Wondering what you can do at home with surplus fruits or veggies? Canning is a great way to preserve the nutritional content of vegetables without compromising the quality and enjoy them well into winter. Canning is an important, safe method of food preservation if practiced properly. The canning process involves placing foods in jars and heating them to a temperature that destroys microorganisms that could be a health hazard or cause the food to spoil. Canning also inactivates enzymes that could cause the food to spoil. Air is driven from the jar during heating, and as it cools, a vacuum seal is formed. The vacuum seal prevents air from getting back into the product bringing with it microorganisms to recontaminate the food. Canning was first documented as a method of food preservation in the early 1800’s, when a man named Nicholas Appert was the first person to introduce his method of heat-treated produce in sealed glass jars, preventing microbacteria from spoiling the food. Fifty years later, John Mason invented the familiar glass jar with screw on threads that we all know and love today. Thank you for supporting local food!

**Crop Profile**

**Calendula**

Calendula is an flowering herb that has been used for centuries for medicinal purposes. It can be used topically to heal wounds, burns, and rashes, and the edible flowers are a traditional remedy for supporting the immune system while providing numerous antioxidants. The petals are edible and can be used fresh in salads or dried and used to color cheese or as a replacement for saffron. Calendula petals can be used in salads, salsas, scrambled eggs, quiches, teas, and many other dishes to add a festive pop of color. Whole flowers can be dried and added to soups and stews. Romans and Greeks used the golden calendula in many rituals and ceremonies, sometimes wearing crowns or garlands made from the flowers. One of its nicknames is “Mary’s Gold,” referring to the flowers’ use in early Catholic events in some countries. Calendula flowers are sacred flowers in India and have been used to decorate the statues of Hindu deities since early times.
Recipes and Tips!

Green Beans with Tomatoes

Wash and trim the ends of the green beans. Set aside.

In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and sauté for about 4-5 minutes or until the onion is translucent. Make sure to give it a few stirs. Add the red pepper flakes and the minced garlic, and crush them as they cook. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to obtain a vigorous simmer. Simmer for about 10 minutes or until the sauce begins to thicken. In the meantime, bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Cook the beans for about 5 minutes. Beans should still be crisp. Drain and add to simmering tomatoes. Simmer, uncovered, until beans become tender but still firm (not mushy). If the sauce appears dry, add some water. Add the calendula during the last few minutes of cooking. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

Spanish Rice

Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and preheat oven to 350°F. In a food processor or blender, puree the tomatoes and onions until smooth. Measure 2 cups of puree, pouring off and discarding any excess. Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven or a 3-quart saucepan until shimmering. Add the rice and sauté, stirring frequently, until light golden in color, about 10 to 15 minutes. Add garlic and jalapeno and stir until fragrant, about 15 seconds. Stir in tomato mixture, broth, tomato paste, and 1 ½ tsp. salt. Bring to a boil. Cover and bake until the rice is tender and the liquid is absorbed, about 30 minutes. Stir halfway through baking time. Fluff rice with a fork. Fold in cilantro and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with lime wedges.

Calendula Tea

Fill a cup or jar with fresh calendula blossoms. Pour boiling water over the blossoms, making sure to cover them completely. Cover and let steep for 10-15 minutes. Strain out the blossoms using a mesh sieve, cheese cloth, or coffee filter. Drink immediately or store in the fridge for up to two days.

Calendula & Thyme Shortbread Cookies

Cream together the butter and sugar, then add the egg yolk, lemon juice and lemon zest and stir to combine. Then add the flour, arrowroot, calendula, thyme, and salt. Gently stir everything together until the dough barely holds together. Take the dough out of the bowl and form it into a log shape. Wrap it tightly with parchment paper, twisting the ends to help hold it all together. Put in the fridge or freezer for about 30 minutes, or until firm. When ready to cook, preheat the oven to 300°. Slice the log into ¼ inch rounds. Put them on a parchment lined baking sheet, about an inch or so apart. Bake for 25-30 minutes. Check them closely after 25 minutes, as they will start to brown pretty quickly. Take them out when only the edges just barely start to turn golden. The centers will still be fairly soft. Let them cool on the baking sheet for several minutes before transferring them to a cooling rack. Note: You can experiment with other herbs and flowers, such as violets, lavender, oregano, and sage!