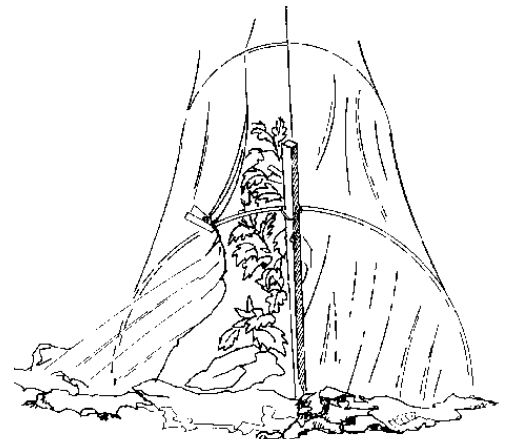
Columbia County has a mild enough climate to support winter vegetable gardening. Our cloudy weather makes winter tomatoes and cucumbers poor choices. But a number of other vegetables are just dandy.

Most vegetables that you can harvest through the winter need to be started right away. Then they will need some kind of protection from the coldest temperatures and the constant rainfall of late fall through winter.



Some outstanding winter vegetables are kale, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, carrots, parsnips, green onions, various mustards and Chinese greens. Lettuce can be very productive given some modest temperature protection like a plastic hoop house over the plants.

Spinach seeded in early September and allowed to over winter will produce far more leaves than transplants set out in the early spring.



Some plants can be harvested in the fall/winter and others left for spring.

Some cauliflower varieties will survive very cold winter temperatures and produce nice heads in April and May.

Most of these plants are best seeded by July 15<sup>th</sup>. You can push the date back a little later if you are willing to provide some cold protection in October.



Finally, it is not too late to seed peas, radishes, carrots, beets, turnips, rutabagas, bush beans, Savoy or Chinese cabbages, and broccoli for fall eating. There is still a lot of opportunity for planting and good eating this year.

## A plant by any other name

I teach a weed identification class in the Master Gardener program. Some years ago, many students from the Portland area brought in examples of a geranium family plant that was invading their flower beds and natural areas. I also started getting increasing numbers of samples from Columbia County and, in fact, found it on my property.

The common theme that ran through the stories was that they liked the plant when they first noticed it but that it had now overstayed its welcome.

The geranium is called “herb Robert” by some, “stinky Bob or piss geranium” by others. There is a story going around that it was Linnaeus’ least favorite plant so he named it after his least favorite person.

Be that as it may, the plant has typical geranium features. The stems are noticeably reddish and the leaves are fern-like and 3-5 lobed. The leaves themselves can turn reddish in a drought situation. The plant can reach 16” tall, though most specimens I have seen are 8-12” high. There are pretty pink flowers which are accented by 10 orange stamens. As some of the common names imply, there is a strong and unpleasant odor associated with the plant. It is an annual/biennial plant, so it goes from seed to seed each year. During the spring and early summer, it can be confused with our native bleeding heart. But bleeding heart dies back in the winter whereas Robert’s Geranium does not. That is the best clue as to which plant you are seeing. The flowers of the two plants are quite different as well and bleeding heart foliage has no stink.

For some unexplained reason, the plant appears to be spreading rapidly. It has been around for a long time, but never has been as aggressive and pervasive as it appears now. Has there been a subtle climate shift that favored it or has the plant simply reached a critical population density? The answers are not clear.



What is clear is that the plant is invading our gardens, landscapes, and woodlands. It is capable of forming a biologically sterile monoculture under trees though our understory flora seems more resilient than I expected. Do not encourage this plant. Remove them from your gardens and don’t toss the plants where they might establish and spread!

## ~ JULY ~

### Garden hints from your OSU Extension Agent

Oregon State University Extension Service encourages sustainable gardening practices. Always identify and monitor problems before acting. First, consider cultural controls; then physical, biological, and chemical controls (which include insecticidal soaps, horticultural oils, botanical insecticides, organic and synthetic pesticides). Always consider the least toxic approach first. All recommendations in this calendar are not necessarily applicable to all areas of Oregon. For more information, contact your local office of the OSU Extension Service.

#### Maintenance and Clean Up

- Mound soil up around base of potatoes. Gather & eat a few "new" potatoes from each hill, when plants flower.
- Early morning is the best time to water vegetable and flower gardens to reduce evaporation. Water the soil, rather than leaves to reduce disease. Water deeply and infrequently to encourage root growth.
- Hanging baskets of flowers or vegetable plantings need careful attention to watering and feeding during extended periods of hot weather.
- Weed and fertilize rhubarb and asparagus beds. A mulch of compost or rotted cow manure works well as fertilizer. Water deeply to develop crowns for next year.
- Mulch to conserve soil moisture with paper, plastic, sawdust, etc.
- Stake tall-growing flowering plants such as delphinium, hollyhocks, and lupine. Stake tomatoes, as necessary.
- If a green lawn is desired, make sure lawn areas are receiving adequate water (approximately 0.5 to 1.5 inches per week from June through August). Deep watering less often is more effective than frequent shallow watering.
- Make compost of lawn clippings and garden plants that are ready to be recycled. Do not use clippings if lawn has been treated with herbicide, including "weed-and-feed" products. Do not compost diseased plants unless you are using the "hot compost" method (120° to 150°F).

#### Planting/Propagation

- Midsummer plantings of beets, bush beans, carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, lettuce, kale, and peas will provide fall and winter crops.
- Dig spring bulbs when tops have died down; divide and store or replant.

#### Pest Monitoring and Management

- Continue monitoring raspberry, blackberry, blueberry, cherry and other plants that produce soft fruits and berries for Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD). If SWD are present, use an integrated and least toxic approach to manage the pests. To learn how to monitor for SWD flies and larval infestations in fruit, visit <https://spottedwing.org/>.
- Control hollyhock rust by sanitation, picking affected leaves, or spraying with a registered fungicide. Read and follow label directions.
- Watch for cutworm damage in garden. (In July, climbing cutworms become a problem and large portions of foliage will begin to disappear on established plants.) Use barriers, remove by hand, use beneficial nematodes when soil temperature is above 55°F, or spray with *Bt-k* according to label directions.
- Late this month, begin to monitor for early and late blight on tomatoes.
- Place traps to catch adult apple maggot flies. You can use pheromone traps to monitor presence of pests.
- July 10: spray filbert trees for filbert worm, as necessary.
- July 10-15: spray peach and prune trees for peach tree borer, and peach twig borer, as necessary.
- July 17-23: third spray for codling moth in apple and pear trees, as necessary.
- Cover blueberry bushes with netting to keep birds from eating all the crop.
- Watch for early and blight on tomatoes. Correct by pruning for air circulation, picking off affected leaves, and/or treat with approved fungicide.
- Monitor camellias, holly, maple trees for scale insects. Treat if necessary.
- Monitor rhododendrons for adult root weevils.
- Check leafy vegetables for caterpillars. Pick off caterpillars as they appear. Use *Bt-k*, if necessary.
- Spider mites can become a problem on ornamental plants, vegetables, and fruit plants during hot, dry weather. Watch for dusty-looking foliage, loss of color, presence of tiny mites. Wash infested areas with water or spray with appropriate pesticides.
- Remove cankered limbs from fruit and nut trees for control of diseases such as apple anthracnose and bacterial canker of stone fruit. Sterilize tools before each new cut.



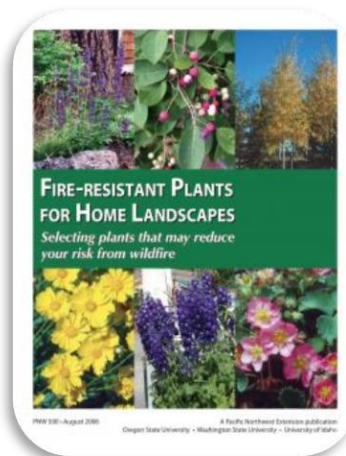
## OSU Extension's Fire Program: <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/forests/fire>

**Real-time Map of Fires in Oregon:** This map includes information about what is going on currently within your area including level of containment of fires and fire evacuation areas:  
<https://beav.es/3hs>

**Evacuating with Horses** (resource from the NFPA):  
<https://beav.es/3he>

**Evacuating Household Pets** (resource from the NFPA): <https://beav.es/3hn>

**Firewise Checklist:** <https://beav.es/3hh>

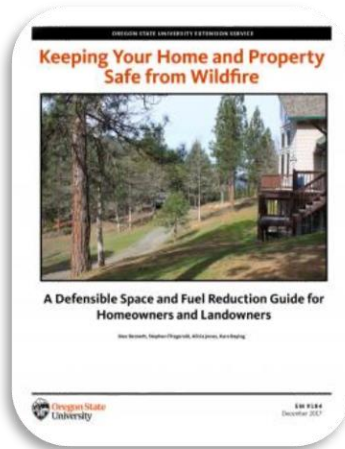


## **Fire-Resistant Plants for Home Landscapes:**

As homeowners continue to build in the wild and urban interface, they must take special precautions to protect their homes. One way to do this is to create a defensible space around the home, and

one important factor can be using fire-resistant plants in landscaping. Listed by categories: ground cover, perennials, shrubs & trees.

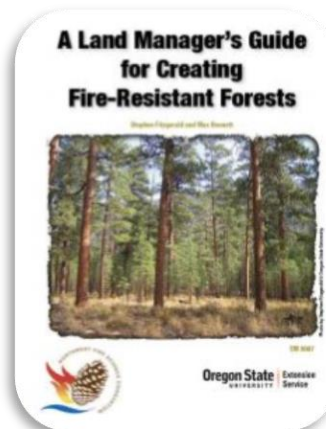
<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/pnw590>



## **Keeping Your Home and Property Safe from Wildfire: A Defensible Space and Fuel Reduction Guide for Homeowners:**

Help for homeowners who want to reduce the wildfire risk around their homes or on their forest property by creating defensible space.

<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/em9184>



## **A Land Manager's Guide for Creating Fire-Resistant Forests:**

Provides an overview of how various silvicultural treatments affect fuel and fire behavior, and how to create fire-resistant forests. In properly treated, fire-resistant forests, fire intensity is reduced and

overstory trees are more likely to survive than in untreated forests. Much of what is presented here is pertinent to the drier forests of the PNW, which have become extremely dense and fire prone.

<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/em9087>

**Please take our brief survey about community preparedness: :**  
<https://beav.es/3n6>

**This will help us to plan our future educational programming.**  
**Thank you!**



## **The Home Ignition Zone: Protecting Your Property from Wildfire:**

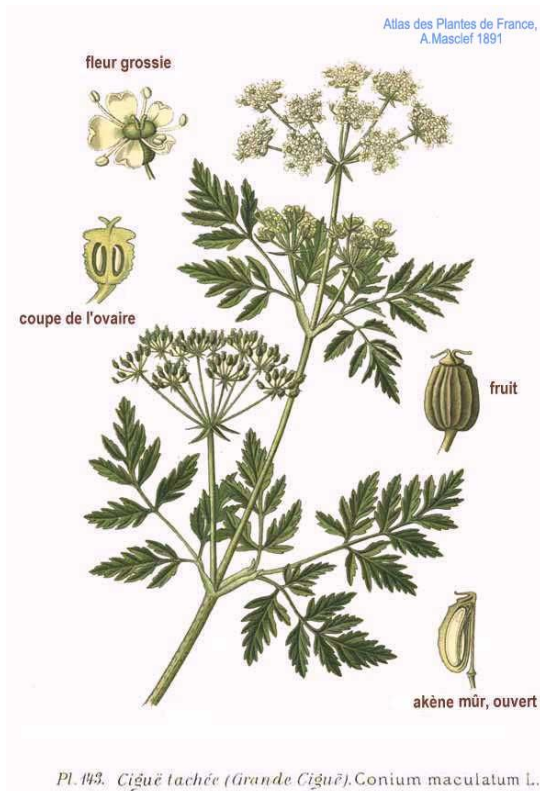
Wildfire is inevitable. Learn what you need to know to prepare your home and property. Handy worksheets help you assess each zone of your property to reduce the threat wildfires pose.

<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/em9247>

# Farm and livestock notes

## Poison hemlock

For some reason, there appears to be an upsurge in the amount of poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) in Columbia County.



This is not a new plant. It was unintentionally introduced by settlers to the region at least 150 years ago and has been part of the cultivated landscape.

The plant is highly toxic to humans and livestock. Socrates was forced to drink a concoction of this plant as fatal payment for being somewhat of an obnoxious dissident in Greece several thousand years ago (read *The Death of Socrates* by I. F. Stone for an interesting discussion of this event).

The foliage or roots can poison livestock, with the foliage being more toxic. The toxicity is not lost in hay or silage making.

Handling the plants or chopping them with a “weed-eater” can cause a dermal reaction in many people.

Poison hemlock is a carrot family biennial, meaning that plants that germinate from seed this year over winter as rosettes and bolt to flower next year. The plant in flower is tall, often exceeding 5-6 feet. Flowering stems are very visible right now. The stems have characteristic purple spotting and the whole plant has a distinctive “mousy” odor.



The flower is similar to Queen Anne’s lace. Seeds fall near the stem and up to 85% can germinate immediately. Some will germinate the following year or two but seed viability is relatively short.

Poison hemlock needs disturbed ground or ground with poor vegetative cover to get started. It can tolerate somewhat poor drainage (and may be more competitive in those areas) but does not require it.

There are some herbicides that will help control poison hemlock, but timing is crucial. There is little evidence that spraying the flowering stalk at this stage will keep the plant from going to seed. And since a biennial dies after going to seed, what’s the point?

It is more effective to establish a vigorous competitive cover (usually grass) where hemlock seeds are germinating. Then selective herbicides that don’t damage grass can be used to control the escaped rosettes this fall or next March/April.



## Tips for Cooling Your Chickens in the HEAT

*Local chicken keeper shares tips on keeping backyard chickens safe and comfortable in summer's heat.*

*Contributed by Sonia Reagan, OSU Extension Staff*

A record setting heat wave was forecast for the end of June (will there be another this summer?) and I am glad to share some tips for successful management of your backyard chickens in extremely warm temperatures. Preventing heat stress is much easier than treating it!

Besides providing a suitable coop and run (well-ventilated, dry, proper bird spacing, and access to shade, etc.) water management is THE most important AND practical way to help chickens combat heat stress. As birds do not sweat, chickens generally may experience heat stress beginning around 85 degrees Fahrenheit. To help your chickens beat the heat try some of these proven tips:

- **Cool drinking water:** unhook automatic waterers that unnecessarily heat water; add frozen water bottles or ice; provide a wide, shallow pan to dunk wattles in; water with a cool, dripping hose. \* Drinking cool water can lower their body temperature, increase their productivity, and improve survival rate.
- **Offer cooling treats:** cabbage, greens, weeds, melon, or even frozen berries and vegetables. Light activity may increase their consumption of cool water but do keep them calm – this is not the time to allow children, dogs, or other pets to chase or inadvertently disturb your flock.



***Author's chickens staying cool in 114 deg. F temperature on June 28th, 2021. Note the cool water running into a wide pan in a shaded run.***

- **Strategically create shade**, especially where the afternoon sun shines. Be creative! Hang fabric, use a canopy, or even move the coop and run under a tree, if possible.
- **Misted water** may be used in the area near their coop and run to create a cooler micro-climate but take care not to get their feathers wet! They need to be able to lift feathers up off their skin for cooling.

- **Heat stress** can throw off the electrolyte balance so a water-soluble electrolyte could be offered to help correct the imbalance (purchase one designed for poultry from your feed store.)

- Tip: make the electrolyte solution up and freeze as ice cubes!

**Monitor chickens closely:** Be ready to intervene if they display signs of heat stress. Normal signs of a warm chicken include light, open mouthed panting, and wings slightly held out and away from the body. However, signs of heat stress include gasping, heavy panting, pale

comb and wattles, staggering, wings held out wide while the chicken is crouched, lethargy or unconscious, and even seizures. Prompt attention is necessary to save a life. To cool a mildly heat-stressed chicken: wrap in a damp, cold towel & place in cool area until recovered. For a severely heat-stressed bird: submerge in cool water up to the neck until it “comes ‘round” and place in a cool area until fully recovered and completely dry.

Some breeds (and individual birds) are more prone to heat stress than others. Larger, heavier breeds with dark feathers and small combs may suffer more in the heat. The larger combs and wattles of smaller breeds help them tolerate heat better. If our PNW summers continue to trend warmer, it may be time to consider more heat tolerant breeds.

Happy Chicken Keeping!

For more information read: <https://beav.es/3BJ>



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**Return Service Requested**

*To receive this newsletter by email*  
Contact: [Sonia.Reagan@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Sonia.Reagan@oregonstate.edu)  
or call 503-397-3462. Thank you!

**Pressure Gauge Testing:** July 7, 2021 to July 28<sup>th</sup> 2021, Wednesdays from 10am to 2pm, FREE, at the Extension office in St. Helens. For questions and requests for accessibility-related accommodations please contact: [Jenny.Rudolph@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Jenny.Rudolph@oregonstate.edu). Pressure canners with a dial gauge need to be tested every year before you use them for accuracy. Canning with a gauge that is off can result in under-processing of home canned foods, which is unsafe. The **OSU Extension Catalog** has a number of publications that provide comprehensive information related to food safety and food preservation on a variety of topics, including:

- Fruits and Vegetables;
- Meat, poultry, game, seafood;
- Pickling;
- Jams, Jellies, Preserves;
- General Canning;
- Freezing;
- Drying;
- Smoking and Curing;
- Fruits (specific);
- Vegetables (specific); and
- Other topics related to home food preservation.



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