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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, March 2, 1934.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Gardens and Budgets." Information approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

"Come in, Aunt Sammy." My neighbor greeted me cordially. "Come in and help me decide what to plant this spring. Can't let all our extra garden space go to waste. Shall I have four o'clocks and marigolds and delphiniums?"

"By all means," I said, "and some hollyhocks and Sweet Williams. But it's too early to plant flowers."

"Not too early to talk about them," said my friend. "Look at these lovely asters. And these red roses. Oh, I must have a rose garden."

I entreated her not to talk about rose gardens, for the present. My thoughts were on more important subjects. Budgets, for instance; but it was hard to interest my neighbor in budgets when she was surrounded by gardening books and bright new seed catalogs.

"I'm sorry for you," she said. "It is sad to think about budgets when you might be selecting what you want to plant in the flower garden. There's something else I must have -- sweetpeas. But roses are my chief interest. Listen to this, Aunt Sammy."

She picked up a book -- it was Louise Wilder's "Fragrant Path," and read this charming tale:

"Monsieur Forestier, the great garden architect of modern France, used to tell a story of how one evening he was strolling between hibiscus, palms and oleanders in a garden along the African shores of the Mediterranean accompanied by a young Arab. As they walked along he noticed the Arab had a rose tucked behind his right ear, the blossom falling down on his dark cheek, and when they reached the end of the walk and turned to come back the Arab took the rose and placed it behind his left ear. So Monsieur Forestier asked him, 'Why have you changed the rose from one ear to the other?' And the Arab answered, 'Because the breeze is now on our left and this way I can continue to enjoy the perfume of the rose.'

"And you would talk about budgets," said my garden enthusiast friend, "when you can read about the perfume of the rose."

I explained that my budget had to do with gardens -- not rose gardens, to be sure -- but with vegetable gardens, the vegetables to be canned for use next winter.

"You are foresighted," she said. "Talking about next winter's food supply when the current winter is still upon us."



"I'm not the only foresighted gardener," I told her. "In the state of Virginia, last year, 6,991 homemakers canned  $5\frac{1}{2}$  million jars of food for this winter's use. And they found out that just as money is more wisely spent when budgeted, so canning is more wisely done when you have charted the exact plan of what the family will need."

"I see," said my friend. "And now is the time for charting the vegetable garden."

She was right. Now is the time for charting, because the plan must come before the garden is planted. It won't be long now until vegetable gardens are one of the foremost topics of the day.

The homemakers of Virginia started their budgeting several years ago. They have learned by experience that a careful plan means better balanced meals and greater variety of food -- more cans of tomatoes and other vegetables, more meat, and less jelly, jams, and pickles. Of course it's very nice to have a supply of home-made jelly and jam, and enough pickles to last out the season, but at the same time the vegetables and meat are more important.

Without a canning budget, the women find that their tendency is to fill up all the jars with early fruits, and then the late tomatoes and other vegetables are left out.

The first year, that was in 1931, more than 2,000 Virginia women budgeted their canning. One-third of their jars were filled with pickles and relishes and one-tenth with tomatoes. The next year was better. They canned more tomatoes and fewer pickles. Last year, 1933, was the best of all. Tomatoes had jumped to one-third of the total supply of food canned, and pickles and relishes weren't taking up quite so much room on the closet shelves. As you will note, the number of budgeteers was increasing by leaps and bounds. There is no other way to express it. More than two thousand the first year, almost four thousand the second year, and in 1933, almost seven thousand canning budgets.

Of course, not all the food put up for winter is in glass jars. Much of it is stored and dried. Jars were scarce last year, so everywhere in the State extension workers were giving demonstrations on drying vegetables and fruits. As a result, the ladies of the Old Dominion State dried more than 237,000 pounds of fruits and more than 238,000 pounds of vegetables.

"More vegetables than apples," remarked my neighbor. "That is something, when you consider Virginia's reputation for apples. . . I've just been thinking about my own last year's canning. Right now I'd like to trade two dozen quarts of relish for the same amount of vegetables. Why did I put <sup>up</sup> so much relish, anyway? Maybe I'd better plan my spring vegetable garden, then the summer and fall garden, so that I'll have enough vegetables to last until spring comes around again. After all, if those Virginia women have done all that you say they have, there must be something to this canning budget. Seven thousand women can't be wrong."

When I left her, she was working on a chart -- and trying to figure out just how much of each vegetable her family would need, when it comes time to can.

And while she worked on her vegetable chart -- I might as well admit it -- I was planning a rose garden. One can't be practical all the time.

