Garden to Table: Preserve, Sustain and Nourish

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The art of food preservation is all the rage right now, but before refrigeration and the convenience of grocery stores, this art was an essential to every household. Preserving food is a great act of sustainability by giving longevity to the seasonal abundance that nature offers, and providing nourishment to our bodies throughout the year. Always use proper sanitation and food safety when preserving food.

Before choosing which way to preserve your harvest, consider:

1. How you plan to use the food
2. What equipment you (or your friends!) have
3. How much time you have to spend

Canning is a great option for foods that will be cooked after opening, like tomato sauce, peach pie or roasted peppers. Plan a canning party with some friends and neighbors to spread the work and pool resources.

Dehydrating can be fussy. Use a good dehydrator to get consistent drying and good texture. Sun drying and dehydrating in the oven are other options but often require extra care to dry evenly. Great for fruit like apples and plums.

Fermenting gives a tasty zing to your foods, plus the bonus of healthful probiotics that flourish when foods are fermented. These “friendly bacteria” help our body's digestive and immune systems.

Freezing may be the easiest option with the least equipment required. Blanch vegetables first in boiling or steaming water to stop the ripening process of the food. Freezing is a great nutritional option because abundant nutrients will be stored in the freezer. Check this resource for blanching times for vegetables: nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze/blanching.html. Take a canning or fermenting class to gain experience and knowledge – visit our "Kitchen" classes at seattletilth.org/learn.