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like peas, beans, or asparagus, which need the addition of vinegar or lemon juice, for it is established that bacteria cannot grow in the presence of acid. Do not put much salt in peas, as it tends to harden them. About a dessert-spoonful of vinegar to a pint jar of peas should be sufficient. Peas should be sterilised for 120 minutes continuously; or for two days running for one hour each day.

Smoking Trout

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I read your letter in *The Listener* about smoking trout, and am sending you our experience. We smoked trout by this method when camping at Lake Ohau, and they were delicious.

My husband had taken some sawdust with him, thinking to try this smoking, otherwise we would not have had it at the lake. We drove four sticks into the ground, the height of a wool-pack, then cut the bottom out of the pack and pulled it over the sticks. The top of the pack we left on, to form the lid. We put a piece of wire or stick on the top to hang the trout on.

The next thing was to take half a kerosene tin (or less would do), and fill it two-thirds full of sawdust. Oak sawdust is best, but any kind will do excepting pinus insignis which is no good owing to the gum making bad smoke.

The trout must be cleaned with a damp cloth (not washed), split open, and sprinkled with a little salt and sugar—not much! Put them into the sun and air to dry. Be sure to keep the flies off. Pierce the lugs of the trout and insert a piece of stick to keep it flat out; and hang it up to the top wires. Set fire to the sawdust, which will require a few twigs to start it off; put it into the wool-pack and fasten the top or lid of pack securely, to keep the smoke in. We kept our trout in four hours, until just a golden brown,

and they were very good to eat. We tried smoking at Lake Hawea, but having no sawdust, used dried manuka, with a little green stuff mixed in; but we did not care for the flavour.

—“Listener” (Mosgiel).

Many thanks indeed. That is very interesting. You will like to read this letter on the same subject from a charming little Maori woman who lives in the Waikato. She used manuka, and probably would not notice the flavour if she had not previously enjoyed the oak sawdust smoking method. I think, too, that hers might have been sea-fish, and not trout.

Smoking Fish with Manuka

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Before I was married I lived up near the North Cape, and fish is always plentiful there. The Maoris used an old tank turned upside down for smoking their fish. Cut a square hole, like the ones on the ordinary boilers, near the bottom of the tank, about 2 feet up from the ground level, and make this door two feet square. Run an ordinary plain fencing wire through the tank about two feet from the top, and catch it on both sides by pushing it through the tank again and twisting it round the bit that is outside to make it tight. This is to hold the fish, which is then filleted, heads all cut off, of course, and hung over the wire in the tank. The fish can be salted or not, according to one's taste. The hole or door near the bottom of the tank ought to be big enough for one to crawl in and hang the fish. No cooking is needed—the heat of the smoking does that. We used new manuka—not the dry stuff—to smoke ours with; but it is started with the dry. The wet or green manuka makes plenty of smoke. I am not certain how long it took to smoke the fish, as we did ours off and on, when we had the chance, but one can always find out by tasting, or even opening the fish.

—“Maori” (Waikato).

Drooping Ferns

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Do you think any of your helpful Daisy Chain could help me in a little matter? I have two maidenhair ferns in pots, and I don't seem to know the right way to treat them, for they are both fading. I do pick off the dead fronds, but soon there will be none left. I water them, keep them in the dining-room out of draughts, take the chill off the water before I give it to them, and yet in spite of all my fuss and attention they don't grow! Would you ask if anyone could suggest what I should do? I have no green-house to

put them in—perhaps the air is too dry in my dining-room, where there is a fire.—“Maiden” (Wellington).

How very disappointing for you. It does always seem to me that ferns and plants are somewhat temperamental and grow for some people better than for others. Well, I broadcast your difficulty, and here are some excellent replies:

Watering Ferns

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I am not in the habit of writing to radio people, but I really must this time. I have just heard you tell of the lady who has no luck with her maidenhair fern. I have had one for about seven years now. Up till then, I had no success, and had tried several times. When I had this one given to me, I was told to keep it in a sunny window, but to keep a blind or close curtain to keep the direct rays of the sun off. Then once a week in winter, and twice a week in summer, completely submerge the pot, and up to a couple of inches of the stems, in a bucket of ordinary cold water. I have done this, and once during that time it has been re-potted. I have told numerous people of this treatment, and so far have not known it to fail. Mine is a beauty.—“M.L.”

Epsom Salts for Ferns

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I heard you mention over the air this morning about the fern that would not grow in spite of everything that was done for it. Have you ever heard of giving ferns Epsom salts? You can either sprinkle it liberally round them, or put it in the water. An aspirin put in the vases with flowers that have started to wither will revive them wonderfully.

—“Mrs. H.” (Ashburton).

Fern Cultivation

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I heard you speaking about a maidenhair fern which does not grow properly. Last year I sent to New Plymouth for some, so I am forwarding to you the directions for fern cultivation which came with them.

“The best compost for ferns is one part earth (any kind), one part sand, and one part dry cow manure. Leaf mould or Gei-Gei can be used in place of the cow manure, whichever is most easily obtained. Mix all together, and pot firm, keeping the crown of the fern above soil level. Keep damp and shaded till growth begins. Fern foliage turning brown during the growing season is a sure sign of over-watering (sour soil). Cut off all brown fronds and give the plant a rest, taking care not to let it get too dry. It should be understood by growers who want the very fine

“Gracillimum” variety, that these will not show their true foliage until they are potted and rootbound. These remarks apply to all maidenhair ferns when young—the older the fern, the finer the leaf. They should do well near the glass in the “spare room.”

Saving Orange Juice

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I wonder if you could help me? I have a number of small oranges from my own garden, and would like to make up some orange cordial, as we use a lot in the hot weather. I thought you may have heard of some way to make it keep. I have given all the big oranges away to friends for marmalade, and made some myself. Now I just wish to use up the small ones. I have searched *The Listener* each week, but have not found this among the many good recipes, so thought I would drop you a line.—“Old Admirer” (Gisborne).

Yes, it certainly would be a pity to waste the good small oranges. I haven't an orange cordial; but this lemon cordial would probably do, using less sugar. Two or three good lemons with rinds, 2lbs. of sugar, 1oz. citric acid, and 1½ pints of water. Boil the water and the sugar. Peel the lemons finely and put the peel into a large basin. Add the lemon juice and pulp, and the citric acid. Pour over this the syrup and leave all night. Then lift off the floating peel and bottle. Two tablespoons in a tumbler of water makes a lovely drink.

PRESERVING LEMON JUICE:

Here are two ways of preserving lemon juice, which you could probably use quite satisfactorily. (1) Squeeze out the juice, bring to the boil some water and the lemon skins, add this to the strained juice, and sugar in the proportion of one cup to every two bottles. Boil for ten minutes then overflow heated bottles and seal. (2) Squeeze out the juice. Gradually heat to simmering point, 180 degrees. Then strain through muslin, and if liked, add sugar to flavour—this is optional. The sugar is in the proportion of 1 cup to 1 gallon of juice. Pour into bottles, cover lightly, sterilise at 180 degrees for 30 minutes. Remove, cork tightly, dip in wax, and seal.

ORANGE BITTERS: Have nice ripe New Zealand grapefruit or oranges and cut them up into an enamelled bowl. Squeeze every day. Strain through a cloth into another bowl, squeezing all the juice out. Add the sugar—3½lb. to one gallon of liquid. Stir well. Put into a stone jar or cask to work. When finished working, bottle, and leave for six months. It can be drunk plain, or with water, or better still, soda-water.

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