

Fruit Bottling



without sugar

4 SIMPLE METHODS

There is no need for an ounce of our precious home-grown fruit crop to be wasted. Housewives who have no sugar to spare at the moment can use one of these simple methods of bottling without sugar.

Choosing preserving jars and rubber rings

There are many different kinds of preserving jar but they all work in the same way. The jar, filled with the hot sterilized fruit, is closed with a glass or metal lid resting on a rubber ring to make the joint airtight; a metal screwband or clip holds the lid tightly in place while the contents of the jar are cooling. When the jar is cold, the lid is held firmly in place by the vacuum formed in the jar; once the jar is sealed in this way it no longer depends on the tightness of the screwband or clip to keep it airtight.

Before buying jars, make sure there are no chips, ridges, etc., on the mouth, which might prevent the lid and rubber ring from fitting properly. If you use the special lids sold to fit on jam jars, choose jars that have smooth and quite circular mouths, and make certain that the lids fit properly.

When buying rubber rings, take a sample jar or ring with you to get the right size. Good rings feel elastic and will spring back after slight stretching.

Testing Jars before use

There is no absolutely reliable way of testing jars before use, but the following may be tried. Fill the jar with water, put on the rubber ring, lid, and screwband or clip. Wipe the outside of the jar and stand upside down for half an hour; if the water leaks out, examine the jar for defects. If a jar leaks when first tested, a different rubber ring or two rings may help. With the clip type, it may be necessary to bend the clip slightly to make it grip more tightly; or a penny pushed under the centre of the clip may help.

Storage

The filled jars should be stored in a cool, dark place; light destroys the colour of fruit and its vitamin C. A label with the date of bottling will show which jar should be

used first. The screwbands or clips should be removed and greased, and either put away in a dry place until next year, to prevent rusting, or, in the case of screwbands, they can be replaced on the jars, but should not be screwed down tightly.

Preparing the fruit

It is a waste of time and money to bottle bruised or over-ripe fruit, so pick it over carefully and discard any which is not in perfect condition. The fruit should be just fully ripe, except for gooseberries which are used green and hard.

APPLES.—To preserve the colour of apples put them in salt water (1 tablespoon salt to 1 quart water) as soon as they are peeled. Drain and rinse. Then plunge in boiling water for two to three minutes to soften slightly so that they will pack more easily. *If the apples are to be bottled by the Campden method, put them immediately after peeling into the solution, not into salt water or boiling water.*

PEARS should be placed in salt water after peeling as described above. Cooking pears should be stewed until tender.

QUINCES.—Stew until tender.

OTHER FRUIT.—Pick over carefully and wash.

TOMATOES.—See special leaflet.

NOTE.—If you can spare a little sugar it is worth while making a bottling syrup by dissolving 2 to 8 oz. sugar per pint of water. Allow this to boil for a few minutes, strain and use in place of water in the "Deep Pan" or "Oven" method. The sugar will penetrate the fruit during storage.

PRESERVING IN A DEEP PAN

For this method you need a pan deep enough to allow the jars to be completely covered with water. A sterilizer, zinc bath, large fish kettle, or even a bucket will do. It must be arranged so that the jars do not touch the bottom or sides of the pan. A false bottom can be made by nailing together strips of wood in trellis fashion, or a layer of straw, folded newspaper or cloth can be used. If there is no lid available, use a pastry board.

Wash and drain the jars and lids; put the rubber rings to soak in cold water.

Pack the fruit tightly into the jars almost to the top. Shake soft juicy fruits down; for hard fruits the handle of a wooden spoon is useful for arranging the fruit in layers so as to pack tightly.

Fill the jars to overflowing with cold water.

Put the rubber rings and lids in position and fasten with the screwbands or clips. Screwbands should be tightened up and then unscrewed half a turn so as to allow for expansion.

Stand the jars in the pan so that they don't touch one another or the sides of the pan. Cover the jars completely with cold water, put on the lid, and heat slowly to simmering point, about 185°F. This should take 1½ hours. Keep simmering for 15 minutes. Pears need 30 minutes.

With a cup or jug take out enough water to uncover the tops of the jars. Lift one jar at a time out of the

pan, stand it on a wooden table or board and tighten the screwband or see that the clip is holding properly. Put the jar aside to cool and tighten the screwband at intervals.

Don't take out several jars at once. Each jar must be screwed up with the least possible delay while it is still hot. As the jars cool, the screwbands should be tightened up further.

TESTING THE SEAL

After 24 hours, remove the screwband or clip and lift each jar by its lid. If the lid comes off, the seal is imperfect and the fruit should be eaten within a few days or resterilized by heating again just as described above. If the jar can be lifted by the lid the seal is perfect.

Remember that even a perfect seal is no guarantee that the fruit will keep unless the sterilizing has been done properly. The instructions must be followed carefully.

THE OVEN METHOD

Wash and drain the jars. There is no need to dry them. Pack the fruit tightly into the jars, fill to the top, as the fruit shrinks during cooking.

Put the jars in a very moderate oven (about 240° F.), covering with lids or tins to prevent discolouring. The jars must be placed on an asbestos mat, piece of cardboard or wood, or several thicknesses of newspaper so that they do not touch the oven shelf.

Heat in the oven until the fruit is thoroughly cooked and has shrunk a little ($\frac{3}{4}$ hour to 1 hour). It is most important to cook the fruit well.

Put the rubber rings and lids in a pan of cold water, bring to the boil and keep boiling for 15 minutes to sterilize them. They must be hot when placed on the jars. If you are using the jam jar lids, fit the rubber rings on them before sterilizing. Screwbands and clips need not be sterilized.

Remove the jars one at a time from the oven and fill to overflowing with boiling water. If the fruit has shrunk very much, before adding the boiling water quickly fill up with fruit from an extra bottle heated with the others. Put the hot rubber ring and lid on at once and fasten down with screwband or clip. Each jar must be sealed in this way before the next jar is taken out of the oven. As the sealed jars cool, tighten up the screwbands.

After cooling 24 hours, test and store as described under "Preserving in a Deep Pan."

N.B. This method is not as satisfactory for apples, pears and quinces as "Preserving in a Deep Pan."

PULPING


This is a simple way of bottling stewed fruit whether soft or hard. It can be used with windfall apples or bruised plums if all the bruised parts are first removed.

A deep pan is needed as described in "Preserving in a Deep Pan."

Wash and drain the jars and lids; put the rubber rings to soak in cold water.

Put the jars somewhere to get hot.

Stew the fruit in a little water until thoroughly pulped using only enough water to prevent burning. About thirty



minutes stewing is needed for soft fruit, longer for hard fruits. When the fruit is thoroughly pulped, pour at once into the hot jars.

Seal immediately with rubber ring, lid and screwband or clip. Tighten the screwband up and then unscrew half a turn so as to allow for expansion.

Put the jars in boiling water in a deep pan as described in "Preserving in a Deep Pan" and boil for 5 minutes. The jars must be completely covered by the water.

Remove the jars one at a time and tighten the screwband or see that the clip is properly in position. As the jars cool, tighten the screwbands up further.

After cooling 24 hours test as described in "Preserving in a Deep Pan."

THE CAMPDEN METHOD

In this method the fruit is not cooked but is preserved with the Campden tablets which can be bought from most chemists or grocers. The tablets can be used with most stone and soft fruits if sound and not over-ripe, but it is not recommended for wild blackberries, sweet cherries, pears, dessert apples, black currants, gooseberries, or tomatoes.

Any jars with airtight lids can be used with this method.

HOW TO USE THE TABLETS

Wash and drain the jars. Dissolve the tablets in cold or tepid water, allowing one tablet to each half pint. At least half a pint of solution must be used for each 1 lb. of fruit and sometimes more is necessary.

Pack the fruit in the jars, but not too tightly.

Pour the solution in until the fruit is covered completely. Shake each jar gently to remove bubbles as far as possible.

Seal at once. If metal lids or screwtops are used the metal must be protected by two or three layers of paper inside the lid or by smearing the inside of the lid with vaseline.

This method does not produce a vacuum, so it is not possible to test after sealing.

HOW TO USE FRUIT PRESERVED BY THE CAMPDEN METHOD

The fruit can be used for stewing in puddings or pies or for jam-making.

FOR PUDDINGS ETC.

Pour the fruit into an open pan and heat without sugar until there is no further smell of sulphur. If there is difficulty in getting rid of the sulphur smell with plums, stone them before heating. Do not throw the liquid away as it contains fruit juices and vitamins. When cooking is finished add sugar to sweeten.

FOR JAM MAKING

Strain the liquid off and boil it alone in a pan to avoid over-cooking the fruit. When the liquid has been reduced to about half its bulk, add the fruit and simmer until it is softened. Then add the sugar and finish the jam in the usual way.

N.B. Vegetables should not be bottled by any of these methods.