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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Tuesday, May 26, 1931

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9 Housekeepers' Chat
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NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Garden Questions." Information approved by the Bureau of Plant Industry U.S.D.A. Recipe for fresh strawberry pie from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Bulletins available: "The Farm Garden in the North" and "Home Gardening in the South."

Gardeners are asking lots of questions lately. Last night at ten o'clock one of them telephoned me to ask if I knew just how deep in the soil seeds should be planted. She said this was her first garden and she wanted to plant it exactly right. She was so enthusiastic that I had visions of her out with a flashlight and a measuring tape putting in her radish seeds.

I am sure the telephone in W.R.B's house must be ringing day and night. To be a garden adviser in these days of eager amateur gardeners must be a full-time occupation.

The question of how deep in the soil to plant seeds depends on several factors. First, what seeds are being planted? Second, what type of soil? Third, how much moisture in the soil? and, fourth, what time of year is the planting being done?

In light soil, seeds can be planted a trifle deeper than in heavy soil. That's common sense, isn't it?

Then, in the early spring when the soil is moist near the surface and warmer there than farther down, it is a good plan to plant near the surface. Later in the summer, when it is dry, the seeds should be put in deeper where there is more moisture. Even in summer, tiny little seeds like carrots, should not go down too deep. In order to reach the moist soil in hot weather, you can make a shallow trench and plant at the bottom of it with a light covering, or you can sprinkle the soil in the bottom of the little furrow.

I have a few estimates for planting depth that may be helpful to you. I'll read them slowly and you can jot them down in the garden section of your notebook. Of course, they are very rough estimates. It is impossible to be exact in such matters.

Pencils ready? You'll need them not only for your garden notes but for the recipe for fresh strawberry pie which I promised you yesterday.

Celery and parsley seeds go down about one-eighth inch.

Turnips--one-eighth inch.

Cabbage, carrot, and lettuce--one-fourth to one-half inch.

Onion, radish, salsify, beet, chard and tomato--from one-half to one inch.

Bean, sweet corn, cucumber, melon, New Zealand spinach, pumpkin, and squash--one to two inches.

Peas--one and one-half to three inches according to moisture in soil and potatoes four or five.

Another question is how thick to plant seeds. Here's what Bob Adams of Cornell University has to say about this matter:

"Don't make your plants come crowding up
As thick as hair upon a pup,
Your seeds, be careful how you place them
And take a little pains to space them."

Thinning out plants is a tedious job and the thicker you plant, the more you must thin. You waste good seeds also by too thick planting. But circumstances alter cases, as the old saying goes. Do not plant seed that is old or of doubtful germination. Plant beets and chard fairly thick, if the thinnings are to be used for greens. Plant onions sets an inch apart, if you wish. Then take every other one for eating green and raw and smelly. Later, perhaps, use every other one again, leaving them four inches apart to make large bulbs by late summer. It is hard to scatter seed evenly. One good way is to cut a small envelope straight across the end and shake seed with an even steady motion from the cut edge, which is held lengthwise of the row.

Carrots, parsnips and parsley may be sown at the rate of five or six seeds to the inch. Beets, chard, onions, spinach and salsify may run two to four seeds to an inch."

Now about your flower garden. Here's a nice idea about color the season through. Why not choose perennial plants which will make your garden colorful from early spring to late fall? Many gardens which are radiantly lovely in spring and early summer begin to look dreary and forlorn when autumn comes. The wise gardener will not wait until fall and then bemoan the fact that her flowers are all gone. She will make definite plans in spring for late blooms.

Some of the loveliest perennials will blossom during September and October and many annuals will flower gaily until cut down by frost.

The early spring bulbs such as tulips, daffodils and grape hyacinths, are followed in bloom by the painted daisy and the later varieties of tulips.



When these flowers are gone, the English daisies, columbine, peonies, iris, phlox and poppies come, many of which will last until late in the season. Then the aster, chrysanthemum and Japanese anemones begin, which bloom throughout the fall.

Perennials make effective borders. If several which bloom at the same time are grouped together in drifts or clumps and similar plantings repeated at intervals throughout the length of the border, the color effect will be more beautiful than if the individual plants are grouped separately. Perennials can be selected and timed to give a continued bloom of color throughout the summer.

Now for the recipe for fresh strawberry pie. This is one of the Recipe Lady's very recent works of art. When you've tried it, I'll wager that you'll be extra thankful there is a Recipe Lady to work out directions for so many delicious dishes.

Fresh strawberry pie---or I might describe it as uncooked strawberry pie---is unique in all my experience with pies. Just one crust or shell with a filling half cooked and half uncooked. And the result is a beautiful concoction, ruby red in color. Of course, you know that cooking strawberries changes their appearance---and not generally for the better. I'm not saying anything strawberry jam here. That's another story that we'll discuss next week. I'm talking about cooking these berries in sauce or pie. They wilt and lose much of their delightful color. And that color is one reason for the popularity of strawberries. There is nothing that makes me sadder than to look at a bowl of stewed strawberries---dreary, elderly-looking fruit, quite different from the bright, plump, refreshing berries that went into the kettle. Berries cooked in pie also grow limp and sad-looking during the baking. Here's a puzzle to solve: How can strawberries keep their looks and yet be made into pie? The recipe for today is the answer. Fill a crisp, baked crust or shell with fresh berries and then pour in a clear, red, thick sauce of strawberry juice. And on top---

But wait. I haven't given you the ingredients yet. There are just six.

Pastry

1 quart of strawberries
1 cup of strawberry juice
1/2 cup of sugar
1 and 1/2 tablespoons of cornstarch, and
1/4 teaspoon of salt

I'll repeat that list. (Repeat.)

Bake a pie crust until it is light brown and crisp. Wash and cap the berries. Select the largest ones and arrange them in a close layer in the baked crust. Crush the remaining berries and heat them just long enough to extract the juice. Cook it over direct heat, stirring until thickened. Then cook it in a double boiler for about 10 minutes. While hot, pour this red sauce over the berries in the crust. When cold serve with whipped cream.

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Wednesday-- "Warm-Weather Clothes for the Baby."

Dear Sir,
I am writing to you regarding the matter of the...

I have been thinking about the situation for some time...

I am sure that you will understand my position...

I would be grateful if you could let me know...

I am looking forward to your reply...

Yours faithfully,
[Signature]

[Name]
[Address]
[City]

[Name]
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