



Sudden Oak Death 5th Science Symposium

MILLENNIA OF SUSTENANCE

Acorns - From Oak Tree to Plate

One tall mature oak tree can produce almost 1,000 pounds of acorns in one growing season during normal weather conditions. For today's purposes, we bought acorn flour from Sue Chin, owner of Hot Dog Depot and Bakery in Martinez, since we had not harvested and stored acorns from the previous fall. Sue harvests and processes acorns to use as a starch in many traditional Korean dishes, as well as the Korean-American Acorn Bread that she began making so as not to waste any of the seed.

Processing acorns step-by-step

1. Harvest acorns
2. Dry the whole nuts
3. Store acorns (up to several months)
4. Crack open the outer shell
5. Leech acorns
6. Use immediately or dry for later



1. Acorns can be **harvested** every day from September through October – as soon as possible after they have fallen off the oak tree onto the ground. They may be green, or green and tan, or brown. The green ones aren't fully ripe yet, but collect them also because they will ripen to a dark brown in a few more days.

2. Spread acorns on a tray or screen. Discard any acorns with signs of mold or holes, which likely indicate worms. **Dry** the acorns either in direct sunlight for 2-5 consecutive days, or in a warm oven (about 175°F) for 20 minutes with the oven door slightly ajar to let moisture escape.

3. After further inspection for mold or holes, **store** dried acorns in a cool dry place in a sealed container such as Ziplock bags or Tupperware. Acorns will keep for several months.

4. Remove the acorn nutmeats from their outer shells once you are ready to process and eat them. **Crack** the thin outer shell with a nutcracker. Peel it off, saving the inner nutmeat, which can then be processed either whole or ground.

5. Acorns must be **leached** by either boiling the nutmeats in a series of successive pots or flushing with cold water for several hours to remove the (water-soluble) tannic acid.

5. Once leached, the damp acorn nutmeat may be **used** in a bread recipe, or **dried** (again, either by the sun or in the oven) if storing for later use. Pound or grind dried nutmeats to desired consistency. Acorn grits and flour will keep in a sealed container for several weeks in the refrigerator or several months in the freezer. Since it contains oil, it will go rancid if left in a warm environment.

