

FOODS CONTAINING VITAMIN C (2)

(Written for "The Listener" by DR. MURIEL BELL, Nutritionist to the Department of Health)

IF we were rats or rabbits we wouldn't need to bother about what foods acted as substitutes for oranges, for there are a few species of animals which are able to make Vitamin C for themselves. It has been whimsically postulated that the human need for this vitamin suggests a proof that man came from a Garden of Eden, where succulent plants grow in abundance.

Unfortunately we cannot avoid having to eat foods to get all the nutrient materials that we require. The hope that we can get all these things in pill form has to recede when we realise that the number of chemical substances which are suspected of playing a part in animal nutrition does not stop at those that have been prepared by chemical synthesis. Though we shall be able to buy Vitamin C in pill form at a much cheaper rate than the cost of oranges, there are other substances associated with Vitamin C in oranges; and if we took vitamin pills to the exclusion of vegetables and fruit for prolonged periods, we should probably find ourselves suffering from hitherto undescribed deficiency diseases.

Preserve Black Currants

To continue with our search for substitutes for oranges, we need to consult lists of vitamin values. It is usual to express these in terms of the value per unit weight of the food. Occasionally, this is to some extent misleading, because, for example, we are likely to eat a greater weight of potatoes than of mustard and cress or of rose-hips. When we look at a list of Vitamin C values we find that rose-hips stand highest—and that is why in England and on the Continent at present, people are being encouraged to gather rose-hips to make up for the lack of oranges and other imported fruits. Black currants and guavas come next, both being extremely rich. May I repeat what has appeared in a previous issue of this journal, that as many black currants should be preserved this year as possible. We are interested to know of the value of guavas grown in New Zealand and if anyone is interested and would be kind enough to send a few to the Nutrition Research Department at the Medical School, they will be tested. Next on the list come Brussels sprouts, mustard and cress, followed by strawberries. Cabbages, cauliflower, watercress, liver, oranges, gooseberries, and lemons rank high. Sometimes parsley is also very rich. New potatoes, swede turnips, tomatoes, grapefruit, spinach, and some varieties of apples come next. With a few intermediates, plums, carrots, onions, and grapes bring up the rear. As one scientific paper has recently expressed it, "as a war-time vegetable, the onion stands in bad odour," though one would hasten to add that flavour is an important attribute to good digestion and nutrition. Another scientist has stated

that grapes are in reality a poor choice of fruit to take to one's sick friend, but again they are so delicious that they are certain to react favourably on his digestion. Dried fruits and vegetables are usually poor in Vitamin C, though in some instances, the Vitamin C remains when the food is dried.

More needs to be said about this vitamin—those of us who are responsible for the health of babies and of women have it rather on our minds at present. It will be continued in our next article.

(Next week: "Gather Ye Rose-hips While Ye May," by Dr. Muriel Bell.)

No Dieting-

HARDY'S

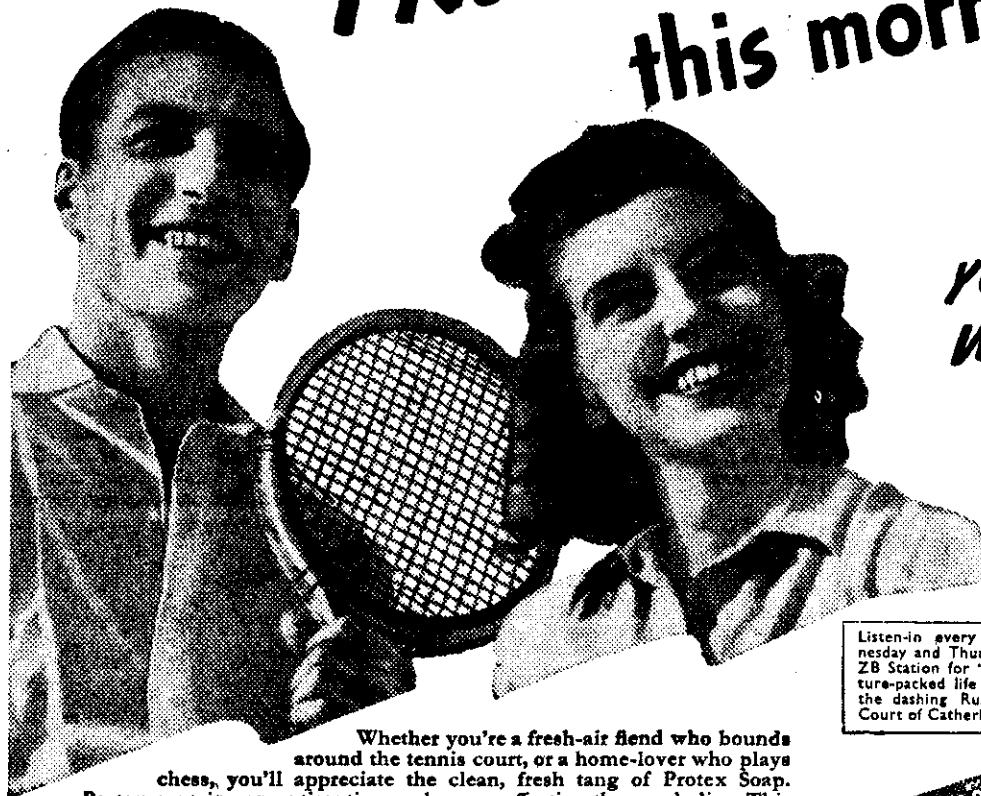
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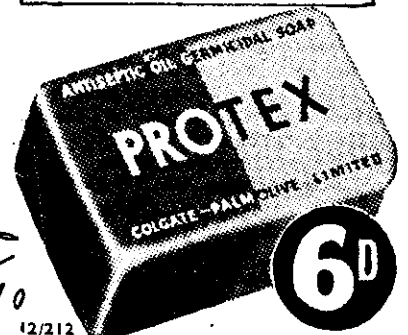
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*As Fragrant
as the Bush*



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