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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

TUESDAY, December 20, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics and the Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, U. S. D. A.

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Trying to answer all these Christmas questions before the day arrives is keeping your Aunt Sammy on the jump.

Two listeners have inquired about an old-fashioned spiced fruit drink to serve hot for holiday parties. I can suggest 3 good answers--hot spiced cider, hot spiced grapejuice, or mulled cranberries.

For hot spiced cider, add a fourth cup of sugar....8 short sticks of cinnamon.....12 whole cloves.....and 8 whole allspice.....to one quart of cider. A tiny bit of salt helps, too--about an eighth of a teaspoon. Heat this mixture to boiling, then cool and let it stand several hours. Let it stand overnight if that is most convenient for you. The next morning heat it again, and strain out the spices. When you serve it, serve it hot. It's very good with cookies or sandwiches.

Spiced grapejuice is made in much the same way only you use more sugar and cinnamon but no allspice. Sometimes a little lemon juice added just before serving helps the flavor.

From Wisconsin, one of our important cranberry States, comes a recipe for mulled cranberries--another good hot punch for Christmas. To make mulled cranberries start with 4 cups of sweetened cranberry juice and add 1 teaspoon of whole allspice...and tablespoon of broken cinnamon stick. Bring this mixture slowly to the boiling point. Add the juice of 1 lemon, strain and serve hot.

That reminds me of the second question coming up--"Can you tell me how to make a relish of raw cranberries and honey? It is to serve with poultry or any roast meat. I have tasted a delicious relish made this way but could not get the recipe."

Answer: Here are directions for making a relish of raw cranberry, orange, either honey or sugar and a bit of salt to develop the flavor. The proportions are easy to remember if you just remember the number 1. Use 1 pound of cranberries.... 1 orange.....1 cup of either strained honey or sugar.....and 1 little pinch of salt. Pick over the berries and discard any soft or imperfect ones. Wash berries and drain. Wash the orange, cut it in quarters, and take out any seeds. Grind the berries and orange, rind and all, through the food-chopper, using the fine knife. Add the sugar or honey and the salt. That's all--except that you store this relish in a tight jar in a cold place. It will keep this way for 2 or 3 weeks.

You listeners looking for a last-minute gift to make at home, how about giving a jar of cranberry relish?

Now here comes question number 3: "Should I use hot or cold water to soak apricots and prunes?"

Answer: Hot water--if you're in a hurry. The fruit absorbs hot water faster than cold. Be sure to wash the dried fruit before you soak it. Then add only enough hot water to cover. Use this same "soaking water" to cook the fruit in so you won't lose any food value. Very dry dried fruit may need overnight soaking and long cooking, but much of the dried fruit you buy in the stores nowadays is not so dry and quite tender. It often needs no soaking at all and can go directly into the kettle for just a short cooking. Listeners often ask why dried fruit loses its flavor during cooking, and falls to pieces so that by the time it is served, it's not much more than an unattractive mush. The answer is: too much water for cooking and soaking; or too long soaking or cooking; or violent boiling; or stirring during cooking. Avoid all these if you want to make the most of dried fruit.

Here's another dried-fruit question: "When is the best time to add sugar to apricots--during cooking or afterward?"

Answer: Just as you're taking the fruit from the stove. Sugar added during cooking may tend to harden or toughen the texture of the apricots.

In reply to those listeners who missed out on the news about the fireproof Christmas tree last week, let me say once more that you are welcome to directions for making your tree fire-resistant. Write to the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. The new method is simply to stand the cut-end of the tree-trunk in a solution of water and ammonium sulphate. If the tree drinks enough of this solution, it becomes fire-resistant. The amount a tree needs for this purpose depends on its weight. A tree that weighs 8 pounds, say, will need to take up a quart and a half of water containing 2 pounds of ammonium sulphate. But you will find a simple method for figuring this in the directions for the process. Once again, if you want information on the simple new method for fireproofing a Christmas tree, write to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

The Department also has a bulletin telling you how to fireproof fabrics--how to make your window curtains, or fireside rug, or ironing-board cover resist fire. This bulletin is called "Fireproofing Fabrics," and it is No. 1786. If you want a copy, write direct to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

With the circular on fire-resistant Christmas trees and the bulletin on fireproofing fabrics, in your house, Santa Claus won't need to worry about singeing his whiskers when he comes down your chimney. Here's wishing you a happy Christmas, safe from fire dangers.

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