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Homemakers' chat

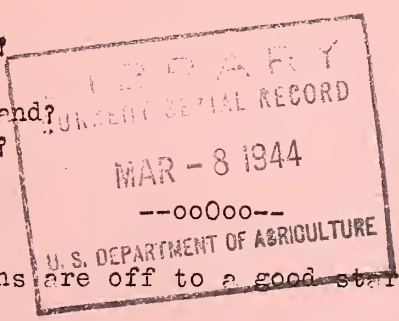
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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, March 9, 1944.

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QUESTION BOX:

- Any new water bath canners?
- More freezer-lockers?
- Necessary to rent garden land?
- How clean brass and nickel?



ANSWERS FROM:

War Food Administration officials, Victory Garden advisers, and home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

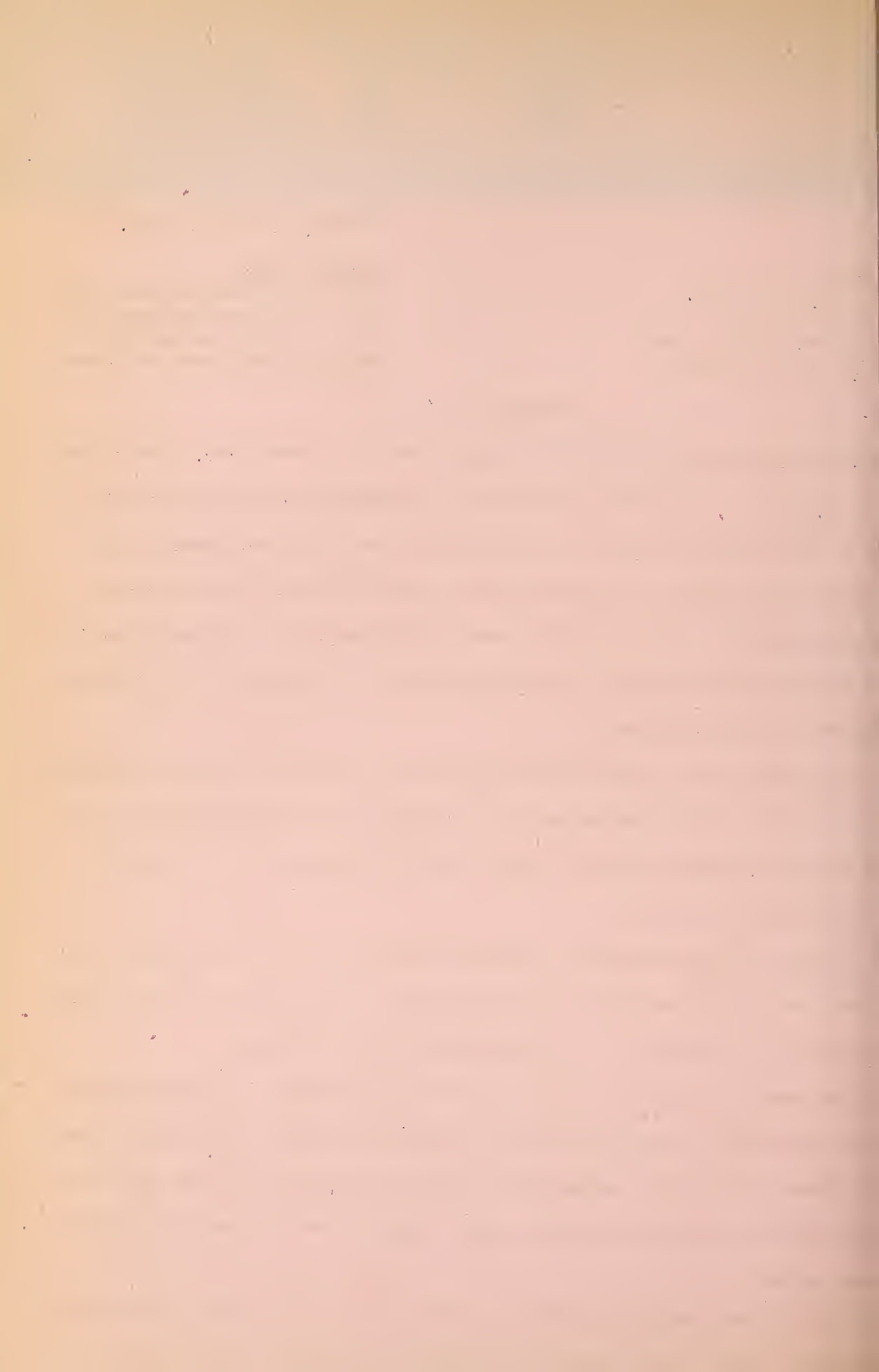
Food preservation plans are off to a good start the country over. Homemakers are already writing in to ask such questions as whether they can get new canning equipment, or how their community can get materials for a freezer-locker plant. Then the mail today includes a Victory Garden problem that some of you may also have met, and a question about polishing brass light fixtures. Various officials in the War Food Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have furnished the answers to these questions.

The first letter is an inquiry about getting new water bath canning equipment. "I've heard that new steam pressure canners are going to be manufactured for this season's vegetable canning, but what about water bath canners for tomatoes and fruits. Can we get them, too?"

The War Food Administration says that the War Production Board has just approved a 1944 program for manufacture of about 500,000 new enamel water bath canners. These won't be rationed, and will be sold in retail stores.

The next question is also on food preservation equipment. "I have a friend who uses frozen storage to keep her fruits and vegetables instead of canning them. There's no freezer locker near enough for us to use, but if I get a few people interested in starting a community locker plant, could we get the necessary materials and equipment?"

Yes, the war Food Administration has a program, approved by the War Production Board, to expand locker plant facilities considerably in 1944. The WPB made e-



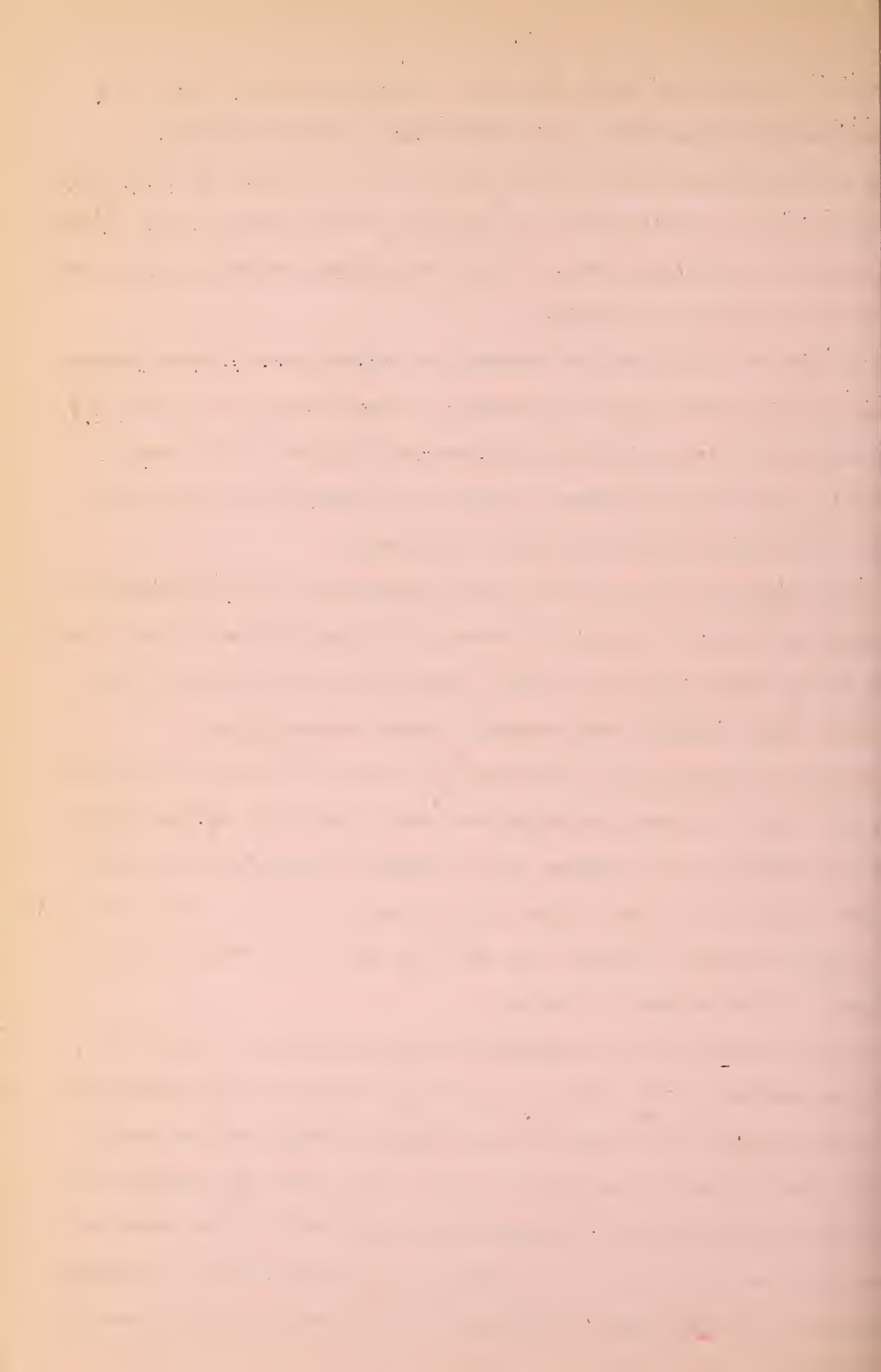
nough materials available for about 550 plants. These plants could hold about 220,000 individual lockers, and enable about 200,000 more families to preserve the foods they raise by putting them in frozen storage. If you secure the first year's locker rentals from the required number of families, you may then apply for priorities to construct a community locker. Contact your county agricultural conservation committee for further information.

Next we come to a situation that bothered one of last year's Victory Gardeners. She writes: "A friend of mine last year started a Victory Garden on a vacant lot. Later the owner of the lot appeared and demanded rent---rather a high rent. My friend paid it, but felt very indignant since she was growing the garden for a good cause. What should anyone do in such a situation?"

The whole incident is too bad, but garden specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture say there is nothing this gardener or anyone else can do in the matter except pay up, since she used the land. Technically your friend was a trespasser without legal standing, even though her motive was patriotic.

If she had investigated the property before going ahead with the plowing and planting, and located the owner, she might have made a deal with him. For example, she might have agreed to pay a nominal rent, or even make some return in garden products for the use of the land. After all, property owners have taxes and other expenses to pay, and anyone wanting to use the land, even for a Victory Garden, should expect to share expense in some way.

The War Food Administration is anxious to have more gardens started this year, and, if possible, larger gardens, to grow more vegetables to use fresh and for canning and storing. Many vacant lots and suburban tracts that are fertile and suitable for growing food were idle last year. They should be gardened this season. Garden specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture urge owners of vacant lots to donate the use of them, either to organized committees or to groups of individuals, or to offer them at a reasonable rent. Having space in a communi-



ty garden has many advantages, whether or not one pays for the use of it.

Nobody has any warrant to use land without permission, either for gardens or any other purpose. For full protection, the permission should be in writing. The earlier in the season you can make arrangements for the use of another person's land, the better. Tracts that were idle last year will need earlier plowing or spading than gardens that were cultivated in 1943.

Our last question is about cleaning brass electric light fixtures and a lamp with a nickel base. Here are the directions given by home equipment specialists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture:

For cleaning brass, dust with a soft cloth. Wash the fixtures in hot sudsy water, rinse, and dry. If spots are not removed, rub with one of these combinations --hot vinegar and salt, or lemon rind and salt. Or try hot buttermilk or sour milk, or tomato or rhubarb juice. As you see, all of these are mild acids.

Wash the fixture and rinse immediately and thoroughly to remove all of the cleaner. If you use a polish, apply it with a soft cloth. Use only a polish made especially for brass. Rub with a soft cloth or chamois until the surface is as bright as you wish. (Some people prefer to leave brass unpolished.) Once the brass fixtures are clean, you can lacquer them, and then you'll only need to dust and wash them.

Now about the nickel lamp base. Use soap and water to clean it. If this does not clean, use a fine cleaning powder such as whiting, dampened with alcohol, or whiting paste. Rinse. Dry with a soft cloth. Daily washing will keep nickel bright. Nickel demands frequent care to prevent its darkening. Never use a coarse gritty cleaning powder for nickel.

