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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

Thursday, January 22, 1942

QUESTION BOX:

How start a frame garden?
How keep broccoli and Brussels
sprouts in the house?
How remodel a fur collar?

ANSWERS FROM:

Plant scientists, extension
workers and home economists,
U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Today's question box includes a couple of garden questions, answered by plant scientists or extension workers of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and one on remodeling a fur collar on a coat. The clothing specialists have taken care of that for us.

First is a question on making a frame garden. In most states the Extension Service can tell you what will do well in your locality. A frame garden is especially useful where wind, sand, a shortage of moisture or extreme summer heat or winter cold make it hard to get a good garden started in the open. Here are some tips on making the frame garden. They're from a Texas home demonstration agent.

You can start an outdoor frame garden whenever danger of frost is past. Make it 4 or 5 feet wide -- if more, you may find it hard to reach across for cultivating and picking the vegetables. Make it as long as you like -- 20 feet is a good length. Of course, you can have several frame gardens if you have plenty of space and enough lumber for the frames. You may be able to get wide scrap lumber to make the side walls. They should be 12 to 18 inches high.

When your rectangular frame is put together, nail strips of one by one inch lumber across the frame every 5 feet to support the cover. You'll need enough good strong muslin seamed together to cover the whole frame and drop over the ends. This will be one of your chief expenses. Tack the muslin to the frame

on one of the long sides, and arrange some way of holding it down along the opposite edge and over the ends. Tie-strings at intervals would do, or you might weight the hem of the loose edge. When you want to roll the cover back two people can do a smoother job than one.

In some places they use a cover made of lath strips instead of a muslin cover. This breaks the sun's rays, but lets in more sunshine than the muslin. Cover the lath strips with wire netting to keep out chickens and small animals.

Before you set the frame in place, prepare the soil. Spade up the ground to a depth of 10 inches and fertilize it well. If you use sub-irrigation, lay the tile first. Throw up sand or soil along the sides of the frame garden for additional protection.

Plant rows 8 to 12 inches apart across the frame, to make cultivation easier. Water your crops well. Watch the outdoor temperatures so as to be ready to cover up the new growing plants if the weather turns cold. On mild, sunny days, open up the frame garden to the sunshine. As soon as one crop is over, plant another in its place.

As to what to plant in the frame garden -- you can try whatever grows well in your part of the country. Particularly good are the leafy green vegetables, and lettuce, peas, snap beans, tomatoes, yellow squash, and any others your family likes. What you are working for is a supply of vitamins and minerals in the family diet for as many months of the year as weather permits you to grow them.

And now for a question from a homemaker who realizes that good care of food she buys at the store is one way of avoiding kitchen waste. She writes: "Please tell me the best way to take care of broccoli and Brussels sprouts after bringing them home from market. If I put them in the refrigerator, they flavor the butter and their odor fills the whole refrigerator."

The plant specialists of the Department say that both these vegetables are difficult to store at home. In fact, cabbage is the only member of the "brassica" family that keeps well for any length of time. However, if you have some broccoli or Brussels sprouts you can't use the same day as bought, you could wrap them well in waxed or parchment paper to prevent odor from escaping, and keep them a day or two in the refrigerator.

Generally speaking, the fresher your fruits and vegetables, the higher their quality on the table and the richer they are in vitamins. So, it's preferable to buy most garden produce in small day to day quantities. Then you can be sure of plenty of vitamins in the family diet.

Our last question is from a woman who is remodeling a coat. "Do you think I could cut down a large fur collar that is worn in spots?"

Yes, the clothing specialists say, you could do this fairly easily. And there is a brand new bulletin just out to help you do so. This bulletin, on making or remodeling coats at home, has lots of pictures and several pages devoted to fur trim. You can get a copy by writing to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Ask for Farmers' Bulletin 1894-F, or just the "coat-making bulletin."

Since you're using an old fur collar, you may have to cut out the worn spots and piece here and there. If you make sure the hairs all run the same way, piecing does not show on the right side of the fur. On the skin side mark arrows to show the direction of the hairs with a piece of chalk, and when you piece, have the hairs on the patch run in the same direction. Mark the worn places, and cut them out carefully with a sharp knife or razor blade, cutting just through the skin without cutting any hairs. You won't need to make seam allowances, because you whip the pieces together with an overhand stitch to make a flat strip of fur big enough to take your new pattern. Better send for the bulletin, however, for some other details, including a tip on making good-looking fur buttons from your scraps.

That's all for today..

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