Preservation of Fruits and Vegetables.

PRESERVATION OF FOOD.

Canning has become the most popular means of preserving large quantities of fruit and vegetables and since these are so plentiful during the summer months as actually to be wasted, and at other times very difficult to obtain, it is important to preserve quantities of perishable fruits and vegetables during the growing season for use during the winter. Moreover, the use of an abundant supply of fruit and green vegetables is essential to health at all seasons of the year.

The motto in every household should be "The best is not too good for canning". Select young, fresh, clean fruits and vegetables or none at all.

STERILIZATION.

Foods decompose or spoil because they are attacked by living germs, minute forms of plant life. Three type of these tiny organisms cause the spoilage in foods, namely, moulds, yeasts and bacteria.

Every household is familiar with moulds in their growing state. Moulds thrive in dampness and darkness, require moisture and warmth, and feed upon sugar and starches. Moulds are easily killed by moist heat.

The use of yeast in breadmaking is familiar. Yeasts require food in the form of sugar, warmth, moisture and air. When they grow the sugar is broken up and alcohol and carbon dioxide are formed. This gas shows on the sides of a fermented bottle in the form of bubbles.

Yeasts are very abundant in the air and on the food and for this reason it is necessary to destroy them and seal the jar air-tight, so that none can enter, after the food is canned. One yeast in a jar of fruit will cause fermentation in a very short time if conditions are favourable for its growth.

Bacteria are much more difficult to destroy. They require warmth, moisture and food. Bacteria in their growing state may be killed by subjecting them to a moist heat at boiling temperature for different lengths of time.

TWO KINDS OF SPOILAGE TO GUARD AGAINST.

In canned goods there are two kinds of spoilage. The first is called "flat sour", a term used to include all forms of bacterial growth that develop within the food. The second type of spoilage to guard against is mould, a plant growth that is distinctly different from the bacterial growth. Moulded foods are seldom more than surface affected because air is necessary for its growth; the "flat sour" spoilage means that the entire can must be discarded.

"Flat Sour" may be caused:—I. By the vegetables being allowed to stand in the cold water of the blanching period for a longer time than is necessary. Never blanch or cold dip more than you can pack at once.

II. By the jars being allowed to stand after being filled with boiling water, before being placed in the canner or sterilizer. If one or two of the jars are in the canner a few minutes longer than is necessary the fruit or vegetable will not be affected, while if the jar were left on the table for a corresponding length of time "flat sour" might be started.

III. By the jars being placed close together after being taken from the canner which prevents their cooling rapidly.

IV. By the product being allowed to stand over night before canning. Peas, beans, corn and asparagus which are overripe or too mature when canned will readily "flat sour".