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ORCHARD AND GARDEN

THE FARM CANNING FACTORY HAS A BIG FUTURE

Points to Look Out For in Making It a Success

IN STARTING a farm canning factory, it is best not to begin operations trying to can 15,000 or 20,000 cans until everything connected with the work is fully understood, and likewise with the disposal of the canned products. If the beginner were to put up a very large quantity at the start, insufficient cooking might result in a very large loss. So I found the best plan to make haste slowly and to learn everything connected with the work before entering too deeply.

I have reason to believe that the small farm canning factory is going to become the real canning factory of the future. I am told that large factories find it difficult to secure the promise of sufficient farmers of the neighborhood to raise enough to keep the factory busy during the season. Much money has been invested in such a large factory and idleness spells loss. Not much has been invested in a farm canning factory, hence it can operate at a good profit where a large factory cannot.

What to Can

THE owner of a farm canning factory should be in a position to raise most of the things he cans, for the greatest profit is derived in that way. In addition, the labor problem is easier to solve, for he can secure the help of his own children and a few neighbors. In this way the fruits and vegetables are canned just at the proper time without hauling a big distance, bruising them or carrying them over from day to day.

The question of "what to can and what not," is a rather perplexing one. My experience has shown me that tomatoes are among the easiest vegetables to can, and there is always a strong demand for them. Hence one is safe in raising all the tomatoes one can. I raise both yellow and red varieties, but I find a greater call for the red. When able to place my tomatoes on the market early at three cents a pound or more, I sell them while the price remains good, but as soon as they drop below three cents, I begin to can at once. Blackberries are easy to can and find a ready sale, especially in a year when fruit is scarce. I use No. 3 cans (size of regulation tomato cans) for everything I can except corn, for which I use a No. 2 can. In this way a full ten cent value is given for everything I put up. Peaches and pears are easily put up, but I could never secure sufficient to put up on a large scale. Grapes also find a ready sale. Our experience tells us it is best to put up snap beans in the following way. While directions with the canning outfit say to parboil 10 minutes and then can, we have found it best to cook as for table use, then can. In opening the can, the beans need not be cooked, simply warmed and seasoned. If one simply parboils them before canning, the beans do not become as tender and delicious as when cooked in the way mentioned. In canning apples, we slice them as for pies, pour cold water into the cans and seal, and delicious apple pies during the cold winter months are the result. In our section of the Piedmont country we find it impossible to raise good winter apples. However, we are able to raise many varieties of summer and fall apples, so we help ourselves by canning all the surplus apples during summer and fall and so have plenty for winter use. I have not yet fully determined what figure I can afford to pay for summer and fall apples to can on a large scale.

I have found that it does not pay me well to put up much corn, as it requires such a long time to cook it. And, what is more, a person should

have the best variety of sweet corn for that purpose and not use the common field corn. I have never canned sweet potatoes, for the reason that we can keep them very well in our climate in special houses, and so it seems like a waste of time to can them.

I believe in experimenting with new things. Two years ago I put up corn and tomatoes, about half and half, for our own use, and we liked it very much, so I tried to can some for market. When I tried to sell this new combination to the merchants they said they were afraid they could not handle it. Then I got busy and sold it privately and soon had more orders than I could fill.

The proper method of canning is not difficult to learn if you bear in mind that cleanliness must be strictly insisted on by everyone in the work. The children can quickly learn to peel tomatoes, yet their work must be watched that they allow no peelings to get into the cans. An honest pack of fine, ripe tomatoes should always be given, because that very feature marks the difference between the large factory and the small farm outfit.

Attractive lithographed labels can be secured for 20 cents per 100 to paste on the cans. There is always a space to insert your imprint and so build up a profitable business. I cannot see there is any danger of overstocking the market with goods of first-class quality, as the towns and cities are growing so fast. I certainly believe there will always be room at the top for canned goods of first quality, and that is what each one should try to place on the market.
P. C. HENRY

Starting Early Vegetables

COLD frames without bottom heat, or hotbeds, with packed manure, will be sufficient for Central Alabama and Georgia. In the higher, more Northern sections, some heat is necessary. For the cold frame use four boards, one 12 feet long, 12 inches wide, and one inch thick, for the back and one 12 feet long, six inches wide and one inch thick for the front. Cut two side pieces, each six feet long, so that the slope is equal from back to front, 12 inches to six inches. Fasten the corners to stakes, and cover the whole with four window sashes 3x6 feet, and the cold frame is complete. For heat, dig out a space about 7x13 feet, and a foot deep. Pack in nine or ten inches of fresh manure, tramping and packing well. Cover this with a couple inches of soil. These frames should have been built in October, but might well be made and used now.

Lettuce is the most popular crop grown to maturity in hotbeds or cold frames. Seed may be sown any month after September, for home use. Some time will be saved by sowing as late as the first of February. Distribute the seed thinly but evenly in rows four inches apart, and not more than half an inch deep. The best way of covering is to sprinkle a quarter of an inch of sand or fine earth over the seeds. When the plants begin to crowd, transplant to six inches apart each way. One three-foot row of seedlings ought to furnish plants to fill one frame, and have some to spare.

Early morning is the best time for watering, and the common mistake is too much water. Supply in small quantities, do not allow plants to wilt, but water only when they are dry.

Spinach may be fully matured in frames by sowing seed, as for lettuce, in November. After the spinach is all used, beans may be sown. The rows should be put eight to ten inches apart and the plants thinned, after they come up. Radishes also do well, sown at any time during the winter.
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