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homemakers' chat

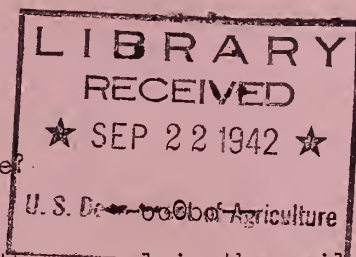
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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, August 20, 1942.

QUESTION BOX:

Sugarless canning?
Are canning acids harmful?
How preserve mushrooms?
Easiest way to can tomato juice?



ANSWERS FROM:

home economists of the
U.S. Department of Agriculture

More canning questions than usual in the mail this week. Victory Gardens are now in full production, of course, and many city people with no gardens still want to take advantage of large local supplies to put up tomatoes, peaches, and other fruits and vegetables. Here are a few of the many canning questions, with answers from the home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Question One: "I have some fruit trees and would like to can some fruit for winter use. Where can I get directions for canning without sugar?"

Directions for canning fruits without sugar are in the canning bulletin, the home economists say. You can get a copy of this bulletin by writing the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. Meantime, in case your fruits ripen before the bulletin reaches you, here is what it says about canning without sugar:

"Fruits for pie-making (or for use in diabetic diets) are commonly canned without sugar. Juicy fruits, such as berries, cherries, currants, and plums, should be canned in their own juice when sugar is omitted. You don't need water. Extract the juice from the riper fruits by crushing, heating, and straining. Pack the remaining fruits closely into containers without preheating, add boiling hot juice to cover. Adjust caps on glass jars; or exhaust tin cans and seal; then process the required length of time. Or give the fruits a short precooking - say, 2 to 4 minutes' of simmering, then pour into containers at once, seal, and process.

The less juicy fruits, such as apples, peaches, and pears, when canned without sugar need some water. But to preserve the natural fruit flavor you use only

the smallest quantity of water necessary.

Question Two: "What are canning acids and canning powders? Are they harmful?"

The usual chemical preservatives are salicylic acid, and benzoate of soda. These and "canning powders", vary in their effects on the human body. Some are more harmful than others. Therefore, to all questions about using chemical preservatives for home canning, the home economists have the same answer: Do not use them. The safe way for the home canner is to process foods correctly with heat and not to use chemical preservatives. Canning directions are in Farmers' Bulletin 1762, the "canning bulletin" just mentioned.

Question Three: "What is the right way to can wild mushrooms?"

First, a word of warning: Be perfectly sure the mushrooms you can are an edible variety. Now for the directions for canning mushrooms: Wash thoroughly. Peel mushrooms and drop into water containing a little vinegar to prevent darkening. Use 1 tablespoon of vinegar to a quart of water. Precook the mushrooms by placing them in a wire sieve or colander, covering with a lid to hold the mushrooms under water, and immersing for 3 or 4 minutes in boiling water containing 1 tablespoon of vinegar and 1 teaspoon of salt per quart. Fill into containers at once and cover with freshly boiling water. Add 1 teaspoon of salt to each quart. Process immediately in a steam pressure canner at 240 degrees or 10 pounds pressure,-- 25 minutes for pints, 35 minutes for quarts.

If you have no steam pressure canner, dry your mushrooms instead of trying to can them. To dry mushrooms just string them on strings and hang them in a dry place.

One more canning question, from a man living in a city: "I intend canning some tomato juice and would like to know the simplest and cheapest way to do it. Is there a chemical I can use to preserve tomatoes without boiling them?"

Once more the home economists say NO PRESERVATIVES. In preparing and canning tomatoes, use knives of stainless steel and avoid utensils of copper, brass, or iron. This saves the natural flavor and color of the tomatoes. Use only fully ripe tomatoes, preferably bright red ones. Discard any green parts or any moldy, or decayed tomatoes. Wash well, remove cores, and cut in small pieces.

For making juice, you can remove the skins or not, as you like. Don't try to handle more than 1 or 2 gallons of tomatoes at a time. Work fast. Precook the tomatoes at about 170 to 180 degrees Fahrenheit. Or, if you haven't a thermometer, simmer until they are softened. Don't let them boil. Put the hot softened tomatoes through a fine sieve quickly. Use a bowl or cone-shaped sieve if you can, because it allows the least air to be incorporated in the pulp. Unless the juice is for a baby or an invalid, add one-half to 1 teaspoon of salt to each quart.

Reheat the juice at once after putting the pulp through the sieve. If you are using glass containers, heat the juice to 190 degrees Fahrenheit. Pour into sterilized containers and seal. You won't need to process the juice. Invert the bottles while they are cooling. If you are using tin cans heat the juice to 180° to 190° (or to simmering) pour into cans and seal. You will need to process the cans 5 minutes in a boiling water bath.

With these directions for canning tomato juice we must stop for today.

Next week we'll be back with more questions and answers on war-time subjects.

