

practical. In addition, it is best to allow the garage or cellar to cool down in the fall before storing apples there.

Processing Apples

See page 225 for general information if you are not familiar with terms used here.

When processing apples for storage, select a method (canning, freezing, or drying) that is consistent with available storage locations and capacity, and the planned use for the end product.

Apples maintain better texture and color if stored packed in sugar or syrup, but sugar is not necessary for preserving them. Apple juice or water can also be used.

To prepare apples for processing, choose crisp, firm, fully ripe apples. Mealy apples should be avoided or used for sauce. Wash (scrubbing with a soft brush, plastic pot scraper, or cloth will aid in removing bloom and dark spots) and drain. Peel, core, and cut into halves, quarters, or slices.

An enzyme in apple flesh darkens with exposure to air, causing a brownish discoloration. This can be prevented by holding cut apple pieces in an ascorbic acid solution (prepared according to package directions), or a solution of 2 tablespoons of salt and 2 tablespoons of lemon juice per gallon of water, until ready to process them. Drain. (Apples held in lemon juice should be rinsed before using.)

Canning: Allow about 2 3/4 pounds of whole apples per quart. Prepare desired syrup (page 230), allowing 2 cups of syrup for each 5 pounds of apples, and heat to boiling. Add prepared apple quarters or slices and return to a boil, stirring occasionally. Spoon hot apples into jars and pour in boiling syrup to within 1/2 inch of top. Wipe rims, adjust lids and water-bath for 20 minutes. Consult your state Extension Service for further information on canning at elevations greater than 1,000 feet.

Freezing: When freezing apples, steam over boiling water for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes if a firmer texture is desired.

Apples frozen in water, juice, or sugar syrup may turn dark on top. To prevent this, place a piece of crumpled waxed paper or parchment paper under the lid of the container to keep the apples submerged. Add ascorbic acid as directed to maintain fresh color.

Allow 1/2 inch *headspace* for pints or 1 inch for quarts where headspace is specified in the directions below. This will allow for expansion of apples and liquid during freezing.

Unsweetened apples: Mix 1/2 teaspoon ascorbic acid into 3 tablespoons of water. Sprinkle over 1 quart of apples, stirring to coat. Place in freezer containers or bags, seal, label and freeze up to one year. Or, place individual apple slices on baking sheets covered with waxed paper after mixing with water and ascorbic acid. Freeze, then transfer to freezer bags and label.

Unsweetened apples in water: Allow 1 to 1 1/2 cups of water mixed with ascorbic acid (1/2 teaspoon to 4 cups water) per quart of apples. Pack apples into freezer containers, cover with prepared water, leaving headspace. Label and freeze.

Syrup pack: Prepare desired syrup (page 230), adding 1/2 teaspoon ascorbic acid per 4 cups of syrup. Allow 1 to 1 1/2 cups of syrup per quart. Pack apples in freezer containers, cover with syrup, leaving headspace. Label and freeze.

Sugar packed slices: For each 4 cups of apples, stir in 1/2 cup sugar, 1/4 cup water, and 1/4 teaspoon of ascorbic acid. Pack into freezer containers, leaving headspace. Label and freeze.

Drying: Apples are one of the most popular fruits for home drying. Select firm crisp apples, wash and drain. Slice apples into uniform thickness, leaving the skin and core if desired. To maintain color, dip in ascorbic acid water, then drain.

For oven drying, place on cooling racks over baking sheets. Place in oven and maintain a temperature of 120° to 140° F. for 12 to 14 hours or until apples are tough and pliable. A temperature of more than 140° will cause the outside to dry but prevent the inner part of the fruit from drying properly. The oven door should be opened slightly to allow moisture to