



Family, Home & Garden Education Center Info Line
Question of the Week

Q: Help, I've spent all morning processing tomatoes and they are floating to the top of the jars. What went wrong?

A: Rest assured; as long as you followed proper processing directions and your jars have sealed, your floating tomatoes are safe to eat. There are a few reasons why tomatoes might float in the jar. If you processed your tomatoes without cooking them first (“raw pack”), they'll probably float. Boil the tomatoes gently for five minutes before filling your canning jars.

Also, when you put tomatoes in the jars, pack them tightly, leaving only ½-inch headspace at the top of the jar before processing in a water bath or pressure canner. Use a wooden stick or plastic wand to remove any extra air bubbles from the jar.

Finally, make sure you use firm, ripe fruit when canning tomatoes or any other product. Always use the best fruits or vegetables available if you are going to spend the time, money and effort to put food away. Never use “seconds” that may contain diseases or molds when canning, freezing or drying the summer’s harvest.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension's Family, Home & Garden Education Center Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or e-mail us at fhgc@ceunh.unh.edu