CANNING AND PRESERVING FRUIT.—III.*

HINTS FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

BY MARIA PARLOA.

Continued from Supplement No. 1754, page 110.

CANNING FRUIT.

THIS method of preserving fruit for home use is from all points the most desirable. It is the easiest and commonly considered the most economical and the best, because the fruit is kept in a soft and juicy condition in which it is believed to be easily digested. The wise housekeeper will can her principal fruit supply, making only enough rich preserves to serve for variety and for special occasions.

The success of canning depends upon absolute sterilization. If the proper care is exercised there need be no failure, except in rare cases, when a spore has developed in the can. There are several methods of canning; and while the principle is the same in all methods, the conditions under which the housekeeper must do her work may, in her case, make one method more convenient than another. For this reason three will be given which are considered the best and easiest. These are: Cooking the fruit in the jars in an oven; cooking the fruit in the jars in boiling water; and stewing the fruit before it is put in the jars. The quantity of sugar may be increased if desired.

It is most important that the jars, covers, and rubber rings be in perfect condition. Examine each jar and cover to see that there is no defect in it. Use only fresh rubber rings, for if the rubber is not soft and elastic the sealing will not be perfect. Each year numbers of jars of fruit are lost because of the false economy in using an old ring that has lost its softness and elasticity. Having the jars, covers, and rings in perfect condition, wash and sterilize them.

Have two pans partially filled with cold water. Put some jars in one, laying them on their sides, and some covers in the other. Place the pans on the stove where the water will heat to the boiling point. The water should boil at least ten or fifteen minutes. Have on the stove a shallow milk pan in which there is about 2 inches of boiling water. Sterilize the cups, spoons, and funnel, if you use one, by immersing in boiling water for a few minutes. When ready to put the prepared fruit in the jars slip a broad skimmer under a jar and lift it and drain free of water. Set the jar in the shallow milk pan and fill to overflowing with the boiling fruit. Slip a silver-plated knife or the handle of a spoon around the inside of the jar, that the fruit and juice may be packed solidly. Wipe the rim of the jar, dip the rubber ring in boiling water and put it smoothly on the jar, then put on the cover and fasten. Place the jar on a board and out of a draft of cold air. The work of filling and sealing must be done rapidly, and the fruit must be boiling hot when it is put into the jars. If screw covers are used, it will be necessary to tighten them after the glass has cooled and contracted. When the fruit is cold wipe the jars with a wet cloth. Paste on the labels, if any, and put the jars on shelves in a cool, dark closet.

In canning, any proportion of sugar may be used, or fruit may be canned without the addition of any sugar. However, that which is designed to be served as a sauce should have the sugar cooked with it. Fruit for cooking need not have the sugar added to it.

Juicy fruits, such as berries and cherries, require little or no water. The only exception to this is when they are cooked in a heavy syrup.

Raspberries.

12 quarts of raspberries.
2 quarts of sugar.

Put 2 quarts of the fruit in the preserving kettle; heat slowly on the stove; crush with a wooden vegetable masher; spread a square of cheese cloth over a bowl, and turn the crushed berries and juice into it. Press out the juice, which turn into the preserving kettle. Add the sugar and put on the stove; stir until the sugar is dissolved. When the syrup begins to boil, add the remaining 10 quarts of berries. Let them heat slowly. Boil ten minutes, counting from the time they begin to bubble. Skim well while boiling. Put in cans and seal as directed.

Raspberries and Currants.

10 quarts of raspberries.
3 quarts of currants.
2½ quarts of sugar.

Heat, crush, and press the juice from the currants and proceed as directed for raspberries.

Blackberries.

The same as for raspberries.

Currants.

12 quarts of currants.
4 quarts of sugar.

Treat the same as for raspberries.

Gooseberries.

6 quarts of berries.
1½ quarts of sugar.
1 pint of water.

For green gooseberries dissolve the sugar in the water, then add the fruit and cook fifteen minutes. Ripe gooseberries are to be treated the same as the green fruit, but use only half as much water. Green gooseberries may also be canned the same as rhubarb.

Blueberries.

12 quarts of berries.
1 quart of sugar.
1 pint of water.

Put water, berries, and sugar in the preserving kettle; heat slowly. Boil fifteen minutes, counting from the time the contents of the kettle begin to bubble.

Cherries.

6 quarts of cherries.
1½ quarts of sugar.
½ pint of water.

Measure the cherries after the stems have been removed. Stone them or not, as you please. If you stone them be careful to save all the juice. Put the sugar and water in the preserving kettle and stir over the fire until the sugar is dissolved. Put in the cherries and heat slowly to the boiling point. Boil ten minutes, skimming carefully.

Grapes.

6 quarts of grapes.
1 quart of sugar.
1 gill of water.

Squeeze the pulp of the grapes out of the skins. Cook the pulp five minutes and then rub through a sieve that is fine enough to hold back the seeds. Put the water, skins, and pulp into the preserving kettle and heat slowly to the boiling point. Skim the fruit and then add the sugar. Boil fifteen minutes.

Sweet grapes may be canned with less sugar; very sour ones may have more.

Rhubarb.

Cut the rhubarb when it is young and tender. Wash it thoroughly and then pare; cut into pieces about 2 inches long. Pack in sterilized jars. Fill the jars to overflowing with cold water and let them stand ten minutes. Drain off the water and fill again to overflowing with fresh cold water. Seal with sterilized rings and covers. When required for use, treat the same as fresh rhubarb.

Green gooseberries may be canned in the same manner. Rhubarb may be cooked and canned with sugar in the same manner as gooseberries.

Peaches.

8 quarts of peaches.
1 quart of sugar.
3 quarts of water.

Put the sugar and water together and stir over the fire until the sugar is dissolved. When the syrup boils skim it. Draw the kettle back where the syrup will keep hot but not boil.

Pare the peaches, cut in halves, and remove the stones, unless you prefer to can the fruit whole.

Put a layer of the prepared fruit into the preserving kettle and cover with some of the hot syrup. When the fruit begins to boil, skim carefully. Boil gently for ten minutes, then put in the jars and seal. If the fruit is not fully ripe it may require a little longer time to cook. It should be so tender that it may be pierced easily with a silver fork. It is best to put only one layer of fruit in the preserving kettle. While this is cooking the fruit for the next batch may be pared.

Pears.

If the fruit is ripe it may be treated exactly the same as peaches. If, on the other hand, it is rather hard it must be cooked until so tender that a silver fork will pierce it readily.

Quinces.

4 quarts of pared, cored, and quartered quinces.
1½ quarts of sugar.
2 quarts of water.

Rub the fruit hard with a coarse crash towel, then wash and drain. Pare, quarter, and core; drop the pieces into cold water. Put the fruit in the preserving kettle with cold water to cover it generously. Heat slowly and simmer gently until tender. The pieces will not all require the same time to cook. Take each piece up as soon as it is so tender that a silver fork will pierce it readily. Drain on a platter. Strain the water in which the fruit was cooked through cheese cloth. Put two quarts of the strained liquid and the sugar into the preserving kettle; stir over the fire until the sugar is dissolved. When it boils skim

well and put in the cooked fruit. Boil gently for about twenty minutes.

Crab Apples.

6 quarts of apples.
1½ quarts of sugar.
2 quarts of water.

Put the sugar and water into the preserving kettle. Stir over the fire until the sugar is dissolved. When the syrup boils skim it.

Wash the fruit, rubbing the blossom end well. Put it in the boiling syrup, and cook gently until tender. It will take from twenty to fifty minutes, depending upon the kind of crab apples.

Plums.

8 quarts of plums.
2 quarts of sugar.
1 pint of water.

Nearly all kinds of plums can be cooked with the skins on. If it is desired to remove the skin of any variety, plunge them in boiling water for a few minutes. When the skins are left on, prick them thoroughly to prevent bursting.

Put the sugar and water into the preserving kettle and stir over the fire until the sugar is dissolved. Wash and drain the plums. Put some of the fruit in the boiling syrup. Do not crowd it. Cook five minutes; fill and seal the jars. Put more fruit in the syrup. Continue in this manner until all the fruit is done. It may be that there will not be sufficient syrup toward the latter part of the work; for this reason it is well to have a little extra syrup on the back of the stove.

Stewed Tomatoes.

Wash the tomatoes and plunge into boiling water for five minutes. Pare and slice, and then put into the preserving kettle; set the kettle on an iron ring. Heat the tomatoes slowly, stirring frequently from the bottom. Boil for thirty minutes, counting from the time the vegetable begins actually to boil. Put in sterilized jars and seal.

Whole Tomatoes.

8 quarts of medium-sized tomatoes.
4 quarts of sliced tomatoes.

Put the pared and sliced tomatoes into a stew pan and cook as directed for stewed tomatoes. When they have been boiling twenty minutes take from the fire and rub through a strainer. Return to the fire.

While the sliced tomatoes are cooking, pare the whole tomatoes and put them in sterilized jars. Pour into the jars enough of the stewed and strained tomato to fill all the interstices. Put the uncovered jars in a moderate oven, placing them on a pad of asbestos or in shallow pans of hot water. Let the vegetable cook in the oven for half an hour. Take from the oven and fill to overflowing with boiling hot, strained tomato, then seal. If there is any of the strained tomato left, can it for sauces.

Canned Fruit Cooked in the Oven.

This method of canning fruit, in the opinion of the writer, is the one to be preferred. The work is easily and quickly done, and the fruit retains its shape, color, and flavor better than when cooked in the preserving kettle.

Cover the bottom of the oven with a sheet of asbestos, the kind plumbers employ in covering pipes. It is very cheap and may usually be found at plumbers' shops. If the asbestos is not available, put into the oven shallow pans in which there are about 2 inches of boiling water.

Sterilize the jars and utensils. Make the syrup; prepare the fruit the same as for cooking in the preserving kettle. Fill the hot jars with it, and pour in enough syrup to fill the jar solidly. Run the blade of a silver-plated knife around the inside of the jar. Place the jars in the oven, either on the asbestos or in the pan of water. The oven should be moderately hot. Cook the fruit ten minutes; remove from the oven and fill the jar with boiling syrup. Wipe and seal. Place the jars on a board and out of a draft of air. If the screw covers are used tighten them after the glass has cooled.

Large fruits, such as peaches, pears, quinces, crab apples, etc., will require about a pint of syrup to each quart jar of fruit. The small fruit will require a little over half a pint of syrup.

The amount of sugar in each quart of syrup should be regulated to suit the fruit with which it is to be used. The data already given will be a guide. The quantities given will not make the fruit very sweet. The quantity of sugar may be increased or diminished to suit the taste.

(To be concluded.)

* Reprint of Farmers' Bulletin 203, issued by the Department of Agriculture.