

How to freeze your garden broccoli, cauliflower



Gardening
Carol Savonen
Guest columnist

Question: I am having a bumper crop of broccoli, cauliflower and other brassicas that I planted from plants I started indoors from seed this late winter and early spring. I have so much of all of these that I am thinking I'm going to have to preserve some of these somehow. What would you advise I do with all my broccoli and cauliflower?

And one more question: When I steam or microwave my broccoli and cauliflower, I find dead earwigs and tiny slugs in the water, even though I washed these well before cooking. Any advice on this?

Answer: Congratulations on all your production! First, I'll tell you how to debug your produce. As soon as you harvest your heads of cauliflower and broccoli, bring them indoors and put them in a big bowl or spaghetti pot of cold salt water. I use a couple of tablespoons or more of salt per a gallon of water. This upsets your pests and they try and exit the scene. I usually soak my brassicas in salt water for a half hour or so. Then I cook, refrigerate them for up to a week,

or blanch and freeze them.

Here's how I prepare my broccoli and cauliflower for the freezer. You can't just freeze broccoli straight from the garden. Vegetables have enzymes, which if not stopped by heat, would cause the flavor, color and texture to go downhill. Blanching also cleans your veggies and slows down the loss of vitamins.

Soak, peel, break up: After soaking the heads in salt water, I peel the tough skin off the stem. Then, break the heads up into about 1 1/2 inch pieces.

Boil, blanch: Put them in a steaming basket or colander into a spaghetti pot with about 6 inches of boiling water inside. Put the steamer basket of brassicas (no more than half full per batch) to blanch in boiling water for three minutes. Then, quickly plunge the basket of hot brassicas into another large bowl or pot full of ice cubes and water for three minutes more.

Cool and dry: When the blanched veggies are cool and out of the icewater, I cover the kitchen counter with some clean cotton dish towels and roll up all the pieces in the towels to dry them off a bit. Removing excess moisture prevents the vegetables from sticking all together and getting really icy in the freezer.

Store: I put my blanched, cooled and dried brassicas into clean and dry quart



Soak broccoli grown in your garden in salt water to rid them of pests.

ANNA REED/STATESMAN JOURNAL

and pint plastic containers that I save over the year. Yogurt containers work really well. I have used plastic freezer bags as well as vacuum sealed plastic in the past.

These days, with all the plastic floating around in the universe, I try not to purchase or use single use plastic any more. So it is just yogurt containers for me.

Label: Don't forget to label them with the contents and date preserved. I've kept frozen broccoli for up to a year. It is great in winter quiches and soups.

Crowds

Continued from Page 1A

But there is hope.

Follow a few commonsense rules, and you can still have a good experience, even during the height of summer and even, sometimes, on the weekend.

Here's a few tips and tricks that I've picked up over a decades of exploring and writing about our great state.

1. Arrive early

It's entirely possible to travel to a very popular destination, on the weekend, and still have a good experience.

The key is getting there early enough. Take Three Pools Recreation Site, home to the beloved turquoise swimming holes of the Little North Santiam. It has become the poster child for a beautiful place marred by crowds.

New rules established last year have sought to fix this issue by only allowing in people who can fit in the 94-space parking lot.

The trick to getting one of those spots, and enjoying the swimming holes before it morphs into madness, is arriving at or before 11 a.m.

Josh Weathers, developed recreation manager for Willamette National Forest, said people who arrive by 10:30 or 11 a.m. usually get a few hours of enjoyment before the place gets too busy to be fun.

Those who arrive later than 11 a.m. — and certainly by noon or 1 p.m. — run a high risk of not getting a parking spot, and being out of luck.

The same type of rule holds true at a place like Road's End Beach in Lincoln City. Parking spots remain plentiful at 11 a.m. and the beach has plenty of space for everyone. But by noon or later, the traffic gets backed up on Highway 101 and finding a spot becomes a ruthless competition.

2. Visit on a weekday

It's not easy for most people to get away during the week. But if you can plan ahead to swing a few midweek days off, it makes all the difference, especially for nabbing campsites at popular destinations.

The best times to get a great campsite, with as little competition as possible, is Monday, Tuesday and Wednes-

day. Thursday and Friday are good for grabbing a campsite for the weekend.

The midweek rule applies just about everywhere, but it's most pressing at small and popular campsites, such as Elk Lake.

Nestled below Battle Axe Mountain, north of Detroit, Elk Lake is a beautiful spot to camp fish, float, swim and launch adventures.

The problem is that the campground is small, with just 17 sites, all first-come, first-served. The Forest Service outlawed "dispersed camping" at Elk Lake last year, which limited the number of campsites even more.

That makes Elk Lake the ideal mid-week destination.

3. Learn about dispersed camping

A surprising number of Oregonians are unaware of "dispersed camping" — simply finding your own place to put down a tent that's not within a campground.

Oregon has thousands of miles of Forest Service roads to unique places on public land. And, with some exceptions, you're allowed to camp where ever you please.

You'll often find more solitude at "dispersed sites." It's also free. The downside, of course, is there are no amenities like a bathroom or water.

The best option is simply to travel USFS roads, the farther out the better, to search for already-created dispersed sites, usually just off the gravel roads. Don't cut down trees or clear your own campsite. Find a place to fit in.

I'd recommend asking Forest Service officials about good and legal areas for dispersed camping ahead of time.

Also, if you pick this option, make extra sure to pack out your garbage and figure out a sanitary way to use for the bathroom. Dispersed sites are notorious for people leaving behind garbage.

One popular area for dispersed camping — although there are rules about where you can do it — is the Quartzville Corridor between Detroit and Sweet Home.

4. Pick a less-traveled trail

Many people have become aware of increasing crowds on the trails in wilderness areas in the Central Cascades, near Bend and Detroit.

That's what's led to the Forest Ser-

For details on more than 300 outdoor destinations around Oregon, download the Statesman Journal's Explore Oregon App on Google Play or the iTunes Store.

vice plan to consider a permit system, likely starting next summer, that would limit the number of people allowed into places like the Three Sisters and Mount Jefferson wilderness areas.

But one thing lost in the conversation about over-crowding and damage to beautiful areas is this: the vast majority of crowding occurs on just a handful of hiking trails.

More than half the use in the Three Sisters, for example, is confined to five trailheads — including the Green Lakes Basin, South Sister climbers trail and other spots off Cascade Lakes Highway near Bend.

Yet there are 48 trailheads in the Three Sisters, many of which get little use.

So, do some research before taking a trip, and pick an area that gets a less use. There are plenty of hikes and backpacking adventures that see few travelers.

5. Travel deeper into the wilderness

While it's true that crowds have increased on trails, almost all of the increase is focused on short and easy hikes.

Once you get deeper into the wild — around six miles from the trailhead — there are actually fewer people in wild areas now than in the 1990s, according to research by Troy Hall, an Oregon State University professor who has tracked use in wild areas across the West.

That's not true of every place, but as a general rule, if you're willing to backpack out 6 miles (and 12 miles round-trip) you'll have a lot less company.

6. Visit Eastern Oregon ranges

The mountain ranges of Eastern Oregon include some of the most beautiful places in the state — the Strawberry, Elkhorn, Steens, Blue and Wallowa ranges.

Do a little extra driving and you'll be

rewarded.

A few of my favorite backpacking spots in Eastern Oregon include the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness and the south side of the Eagle Cap Wilderness in the Wallowa Range.

7. Travel in September

The best month to go exploring in Oregon, for my money, is in September.

The kids are back in school, which means fewer crowds, and the weather is about as good as it gets, with sunny days and cooler nights that often kill off mosquito hordes.

8. Make reservations

If there's no way you can get off work midweek, but you still want to explore a popular area like the Oregon Coast, Little North Santiam or Detroit Lake areas, just get a reservation.

Many campgrounds in those popular areas offer advanced reservations.

Beachside or Tillicum Beach, for example, are two of the best campgrounds on the coast near Yachats. The sites are right on a stunning stretch of beach, putting them in high demand.

The walk-in sites are close to impossible to get, but there are plenty of sites open for reservations if you plan a week or two in advance. The same is true of Southshore Campground, at Detroit, or Canyon Creek Campground, near Opal Creek.

9. Hike to a swimming hole

The places that get the most crowds in summer are swimming holes. That makes a lot of sense, given they're a way to cool off in the forest on boiling days.

But if you're willing to hike into a swimming hole, you can find your own private paradise.

One of the best places for hike-in swimming holes is the Little North Santiam Trail, east of Salem. This area offers the same swimming possibilities as popular Three Pools, but with the added benefit of getting some exercise.

Zach Urness has been an outdoors writer, photographer and videographer in Oregon for 10 years. He is the author of the book "Best Hikes with Kids: Oregon" and "Hiking Southern Oregon." He can be reached at zurness@statesmanjournal.com or (503) 399-6801. Find him on Twitter at @ZachsORoutdoors.

When it comes to your to-do list, put your future first.

To find out how to get your financial goals on track, contact your Edward Jones financial advisor today.

www.edwardjones.com
Member SIPC

Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

OR-SAL0008134-01

LOCAL ADVISORS

Salem Area

<p>Vin Searles FINANCIAL ADVISOR Mission 503-363-0445</p> <p>Michael Wooters FINANCIAL ADVISOR South 503-362-5439</p> <p>Caitlin Davis FINANCIAL ADVISOR West 503-585-1464</p> <p>Jeff Davis FINANCIAL ADVISOR Liberty 503-581-8580</p>	<p>Garry Falor FINANCIAL ADVISOR West 503-588-5426</p> <p>Chip Hutchings FINANCIAL ADVISOR Lancaster 503-585-4689</p> <p>Tim Sparks FINANCIAL ADVISOR Commercial 503-370-6159</p>
---	--

Keizer Area

<p>Sheryl Resner FINANCIAL ADVISOR Keizer 503-304-8641</p>	<p>Mario Montiel FINANCIAL ADVISOR Keizer 503-393-8166</p>
---	---

Surrounding Area

<p>Bridgette Justis FINANCIAL ADVISOR Sublimity 503-769-3180</p> <p>Tim Yount FINANCIAL ADVISOR Silverton 503-873-2454</p>	<p>Kelly Denney FINANCIAL ADVISOR Dallas 503-623-2146</p> <p>David Eder FINANCIAL ADVISOR Stayton 503-769-4902</p>
--	--

Your friendly local dentist ...

Michael Kim, DDS

Now taking New Patients!

Cosmetic • Implant • Bridges/Partials
Extractions • Crowns/Fillings • Root Canals

Enter for our monthly Kindle drawing at each appointment

Brittney, RDH Morgan, RDH

We accept most insurance!

503-873-3530

410 Oak St, Silverton, OR, 97381 | kimsilvertonordentist.com