

The Farm Home and Kitchen.

Contributed by the Association for Country Education.

Hints for Preserving Vegetables.

IN the interest of health no family can afford to stint the quantity of vegetables served. Every housekeeper knows that she should buy and use what is in season. Even so, some people seem to have the same meal year in and year out and never modify their diet in accordance with the provision of material.

This is poor economy in every way, as, quite apart from money wasted through failure to buy the foods when they are cheap, there is the greater danger of such people gradually suffering hidden starvation for lack of some food elements which their monotonous diet lacks—the result is, in the long run, sickness and expense. It is good economy to eat all the fruit and vegetables you can while they are procurable, and so to replenish any deficiencies that may be produced during the rest of the year when these foods are too costly for frequent use. In New Zealand we are fortunate that it is possible to get fresh green vegetables almost all the year round, but we cannot all afford to pay big prices.

Vegetables in the Diet.

To keep us healthy and properly nourished our diet must supply vitamins and minerals procured through eating fruit and vegetables in addition to milk, butter, protein, and whole-grain products. The amount of vegetables required works out at a liberal serving of a root vegetable and a green vegetable once a day in addition to potatoes.

Those fortunate enough to have ground to grow their own vegetables will have been spending much time in the garden lately, and how proudly they will now be viewing potatoes, cabbage, green peas, beans, carrots, radishes, lettuce, spinach, and silver beet all ready for use.

None of these vegetables should be wasted, and what cannot be used fresh can easily be bottled, pickled, and dried for use in the winter, when fresh ones may not be so easy to obtain.

When buying food in hot weather it is advantageous to do shopping as early in the day as possible, and naturally to buy perishables in as small a quantity as circumstances permit.

By going to market early one can secure vegetables fresh from the market garden. Those who have their own gardens are well advised to pick their day's supply of vegetables in the cool of the morning while the lettuces are crisp, and the peas, beans, &c., cool and firm. All vegetables should be unwrapped, picked over, and spread out to permit the air to circulate around them. This will help to prevent bad smells, wilting, sweating, fermentation, and the growth of mould, which so often develop in peas, beans, and cabbages which are not so treated.

Preserving Tomatoes.

First of all, we shall talk about tomatoes. They can be preserved by the hot or cold pack method, blanched and done just as fruit, substituting for syrup boiling water and one to two teaspoonfuls of salt per quart jar, and then processed in a hot-water bath or oven at 250° F. for twenty to thirty minutes.

Another way is to make purée, which, by the way, is excellent for soups, sauces, and savouries. To make purée, blanch the tomatoes by plunging them first into boiling water and then into cold water. Remove the skins, cut the tomatoes into quarters, allow one teaspoonful of salt to 2 lb. tomatoes, and boil them down until they reach half to one-third their original volume. Then pour this pulp

into sterilized jars and seal (a very little sugar may be added during cooking to bring out flavour, and also onions and celery, *but no soda*).

The preservation of tomato-juice is another method of utilizing the high vitamin C content of this valuable vegetable. The juice may be extracted from the tomatoes in either one or two ways—by the use of a juice-extractor, of which several types are now on the market or by the following method: Wipe the tomatoes, cut in pieces, and cook gently in a saucepan with no additional water until they are soft and puffy. Then press through a fine strainer. When the juice has been obtained bring it to boiling-point, pour it into hot jars, adjust the lids almost but not quite tight, and boil or steam the jars for five minutes (no longer). Remove from the water, screw the lids tight, and allow to cool. Juice prepared by this method may be used for tomato cocktail, for sauce, for oyster cocktail, for soup, and for seasoning all kinds of dishes.

Peas and French Beans.

Now peas and French beans. Bottling consists of destroying any bacteria and mould or their spores that may be on the food, or, if all are not destroyed completely, in making the condition so unsatisfactory for them that they will not become active. Heating is, of course, the process by which they are destroyed; added sugar hastens the safety stage.

The acid of fruits is very helpful in this work of germ-destruction, and consequently shorter cooking is needed to sterilize fruit than is needed to make non-acid foods equally safe. Peas and French beans are not acid and cannot be bottled in a sugary syrup, so that