

FROM THE MAILBAG

Water Marks

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I wonder if I can help "Mrs. A." whose S.O.S. about water marks on a new frock appears in *The Listener*. About two years ago my daughter got fresh plum juice all down the front of a new frock—synthetic material. I sponged each mark with warm water and dried in the shade. When dry I ironed with a warm iron. The stains had gone, but I was left with a series of water marks. I felt annoyed and rubbed one in my hands—as though washing. To my delight the mark had gone so I rubbed the others and then pressed the frock. Not a mark!

"*Listener-in.*"

Preserving Flowers

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Do you know if there is any method of keeping flowers—say dahlias for instance—in a state of preservation for use in three months' time? Flowers are not plentiful in winter here in Balclutha, and I wondered if the glycerine method would do for those. "*Balclutha.*"

A "*Link*" supplied the answer to this, and backed it up by saying that she herself had preserved rosebuds for 3 months. When taken out and put in the vases, they even opened out a little—and kept for about 2 weeks! The idea, like many other new ones, came from America, where preserved flowers (zinnias, chrysanthemums, marigolds, cornflowers, water-lilies, cosmos, carnations, scabious, orchids, daffodils, roses and so on) were exhibited in winter at a show. The method is to keep them—not in cold storage, as one would expect—but in perfect DRYNESS. This is done by cutting the stalks so that the flowers will stand straight upright, and arranging them very carefully in deep flowerpots, standing in 2 inches of perfectly dry sand, not touching each other to bruise the petals. Then, working from one side, and very, VERY gently, sift in more DRY sand until the flowers are completely covered, tops and all. Then keep the containers in a cool and perfectly dry place—for 3 months. What a thrill it will be to open them. Be extremely careful to just tip the sand out very gradually, letting it flow out slowly, for the preserved flowers are extremely BRITTLE. The main difficulty is to get the sand perfectly dry. River sand is easier, but sea-sand must be washed and washed, and then dried for days and days in cool oven and sunshine. I hope the Daisy Chain will try this out, as they did the "coal flowers" a few years ago, and will let us know the result. If using big flowerpots, cover over the drainage hole with two thicknesses of parchment paper.

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NEW ZEALAND *Listener*, JULY 30

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