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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, July 14, 1943.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

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

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Before the summer gets a day older, I must answer those canning questions coming in on every mail. I'm hoping that the answers I give today will save you the bother of writing for the information.

We're going to talk about canning the early fruits and vegetables today. Later in the summer we'll discuss peaches and pears and tomatoes and corn. But right now we have the berries and cherries to think about as well as early vegetables like peas and snap beans.

By the way, have you a reliable time table and temperature guide for canning? You need one to make sure your products are safe from spoilage. Unfortunately the home economists say that not all time tables in circulation are reliable. If you haven't a time table and temperature guide, please write me and I'll see that you get one worked out by specialists at the Bureau of Home Economists.

The first question today is about canning berries.

"Dear Aunt Sammy: How can I put up berries and cherries so they won't separate from the sirup and float on top of the jar? If my fruits do float, does this affect their quality?"

Here's what the canning experts answer:

"No. Fruits that float in the jar are just as good as those that don't. And when they are turned out to serve, you'll never know the difference. But most of us want the satisfaction of putting up attractive looking jars. Also, there's an economy point involved--that is, to get all the fruit possible into each can.

"Cooking shrinks berries. Fruit that fills a can when raw shrinks down about one-third or more when sterilized. So, if you want full containers and want to keep the berries from floating, first heat them through with just enough sugar to make them taste good. Add only a very, very small quantity of water, just enough to keep them from scorching. Then pack the hot fruit into the hot containers, seal them up, and process them for five minutes in a bath of boiling water. Or, if you prefer, you can process glass jars of berries in the oven. But if you do process in the oven, seal the jars only partially, or the steam collecting inside will spoil the perfect seal."

Now here's a question about using tin cans in putting up berries.

"Is there any special kind of tin can that should be used for canning berries?"

Answer. "Indeed there is. If you are canning berries, cherries or any other red acid fruit, use the cans with a special enamel lining called "R" or sanitary enamel. When these red fruits are put into plain tin cans they are likely to fade soon. There's a harmless chemical reaction that causes the fruit to lose its attractive red color. And, by the way, the lining of those "R" or sanitary enamel cans looks like bright gold. Don't confuse them with the enameled cans designated as "C", which have a dull gold-colored lining and are used for canning sweet corn, green peas and lima beans."

There's more to this story of loss of color. You know that fruits often fade in glass jars. That's why the specialists say that if you can red fruits in glass, keep the jars in the dark to prevent the fruits from fading. You know those heavy paper cartons that the jars come in. They make convenient storage containers for the canned fruit. Or, if you keep your canned products on shelves in a cool, dry cellar, hang a curtain of oil cloth in front of the shelf to shut off the light. But however you manage it, store all cans of red fruits in a cool, dark place.

Several homemakers have written to ask about canning fruits without sugar for use in special diets or for some other special purpose. "Do fruits canned without sugar keep?" my correspondents want to know.

The canning specialists say they do if you can them properly. Heat the fruit first, simply leaving out the sugar, and pack hot into hot containers. Process in the usual way. If you need more liquid to fill up the cans, use hot fruit juice. Sometimes you can get this juice from very ripe fruit, too ripe to can whole.

Suppose somebody asked you the main points about canning the early vegetables--asparagus, perhaps, or peas, or snap beans. What would you say?

Here's what the specialists say:

"The one thing never to forget in canning asparagus, peas, snapbeans and all other non-acid vegetables is that they need processing at a higher temperature than that of boiling water. We recommend processing asparagus and peas and snap beans in the steam pressure canner at 240 degrees F. That is 22 degrees above the temperature of boiling water. The steam pressure method reduces the chances of spoilage. As an economy measure ^{and} as a safety measure, we recommend it.

"And here again we use the hot pack. After you pick over and wash the vegetables boil them for a few minutes to fill jar. Then seal and process in the steam pressure canner. The exact time to process varies for different vegetables. The hot pack methods combines all the advantages of the open-kettle method plus those of the cold-pack."

So much for the canning questions. If you want more information on canning write the Bureau of Home Economics.

Monday: "Summer Breakfasts."

