

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

Radio Service

OFFICE OF
INFORMATION

RECEIVED
★ AUG 15 1933 ★
U. S. Department of Agriculture

Hh
HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

THURSDAY, August 24, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Questions on Canning Corn." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

---ooOoo---

The mailbag is full of letters today. As usual at this time of year, canning questions are at the top of the heap. First thing here is a question about canning garden corn. "Dear Aunt Sammy: Will you advise a beginner at canning as to what size jars to use in putting up garden corn? And will you give me any other suggestions about canning corn at home?"

I am pleased to pass on to you what the specialists have to say on this subject. To begin with, they say that corn is one of the most difficult vegetables to can successfully. So many housekeepers write each season about troubles with spoilage of their home-canned corn. Several reasons why corn is difficult to can. First, it's a non-acid vegetable, and all non-acid foods need processing at high heat--processing under steam pressure--for safety. Second, the covering of each kernel and the compact texture makes heat penetrate slowly and therefore makes sterilization difficult. That's another reason for processing corn under steam pressure. And that's also why the specialists recommend small containers for canning corn. They advise either pint glass jars or No. 2 tin cans, but nothing larger for safety.

Some people put their corn up "cream-style" or "Maine style pack." You make this cream-style corn by cutting the kernels to half their depth and then scraping out the contents. Other people can their corn whole-grain, just cutting off the kernels with no scraping. The specialists advise this latter method for home canning. They say that whole-grain corn is easier to process and takes a shorter time for canning.

As we mentioned yesterday, when we were talking about cooking green corn, corn is a vegetable that can't stand around and wait safely. If you let it stand in your warm kitchen, it loses its sweet flavor. What's more a type of spoilage known as flat sour may develop in it on standing. Flat sour is responsible for much of the spoilage of home-canned vegetables. So, if you bring in corn from the garden and then let it wait a day or so before you get around to canning, or if you put it in cans and then let it stand and wait before processing, you'll lose a lot of good flavor and spoilage may set in while it waits. So, for successful canning the specialists say that prompt action is essential from first to last. Bring the corn in from the garden only when you are all ready to can it. "An hour from garden to canner" is a good rule to remember.

Prepare the corn promptly and process it promptly. Use small containers and a pressure cooker. Still another point. Don't try to put up too much corn at a time. Gather a small amount and do a good, careful but prompt job on it.

How do you know when your garden corn is just right for canning? Well, usually it is at the right stage in from 17 to 25 days after silking. But you can test it to make sure. Burst some of the raw kernels and if a thin milk fluid flows out, the corn is the proper ripeness to can. But if the milk comes out looking thick and starchy, the corn is too ripe. Better preserve corn at this ripe stage by drying or salting rather than by canning.

Well, as we mentioned back there, canning the whole grain cut from the cob generally is more successful than scraping out the kernels and canning the thick "cream style" corn. It's easier to sterilize and takes less time in the canner. Simply husk the ears and pull off the silk. Use a fairly stiff brush to remove any remnants of silk. Don't precook the corn. Just cut the kernels off with a sharp knife from the tip to the butt of the ear. No scraping of the cob. Put the kernels in a pan. Cover them with boiling water. Add one teaspoon of salt and two teaspoons of sugar to each quart of corn and bring the mixture just to the boiling point. Transfer the hot corn and its liquid quickly to the hot jars or tins. Pack the corn loosely and lightly. Fill the container to within one-half inch of the top. This half-inch allows for the swelling of the corn during processing. Stir the contents of the jars or tins with a knife to let any air bubbles escape. I heard the other day of somebody so anxious to get all the corn possible in the cans, that she used a potato masher to pack it in. That is just the wrong idea. Pack the corn in lightly, so that the juice can circulate and the heat can penetrate through and through the jar. Now you're ready to process the corn. You put the containers of whole grain corn in your pressure cooker and process them at ten pounds pressure. The time? Whole grain corn in pint jars takes 55 minutes at ten pounds pressure. Whole grain corn in No. 2 tin cans takes 50 minutes. Don't use large glass containers and don't use those large No. 3 tin cans. Cream-style corn takes more pressure and more time.

Just a minute. Here we were going off and forgetting to mention the kind of cans to use, if you're putting up your corn in tin rather than in glass jars. In ordinary tin cans corn is very likely to discolor. You may open up a new can for supper some night and find the corn inside dark and unattractive looking. You see, the protein in the corn reacts with the metal in the can to form metallic sulphide-- harmless but not good to look at. So, for canning corn the specialists recommend cans with an enamel lining that prevents this reaction. Tin cans called C enamel are the things. They have a lining which is dull gold in color.

Tomorrow: "Canning Tomatoes."

