

# Directions for Preserving Fruits and Vegetables

THE proper preservation of fruits and vegetables for winter use is an important question for the housekeeper. A bulletin on this subject, recently issued by the Wisconsin Experiment Station, contains many useful recipes and suggestions. While the recipes were worked out largely with native fruits, they will apply equally as well for preserving the domestic varieties of Canada. The following extracts may be of value to the lady readers of THE HORTICULTURIST:

It is important that the fruit intended for canning should be in the right stage of ripeness; it should be firm, having attained its full size and normal color. It should be free from all kinds of blemishes, such as scab, rust, rot, and all forms of insect life. Fruit intended for canning in any way should be utilized as soon as possible after it is picked. If left standing for hours, even if the fruit is not over-ripe, the fine flavor is lost and the keeping qualities greatly impaired.

## SELECTION AND PREPARATION

In selecting fruit for canning, it is advisable not to mix the different varieties together; for example, if plum preserves are made, each lot should be made from a distinct variety, or a combination of flavor will be the result, besides some varieties require more heat than others, thus giving the preserved product a lack of uniformity. To insure success in putting up fruit, a few precautions must be observed; namely, fresh perfect fruit, absolute sterilization of all utensils, the best grade of sugar, and other materials used.

## NOTES ON MAKING PRESERVES

When fruit is put up by the oven method, either cover the oven with heavy asbestos paper and cover the jars with the same paper, or place the jars in a dripping pan with a little cold water in the pan, and place a pan over the jars, as the fruit cooks faster in the top and may turn a little dark if not covered.

In making preserves, different fruits require different amounts of sugar; if a heavy syrup is wanted and no syrup gauge is at hand, use just enough water to liquify the sugar and heat very slowly as sugar often crystallizes in the bottom of the jar, if boiled rapidly, and the fruit will not be sweet enough. In making syrup, when it begins to boil, run a wet cloth carefully around the edge of the pan, to take out the impurities in the sugar, leaving the syrup clear.

A good way to prevent moulding and improving the general keeping qualities of preserves is to cut out circular pieces of paper to fit over the preserves. Be-

fore placing it over the preserves dip in melted paraffin and on top of this paper pour melted paraffin, making a layer an eighth of an inch in thickness. Paraffin may be obtained at any drug store and is both cheap and effective.

## DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING JELLY

Fruit for jelly is best gathered a little unripe. Jelly made from fruit gathered after a heavy rain will require a greater amount of boiling, and in some cases will not "jell" at all, owing to the lack of the starchy properties contained in fruit. This, however, may be put into jars and sealed and used for mince meat.

Great care should be used in skimming jelly. The juice should not be stirred, but the scum skimmed off carefully. If allowed to boil over, the jelly will not be clear.

In putting the jelly into glasses, sterilize the glasses, and drain them thoroughly; otherwise, air bubbles are apt to be in the jelly. When filling, fill each glass full before attempting to fill the next, as jelly will slide off in layers when turned out if put in a little at a time. Boil only a small amount of juice at one time, and use a shallow pan, as the water evaporates faster in a shallow pan, allowing the juice to "jell" in less time. Some people think that fruit that is not fit to can or preserve is all right for jelly, but this is not true. Perfect fruit is more essential for jelly than any other way of caring for fruit. Soft ripe fruit may be used for jams or marmalades.

Fruits such as strawberries, raspberries, peaches, which will not jell easily, make beautiful jelly if one-third rhubarb juice is used and the flavor is not harmed by such addition.

## NEW WAY OF MAKING PLUM JELLY

A new way to make plum and other jellies, is to place the fruit dry in jars. Two-quart jars are good. Either place the jars in the oven in asbestos paper or in a fruit steamer and cook till fruit is tender. Take out and strain through a flannel bag. Add as much sugar as juice, and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Place on the back of the stove and heat slowly until it forms jelly drops on the spoon. During boiling skim carefully. It will take but a little boiling as this is pure juice. This process produces the clearest and finest plum jelly.

The pulp may be used for jams or butter by straining through a sieve and adding equal amount of sugar and heating slowly till thick enough. Place in jars and seal as usual.

## MAKING APPLE JELLY

Cut the apples into quarters. They should not be cored or peeled. Cover with water and cook till tender and strain. Let stand an hour or more and

strain through a flannel bag. Measure out the same amount of sugar as juice, boil the juice fifteen minutes before putting in the sugar. Stir until the sugar is dissolved and boil slowly till it jellies in a spoon. Plum juice may be added if a plum flavor is desired. Apple jelly often lacks a decided flavor and this can be enhanced by adding a small quantity of plum juice.

## CURRENT JELLY

Wash and mash the fruit well, let stand a little while and strain. Put the juice in a stone jar and place in the coolest part of the cellar for 24 hours. Then remove the scum which will form on top, strain through a flannel bag and measure pound for pound of sugar and juice and stir till the sugar is dissolved. Put in glasses and seal. In 24 hours you will have a perfectly transparent jelly. No heat is required.

## MAKING PLUM PRESERVES

Plums are always nicer peeled and it is easily done by placing the fruit in boiling water for a minute or two, then pouring on cold water. The skins will then slip off easily. If plums are to be canned with the skin on, either prick each plum with a darning needle or cut one side to the stone so that they will stay whole. Some varieties require more sugar than others.

## CANNED PLUMS

Make a syrup by using pound for pound of fruit and sugar, or less sugar if not so rich a sauce is wanted. When the syrup is boiling add the fruit. Cook till tender, and carefully remove the fruit and place in jars. Fill up with the syrup and seal.

## BAKED PLUMS

Sort the fruit, wash and let dry, then put the fruit into sterilized jars and place the same in the oven which should be lined with asbestos paper. Cook till the fruit looks clear, not soft. Open the oven door carefully so as not to let the cool air in suddenly as it may break the jars. Lift the jars out, place the rubbers on, fill with the boiling syrup and seal hot.

## STEAMED PLUMS

Treat the fruit the same as in the foregoing recipe, only place the jars in a steamer and steam till tender, fill with hot syrup and seal.

(Continued next issue)

To see your hands in a basin of water at frequent intervals when peeling fruit for canning or preserving is a sign that you have your share of that which is next to godliness.