



Live Farm Fresh Without the Farm™

## **Living Homegrown Podcast Episode #01 Q & A Episode: Why Bother With Canning & Preserving**

**Show Notes: [www.LivingHomegrown.com/01](http://www.LivingHomegrown.com/01)**

You're listening to the LivingHomegrown Podcast, episode #1

**Announcer:** Welcome to the Living Homegrown Podcast, where it's all about how to live farm fresh, without the farm. To help guide the way to a more flavourful and sustainable lifestyle is your host, national PBS TV producer and canning expert Theresa Loe.

**Theresa Loe:** Hey there everyone, and welcome to episode #1 of the show.

It's kind of exciting...it's episode 1...I feel like we should be...celebrating with a Jamtini or something. I'll be sure to put a recipe in the show notes for how to make a jamtini. It's a great drink you make with homemade jam so it would be perfect if we all had one right now.

My name is Theresa Loe and my goal with this podcast is to help you live closer to your food. And I will be doing that by answering your questions on canning & preserving, food crafting and small space homesteading. And I'll also be interviewing experts that I know through my work as one of the producers on the national PBS TV show, Growing A Greener World with Joe Lamp'l.

If want to know about this podcast, my online canning academy or if you are just curious about dirt of MY background, just be sure to listen to episode 00. It's just a short little episode that's kind of like an about me page on a blog or website. And it gives you the whole scoop.

Okay, so today is a Q & A episode with a reader question from my website, LivingHomegrown.com.

And I just think it is perfect question for kicking off this podcast series because it's a simple question that I get asked all the time.

And if you're a canner or food crafter or even someone who grows your own food (or you're just interested in getting into this DIY realm of food), then it's probably a question that you're gonna be asked at some point as well.

So let's just dive right into the question. It's from Julie and she writes

**Reader Question:**

*I've just started to get into canning and I've have made a few jams so far and it has been a lot of fun. Right now, I'm reading everything I can get my hands on and I'm looking forward to experimenting with pickle making this summer.*

*However...I'm finding a little push back from my family on all of this. They love the jams – because they taste great. But as I start talking about maybe buying a pressure canner some day or learning to ferment food, they just don't get it.*

*My mother in law thinks the whole thing is silly and doesn't understand why I would go to all this trouble when (according to her) I can just buy everything at the store.*

*I'm hoping you can give me a great answer to say when people ask me...why am I doing this? Because I can't seem to put it into words other than to say..."it's fun!"*

Well hey Julie, thank you so much for your question.

First of all – yes...It is very fun. But man...it is SO much more than that.

So let's start with the comment that people think you can buy what you're preserving in the store.

Listen. You can't.

You can't buy these things in the store.

You can't buy "Rose-Pluot Jam" or "Drunken Cherries" or any number of crazy named preserves at a typical grocery store. And if you have those things in your grocery store then man I want to live in your neighbourhood. Because I don't have anything like that out here in Los Angeles.

But those are things that either I've mad or my students have created and the flavor is awesome.

Homemade preserves are unique. They are special artisan foods that you create and can be just as unique as a signature dish by a famous chef. They are created out of your kitchen with love and artistry. And no one else will make them like you do...they are uniquely you.

**So, one of the biggest reasons to can and preserve is for flavor.** And you really touched on that in your comment when you said everyone loves the flavor of your jam. Well you're right, you just can't get that kind of flavor anywhere else.

Now let me give you an example of an "aha moment" I had several years ago because it kind of created as a shift in the way I look at preserving my own food.

Prior to this shift, I had been canning my whole life. As a kid growing up in Southern California, my family grew and preserved some of the food in lots of different ways. And for many years, I had been growing a lot of food on our tiny 1/10<sup>th</sup> of an acre homestead here in Los Angeles. And I preserved a lot of it!

Now my family also has property up in Northern California and on that property my dad has planted the most incredible white peach tree. Now this is one of those peaches that you have to eat leaning forward on one leg ...And what I mean by that is...that when you bite into it the juice just drips down your arms and your chin, and you have to kinda lean forward so you don't get it all over the front of you. And it's best to eat it outside. When you bite into one of those peaches, it is bursting with flavor and juice. It's absolutely...awesome

Now one summer my family (my husband and my boys and I) we were up at the property and the peaches were at their peak. We just happened to hit that magic week where the clouds parted and the peaches were heaven. Well after we ate so many peaches that I was sure my entire family would be sick, I decided that I had to come up with a way to take some home. So I picked some peaches, and I decided to make a jam. I grabbed a standard jam recipe out of one of my mom's canning books, and a box of pectin (you know just a regular, store bought pectin). And if you have ever made that kind of jam, it takes a whole lot of sugar. So I had the recipe, the pectin and a whole lot of sugar and I made up this batch of jam.

I just followed the recipe straight.

And after it cooled, I was really excited to taste it. – because I hadn't tasted it while I was making it.

And I expected the taste to be the same peach flavor I had experienced right off that tree.

...Well when I tasted it, it tasted...terrible! It tasted like peach flavored sugar. And all that magic? It was gone. It was covered up by all that sugar!

And it was at that moment that I realized that although I had many reasons to can food, for me one of the first reasons was about creating a time capsule of that peak flavor that I had experienced right off that tree. And I needed to from then on make a conscious effort to do that every time.

So that meant choosing my recipe just a little more carefully and using everything in my power as a canner to capture what we as gardeners work so hard to create. So whether it was that magic moment of ripeness from that peach tree or the sweetness of a warm summer heirloom tomato right off the vine, my ultimate goal from then on was to package that moment up in a jar.

And for the record, after that sugary disaster, I marched right back out to that tree, and I picked some more fruit and I made a second batch of jam. But this time, I used a low sugar recipe and I bumped it up with spices. And that second jam? It was pure heaven in a jar. In fact it's become legend with my friends and if you ever watch my twitter feed or Facebook feed right around Christmas time, you're gonna see that people start asking me if they're still on the list. And what they're talking about is if they are on the list to get a jar of that jam for Christmas. We now have to plan our entire family vacation around that peach tree every year, just so I can make that jam.

Now you are probably wanting that recipe about now, so I'll tell you that it is on my blog and I will have a link to it in the show notes for this episode.

You can just go to [LivingHomegrown.com/01](http://LivingHomegrown.com/01) to get it.

So...aside from flavor, let me tell you some other reasons that I find people like us like to put up food...and just to be clear, these reasons work not just for canning and preserving. It's also about doing things like making cheese or bread or even growing your own vegetables...it is all tied together.

## **2) So the second reason to do these things is to know what's in your food**

You want to know if it is low sugar or high sugar.

You want to know if it is organic or GMO.

You want to know that there's nothing in that food that you didn't put there yourself.



**3) I think it is also about knowing the story of your food**

Where did it come from?

How was it grown?

Was it even sprayed?

What is the history of that seed or tree?

Because you know what? ALL food has a story and by crafting your own food and growing our own food, we know EXACTLY what that story is.

**4) And for me it's also about Community**

Because Canning and preserving is a way of sharing my garden with other people. So when you can, you can give away just a little bit of your time and a little bit of yourself when you hand somebody that jar. And to me that's a really special thing.

**5) Another reason is just preserving a bountiful harvest**

If you grow food, you are always going to have a time where it all comes on at once. It notoriously happens, especially with zucchini. And by canning and preserving it, you're saving that crop for later so that it doesn't go to waste. You worked really hard to grow that food, and you don't want to waste it.

**6) Also canning your own food is part of a more sustainable & local lifestyle**

It's not just about saving food for later. It's about eating locally all year long. Even when it's out of season. So when you pull that jar off the shelf in the middle of winter you're still eating locally sourced food and it still has in season flavor. And you're also leaving a smaller carbon footprint by eating locally. You're supporting local agriculture. And that means you're putting money back into the community that you live in. And that's a pretty cool thing.

**7) It's also about sharing tradition**

Now my mother taught me how to can and I went through Master Food Preserver training and culinary training. But I am now teaching my two teenage sons how to can food. And they currently can make a pretty mean

batch of cinnamon plum jam. That's their speciality and their favourite thing to make. But I feel by teaching my kids the lost arts, I am helping connect them to traditions of our past and hopefully those skills will serve them as adults.

And by the way, if you have boys, they usually love to cook. When my boys were young, we approached it kind of like a mad science experiment and they had a lot of fun with it.

**8) And the last reason for canning food – and if you're keeping track this one is #8 - is to save money** – especially when you're talking about putting up organic produce, which can be really expensive in the stores. Now not all canning is automatically a giant money saver – but a lot of it is. And it's a big reason for why so many people get into canning in the first place.

Now Julie that was probably WAY more than you wanted as an answer, but I'm just hoping that at least one of those reasons will resonate with you so that when someone else comes up to you and says "why would you even bother to do this canning stuff?" that you have just an answer that comes out automatically and you can say it with passion and conviction.

So that's my Q & A episode for today.

And I should probably say right here that if you have a question that you would like to see answered either here on this podcast or on my blog, or even our TV show, head on over to my website. I have a special section there where you can leave a voice mail message or a written message. And your feedback directly influences what I'm going to be covering. So all you have to do is visit [LivingHomegrown.com/ASK](http://LivingHomegrown.com/ASK)

That is A.S.K. and I will check out each and every one of your comments. I would love to hear from you.



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Thank you so much for joining me here today. I know how busy you are and I just really appreciate that you took time out to listen. So until next time, keep working towards living just a bit more local and living homegrown.

Take care...

**Announcer: That's all for this episode of the Living Homegrown podcast. Visit [LivingHomegrown.com](http://LivingHomegrown.com) to download Theresa's free canning resource guide and find more tips on how to live farm fresh, without the farm. Be sure to join Theresa Loe next time on the Living Homegrown podcast.**