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# Homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, March 5, 1942

## QUESTION BOX:

How put down eggs?  
How build outdoor fireplace?  
Wool scraps for rugs.

## ANSWERS FROM:

Scientists and extension  
workers of the U.S. Depart-  
ment of Agriculture

--ooOoo--

Questions on saving in one way and another usually fill our mail bag these days. Today there's one on saving surplus eggs, another on building a picnic place in the back yard to save using the automobile and conserve tires, and one about making homemade rugs to use up wool scraps. All these savings are valuable. Answers today come from various specialists in the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

The first question is about preserving eggs. "What are the best months for putting eggs down in water glass? Please tell exactly how to do it."

The poultry specialists say that March, April and May are the best months for putting down eggs, because hens are laying actively in those months and you probably have more on hand than you can use. Put down a few eggs at a time, as you gather them. These eggs will retain a good flavor for 8 or 10 months. You can use eggs preserved in water glass at home next fall when the laying slows down, and send to market any new-laid ones you get at that time.

You won't have to use any restricted materials to put down eggs. For a fairly good supply all you need is a quart of sodium silicate, or water glass, and a 5-gallon earthen ware or "stone" crock. You can put about 14 dozen eggs in a crock that size, with 2 inches or more of water glass solution above the last layer of eggs.



Here are the complete directions for "putting eggs down";

Boil 9 quarts of water and cool it. Add 1 quart of water glass and mix well, right in the crock you are going to store the eggs in. Be sure to set the crock where you won't have to move it again, or you might crack some of the eggs. Whenever you have a few extra eggs, candle them to make sure there are no cracks or other defects. Get them into the water glass solution promptly.

By the way, don't forget, if you have a freezer locker, you can store some of your eggs frozen. For freezing, the new laid eggs are generally broken into cans, sealed up and then quickly frozen. They must be handled with just as much speed as water glass eggs.

Now for a question about building an outdoor fireplace. This letter is from a mother who has two boys of high school age. She writes: "Our family has always enjoyed week-end picnic trips and meals in the open. Now that we are trying to conserve our automobile tires, my boys have suggested that they might make an outdoor fireplace at the end of the garden, where we could still have open-air meals and picnics without using the car. Where can we find out about the proper dimensions, the best materials, cost, and so on?"

Engineers of the Department consider a back-yard fireplace very practical at any time, but especially so just now, and they say it would not be a difficult matter for two boys of high school age to build it. It wouldn't cost very much, maybe from 5 to 10 dollars. In fact, these engineers know of one man who built an outdoor fireplace for only 30 cents, -- the amount spent for part of a bag of cement for the mortar. This man picked up bricks along the roadside and on vacant lots until he had enough. Your boys might also find field stones that would do just as well. Most outdoor fireplaces can be made of materials on which there are no war time restrictions.

As your family likes meals in the open, such a fireplace offers a chance for another saving besides conserving your tires. You'll burn wood in it, instead

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of the coal, gas, or electricity you use for indoor cooking,

There is some helpful information on dimensions and construction of outdoor fireplaces in a new farmers' bulletin which you can get free by writing to the U. S. Department of Agriculture. This bulletin, - number 1889, - has pictures of different types of fireplaces, and scale drawings for builders to follow.

Don't make the mistake of planning too large a fireplace. If you want to build a grille into the walls, you can broil steaks, hamburgers, frankfurters, and other things more easily, and set your skillets on it. Make the grille of heavy iron rods or piping set into the brick work or stone work about 12 inches above the fire hearth, spaced about 1 and a quarter inches apart to prevent pans from dropping through.

Locate the opening of the fireplace toward the prevailing breezes, but protected from strong winds. Of course you don't want a fireplace too near shrubbery or trees. Have the boys slope the hearth a little toward the front to let rain water run off. And it's a good idea to pave the ground **around** the fireplace for a few feet with flagstones, or cover it with gravel or sand. That's not only for fire protection, but to prevent the area from getting unsightly and muddy .

The last question is about using dark colored woolen scraps such as those from making dresses or shortening coats, to make small rugs. The Extension Service in many States has directions for making such scraps into hooked rugs, or braided or crocheted mats. For either of these you cut the pieces into inch-wide strips, sew end to end, and roll into balls. When you have enough, braid or crochet the strips into a long strand, and then sew the braid or strand round and round by its edges to make a flat oval or round mat as large as you want it. That's all we have time for today.

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