

poison food if used, for example, in Spanish cream where the white is not cooked.

"J.T." Christchurch.

Duck eggs, whether fresh or preserved, should never be used in an uncooked recipe. Spanish cream is a good example because it is such a favourite sweet. Duck eggs must always be cooked, and are then perfectly safe. They are excellent for cakes, because 2 duck eggs go as far as 3 hen eggs. Preserving them is quite successful using liquid preservative. I used to keep ducks myself, and always preserved a kerosene-tin full in this way. I had separate tins for duck and hen eggs, however, just as a safeguard.

Ginger Beer Plant

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Can you or any readers tell me what the Ginger Beer Plant is? It must start from something. Also, since we have been making this drink we have heard from a number of persons that it is harmful. Is this so or just a tale?

"Ginger," Te Puke.

I have never heard that the ginger beer made from the plant has any ill effects. It is an old drink of the pioneer settlers, and a good thirst quencher. The plant works on the same principle as a little yeast saved over from one week's baking serves as a starter for the next. "A little yeast leaveneth the whole lump." To make a ginger beer plant put the following into a large 2-quart jar: 1 small cup warm water, 1 dessertspoon sugar, 1 teaspoon ground ginger, 2 teaspoons compressed yeast dissolved in a little warm water. Let all stand 24 hours. This is the plant. To make ginger beer, mix in a jug 1 small cup sugar, 1 teaspoon ground ginger, 1 cut-up lemon, without the white pith. Add enough hot water to dissolve sugar, and cold water to make it lukewarm. Then pour on to the plant. Fill the jar right up, and leave 24 hours. Strain off through muslin, bottle and cork tightly. Make up another mixture as before, and pour on plant. Never leave more than 24 hours. If the plant gets too "hot" it may be divided or thrown out. Never have more than 1/4 to 1/2-inch of plant in the jar. Dried yeast may be used instead of compressed.

Discoloured Pears

Dear Aunt Daisy,

In reply to your query from "U.M.I." Christchurch, re discolouration in bottled pears, one of the reasons given in my book of canning instructions seems to be the cause. "Discolouration of fruits in the top of the jar is often due to enzyme activity or oxidation, which means that the heat of cooking or processing was not applied long enough, or the temperature used was not high enough to render the enzyme inactive or to expel the air from the jar." Another hint contained therein: "Pears canned by cold pack method will retain original colour better if a tablespoon of lemon juice is added to each quart jar."

"Marjorie."

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