

## Selecting, Preparing, and Canning: Tomatoes, Introduction<sup>1</sup>

---

United States Department of Agriculture Extension Service<sup>2</sup>

**Quality:** Select only disease-free, preferably vine-ripened, firm fruit for canning.

**Caution:** Do not can tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines. Green tomatoes are more acidic than ripened fruit and can be canned safely with any of the following recommendations.

**Acidification:** To ensure safe acidity in whole, crushed, or juiced tomatoes, add two tablespoons of bottled lemon juice or 1/2 teaspoon of citric acid per quart of tomatoes. For pints, use one tablespoon bottled lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon citric acid. Acid can be added directly to the jars before filling with product. Add sugar to offset acid taste, if desired. Four tablespoons of a 5 percent acidity vinegar per quart may be used instead of lemon juice or citric acid. However, vinegar may cause undesirable flavor changes.

**Recommendation:** Use of a pressure canner will result in higher quality and more nutritious canned tomato products. If your pressure canner cannot be operated above 15 PSI, select a process time at a lower pressure.

- 
1. This document is FCS 8182, a series of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published: February 1993. Reviewed: June 2008 and March 2011. This document was extracted from the *Complete Guide to Home Canning*, Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 539, USDA. It was originally published on CD-ROM as part of HE 8149, Guide 3: Selecting, Preparing, and Canning Tomatoes and Tomato Products. Please visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>
  2. Reviewed for use in Florida by Amy Simonne, assistant professor, Food Safety and Quality, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M. University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Millie Ferrer-Chancy, Interim Dean