

Gifts From the Garden (published 2025-08-23)  
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Now is a productive and busy time for gardeners. Flowers, herbs, fresh vegetables and fruits are everywhere! Gardeners understand the value of sharing our abundance as well as preserving it for future use. As we share our extra produce, we also are sharing our love of gardening. Making gifts, whether edible or decorative, satisfies our desire to give as well as create.

Making and taking a bouquet of cut flowers with scented herbs is a quick and welcome gift. Neighbors always enjoy a basket of fresh tomatoes, zucchini, cucumbers and peppers. You can gift by dividing and sharing perennials, cuttings you've rooted or extra seedlings you've grown. Saving and gifting your own packets of seeds can be delightful surprises for your friends and neighbors.

In addition to preserving our harvest for our own pantry and freezer, we can plan to make enough for Christmas gifts and other occasions. Canning, freezing, and drying or dehydrating are some of the most common preserving methods. High-acid foods like some fruits, jams, jellies, pickles, and tomato are easiest to can. A critical reminder here, when preserving foods, make sure the preserving methods and recipes are reliable, research based, and tested. The National Center for Home Food Preservation website <https://nchfp.uga.edu/> is a reliable source. This canning class video from Kanas State university is available if you've never canned or need an update. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGpIvFWTXXs&list=PLUdL3XGccEJHT7Xki\\_pSc495Su9rZAVns&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGpIvFWTXXs&list=PLUdL3XGccEJHT7Xki_pSc495Su9rZAVns&index=1)

Dehydrating is an excellent way to preserve flowers, herbs, and fruits to be used for edible gifts like tea blends, baked goods, and flavored vinegars. Teas can be made from your favorite blend of dried herbs and flowers and presented in a jar or bag. Infused vinegars can be beautiful in decorative jars displaying a fresh sprig of herb, lemon spirals, or fruits with recipes for vinaigrettes or marinades. Infused salts make an unexpected gift. We all have garlic and celery salt in our spice cabinets, but we don't think of making our own. We can process herbs, citrus zests, and spices with coarse or flaky salt to make our own salt blends.

Freezing is easier and quicker than canning. Compound butters and lemon curd are examples of gifts that are best frozen. When packing, use a gel pack or dry ice to make sure your gift remains frozen during transport.

Flowers, fruits and herbs can be dried and used as decorative gifts. For example, dried lavender tied in small organza gift bags is a great air freshener for closets and drawers. Choose dried rose petals, other favorite dried flowers, herbs and essential oils to make sugar scrubs and other pleasing skin care products. Wreaths and bouquets of mixed dried plants make long-lasting decorative gifts.

Gifts presented beautifully wrapped and carefully labeled show your regard for that person and your creativity and joy in gifting. Utilize what you have on hand for use in gardening and food preparation. Mason jars, in addition to storing jams, jellies and vegetables, can be used to store

dried herbs, tea blends, and potpourri. Cheesecloth over a lid makes a rustic presentation tied with twine. Adding a wooden spoon, dried fruit slices, or evergreen sprigs are nice touches.

Source decorative bottles and jars at craft stores and on-line to display herbal vinegars. Baskets are perfect for groupings of items, such as a loaf of bread with homemade jam. If you are presenting a garden bouquet or plant cuttings, wrap in damp paper towels covered with a plastic bag to keep them hydrated. Pleasingly cover that in brown paper and tie with kitchen string. You can find and personalize free downloadable food labels on the internet or make your own gift tags. Don't overlook the importance of labeling your food gifts. Your recipient needs to know the name of food item, the date preserved, how to store, and the expiration date. Adding nice note with a recipe is always thoughtful.

Along with gifts from your garden, you are sharing your creativity, friendship, and joy of gardening. May you inspire your recipients to do just that and appreciate the joy of gardening! Happy Gardening!

Take advantage of the recipes, templates, and many other gifting ideas in the links below.

## **Resources**

“Healthy Canning,”

<https://www.healthycanning.com/>

“Drying and Preserving Plant Materials for Decorative Uses,”

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP004>

“Homegrown Teas,”

<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/vegetables/homegrown-teas/>

“Gifts from the Garden,”

<https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/design/outdoor-living/gifts-from-the-garden/>

“Preserving Food: Flavored Vinegars,”

[https://nchfp.uga.edu/papers/UGA\\_Publications/uga\\_flavored\\_vinegars.pdf](https://nchfp.uga.edu/papers/UGA_Publications/uga_flavored_vinegars.pdf)

“Preparing and Preserving Lemon Curd,”

<https://nchfp.uga.edu/resources/entry/preparing-and-preserving-lemon-curd>

“Fresh Produce Donation Guidelines for Gardeners,”

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/e3201\\_wcag\\_2.08.pdf](https://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/e3201_wcag_2.08.pdf)

“USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning,”

<https://www.healthycanning.com/wp-content/uploads/USDA-Complete-Guide-to-Home-Canning-2015-revision.pdf>

For more information about gardening, visit UTHORT's YouTube site for helpful videos:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjS3d1IkIH1OZ1Z2qPvhgfQ>

Or Washington County's YouTube site:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@utextensionwashingtoncounty>

**How do I ask a question?**

If you have a question for the Master Gardeners, submit them to us on our website at [www.netmga.net](http://www.netmga.net). Click the link at the top of the page, "ASK A MASTER GARDENER" to send in your question. Questions that are not answered in this column will receive a response from a Master Gardener to the contact information you provide..