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**WHEN, WHAT, AND HOW TO
CAN AND PRESERVE FRUITS
AND VEGETABLES IN
THE HOME**

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WHEN, WHAT, AND HOW TO CAN AND PRESERVE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN THE HOME

GEO. W. CARVER, M. S. AGR.

There is without doubt no activity connected with the farm or garden of greater importance than the canning and preserving of fruits and vegetables. The following are some of the strongest arguments in its favor:

1. It is the easiest, cheapest, quickest, and best method yet devised by which we can have plenty of good, wholesome fruits and vegetables at a time when the fresh article is out of season.

2. Fruits and vegetables can be preserved, dried, and canned that otherwise would go to waste, such as that which is below marketable size, lop-sided, specked, or deformed in other ways.

3. There is always a market for choice, home-canned goods, and many are the quarters, dimes, and nickels that can be taken in in this way.

4. It is a noticeable fact (all other things being equal) that those who partake freely of fruits and vegetables every day have the clearest minds and the strongest and healthiest bodies.

5. With plenty of fruits and vegetables in the pantry or cellar, there is absolutely no excuse for suffering from hunger. It is astonishing how it cuts down the cost of living.

It is estimated that fully two-thirds of our fruits and half our vegetables go to waste every year, which, if canned, preserved, or dried, would furnish nutritious and palatable dainties sufficient to last throughout the winter and spring months.

PREPARATION

An ordinary iron or tin wash boiler, with a heavy wire or slatted bottom, will answer the purpose for cooking. Thoroughly cleanse the jars; fill; place them in the cooker so that they will not touch each other; pour three or four inches of water in the cooker; put on the cover, and steam briskly the length of time necessary for the particular fruit or vegetable you are canning.

METHODS

It is practically impossible to lay down an absolute rule as to the exact time and manner of preserving fruits and vegetables, so much

depends upon the state of ripeness, the variety, and methods used. With the intelligent person a few simple general rules, coupled with a little experience, will enable anyone in a very short time to become quite expert at this very profitable, interesting, and fascinating work.

THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

1. Everything must be scrupulously clean.
2. That success depends upon complete cooking or sterilization, which kills all germ life.
3. That vegetables, fish, meats, and all foods except fruit must always be cooked in the glass jar or can, and not exposed to the air after sterilization.
4. That fruits are more delicate and delicious in flavor when cooked in the jars or cans, but may be thoroughly cooked in a porcelain or granite-lined kettle. For this process the jars or cans must be kept in boiling hot-water; pour out the water, one at a time; fill, and seal at once.

The flavor, however, is never so fine or the fruit so attractive, and it is more likely to mould or spoil.

5. That the sealing must be perfectly done, or the fruit or vegetable will spoil.
6. That glass jars must be wrapped in thick paper or put in a cool, dark place if you wish the color to remain bright and pretty, and the flavor to be the richest and best.

CANNING CALENDAR

In this locality almost one season with another the canner can depend upon fruits and vegetables as per schedule:

APRIL

Strawberries, Extra Fine—Use—

- 12 parts strawberries
- 2 parts sugar

Pack tightly in jars; cook the same as for corn, two days; drain off the syrup on the third day; cook until quite thick; pour over the berries, and cook the whole one hour. The berries should be covered with the syrup.

NOTE—Whenever corn is referred to, see method for corn, page 6

Asparagus—Take the nice, tender tips; wash in cold water, and treat the same as for corn.

English Peas—Shell; wash in cold water, and treat the same as for corn.

MAY

Continue to can strawberries and asparagus.

Blackberries and Dewberries—In all cases where cans or jars are used they are to be thoroughly cleaned. Use—

12 parts blackberries

2 parts Sugar

Pack tightly in jars, and cook the same as for corn.

Huckleberries—Take—

12 quarts berries

1 quart sugar

1 pint water

Put water, berries, and sugar in the preserving kettle; heat slowly; boil 15 minutes, counting from the time contents of the kettle begin to bubble; pour in hot jars, and seal at once.

Plums—Select firm but well-ripened fruit. Prick with a fork in several places to keep from bursting. Take—

8 quarts Plums

2 quarts sugar

and just enough water to melt the sugar. Add a few of the plums at a time; cook until tender; carefully remove the fruit, and place in jars; boil the syrup until thick; cover the plums and seal. The plums must be kept boiling-hot until sealed. If an especially rich syrup is desired add pound for pound of sugar and fruit.

They may be cooked in the can the same as for strawberries, and the flavor is exceptionally good.

Figs—Take—

8 quarts figs

2 quarts sugar

1 pint water

Put the sugar and water in a preserving kettle; heat slowly until melted; when it begins to boil-drop in the figs; boil until they become clear; remove the jar from boiling water; carefully lift out the figs without breaking; fill the jars; cover with the syrup, and seal at once.

Sour Krout—Take a clean keg barrel, or jar; select good firm cabbage heads; remove the outer leaves; wash and quarter as for cooking; shred with a spade, sharp knife, or slaw-cutter until very fine; rub the sides and bottom of the vessel with salt; put in a two- or three-inch layer of shredded cabbage; pound down with a wooden pestle; another layer of cabbage and salt, pounding as before; continue this process until the vessel is as full as you desire; cover over with cabbage leaves, and weigh down with a heavy weight; make a weak brine of salt and water, and cover the cabbage. Use just a trifle more salt than for cooking. Tie a thin cloth over the vessel to keep out worms. Put in a cool dry place

JUNE

Continue the work of May, and in addition begin putting up—
Peaches—Take—

8 quarts peaches
 1 quart sugar
 3 quarts water

Put the sugar and water together; boil and skim; pare the peaches; cut in halves; remove the stones unless you wish them whole; put in the preserving kettle; cover with the hot syrup; gently boil for fifteen or twenty minutes, skimming carefully; place in hot jars; cover with syrup and seal.

Corn—Sheer off the grains with a sharp knife; pack the jars or cans full; salt to taste; fill them up to the top with cold water; put on the rubber rings, and screw on the tops loosely; keep the water boiling for one hour; remove cover of the boiler, and screw down the caps. On the second day loosen caps, and boil again for one hour. Seal again, and repeat same the third day. They may now be permanently sealed and placed in a cool, dry, dark place.

String Beans—String, top, and tail exactly as for cooking; pack tightly in the jars or cans, and treat the same as for corn.

Okra—(Use only tender okra)—Wash in cold water; cut off the stems and tips, leave whole or split as desired, treat the same as for corn.

Beets—Wash young, tender beets; prepare the same as for cooking; cook until done; remove the skins; cut in thin slices, pack into the jars, and treat the same as for corn. If a pickle is desired mix equal parts of good vinegar and water, and sweeten to taste, and cover the beets with the mixture instead of water. (Use only glass jars with glass tops where vinegar is used.)

Tomatoes—Take nice ripe tomatoes dip them in boiling water for a few minutes; immediately plunge into cold water; remove the skins; fill the cans and treat the same as for corn. Two tablespoons of sugar to the half-gallon will improve the flavor.

Egg Plant—Peel and cut into cubes or slices about an inch thick; drop in boiling water for 15 or 20 minutes; pack in jars or cans, and treat the same as for corn.

Lima Beans—Shell, wash in cold water, and treat same as for corn.

Parsnips, Carrots, and Squash—Wash, peel, and grate; slice or cut in discs (squares); fill the cans and treat the same as for corn.

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, AND NOVEMBER

Continue the work of June and begin putting up—

Grapes, Muscadines, and Scuppernongs—Take—

6 quarts grapes

1 quart sugar

1 gill water

Squeeze the pulp of the grapes out of the skins; cook the pulp five minutes, and then rub through a sieve fine enough to hold back the seeds; put the water, skins and pulp into the preserving kettle, and heat slowly to the boiling point; skim the fruit, and add the sugar; boil 15 minutes; pour into hot jars, and seal.

Pumpkins—Wash, peel, and grate; slice or cut into discs (squares) fill the cans and treat the same as for corn.

Pears and Apples—Treat exactly the same as for peaches. If they are hard boil until tender.

In canning fruit no sugar need be used at all, but it makes a much choicer product where it is used.

Quincedonias—Take—

4½ quarts of pared, cored, and quartered quincedonias

1¼ quarts sugar

2½ quarts water

After paring and quartering drop the pieces into cold water; wash and put into a porcelain-lined or granite preserving kettle; cover with cold water; heat slowly, and cook until tender. As soon as the pieces become tender take them out and drain. When all has been cooked strain the liquor through two thicknesses of cheese-cloth. Now take two quarts and a half of the strained liquid and sugar in the preserving kettle; stir over the fire until well dissolved; when it boils skim it thoroughly; put in the cooked fruit; boil gently for about 20 minutes; put in hot jars; cover with the syrup, and seal at once.

Jellies—Put the fruit in a stone jar placed in a boiler of hot water. When the fruit is sufficiently softened strain through a thin muslin bag; place juice in a preserving kettle, and allow one pound of sugar to a pint of juice (1½ of a pound if the juice is very sour). While heating juice, place the sugar in a dish in the oven; allow juice to boil twenty minutes; add heated sugar; let all come to a boil and remove from fire; having scalded the glasses, pour them brimful and allow to stand in the sun for a day or until the jelly is thoroughly set; cover with melted paraffin or with tissue paper saturated with brandy

Pickles—Cucumbers, small, green cantaloupes, citron, watermelon rinds, green beans, cabbage, green tomatoes, etc., may be packed down in brine (salt and water) made strong enough to float a fresh egg; packed tightly in wooden or stone vessels. When desired for pickles soak in cold water until all the salt is out, and proceed in the usual manner for sweet, sour, or spiced pickles.

Sweet Potatoes—Select medium-sized potatoes; boil until two-thirds done; scrape off the skins; cut (if too large for the cans) into thick slices or strips; pack in the jars or cans tightly; cover

with a thin syrup of water and sugar (1½ pounds of sugar to one gallon of water); treat afterwards exactly as for corn.

DRYING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Corn—Corn is delicious when dried. Take tender roasting ears; steam until nearly done; cut from the cob with a sharp knife; spread thinly upon boards or dishes; put in the sun to dry. If the tops of the grains are shaved off and the pulp scraped out, leaving most of the husk on the cob, it makes a much finer product. In cooking, it should be soaked for an hour or two in cold water before the final cooking.

CAUTION—In drying any fruit or vegetable, wire screen, mosquito netting, etc., should be stretched over a suitable frame to keep off flies.

Okra—Steam until two-thirds done; split in quarters the thickest pods, and dry the same as corn.

Pumpkin—Peel and cut in discs about an inch thick or in thin slices; spread in the sun to dry; soak several hours in cold water before cooking.

Apples—Peel, quarter, and core the apples; spread in the sun to dry.

Peaches and Pears—Prepare the same as for apples.

Peach Leather—(delicious)—Take over-ripe peaches; peel, seed, and mash the flesh to a pulp; spread on platters, and dry in the sun or oven.

Strawberry Leather—(delicious)—Made the same as peach leather.

Fig Leather—Take very ripe figs; make the same as for peach or strawberry—one-half figs and one-half peaches make a very fine leather.

INSECTS

In this climate insects are very troublesome to dried fruit or vegetables. I have had excellent success by putting the dried fruit or vegetables in the oven and heating them real hot, sufficient to kill any lurking insects or their eggs; then pouring them into clean paper bags, tying the mouth tightly and suspending the bags. Not a single insect was ever found in the bags, although they were kept several months.

The above are only a few of the many ways in which fruit may be kept by canning, preserving, drying, etc. The thrifty housewife will readily see from the preceding suggestions how she can make many delicious and nutritious things not even mentioned here.