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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE



Thursday, May 21, 1942

QUESTION BOX:

Should city people can?
Non-sweet "filler-uppers"?
Pattern for slip covers?
Mix-matched colors in dresses?

ANSWERS FROM:

Scientists of the U.S. Department
of Agriculture

--ooOoo--

War-time economies are leading many homemakers to ask questions about saving what they have in one way and another. Home economists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture answer these questions for us.

First question: "People tell me it doesn't pay for city families to can. I happen to have a lot of glass jars, and although I haven't a pressure canner for the non-acid vegetables, I feel I could put up some tomatoes and fruit this summer using a wash-boiler if there's no objection to my doing so. What do you advise?"

The home economists say by all means help save food and water-bath canning is one good way to preserve such acid foods as tomatoes and fruits like peaches, cherries and pears. Whatever you can for your family to use next winter, or buy to eat fresh during the season, takes that much pressure off the commercial supplies, we need for our military forces, our Allies, and civilians who have no way to can for themselves.

Next question is on sugar conservation. This mother asks: "What could I fix for the children to eat with a glass of milk after school instead of making cookies that take sugar? They always come home hungry."

One answer, of course, is fruit in season. The home economists of the Department also suggest sandwiches, but make them different from the regular school lunch sandwiches. You could spread them with peanut butter, cottage

cheese, chopped cress or parsley, mixed with creamed table fat or salad dressing or almost any tea-time sandwich flavor that was a little new or different. Do you ever make orange flavored biscuits, using the grated rind? Or nut or raisin muffins? Or pin-wheel biscuits spread with apple butter? The children won't care if these are not hot. And as long as you can get molasses or honey or corn sirup you can make gingerbread and dried fruit cup cakes that satisfy the desire for sweets.

Up for answer next is a question about slip covers. "I want to make a summer slip cover for an upholstered chair out of some printed linen curtains I no longer need. Where can I get a pattern?"

You can buy slip-cover patterns for some types of chairs and sofas, but it is easier to make your own than to alter a commercial pattern to fit your chair, one of the home economists of the Department tells me. You don't really need a pattern because the slip cover can be pinned together right on the chair. A government bulletin on slip covers for furniture which you may get for the asking gives detailed directions for every step. If you haven't a copy, write to the United States Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C. and ask for Farmers' Bulletin No. 1873, "Slip covers for furniture."

While you are waiting for it to come, you may want to get your material ready. Rip out all seams and pleats or gathers, wash or clean the material, and press it well. Then start with the inside back because that is the most prominent part of the chair. Center a design on the inside back. Save another whole design for the top of the cushion and, if possible, reserve a whole design for the outside of the arms - these parts take the largest pieces. Plan the inside arms next. Leave the outside back, the seat under the cushion, and the under side of the cushion until the last. If necessary, smaller pieces can be sewed together for these parts. The seaming will be quite inconspicuous if the designs are matched.

Planning where you will place each part on the cloth before you cut, may prevent a disappointment. Slip covers take a surprising amount of material. Especially when there are designs to be centered and matched. If you haven't enough material, you still have an opportunity to substitute another fabric for parts that will not show, or you may very well combine a plain material with the printed. Use the fabric with the figure for the inside back, inside arms, and cushion; and the plain for the rest of the slip cover.

Now when your bulletin comes, you will be able to start on the slip cover itself.

Now we come to a question about conserving materials in remodeling clothing. This woman asks about ways to remodel two chambray dresses of different colors. The skirts are long, full, and still good, but the tops no longer fit, she says. One is tan and one is blue.

Clothing specialists of the Department say there never was a better time to combine different colors in one dress, because "mix-matched" outfits are good style just now. Since both dresses are cotton and would launder alike, you can put the two materials together without fear of uneven shrinkage. Couldn't you remodel one skirt to slim and shorten it, and use the other to make a jacket or blouse? Maybe you could get enough pieces from the remodeled skirt to trim the upper part, carrying the contrasting color to the top by means of a collar, cuffs, or pockets.

Or you might make one dress into a jumper. Cut away worn parts around the armholes and neck, and use the other dress to make a blouse to wear under the jumper.

Another remodeling idea is to make the front and back of the waist of different materials, repeating the colors in contrasting trimming. Or make the sleeves, belt and trimmings, of a different color from the rest of the dress.

That's all for today.

