



Using, Storing and Preserving

Rhubarb

Michigan-grown rhubarb is available in mid-June, with a second harvest in August.



Prepared by:

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Recommended varieties

Red Petioles, Canada Red, Cherry Red, Crimson Red, MacDonald, Ruby, Valentine, Green Petioles, Victoria.

Storage and food safety

- Trim and discard leaves. The stalks can be kept in the refrigerator, unwashed and wrapped tightly in plastic, for up to 3 weeks.
- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.
- For best quality and nutritional value, preserve no more than your family can consume in 12 months.

How to preserve

Select young, tender, well-colored stalks. Trim off leaves. Wash stalks and cut into ½- to 1-inch pieces. In a large saucepan, add ½ cup sugar or a Splenda-type sugar substitute for each quart of rhubarb. Let stand until juice appears. Heat gently to boiling. Immediately pack rhubarb mixture in hot jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust two-piece lids and process in a boiling water bath.

Process pints or quarts 15 minutes if you live 1000 feet above sea level or below. If you live at an altitude of 1001 to 6000 feet above sea level, process for 20 minutes.

After processing, remove jars of rhubarb from the canner and place on a cooling rack or towel. Let jars sit undisturbed while they cool — from 12 to 24 hours. Then remove rings, check to be sure lids have sealed, wash jars, dry, label and store in a cool, dry place.

Lawn or garden questions?

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Freezing

Choose firm, tender, well-colored stalks with good flavor and few fibers. Wash, trim and cut rhubarb into lengths to fit the package or cut it to the size and in the amount that you need for recipes. You may freeze rhubarb raw or blanched. Heating rhubarb in boiling water for 1 minute and cooling promptly in cold water helps retain color and flavor.

Dry pack – Pack either raw or blanched rhubarb tightly into containers without sugar. Leave headspace. (See chart #2.) Seal and freeze.

Syrup pack – Pack either raw or blanched rhubarb tightly into containers, and cover with cold 40 percent sugar syrup. (See chart #1.) Leave headspace. (See chart #2.) Seal and freeze.

Chart #1. Sugar syrups.

Type of syrup	Percent syrup	Cups of sugar	Cups of water	Yield syrup in cups
Very light	10%	1/2	4	4 1/2 cups
Light	20%	1	4	4 3/4 cups
Medium	30%	1 3/4	4	5 cups
Heavy	40%	2 3/4	4	5 1/3 cups
Very heavy	50%	4	4	6 cups

To make syrup, dissolve sugar in lukewarm water, mixing until the solution is clear. Chill syrup before using. Use just enough cold syrup to cover the prepared rhubarb after it has been placed in the container.

Chart #2. Headspace to allow between packed food and closure.

Type of pack	Container with wide top		Container with narrow top	
	Pint	Quart	Pint	Quart
Liquid pack	1/2 inch	1 inch	3/4 inch	1 1/2 inches
Dry pack	1/2 inch	1/2 inch	1/2 inch	1/2 inch

References

University of Georgia Cooperative Extension. 2006.
So Easy to Preserve (fifth edition). Bulletin 989.