
Living Homegrown Podcast – Episode 73
Canning Jar Storage Tips
Show Notes are at: www.LivingHomegrown.com/73

Theresa: This is the Living Homegrown Podcast, episode number 73.

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 flavorful and sustainable lifestyle is your, host National PBS TV producer and canning expert Theresa Loe.

Theresa: Hey there everybody, welcome to the Living Homegrown Podcast. I'm your host, Theresa Loe, and this podcast is where we talk about living farm fresh without the farm, and that can mean preserving, fermenting, small space food growing, and just taking small steps towards living a more sustainable lifestyle. All the different ways that we can live closer to our food even if we have little or no garden space at all. If you'd like to dive deep into any of these topics or learn about my online canning academy, just visit my website, livinghomegrown.com.

The first announcement that I wanted to make before we dive into this week's episode is that I'm hosting a brand new live webinar in just a few weeks. I'm hosting it the first week of November 2016. Now, this is a brand new webinar that I've never shared before and I'm really excited to talk about it. It's 100% geared towards people who have absolutely never canned before. People who want to learn how to can but are maybe a little intimidated or maybe they just quite literally are absolutely afraid to start canning.

The webinar focuses on the top rookie mistakes that people make when canning and I go over what they are, how to avoid them, how to stay safe while still packing a ton of flavor into your pantry. The focus of this webinar is on water bath canning for complete beginner.

If you've never canned before and you'd like to learn how, this is the training for you. I talk about what canning can do for you and how you can get started, all of that. The webinar is going to be live the first week of November 2016, and I can't say the date right now, because at the time that I'm recording this, I'm not 100% sure what the date will be. If

you'd like to sign-up for the free masterclass, then just go to livinghomegrown.com/class. That's C-L-A-S-S.

By the time this episode comes out, I'll have it all setup for you to sign up there for the masterclass, or sign up sheet to get notified when the masterclass is ready. If you'd like to learn how to can and do it properly and safely, plus learn some of my chef tips for making your preserves taste fantastic, then this is the class for you.

The second announcement is that this episode right now that you're listening to is a special encore presentation of an episode from early 2015. Now, you're probably wondering, "Why in the heck would I be putting out an encore presentation?" The reason is that I'm working on this brand new project for Living Homegrown. I'm super excited about it. For the last few months, I've been having a little trouble scheduling in time for this project. Different things just kept getting in the way.

We just finished filming our PBS season, or PBS show season for Growing a Greener World, and I really wanted to take just a couple of weeks to focus on this new project. To do that, I decided I needed to take two weeks of a hiatus from producing the podcast. Now, really, two weeks isn't really enough to do this whole project. It's actually going to take me a few months, but this will give me a really great jump start.

I certainly didn't want to just stop producing the podcast for two weeks and have it just be air silence, because I know as a podcast listener, that really annoys me when podcasters just stop producing their podcast for no reason and then they start-up again randomly. I understand it, because podcasting takes a tremendous amount of time. People who have never tried to produce their own podcast don't realize the huge amount of work it takes to get your podcast in a rhythm. When you stop, it can take you a little while to get going back up again. I didn't want to do that to you guys.

Instead, I'm going to just bring up this encore presentation so you still have something to listen to, and it's from so far back that you may have never heard it. I have a lot of new listeners just in the last six months, so you may have missed this particular episode. It's filled with really solid information about pantry storage and about how to take care of your jars after you have done your canning. It's also been extremely popular. People always write and say that they didn't understand or know this information before listening to this episode, so it's a really valuable

episode, and that's why I picked it.

I'm just going to let you dive into this encore presentation on pantry storage and taking care of your jars after you can. Remember, that if you'd like to participate in my free masterclass training for brand new canners, just signup at livinghomegrown.com/class. Okay? All right. I'll let you dive right in.

Today's episode is about canning jar rings. I know that doesn't sound really exciting, but I get a lot of questions about how to store your jars after you have made your preserves, and a lot of people don't realize you're not supposed to store your jars with the rings on them. You know what I'm talking about, right? Those standard, two-piece canning jar lids and rings. The flat part sits on top of the jar and then the ring tightens around the jar lid and holds it in place while you're processing it either in a water bath or a pressure canner.

Most canners use this type of lid. A lot of people don't know that after you're all finished processing that jar, you're supposed to remove the ring before you store the jars. When I teach my classes, or when I'm dealing with some of my students that are within my canning course, when I talk to them about this, I get that, "What?" look in their eyes or in their responses and e-mails. I wanted to make sure that I covered it since we're in the middle of canning season and a lot of you guys are starting to put up your preserves and store them in your pantry. I want you to understand the why behind this rule, because it will make a lot of sense to you and I think it will help you a lot in the long run.

The reason most people don't know about this rule is because when you look online or you look inside some of the canning books, they show these beautiful pantries filled with all the homemade preserves and they all have the rings on them. I have even been guilty of this myself, I like to photograph my jars as soon as they come out of the canner, because I'm so excited. Their bright colors, and they look fantastic. I'm taking a picture of them while they're cooling. When they're cooling, you're supposed to leave that ring on.

The jars are sitting there, they're photographed, and then when you look at them, you make the assumption that that's how they should be sitting on the pantry shelf all the time. Just to be clear, you do need those rings to stay on the jars while they're cooling down after processing. The ring should only be removed after the jars have reached room temperature.

The rings have a very very specific purpose, but once that purpose is over, they're supposed to be removed.

Let me explain. The main purpose of that canning jar ring is to align the lid properly on to the jar and to hold it in place while you're trying to create that vacuum seal during processing. After that, it's served its purpose, so then you're supposed to remove it when you set your jar on the pantry.

Three things can happen if you do not remove the rings, and this is what I want you to know. First of all, you can get a fault seal. The ring can inadvertently hold a lid on to the jar that actually has a broken seal. In other words, the vacuum seal is compromised and that ring will make it look as if that jar is okay and perfectly sealed while it's sitting in your pantry.

Later, when you go to pull that jar off the shelf and you open it up, you may or may not notice that the jar was already open. Depending upon how long that jar has been sitting there, you could really have something that's potentially starting to spoil or even if you're talking about a low acid food, you could be dealing with something a lot more dangerous. That's the first reason, you can get a fault seal by leaving the rings on.

The second reason you want to remove that ring is because when you leave it on, you can get rusting happening under the ring along the jar. Have you ever had one of those jars that you pulled off and you left the ring on and it's like sealed with cement? It's just totally stuck and you can't get that ring off. That's because of the corrosion and rust that happens under that ring. It makes sense, you've pulled it out of a water bath or you've pulled it out of a steamy pressure canner, and there's a lot of moisture under that ring.

You start to get the rust and corrosion, and that rust and corrosion can actually break your seal of your jar, especially when you're having to really crank down to open it up. You can end up breaking the seal. When that happens, once again, you pull the ring off, you don't know if that lid came off right then or if it's been sitting on the shelf unsealed for days, or weeks, or even months. You start to wonder, "Is this jar okay?" It takes us back to step one again of you've gotten a fault seal. That's the other reason for taking the rings off.

The third reason is you can get mold growing under that ring. That mold

can lead to a vacuum seal being lost. This happens because some of the food can siphon out of the jar during processing and it can get trapped under that ring. As it sits, it begins to mold and grow, and that mold can actually push up on the edge of the lid and break your seal.

In fact, after your jars are completely cooled, you're supposed to remove the rings and wipe down the jars to remove any sticky residue, especially if you're working with anything that has a sugar content, like jam or jelly. The way it's supposed to work is that you fill your jars, you place on the flat lid, the ring, and you process it in your water bath or your pressure canner, and then when you take them out, you let them cool down to room temperature, usually overnight, and then you remove the rings and wipe down your jars. You can add your labels or whatever you're going to do so that you remember what's inside those jars and then you place them on your pantry shelf.

While we're on this topic, let me give you one more little bonus tip. When you store those jars in your pantry, you're supposed to avoid stacking them on top of each other. Again, a lot of times, photographs, and books, or on the internet will show those jars stacked and it gives the illusion that it's okay to leave them like that while they're sitting on the pantry. Actually, there's two reasons you should not do that. One; is that the weight of the jar can break the seal of the bottom jar, and that makes sense.

The second reason is that stacking the jars will prevent you from seeing if the bottom jar has a problem, or is spoiling, or has lost its seal. This is especially important when you're dealing with something like botulism, because when a jar is sitting there and something starts to happen inside the jar, it usually will pop the lid off of that jar, and that's a really good indicator that there's a problem and that you should not eat the contents of that jar. If you have them stacked, you won't know. That is the reason for not stacking.

I know it's a total pain to have a single layer of your jars and not stack them on top of each other, but at least now you understand the reason behind that recommendation.

All right, thank so much for listening to this special encore presentation. Remember that if you'd like to participate in my free masterclass training for brand new canners, then you can sign-up at livinghomegrown.com/class, and this masterclass will be the first week



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of November 2016. Thanks so much for joining me today you guys. I really appreciate you taking the time out of your busy day to listen. IN the meantime, just try to live a little more local, seasonal, and homegrown. Take care.

Announcer: That's all for this episode of the Living Homegrown Podcast. Visit 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.