



A RAINBOW of flavors are preserved in canning jars at Cathy Boissineau's home. Pictured, from left, are carrots, green beans, pickled beets, dill pickles and waxed beans.

Canning for health, necessity

And preserving your own food can be fun

By Amy Hubbell
Of The Enterprise staff

Canning has been a part of Shirley Dunklow's life for as long as she can recall.

"I remember my grandma Plamondon and my mom (Dorothy Chimoski) canning," said Dunklow, who with her husband, Jerry, raised six children in Lake Leelanau. "This has been an 'off year.' I don't have any kids in my house anymore, so it's been a little different."

But the modest results of this year's harvest will be available to eat all winter long thanks to a French inventor.

In the 1790s, Nicolas Appert discovered that the application of heat to food in sealed glass bottles preserved food from deterioration.

Dunklow, who sells produce from her backyard garden, is off to a late start, just starting to can tomatoes this year.

She plans to back off a bit in her production.

"I used to do 50, 60 quarts a year," she said.

No Campbell's soup for her family. She cans her own tomato soup from a recipe found in her well-worn Ball Canning book.

Another longtime favorite, particularly with her children, was an applesauce made from early gold and gingergold varieties that were grown locally.

"It was so sweet, you didn't have to add any sugar," Dunklow said. "I used to make cases of that."

Her basement shelves already are lined with green beans, two varieties of pickles and salsa.

"Everybody's got to have some salsa," she explained.

Later this fall, the canner will be putting up beef and pork, which provides a tasty all-in-one meal complete with meat and gravy.

While all of her children are grown, they still enjoy the fruits of their mother's labor each Christmas when they get a "care package" filled with the favorite homegrown goods.

"They get excited about what's in the baskets," she said.

In fact, her two daughters and daughters-in-law are expressing interest in carrying on a practice that goes back multiple generations.

Over the summer, the Michigan State University Extension offered a three-session class on home canning at Oryana Community Coop in Traverse City.

Interest in canning appears to have grown hand-in-hand with the local food movement. People are canning today because they 'choose to' — not because they have to.

"It was a necessity for us. I did odd jobs, but I couldn't really work fulltime until after the last one was in pre-school," Dunklow said.

Unlike Dunklow, Cathy Boissineau didn't grow up canning. But it's become an annual ritual at her Empire Township home.

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CATHY BOISSINEAU of Empire Township is shown here sterilizing the jars she'll fill with garden goods to be canned and eaten over the winter.



HAYDEN LaPAUGH holds his fungi after hunting for morels with his father, Eric LaPaugh, this past spring. The LaPaughs often hunt for mushrooms in Leelanau County.

Fall a time for foraging for fungi

By Jen Murphy
of the Enterprise staff

"It's about being out in nature, going slow, and getting to know what's around you," said mushroomer Eric LaPaugh. "It's really calming and therapeutic."

At 7 years old, LaPaugh became a frequent hunter of mushrooms in Leelanau County. He remembers hunting for morels every May for his grandfather's birthday. The last 10 to 15 years, LaPaugh has expanded his fungi-finding palette to include species he considers "easily identifiable" — chicken of the woods, hen of the woods and oyster mushrooms.

"It's a treasure hunt, too. You're out wandering in the woods. You just go out and wander, and you happen to find mushrooms," he said. "It can be challenging, but it can be rewarding as well."

With such a dry early-to-mid August, finding mushrooms has been a challenge without much

luck for LaPaugh.

My how things have changed with several inches of rain and warm temps. Now he'll bring home mushroom meals at a time.

"Mushrooms are a staple for our family," he said.

Learning to identify which mushrooms were edible took LaPaugh quite a bit of time. To gain knowledge, LaPaugh said he took a class and read books. He also taught wilderness survival classes, and foraging for foods is a big part of that experience.

"Do as much research as you can," he advised newbies. "Read, take a class. You really want to go out with somebody who knows. You don't want to eat the wrong mushroom."

That's what the experts all say as well.

"You do this at your own risk," said Linda Scribner, a certified wild mushroom expert licensed to commercially harvest and sell wild mushrooms in Michigan. "You have to take on

that personal risk... There are a lot of things that are look-alikes. And that's the danger."

That said, the fall season is one of the best for mushroom hunting in Leelanau County.

"We have a unique corner of the world here in northwestern Michigan," Scribner said. "You have so much variety going into the woods."

According to Scribner, common varieties native to Leelanau include black trumpet, lion's mane, chanterelle, hen of the woods, and hedgehog or sweet tooth.

Like LaPaugh, Scribner draws inspiration from the search.

"It's mind-inspiring to be outdoors," she said. "You use outdoor skills like using a compass and navigating, but the added bonus is you feel like the hunter-gatherer and can bring something home to the table."

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**Be safe
out there**