

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

homemakers' chat

FOR USE IN NON-COMMERCIAL BROADCASTS ONLY

U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE



1.9
In 344

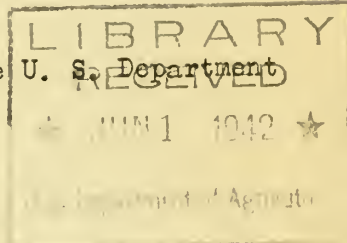
Thursday, May 28, 1942.

QUESTION BOX:

- Mix or match vegetables in storage?
- Crystals in honey?
- Spring care for chrysanthemums?
- How store blankets and rugs against moths?

ANSWERS FROM:

Scientists of the U. S. Department
of Agriculture



--ooOoo--

Once more an assortment of questions have come in the mail, and as usual, scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture have answered them for us. Subjects today range from vegetables to flowers, from getting crystals out of honey to putting crystals in with woollens.

Our first inquiry comes from a housewife already planning how to store her garden vegetables in the fall. She asks: "Do vegetables keep better stored altogether in one big outdoor pit, or in smaller pits with each kind stored separately?"

Plant scientists of the Department answer that as far as the vegetables are concerned, they keep equally well stored together in a large pit or separately in a small pit. But for your convenience in getting the vegetables out in cold weather small pits are better. When you have once opened up a pit, you'll want to remove all the contents at once or some of them may freeze. For this reason, the scientists think it's better practice to store in small amounts, and when you open one pit you can take all the vegetables in it into the cellar. They won't be too many to use while they still deep well.

For your convenience also, store a variety of vegetables in each rather than all one kind. Mix them up just as you will in using them. Then when you open up one pit or bank, you will have some of everything. In storing several crops in the same bank separate them with straw, leaves, or other material. So

the rule for storing vegetables is: Mix rather than match if you want variety of vegetables for winter meals.

Our next question comes from a woman who has planted some small pot-grown chrysanthemums, raised from cuttings, along the edge of her Victory vegetable garden. Now she asks: "What care shall I give these plants in the early summer, so they will bloom well in the fall?"

Plant specialists of the Department reply that as soon as the plants show signs of becoming established in their new location, remove the growing tip. This makes the plants branch out at the sides instead of growing too tall. Generally speaking, you can pinch out the top of the shoot after 3 or 4 pairs of leaves have formed. Some gardeners do this even earlier--after the second pair of leaves is mature. Three to 5 shoots will appear. Stop them in turn, or you will have sprawling plants, almost like shrubby climbers, with crooked stalks when you come to cut the flowers. The number of stoppings varies for each variety. Some branch freely with one or two stoppings, while others you have to check repeatedly.

Don't pinch out the tops after the middle of July, as this might bring the bloom too late into the autumn.

From flowers let's turn to a food that's on many folks' shopping lists just now--honey, to use in place of sugar. This letter is from a woman who bought a gallon of honey and stored it in her refrigerator. She finds it has become somewhat cloudy, and there are crystals in the bottom of the jar. "Is the flavor or food value of the honey affected by these changes?" she wants to know.

Home economists of the Department say the food value and flavor of honey is not changed when it becomes "sugary" or crystallizes this way. But why keep honey in the refrigerator? The cold makes it stiff and hard to pour when you

want it, and cold is not necessary for keeping honey. Honey covered tightly keeps at ordinary room-temperature, 70 degrees,- with a low humidity.

With a few exceptions all honeys crystallize on standing but you can bring honey back to liquid form just by warming it a little. Set the jar of honey in moderately hot water/for a few minutes. Don't use very hot water because too much heat changes both flavor and color of honey.

This summer it's more important than ever to safeguard our woolens and furs from destructive insects like moths and carpet beetles. A steady stream of inquiries on the subject has come in the mail bag. Here's a typical question, with an answer from entomologists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

"What is the best way to store blankets and rugs to protect them from moths? I have put our winter coats and suits away in garment bags, but have no cedar chest for the woolen blankets, and don't know just how to protect the rugs."

The entomologists say you can keep your blankets in any reasonably tight trunk or wooden box, if you put them away clean and keep the cover of the trunk or box tightly closed. Scatter 4 ounces to a pound of naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene flakes or crystals between the blankets as an added precaution. The best way to put the flakes in the trunk is to sprinkle them between folds of thin clean paper. Then they won't cling to the nap of the blankets when you take them out in the fall to use.

Rugs that are kept clean by a vacuum cleaner may remain on the floor all summer with little danger from moths, especially if they get air and sunshine on both sides frequently. However, if you have changed to summer rugs, have the winter rugs cleaned, or clean them well yourself. Then scatter naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene flakes liberally over the surface. Roll the large rug up on a long pole, shorter ones together for a more convenient package. Tie each bundle in several places, and cover with stout paper, using enough to reach well over the ends of the roll. Fold back the ends of the paper so as to leave no gaps where moths can get in to lay eggs. As a further precaution, seal the paper covering with gummed paper tape. If the rugs are clean and protected in this way, there is not much chance that the moths will damage them.

Many rug cleaners have cold storage or will fumigate rugs in storage for a reasonable fee. The rugs are safe in cold storage and you are saved the trouble of wrapping them. (Written by E. H. Wharton.)

