



Using, Storing and Preserving Parsnips

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Michigan-grown parsnips are available in September and October.

Parsnips should be left in the ground until their tops freeze in late fall — the flavor becomes sweeter when the roots are exposed to temperatures below 40 degrees F. Unharvested roots may be left in the ground to be used during the winter. Mulch the bed to keep the soil from freezing, and mark the location with stakes.

Small and medium-width roots have the best flavor and texture. Large roots tend to be woody and fibrous.

Recommended varieties

Albion, Javelin, Lancer.

Yield

4 medium (1 pound) parsnips equal 2 cups diced and cooked.

Fresh storage

Parsnips are best if stored in cold, moist storage – at temperatures between 32 degrees and 40 degrees F with a relative humidity of 90 to 95 percent. The colder part of the refrigerator offers this range of temperatures. To maintain a high relative humidity, put the parsnips in a plastic bag or place parsnips unbagged in the vegetable crisper of the refrigerator, which should be more than half



full of produce. If the parsnips are to be washed before being put into moist storage, be sure to remove excess water or allow it to evaporate. The average storage life of parsnips using this method is 2 to 6 months.

How to preserve

Parsnips may be canned, but freezing results in a better product.

Freezing

Choose small to medium-sized parsnips so they will be tender and not woody. Remove the tops, wash, peel and cut into 1/2-inch cubes or slices. It may be necessary to remove a fibrous core. Heat the parsnips in boiling water for 3 minutes. Cool the parsnips in ice water and drain. Do not leave water droplets on the parsnips — these will cause freezer burn to occur. Pack into containers, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

Hot pack

Wash parsnips, scrubbing them very well. Peel, remove fibrous core, slice or dice the parsnips. Place the parsnips in a saucepan, cover with boiling water and boil for 5 minutes. Pack hot pieces into hot jars leaving 1 inch headspace. If desired, add 1/2 teaspoon of salt to pints; 1 teaspoon of salt to quarts. Fill each jar to 1 inch from the top of the jar with boiling hot cooking liquid. Wipe the jar rims. Adjust the lids and process the jars.

Lawn or garden questions?

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Call toll-free 1-888-678-3464.

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Canning

Pressure canning is the ONLY safe method of canning parsnips. Parsnips MUST be pressure canned for a specific period of time to avoid the potential of the food-borne illness botulism.

PRESSURE CANNING PROCEDURES FOR PARSNIPS:

Place jar rack, 2 inches of water and filled jars with lids in canner. Fasten lid and heat canner on high heat. After exhausting a steady stream of steam for 10 minutes, add weighted gauge or close petcock to pressurize the canner. Start timing when the canner reaches the desired pressure.

When processing is complete, remove canner from the heat. Air cool canner until it is fully depressurized. Then slowly remove the weighted gauge or open the petcock, wait 2 more minutes, and unfasten and carefully remove the canner lid.

Remove jars from the canner with a jar lifter and place them on a towel or rack. DO NOT retighten the screw bands. Air cool jars for 12 to 24 hours. Remove screw bands and check the lids to see if they sealed. Wash, dry, label and store jars in a clean, cool, dark, dry place. If after 12 to 24 hours any lids are unsealed, the parsnips MUST BE REPROCESSED. Examine and replace any defective jar. Dump out the parsnips and liquid into a pan, reheat until boiling, and fill hot jars with hot parsnips and liquid, leaving 1 inch headspace. Place NEW LIDS and screw bands on the jars and process for the recommended times listed below.

DIAL-GAUGE PRESSURE CANNER

ALTITUDES

0-1000 feet:

Process at 11 pounds of pressure Pints 30 minutes
Quarts 35 minutes

1001-2000 feet:

Process at 11 pounds of pressure Pints 30 minutes
Quarts 35 minutes

2001-4000 feet:

Process at 12 pounds of pressure Pints 30 minutes
Quarts 35 minutes

4001-6000 feet:

Process at 13 pounds of pressure Pints 30 minutes
Quarts 35 minutes

6001-8000 feet:

Process at 14 pounds of pressure Pints 30 minutes
Quarts 35 minutes

WEIGHTED-GAUGE PRESSURE CANNER

ALTITUDES

0-1000 feet:

Process at 10 pounds of pressure Pints 30 minutes
Quarts 35 minutes

1001 feet and above:

Process at 15 pounds of pressure Pints 30 minutes
Quarts 35 minutes

Preserved parsnips are best if they are used within 12 months.

Resources

How Much Should I Buy? Reprinted 2011. Michigan State University Extension Bulletin CYFC064.

Harvesting and Storing Fresh Garden Vegetables. 2003. Bulletin 617. University of Idaho, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

Andress, E.C., and J.A. Harrison (eds.). 2006. So Easy to Preserve. Bulletin 989 (fifth edition). Cooperative Extension Service, University of Georgia, Athens.

Hodges, L., and D.A. Smith. 2006. Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

This fact sheet was reviewed by MSU Extension educators Laurie Messing, Eileen Haraminac and Hannah Stevens.

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