

Burleigh County Offers Lunch ‘n’ Learn Food Preservation Series

A series of food preservation classes designed to teach beginners the basics of food preservation and offer hands-on learning

The Situation

Home and community gardening are on the rise throughout the country. An increased interest in growing one’s own food and knowing how to prepare it is important for many individuals and families across North Dakota. Reasons for this rise include better tasting food, saving money, living more locally and health; just to name a few. In Burleigh County, over 500 community gardens were planted in the summer of 2012; many of which belonged to first time gardeners. This surge of gardens resulted in an abundance of fresh produce – much to enjoy during the harvest months, and lots to preserve for the future.

Extension Response

The *So Easy To Preserve: Food Preservation Series* was offered by the Burleigh County Extension Office to teach individuals the basic techniques related to food preservation. Classes were held over the noon hour each Thursday in August to accommodate work schedules. Participants were encouraged to bring their own lunch to enjoy during the first twenty minutes of class; which was the lecture and/or video portion of the program. The remainder of the class was devoted to hands-on learning, where participants teamed up with fellow attendees to preserve various foods.

Class topics included:

- **Food Preservation 101** – a basic overview of food preservation, the benefits of home preservation and general guidelines for successfully preserving foods
- **Jams & Jellies** – how to create delicious jams, jellies and spreads from various foods, including native North Dakota fruits
- **Canning Vegetables** – understanding the basics of using a pressure canner
- **Pickling** –an overview of pickling basics and suggestions for success
- **Salsa Making** –recommendations, guidelines and suggestions for making and preserving safe, delicious salsa

Impacts

Over thirty individuals participated in the series and learned valuable knowledge and skills related to food preservation.

Based on survey data, the follow impacts were found comparing pre and post series knowledge and abilities:

- 22% increase in participants understanding of what food preservation is and why we do it
- 29% increase in their understanding of current food preservation recommendations and resources
- 27% increase in their ability to identify and apply the appropriate methods of food preservation
- 31% increase in their skill level when using a boiling-water bath and pressure canner

Feedback

Participants’ response when asked to share their favorite portion of the food preservation series:

“The hands-on activity and being able to taste the results.”

“Hands-on portions of the classes! Actively preparing the vegetables and doing the canning.”

*Over 70% responded that the hands-on portion was their favorite part of the series.

Participants other comments:

“Thank you so much for providing this class at such a reasonable price. I learned so much and am so glad we were given the additional handouts to take home. I made a binder with mine as a long-term reference.”

“Very well organized and presented in the short time available for the class. Great job to all involved at Burleigh County!”

Contact

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