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U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, December 17, 1942.

QUESTION BOX:

Hh Food value of white and yellow turnips?
Quick potato soup?
How clean soiled eggs?
How make ironing easier?

ANSWERS FROM:

Scientists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

--ooOoo--

Today the mail bag brings questions on turnips and potato soup, on cleaning eggs, and on easier ironing. Various scientists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture have supplied the answers. The first inquiry, about the food value of white and yellow turnips, is of special interest, because many people are wondering which vegetables deserve space in 1943 Victory gardens. The Secretary of Agriculture has urged everybody to plant only those vegetables highest in food value.

Here's the question about turnips: "What is the difference in food value, if any, between the two kinds of turnips... rutabagas and white turnips?"

Home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture answer: The yellow turnips or rutabagas rate slightly higher than the white turnips, if you are comparing the root parts only. Neither kind of turnip root furnishes any vitamin A. Rutabagas have more vitamin B-one, also called thiamine; both yellow and white turnips have about the same amount of vitamin C, riboflavin and niacin. The rutabagas are a little richer in carbohydrates and minerals than the white turnips.

Of course, you lose some food value in the parings of the turnips, so it's best to pare very thinly, or, if you can, just scrape the turnips. You lose about 15 percent of total food value in rutabaga parings, 13 percent in parings of the white turnips.

Turnip tops, of course, are another story. The turnip greens you see on the market are the tops of white turnips, and you can grow the same kind in your garden for greens. They supply vitamin A, several of the B-vitamins, and vitamin C. So, if both kinds of turnips will grow where you live, you might plant some of both and have all the food values turnips can supply.

Next letter: "I have heard of a quick and delicious soup to make of potatoes and milk. Can you give me directions for making such a soup?"

Here's a recipe the home economists use: 2 cups of raw potatoes, chopped fine or grated.... 2 tablespoons of fat.... 1 tablespoon of chopped onion..... 1 quart of milk.... 1 and one-half teaspoons of salt.... pepper. Add the chopped or grated potatoes, fat, and onion to the milk. Cook the mixture over low heat until the potatoes are tender. By that time, the starch from the potatoes will have thickened the milk slightly. Add the salt and pepper and serve.

This soup can come to the rescue of a scanty menu. It is nourishing, economical and so easy and quick to make.

Here's a little question that comes up from time to time. "Why do directions for keeping eggs fresh always say never to wash them?"

The reason you never wash eggs, the poultry specialists explain, is that water destroys the "bloom" on the eggshell. This "bloom" is a protective film that keeps the pores of the eggshell closed and prevents bacteria from entering the egg and making the contents spoil. Also odors from other foods may get in through the pores opened by washing the egg, and change the flavor of the egg.

If you find a soiled egg, just wipe it off with a damp cloth, or buff the spot gently with steel wool. Then put the eggs in a wire basket, to give them good ventilation, and store them in a cool place.

Next we have a question on cutting down the job of ironing, to save work and also electricity. "Will you suggest some ways to do my ironing faster and

more easily? I have an electric hand iron. Of course, I use as many things as possible that don't have to be ironed, like knit underwear, seersucker dresses and aprons, turkish towels, and so on. But still I get pretty tired, and I believe my electric bill is higher than it ought to be because I iron so long."

The home economists of the Department of Agriculture recently gathered a number of suggestions about irons and ironing in a little leaflet called "How to Make Your Ironing Equipment Last Longer." You can get a copy of this leaflet if you just write to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in Washington, D.C. Meantime, these tips for easier ironing may help you:

Fold things evenly for the wringer, hang them straight on the line... then you won't have so many wrinkles to iron out.

Put together any articles that are ironed with a hot iron... and in another pile, those you iron with a somewhat cooler iron, then you won't have to change your temperature regulator back and forth. Sprinkle clothes evenly, and don't get them too wet. It takes extra heat as well as more of your energy to iron unnecessary moisture out of clothes.

Heat the iron hot enough for the fabric before you start ironing... but don't overheat. Iron the things that take the least heat first.

Have your ironing board well-padded, set at the right height, in a comfortable light... and sit down to iron, if you can. Sit in a comfortable chair of the right height and shape, and place a clothes-rack handy for the ironed pieces as you finish them.

You'll find that slow, unhurried, well-directed motions give the best results with hand ironing. Iron each part thoroughly dry before you go on to another. Start with the sleeves, collars, ties, and other dangling parts, and iron with the lengthwise thread of the goods whenever possible.

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