Can frozen tomatoes be canned?

Food safety is important when preserving produce, says K-State food scientist

By Maddy Rohr, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Tomatoes can be preserved and packaged in many different ways and frozen tomatoes are no exception, but can they be canned?

Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee said…it depends.

“It is not recommended to can tomatoes that froze on the vine,” Blakeslee said. “This is because the acid content changes too much when they freeze on the vine, making them unsafe for canning.”

However, tomatoes harvested before the fall freeze and then frozen can be canned because they do not change acidity. Blakeslee said however, that the texture will change after canning and become very soft.

“The best choice for canning previously frozen tomatoes is to make a well-cooked product, such as a stewed or crushed tomato product, or made into tomato juice or sauce,” Blakeslee said.

Canning frozen tomatoes by whole or quarters is not recommended.

“They will pack into the jars differently, absorb moisture differently, and the heat transfers through the jars differently,” Blakeslee said. Because of these changes, under-processing and spoilage may occur.

Blakeslee reminds gardeners that tomato canning recipes are based on fresh – not frozen – tomatoes.

Blakeslee, who also is coordinator of K-State’s Rapid Response Center for Food Science, publishes a monthly newsletter called You Asked It! that provides numerous tips on food safety.

More information is also available from local extension offices in Kansas.
FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Rapid Response Center, https://www.rrc.k-state.edu
You Asked It! newsletter, https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/newsletter
K-State Research and Extension local offices, https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html

K-State Research and Extension is a short name for the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, a program designed to generate and distribute useful knowledge for the wellbeing of Kansans. Supported by county, state, federal and private funds, the program has county extension offices, experiment fields, area extension offices and regional research centers statewide. Its headquarters is on the K-State campus in Manhattan. For more information, visit www.ksre.ksu.edu. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Story By:
Maddy Rohr
Maddy23@ksu.edu

For more information:
Karen Blakeslee
785-532-1673
kblakesl@k-state.edu