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homemakers' chat

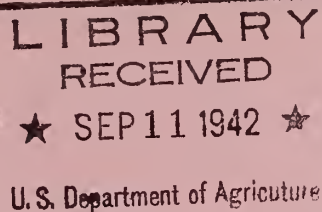
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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, August 27, 1942.

ANSWERS FROM:

Home economists of the U. S.
Department of Agriculture



HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

QUESTION BOX:

How cook Swiss chard?
How use underripe plums?
Chutney same as chow chow?
Supplies for black-out room?

--ooOoo--

Food questions have the floor today. They include one on cooking Swiss chard, another on underripe plums, and one on relishes. And a special war-time question- food supplies for a blackout room.

The first letter is from a woman who has a flourishing Victory garden, she says. "I have a lot of Swiss chard in my garden, and am not sure how to cook it. Do you eat the whole plant, or only the stalks? Please give cooking directions."

The home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture explain that Swiss chard is classed primarily as a green leafy vegetable, valuable for vitamins and minerals like all the leafy vegetables. But you can also eat the stalks, serving them either with the green leaves, or separately.

Chard stalks take longer to cook than the leaves, so you start cooking them first, even if you are going to put them together at serving time. Or you can serve the leaves on one day and the stalks on another, if you prefer.

Cook the chard stalks whole, or cut them up in inch-long pieces. Cook for about 30 minutes, in an uncovered pan in lightly salted water. Use as little water as possible and save any left after cooking for a sauce to put over the stalks, if you are having them as a separate vegetable. When the leaves are served separately as greens, many people like to sprinkle a little lemon juice or vinegar over them. Others use crisp cooked bacon, broken into bits, as a seasoning.

Next we have a question about plums. "Kindly let me know what I can do with plums that don't get a chance to turn red. I have a red plum tree, but just as soon

as these plums have one spot of red on them, the birds pick at them and throw them on the ground. Also there are many Japanese beetles on this tree."

"Is there anything I can do with these plums before they turn red? Can I make jelly or jam out of them while they are a light green? The tree has ever so many plums on it and it seems a shame to let them spoil."

The home economists reply that green fruit as a rule has more pectin than ripe fruit and so is very good for jelly making, but the flavor has not fully developed. So they suggest that if possible you use some ripe and some underripe fruit together. Maybe you could salvage some of the ripe fruit that drops, by cutting out the places the birds have pecked in them.

However, you might try making a small quantity of jelly from your underripe plums. If you get a satisfactory jelly you can then make up a larger lot. To stretch your sugar ration use $3/4$ of a cup of sugar to each cup of juice. Or replace half the sugar called for with an equal measure of honey. You can also replace one-fourth of the sugar with corn sirup. If you use either part honey or part corn sirup, cook the mixture slightly beyond the jelly stage. To be sure about the whole problem of making jelly so as not to waste any fruit this summer, send for a copy of the "jelly bulletin"- Farmers' Bulletin 1800-F. You can get it free by writing to the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Now for a question about relishes. "What is chutney? Is it anything like chow chow? Please give me directions for making."

Chutney is a hot, sweet relish, used with meat in some of the tropical countries. It contains fruits, such as apples or peaches, and hot, or "chili" peppers, as well as raisins, dates, and some spices and seasonings. To make chutney this year it may be necessary to use other spices than those designated in the recipe and to reduce the amount of sugar called for.

Chow chow is a chopped vegetable relish containing vegetables that have been



brined by what is called the long process, and then freshened. If you want to know how to brine vegetables to make chow chow, send to the U. S. Department of Agriculture for a copy of Farmers' Bulletin 1438-- Making Fermented Pickles.

And here's a real war-time question. "In case of a very long blackout, what foods could I keep on hand in our blackout room?"

The principal supplies you can stock without refrigeration or cooking facilities are crackers and something to spread on them-- such as peanut butter, preserves, spreads like apple butter, or a small amount of cheese. The home economists suggest that you have more than one kind of cracker-- plain unsweetened ones, rye crackers, whole wheat and graham, and a few sweet cookies. Keep these airtight. Such supplies should be used and replenished in order to be sure they are constantly fresh.

Keep a constantly fresh bottle of drinking water in the room, and perhaps some tomato juice, grape juice, and other fruit drinks. For sweets, a few tender kinds of dried fruit. That's about all you can do. In the closet where you store these emergency foods, don't forget paper plates, napkins and cups, a knife and a can or bottle opener.

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