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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, March 16, 1944.

ANSWERS FROM:

Home economists of the U.S.
Department of Agriculture

QUESTION BOX:

How remove orange stain?
Uses for rhubarb?
Can we get raisins now?

--ooOoo--

The mail bag today has questions on removing an orange juice stain, on ways to serve rhubarb, and on ways to use raisins. Home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture have replied to all these questions, and food distribution officials also assure us of plenty of raisins. Let's start with the first question, which comes from a lady who accidentally spilled some orange juice on a good dress. Now that we're getting and using plenty of citrus fruit, that's an accident that might happen to anybody. She says:

"I spilled orange juice on a red afternoon dress and it has made ugly yellowish brown spots. Is there anything I can do to take out these spots and bring back the color of the material?"

Textile specialists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture say that if you act quickly you can usually remove a citrus or other mild acid stain. Here's how you do it:

First, sponge the stain with cold water to stop the action of the acid. Rinse several times in cold water. Then apply baking soda or ammonia water. Water alone will not restore the color, but ammonia water may.

To use the soda, sprinkle it on both sides of the stain, moisten with water and allow it to stand until the bubbling stops. Rinse well with water. If the soda does not restore the color, try holding the dampened stain over an open bottle of strong ammonia water, or if the material doesn't water-spot, dilute the ammonia water to half strength, and put a few drops on the stain. Ammonia water affects

some dyes, so have some white vinegar ready to apply quickly if the color changes.

Rinse well with water after treating the stain.

In the case of your red dress, you might try sponging first with water, then, to bring the color back, put on the soda and rinse. If you send the dress to a dry cleaner, be sure to tell him what caused the stain.

From orange stains let's turn to rhubarb and some questions about it. This homemaker says:

"The first bright colored stalks of rhubarb coming on the market now are tempting looking. But I'd like to know what I can do with it besides serving stewed rhubarb and rhubarb pies?"

Why not make a rhubarb "cobbler" for dessert sometimes? A cobbler has the fruit underneath and a biscuit topping. Or you could reverse the idea and make shortcake, with the biscuit part beneath and rhubarb sauce on top. Or make a rhubarb betty, just as you make apple betty---with alternate layers of fruit and bread crumbs, seasoned with sugar and a little fat. Use raw rhubarb for the betty---it will cook in a short time. Whether you serve these desserts, or an old-fashioned rhubarb pie, the first rhubarb dessert makes a hit with the family because it comes along just about the time the apple barrel gives out. Rhubarb adds a little vitamin C and vitamin A to the day's supply, although not as much as some of the other fruits.

Rhubarb is easy to can by the water bath method because it is very acid. The home economists give these directions: Select young, tender stalks. Trim, wash, and cut them up into half inch lengths. Add half a cup of sugar to each quart of rhubarb and let it stand to draw out juice. Boil until tender. Can in glass jars. Rhubarb corrodes tin cans. Pack boiling hot into the jars, and process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath. You'll be able to use the canned rhubarb just as you would freshly stewed rhubarb---as a fruit, or for pies or desserts.

When you have enough sugar to make preserves, you can combine rhubarb and

strawberries for jam, or make rhubarb conserve. And now that a few bananas are coming on sale, a good way to stretch them is to combine them with rhubarb. Use a pint of cut-up rhubarb to one medium-sized banana, sweeten to taste, dot with fat, and bake.

The last letter for today is one asking about raisins. "For a long time it has been hard to get dried fruits. Is it true that now we can get plenty of raisins?"

Yes, the marketing specialists say that we'll get plenty of raisins this spring. Supplies on hand are enough for military and Lend-Lease requirements as well as for civilian needs.

This is good news for homemakers who like to put raisins into bread and bun, or biscuits, muffins, gingerbread, Boston brown bread, cookies, cup cakes, other cakes; or into mince pies or other pies. You can also use raisins in steamed raisin pudding, Indian or cornmeal pudding, bread pudding and many other dessert. In a plum pudding, the raisins are the plums. Raisins go just as well in fruit salads and jellied fruit desserts. And the children like to eat them on cereal in sandwiches---or just eat them. The more raisins, the more iron and other minerals. You are safe in encouraging children to eat raisins just as they are, in place of other sweets.

