



Inside this issue:

Gluten-free Diets 2

New from NCHFP 2

Food Storage after Disasters 2

New Grapefruit 3

Peanut Processor Indicted 3

MyPlate on Facebook 3

New Canning Jars 4

Invert Sugar 4



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Vegetables for Four Seasons



For more seasonal produce, see <http://bit.ly/PR42IS>

It's almost garden planting time! Gardeners are itching to get seeds and plants in the ground to produce fresh produce. But when fresh is not available, frozen vegetables give that almost fresh taste.



Frozen vegetable processors, like Birds Eye, have seen a marked increase in frozen vegetables sales. This is due, in

part, to marketing vegetables on the television channel Nickelodeon.

For early spring, the vegetables in season are asparagus, peas, and salad greens to mention a few.

Asparagus is full of B vitamins, iron, potassium and vitamin C. It also has more vitamin E than any other vegetable. Look for spears about 1/2-inch in diameter with tightly closed tips.

Peas are in the legume family and provide more protein than any other vegetable. Purchase pea pods that are firm and glossy. Keep refrigerated to maintain sweetness.

Salad greens are the basis for many fresh salads. The darker green colors provide more nutrition. Mix varieties for more texture and nutrition.

Sources: Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter, March 2013
<http://bloom.bg/10isQOT>

Saving Lives with Shopper Cards

You've heard them called "shopper cards," "reward cards," or "membership cards." Now they can also save your life.

These cards track shopping habits of consumers.

In the event of a food-borne illness outbreak, health departments can use that information to track when suspect foods were purchased. The data is accessed only with the store's permission.

About 80 percent of consumers use these cards. On average, a consumer carries six loyalty cards.

Source: <http://nbcnews.to/X6lZ4A>



Eating Gluten-free Hits All Time High

According to a survey conducted by The NPD Group, one in three adults are claiming to cut down or avoid gluten in their diets. This survey started in 2009.

While consumers are avoiding gluten at home, they are requesting gluten-free options at restaurants. In fact, consumers order these

foods more than double what they did four years ago. Because of this, restaurants are listening.

Restaurants are learning to train staff to answer questions about gluten-free options. They are also placing symbols on menus and menu boards to highlight these options.

While eating gluten-free is a must for those diagnosed with gluten intolerance or Celiac disease, it may not be necessary for everyone.

Choosing to eat gluten-free is the trend and fad diet of today. In many cases, these people often gain weight.

Sources: <http://bit.ly/Zbyob9>
<http://bit.ly/Xdoger>



Now's the time to get pressure canner gauges tested! Be ready to pressure can your favorite foods. Sources for parts can be found at <http://www.rrc.ksu.edu/p.aspx?tabid=18>.

What's New from NCHFP?

As the growing season nears, so does food preservation season!

There are two new resources from the National Center for Home Food Preservation

(NCHFP) to learn more about food preservation.

One is a blog called "Preserving Food at Home." You can follow along at <http://preservingfoodathome.com/>.

The second is a webinar called "History, Science and Current Practice in Home Food Preservation." It is at <http://nchfp.uga.edu/>.

Food Storage After Disasters

Disasters come in many forms. After these traumatic events occur, food safety can be an issue.

To help consumers become informed, a free webinar will be held on March 27, 2013 at 2:00 pm CST by North Carolina State University. The seminar will focus on conveying proactive and reactive food safety risk messages during a power outage, communicating risks of eating produce grown in flooded gardens and how to engage food handlers in risk-reduction practices during events.

Pre-register at <http://eden.lsu.edu/s-cap/registration>. Select "Food Storage Following Disasters (March 27)."

The event location is <https://connect.extension.iastate.edu/eden>



Grapefruit for All!



More testing is currently being conducted and human testing is being planned.

Grapefruit consumption has declined over the last few years because the fruit can negatively interact with some medications, specifically statins.

Compounds in grapefruit called furanocoumarins cause the “grapefruit juice effect” which inhibits the enzyme action that breaks down certain medications when digested. This can lead to high levels of the medication in the bloodstream. Therefore, grapefruit must be avoided.

Research conducted at the University of Florida has resulted in a new hybrid grapefruit with a low furanocoumarin content. They have also successfully reproduced these grapefruit from parent to offspring. One hybrid, UF 914, has been approved for impending release later in 2013.

Sources: <http://news.ufl.edu/2012/12/19/grapefruit-2/>
<http://reut.rs/YUpdut>



Peanut Processors Indicted

In 2009, a *Salmonella* outbreak occurred in tainted peanut butter than sickened hundreds and killed nine people.

On February 21, 2013, Federal prosecutors in-

dicted the Peanut Corporation of America with covering up problems at the facility. They even made fake certificates saying the products were not contaminated when, in fact, they were. This

led to one of the largest food recalls ever. If found guilty, the penalty is up to 20 years in jail.

Source: <http://reut.rs/Zk1Muc>



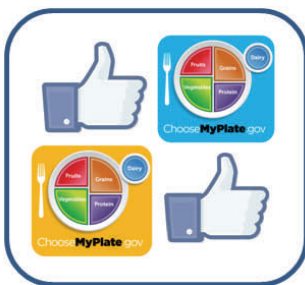
MyPlate is on Facebook

Keep up with information and updates from ChooseMyPlate.gov on Facebook!

MyPlate recently started a Facebook page to help spread healthy eating messages to a broader audience.

The purpose of the MyPlate Facebook page is to share information to help you maintain a healthy lifestyle. They encourage discussion and comments on the posts. Your insights and participation are important and so they invite you to share the content found here with your audiences.

Learn more at <https://www.facebook.com/MyPlate>.



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New Canning Item



To bring back some nostalgia and to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first canning jars made by the Ball brothers, they made limited edition, period-correct blue color canning jars. The jars are embossed with the logos on front and back.

These jars have the vintage look with today's modern standards for quality and reliability.

According to Jarden Home Brands, more new products will be introduced soon.

Source: <http://bit.ly/ZuLqid>

New for 2013!

Jarden Home Brands, the makers of Ball® and Kerr® home canning products, have introduced one of their new canning products for this year.



Karen Blakeslee, M.S.



On the Web at
www.rrc.ksu.edu



What is Invert Sugar?

This type of sugar is also known as glucose or as dextrose in honey. It is also produced when an acid is added to su-

crystals which insure a smooth product. An example is the gooey, liquid centers of filled candy.



Making strawberry jam

crose (sugar). This causes sucrose to split into glucose and fructose.

Invert sugar is very useful in candies and confections. It has very fine

invert sugar is naturally made when making jams and jellies. The acid in fruit interferes with the sugar syrup to make a smooth viscous gel.

Source: In The Sweet Kitchen, by Regan Daley