

Column Name - The Heartland Minute

By: Ben Sims

K-State Research and Extension Greenwood County

Agriculture Extension Agent

“Long Live the Pumpkin!”

Drying and Roasting Pumpkin Seeds

It's pumpkin season! When carving your pumpkin, don't toss the seeds. They make a great snack by drying and roasting them. To dry, carefully wash pumpkin seeds to remove the clinging fibrous pumpkin tissue. Pumpkin seeds can be dried in the sun, in an electric dehydrator at 115-120 degrees Fahrenheit for 1 to 2 hours, or in an oven on a very low, warm temperature only, for 3 to 4 hours. Stir them frequently to avoid scorching. Dried seeds should not be stored with any moisture left in them.

To roast seeds, take dried pumpkin seeds, toss with oil and/or salt and roast in a preheated oven at 250 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 – 15 minutes. Enjoy the treat!

Preserving Pumpkins

Sugar or pie pumpkins are best for cooking and baking tasty pie or bread. They are smaller than pumpkins used for carving festive jack-o-lanterns. They have dense flesh and high sugar content. The flesh is less stringy and the color is usually darker. If using fresh pie pumpkins in place of a 15-ounce can of pumpkin, use 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of mashed fresh pumpkin.

Home canning is not recommended for any mashed pumpkin or winter squash. The only directions for canning these are for cubed pieces. Mashed products can be safely frozen. I recommend you check out the K-State publication (MF1181), “Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe: Vegetables,” for more helpful tips and information. Happy Fall, everyone!

Information comes from K-State University food safety specialist, Karen Blakeslee.

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Ben Sims, at benjam63@ksu.edu, or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.