

(Continued from previous page)

or a light syrup; a fair thing is 6 ounces of sugar to a pint of water. If the syrup is very strong the fruit is apt to rise to the top of the jar. Pack the fruit into the jars, put in the cooled syrup, put on the lids lightly, and sterilise in the usual manner, either in the oven or in the water-bath. Soft fruits, such as raspberries or red currants, need less syrup in the jars than the harder fruits, as they contain so much moisture themselves. It is a safe plan to overflow the jars with boiling water, or boiling syrup, when screwing or pasting down, to make sure that no air can get in.

2. Fill the jars with fruit and then put a dessertspoon, or a tablespoon of sugar on top of each jar. Fill up nearly to the top with sterilised water (boiled and cooled) and put the lids loosely on as usual, then sterilise the fruit till it is soft, but not broken. This is an easy way, recommended by many experienced housewives, who find that the sugar dissolves quite properly and flavours the fruit.

(More preserving next week.)

FROM THE MAIL BAG

Recommending Dried Beans

Dear Aunt Daisy,

We shall soon be getting ready to preserve vegetables; and here is my experience with beans. I have tried them preserved in salt, also bottled, just as you bottle fruit; except that you top and tail the beans and cut them as though you were going to cook them for dinner. But the best way of all, I find, to save jars, time and trouble, is to DRY them! I gather my beans while tender, cut off the ends, cut them very finely just as if ready for cooking; then spread out the sliced beans on flat trays. You can dry them either in the hot sun, or on the rack over the fire, but don't dry them in the oven! It takes three days to dry them sufficiently. Keep turning the beans while drying. When thoroughly dry, put them in paper bags, tie up with string to keep out the dirt, moths and flies, and hang the bags up in a dry place. When wanted for use, just take out a small handful of beans, place them in a bowl of clean water for 24 hours, and wash next morning. Put them in clean cold water, with a small pinch of bicarbonate of soda—or without soda if preferred (this is better without soda)—and boil for 15 to 20 minutes.

They will be found to be as good as fresh beans. I have had dried beans for 30 years at least, and have always found them thoroughly reliable, and an excellent addition to a dinner for the winter months.

Drying Fruit.—I have also dried plums by having good sound fruit, placed on trays, and dried on the rack over the fire. They are like a prune when properly dried and are very good.

For damsons, I like them preserved in salicylic acid. One teaspoonful of the acid to two quarts of water, brought to the boil, then left to get quite cold. Have ready good, clean, sound fruit

packed in jars, and pour the cold liquid over, and cover either with lids or paper, as they keep without being airtight. I use the big jars, and just take out as many as I want to use, and cover up the remainder for another time. I have preserved damsons this way for many years, and have never known them to go wrong.

—“Grandma” (Huntly).

Cleaning a Soiled Raincoat

Dear Aunt Daisy,

This may be of interest to you. Many times during your short session on the air, cleaning a raincoat has been a question. I have tried all sorts of methods, but none was ever really satisfactory. Five months ago, my waterproof got in a terrible mess. It was an expensive coat, too, and had been worn only twice. We were returning from a long motor trip, and late at night had car trouble. Well, with mud and grease all over it, and the coat being an ivory shade, you can imagine what it was like. I took two tablespoons of good soap powder, half a gallon of water, and a breakfast cup of ammonia. I poured the boiling water over the soap powder, and dissolved it, and when it was nearly cold, I added the ammonia. Then, with a nailbrush, scrubbed all over the coat, which lay flat on the table. I was careful not to wet the lining in any way, as it is coloured, and I thought the colours might run. Of course, I had to scrub very hard on the worst parts, and had to go over some of them twice. Then I got some lukewarm water, and washed the coat all over the outside very carefully so as not to leave any water marks. This exceeded all expectations, and you can just imagine how I rushed at my family on their arrival home that evening, to show them my success. The coat looks just as it did when it came from the shop. My family consists of eight—four of each—and they all said, “Mum, send that to Aunt Daisy.” So there you are.

—“Just a Mother” (Island Bay).

Well, that is a good thing to know. It will be a comfort to many a despairing owner of a soiled raincoat. As you say, the question is continually cropping up, and it is grand to get a really proved method like yours. Thank you very much for writing.

Using Tins for Jam

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Is it safe to put hot jam into tins to send overseas?

—“A Listener” (Wellington).

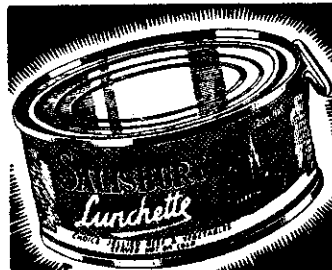
I am assured that this is safe, provided treacle or golden syrup tins are used. They must, of course, be thoroughly clean. Having washed them properly, being careful of the part at the top under the ledge, and so on, sterilise them by putting them into cold water, bringing to the boil, and boiling for ten or fifteen minutes—lids as well as empty tins. Take each tin one by one from the boiling water, shake out the moisture, and fill at once with hot jam. Press the lid down tightly; and when cool, seal all round the top with paraffin wax, to make sure that the tin is airtight. Perhaps some of the Daisy Chain Links will write us some reassuring information on this subject.

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