

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

Tuesday, March 24, 1942

QUESTION BOX

Mend leak in hot-water bag? :
Dye protects against clothes moth? :
How cook dried beans tender? :
Does color of egg shell tell quality? :

ANSWERS FROM

home economists,
entomologists and
marketing specialists
of the U.S. Department
of Agriculture

--ooOoo--

Letters in this week's mail ask many questions about many different subjects.

Letters up for answer today ask about mending rubber, clothes moths, cooking dried beans in a beanpot, and color in egg shells. The answers to all these questions come from scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Let's begin with a question about mending a leaky hot water bag. This letter says: "Rubber is so scarce and valuable that I want to mend the leak in my hot-water bag instead of throwing the bag away. Will you tell me whether I can do this at home?"

That question gets an answer from home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture who have just looked into the problems of saving and repairing rubber articles. They say you can repair your hot water bag at home, if the leak isn't too large, and if the rubber is still in good condition--that is, if the rubber still has plenty of strength and stretch and is not getting sticky, or hard and brittle. They say you can patch a rubber hot water bag or a rubber ice bag as you do the inner tube of a tire. So it's handy to have a little inner-tube patching kit on hand around the home. Also you may be wise to have on hand rubber cement or plastic rubber compounds as well as adhesive tape, or friction tape, or electricians' tape. You can patch rubber with self material or with regular inner tube patching.

Now here's the way to mend that leak in your hot water bag. Turn the bag inside out, if it's that kind of a bag. If not, put the patch on the outside. Cut a piece of inner-tube patching about a half inch larger all around than the hole. Now

pull the stiff cloth from the patch. Then sandpaper the surface of the bag around the leak. (Sandpapering makes the rubber rough so the patch will stick better.) Now apply one coat of rubber cement to the patch and 2 coats to the bag. Let each coat dry, and then put the patch squarely on the leak and do not move it. Press the patch down firmly, put a weight on it to hold it tight, and leave it for a little time until the patch sets.

By the way, you can use the same sort of a patch on a raincoat or a rubber sheet. Or you can patch your raincoat with a piece of fabric just like the raincoat. If you use raincoat material, be sure to use 2 coats of rubber cement on both the patch and the place you are mending.

Well, so much for mending rubber. Now let's answer one question about moths. A housewife wants to know what kind of dye in blankets keeps moths from eating the blanket. She says she has a blanket of white and colored checks. The moths have damaged some of the white but they haven't touched the color. She thinks this must be because they don't like something about the dye.

Entomologists of the Department of Agriculture say: Moths seem unable to mature on some dyed fabrics, but as yet no dye has been found capable of giving sure protection against moths. But the dyeing and general treatment of wool as it is made into fabrics certainly does a good deal to cut down moth damage. The entomologists say the natural mortality of the little moth worms on clothing is from 90 to 99 percent!

By the way, you're welcome to a free leaflet on clothes moths, with complete instructions for saving your clothes from them. Write to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. for Leaflet No. 145 called "Clothes Moths."

Now for a question about cooking dried beans. A housewife says: "I hear the canners aren't going to put up pork and beans in cans anymore. So I want to learn how to cook the dried beans. I've never cooked beans in a beanpot. Will you give me directions?"

The answer to this letter is all printed in a free folder called "Dried Beans and Peas in Low-Cost Meals." You get this bean booklet from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

Here's what that folder says about cooking dried beans: First, pick over the beans and throw out all bad ones. Then wash in cold water, twice if need be, to get out all the grit. Next, give the beans plenty of time to soak--overnight or 5 or 6 hours.

Now put the beans on to cook in the same water they soaked in to save vitamins and minerals. Use soft water, if you can, for soaking and cooking. Hard water toughens the bean skins. Don't add soda to soften beans, because soda destroys some of the vitamin value. Keep the heat low in cooking beans--simmer instead of boil. Add water to the pot from time to time because beans take up a good deal of water as they cook.

You can simmer beans until they are tender, or simmer then bake. You can season beans in many different ways. You can add salt pork, sausage, bacon or ham bone. Tomatoes, onion, mustard, molasses, maple sirup or sugar, cheese, garlic and chili pepper are all used with beans. Cheese is good with beans, too--and catsup. Suit yourself about seasoning beans. Just be sure to soak and cook them so they'll be tender and delicious.

Now to answer just one last question. Here's a letter that says: "Please tell me whether the color of the shell show a difference in quality or freshness in an egg. I mean--does a white shell or a brown shell mean a better egg?"

The answer is: Color of the shell tells you nothing about the freshness or the quality of an egg. If eggs of one color shell are selling for less in your market than those of another, buy the cheaper color shells. In some cities white-shelled eggs are favorites. In other cities they prefer brown shells. But the color of the shell makes no difference in quality or freshness. It doesn't even indicate the color of the yolk inside.

That's all the questions and answers until Thursday.

