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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, October 18, 1932.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "The Question Box." Information from the Bureau of Plant Industry and the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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A lot of questions in the question box this morning.

The first one comes from a New York State homemaker who asks about storing beets, carrots and white turnips from her garden for winter use. She says that last year her vegetables shrivelled and wrinkled from drying during storage. So she wonders if they will keep better if she buries them in beach sand in her dark cool cellar.

The vegetable garden specialists answer "yes." They say if the cellar happens to be rather dry, the vegetables will keep more crisp if you sprinkle the sand with water every two or three weeks. Of course, you cut off the green tops before you store them in sand.

Here's a question about storing canned fruit. A friend writes that she keeps her jars of fruit, her glasses of jellies and her bottles of fruit juice in a closet on the first floor. The closet happens to be very light. She wonders if this is why many of the jellies and canned fruit that she put up last season lost their attractive color before the year was over. And she asks what to do to prevent this fading.

The canning specialists say that the ideal place to store canned goods is a cool, dark, dry place. If you haven't a dark place, like a cellar, for storage, you can cut off a good deal of the light with heavy curtains stretched across the shelves on which your canned goods stand.

But all red fruit juices tend to lose their color on standing, wherever you keep them. The red raspberry juice and jelly is the exception. For some reason or other, red raspberry can hold its color in storage better than any other red fruit. And, more than that, it keeps its flavor well, too.

Just as soon as grapes are ripe in the fall, and housekeepers make grape jelly, the phone at the Bureau of Home Economics begins to ring. Worried housekeepers are calling up to say that they have hard and gritty substances in their grape jelly. The jelly seemed lovely and clear when it was made. What could have happened to it? And were these gritty substances harmful?

"Don't worry," say the specialists. "Sooner or later everyone who makes grape jelly has experience with these small darkish crystals formed by the tartaric acid in grapes. They're quite harmless, but they do spoil the smoothness of the jelly. One way to avoid them is to let the grape juice stand over night



in a big bowl before you make the jelly. The crystals will form on the bottom and sides of the bowl of juice during the night. Then, next day, you can dip the juice out carefully, leaving the crystals in the bowl. Strain the juice through a fine cloth to take out any tiny crystals left. Then go ahead and make your jelly. Continue with the sugar and boil down the mixture until you get your jelly test."

Here's some more grape jelly lore. Excellent grapes for jelly-making are the wild grapes that are growing this time of year in the woods or along country lanes. Country people often bring these to town to sell in the markets. Such wild grapes as fox grapes rank with currants and crabapples at the top of the list of fruits for jelly, because of their rich supply of pectin and acid. Among the cultivated grapes, Concord's are great favorites for jelly.

Most thrifty housewives make a batch of jelly-making grapes "go double". You can use them, the same grapes, to make both jelly and grape butter. First, extract the juice for jelly or for bottling as grape juice. Then use the skins and pulp for making grape butter. You press the pulp through a strainer, add half as much sugar as pulp, a little salt and spice to taste. Then cook the mixture down until it is thick. Pack the butter, boiling hot, into sterilized jars.

Here's a question about cooking milk. "Why does milk always seem to scorch on the bottom of the pan when I cook it? Can you tell me how to prevent this?"

Milk doesn't really scorch easily. You can boil it right over the flame without getting a brown color or a scorched taste. But heat does cause some of the protein in the milk to coagulate on the bottom of the pan. You can scrape up most of the coagulated part and mix it in, when you pour out boiled milk so you won't lose much food value. Or--and this is probably a better idea--you can heat milk in a double boiler as you're likely to do anyway in making cream sauce, cream soup, cocoa, custard sauce, and other milk combinations.

Yesterday we didn't have time to discuss our weekly economy menu. So I'm ready to give it to you today, if you have a pencil handy. Maybe you have some meat left over from your Sunday dinner or from your meal last night. You can chop that up and use it for making croquettes for this menu. Here's the menu: Chicken or meat croquettes served with Chile sauce or catsup; Creamed potatoes with chopped parsley; Green snap beans--either fresh or canned; and, to top off the meal, Heated cinnamon buns and coffee.

Tomorrow, I'll bring you some information about remodeling last year's winter dresses so they'll look as if they stepped out of a Fifth Avenue shop. The new styles this season lend themselves nicely to make-overs--a lucky thing for those of us who want to economize on our clothing budgets, isn't it?

