



19th August 2024

Grow your own pantry and preserve your harvests with British Garden Centres

Summer is a time of abundance, with gardens overflowing with fresh, flavourful fruit and vegetables. But what happens when the growing season ends? Preserving your harvest is the key to enjoying the taste of summer all year round. Let's dive into the world of jams, pickles, and sauces. Discover the joy of homegrown goodness and create a pantry brimming with flavour with expertise from the British Garden Centres team.

Our guide to essential pantry staples

Tomatoes are a versatile and delicious addition to any pantry. From juicy salads to rich sauces, their vibrant flavour can elevate countless dishes. Beans are a nutritional powerhouse, packed with protein and fibre. Whether you prefer the tender sweetness of snap peas, the hearty substance of runner beans, or the classic French bean, they offer a variety of textures and flavours to enhance your meals.

Fresh herbs like basil, rosemary, thyme, and parsley are essential for any home cook, adding depth and complexity to dishes. And don't forget the sweetness of homegrown fruit! Strawberries, raspberries, and blackcurrants can be transformed into delicious jams, compotes, or pies, providing a delightful treat any time of year.

Preserving your harvest

Once you've picked all the tasty treats you have grown in your garden or vegetable plot, it's time to preserve your produce.

Jams

There's nothing quite like the taste of homemade jam, spread generously on warm toast or used as a filling for pastries. Creating your own jams is easier than you might think. The foundation of any great jam is ripe, flavourful fruit. Strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and peaches are classic choices, but don't be afraid to experiment with less common fruits like plums, apricots, or even rhubarb.

How to make jam: Wash and prepare your fruit, removing stems and pits as needed. Combine fruit with sugar and a touch of lemon juice in a large pot. Let the mixture stand for about 30 minutes to allow the fruit to release its juices. Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer until the jam reaches the desired consistency. You can test



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when it's done by placing a spoonful of jam on a cold plate. If it wrinkles as it cools, it's ready. Pour the hot jam into sterilised jars, seal tightly, and place in a boiling water bath to preserve.

Pickles

Pickles are a versatile and tangy addition to any meal. From classic cucumber pickles to more adventurous creations like pickled carrots or beets, the possibilities are endless. The base of any pickle recipe is a brine made from vinegar, water, and salt. Spices like dill, mustard seeds, and garlic add depth of flavour.

How to pickle: Wash and cut your chosen vegetables. Combine vinegar, water, salt, and your chosen spices in a pot and bring to a boil. Pack the prepared vegetables into clean jars, pour the hot brine over them, and seal tightly.

Sauces

Homemade sauces can transform ordinary meals into absolute delights. From the classic comfort of tomato sauce to bold and zesty creations, the possibilities are endless when you grow your own.

Making sauce: A good tomato sauce is the foundation for countless dishes. Sauté onions and garlic, then add fresh tomatoes, herbs like basil and oregano, and your favourite seasonings. Simmer until the sauce thickens and develops a rich, complex flavour. For those seeking more adventurous tastes, experiment with different combinations. Try a sweet and tangy citrus barbecue sauce, a fiery chilli salsa, or a creamy apple sauce.

Preserving tips

We recommend you thoroughly clean and sterilise your jars to keep your homemade preserves safe. Always follow a trusted recipe for the best results. Label your jars clearly with what's inside and the date you made them. Store your finished goodies in a cool, dark space to make them last longer.

Julian Palphramand, Head of Plants at British Garden Centres said: "By dedicating time to preserving your summer harvest, you'll enjoy the fruits of your labour throughout the year. Not only will you save money, but you'll also have the satisfaction of knowing exactly what goes into your homemade jams, pickles, and sauces. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just starting, we have everything you need to grow your own pantry and enjoy the delicious taste of summer all year round."



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Notes to Editors:

About the business:

British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK's largest family-owned garden centre group with 65 centres around the country. The group is owned and led by The Stubbs family, who also own and operate Woodthorpe Leisure Park in Lincolnshire.

BGC was launched in 1987 with the opening of Woodthorpe Garden Centre by brothers Charles and Robert Stubbs. Since 2018 it has expanded rapidly with the acquisition of 50 garden centres allowing it to grow from its heartland to the business it is now with 65 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham.

The group has a team of 2,700 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, 2 growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres, Woodthorpe Leisure Park, and Woody's Restaurant & Bar.

Social Media

Facebook: British Garden Centres

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