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HOUSEKEEPERS CHAT

Monday, August 10, 1931

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Preserving Fruit Juices." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: Mimeographed information on bottling fruit juices. Order from the Bureau of Home Economics. Also two bulletins: "Unfermented Grape Juice." "Farm Manufacture of Unfermented Apple Juice." Order from the U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

When I saw baskets and baskets of bright red currants going into the Recipe Lady's kitchen, I stopped by the door and inquired, "Jelly?"

The Recipe Lady glanced at me, then at the currants and smiled and nodded.

So I said, "If you are going to make jelly this afternoon, I'd like to stop in and watch you do it."

"Oh, dear no. Not today, Aunt Sammy. Let's not even talk about jelly making on a day as hot as this."

"But tomorrow will probably be just as warm."

The Recipe Lady agreed.

"In fact the weatherman says we're due for hot days all this whole week-- and maybe longer."

The Recipe Lady sighed a little and then said, "That's why I'm going to wait until next November or December to make this currant jelly."

"Next December?" I gasped. "Why that's almost five months away. Those currants certainly will be spoiled long since by that time."

"I won't try to save the currants as they are. I'll just preserve their juice. All I'm going to do today is to put that juice up in bottles for safe-keeping. Then I'll have it all ready to use at a more comfortable or more convenient time for jelly-making. That's the way I put up many summer fruits."

Until this conversation took place, I had never given much thought to the advantages of canning fruit juice. But there are many of them as I've now learned.

A shelf of bottled fruit juices is an aid to the family's health and pocketbook. And now is the time to bottle a supply of good health for the household next winter. The valuable minerals and vitamins in the fruits, which are so plentiful and inexpensive now, may be stored away in the form of juice. And all kinds of good things may be made from it.

Desserts, for example, especially colorful gelatin desserts. And pudding sauces for next winter's steamed and baked puddings. Frozen fruit ices of plain and combined flavors. And punches, fruitades and other beverages for summer and winter festivities. And then, as the Recipe Lady has suggested, the juices may be used for jelly making. So convenient and useful are they, that I can't understand why every home canner doesn't include fruit juices on her canning budget each year, along with canned fruit, jams, jellies and so on.

Since the canning bulletin doesn't give directions for bottling, I'll tell you just how the Recipe Lady does it. And then, if you don't remember all the details, or would like to have those directions down in black and white, you can send for the mimeographed leaflet on preserving fruit juices.

Bottling is really a simple process. But it pays to know, before you start, the secret of keeping the delicious natural flavor and color of the fruit when preserving the juice. The secret lies in heating just enough and not too much. Boiling spoils --- or at least changes --- the flavor. But cooking just under the boiling point --- simmering --- not only brings out the juice from the fruit and develops the bright color and good flavor, but is also hot enough to sterilize, because of the acid content.

The first step, of course, is to pick over and wash the fruit. Small fruits like berries must be washed very carefully to see that they are clean and yet do not get mashed and mushy with water during the process.

When the fruit is washed, the Recipe Lady gets out her big preserving kettle and mashes the fruit in the bottom of it. Then she puts the kettle over a low fire, brings the contents just up to the boiling point---stirring all the time--- And then promptly removes the kettle from the fire. This first heating softens the fruit, brings out the juice and intensifies the flavor and color.

Next she strains the heated juice through a heavy jelly bag, just as is done in jelly making. The juice that runs out first without pressure is called "free juice" and, as every jelly-maker knows, it is clearer than that obtained by pressing on the bag. If you want very clear juice, bottle this separately from the second lot, which must be helped through the bag by pressure. Or, bottle all the juice together.

And the fruit pulp that is left? Is that thrown away? No, indeed. Not in these days of thrift in housekeeping. The pulp still contains a good deal of flavor and will make delicious jams or fruit butters. But that is another story.

When the juice has been extracted --- right at this point in the process --- it is time to put in sugar. It isn't necessary to use sugar as a preservative. The juice will keep from spoiling without it. But sugar does improve the flavor of the juice and it also helps retain the color. Add it in the pro-

portion of 1 cup to 1 gallon of juice. Dissolve it by stirring before the juice is reheated for bottling.

That is the next step. Now the sweetened juice goes back on the stove and is heated to the simmering point --- Again just below boiling. For safety use a double boiler. Heat the juice ten minutes over boiling water. Pour the hot juice into hot sterilized bottles. Naturally a little room must be left at the top of the bottle to allow for expansion. Leave an inch if you are using crown caps for sealing, says the Recipe Lady. And two inches if you are using corks. Seal the bottles tight before they are processed.

Now put the sealed bottles in a rack or on a false bottom in a large container of warm water on the stove. It is best to lay the bottles on their sides, covered with enough water to come at least two inches over the top. Again heat the water to the simmering point and hold this temperature for ten minutes. Remove the bottles at once and let them cool.

If you have corked the bottles, dip the cork and the top of the bottle in melted paraffin or sealing wax. Caps that have been clamped on securely before processing will need no further attention. Now all that is left to do is to label those bottles and set them up on a cool, dry, dark shelf.

Questions? Several. I asked them myself of the Recipe Lady and I'll give you her answers.

How about putting up the fruit juices in those regular glass jars used in canning in case you have a lot of them on hand and no bottles?

That's all right. The bottles are easier to handle, but the jars will hold the juice quite as well.

Can the bottles of juice be laid one on top of the other in processing?

Yes, only it is safer not to use more than three layers and not to crowd the container. Be sure that there is enough water to come at least two inches over the top layer.

Is my watch right? Dear me. That's the way it goes. I'll just have barely time to give you the menu for today. The recipe will have to wait until tomorrow.

Everybody ready for the menu?

Veal cutlet and brown gravy; Mashed potatoes; Creamed new or canned corn; Cabbage and raw carrot salad; Orangeade with mint leaves; and for dessert, Jellied peaches and almonds.

Doesn't the sound of that wake up your appetite? I had a good breakfast this morning, but it makes me very hungry even to talk about that dinner. And please notice, that the Menu Specialist has planned it with an eye to both the

good and the beautiful. If you serve the cabbage and carrot salad with the main course, the color scheme will show up to best advantage. See how orange, white and green is featured here? Cabbage and carrot salad, orangeade to drink decorated with sprigs of mint, and jellied peaches and almonds.

It's the recipe for jellied peaches and almonds that I'll give you tomorrow. Most of the other dishes on this menu are to be found in the green cook book, either the old or the revised edition.

Tuesday: "More About Refrigerators."

