FIRST IN FIVE-PART SERIES

Growing your own vegetables

"We wanted to do as much as we could to help our family budget and to offset the high cost of living," says Fred Childs, pictured standing amid his vegetable garden in Edgemere, Md.
(Reflections photo by Benjamin Phillips)

By Michele L. McRae
Reflections Staff Writer

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series of articles on home canning and freezing. This week's article deals with gardening and will be followed in next week's edition with "Canning Tomatoes."

"The spacing of vegetables is very important and the soil around the sides of the plants must be kept loose for the best results," says Fred Childs of Baltimore.

Mr. Childs and his wife, Mary along with their five children have planted their own vegetable garden in Edgemere, Md. near Sparrows Point.

The family broke ground and planted the garden in March and is already consuming and preparing to can and freeze much of this year's crop.

"I planted 30 tomatoes and 30 cabbage plants and none have died. They are all growing and providing a great abundance for the family," says Mr. Childs.

In addition to the tomatoes and cabbages, the Childs' family is growing onions, sweet peas, turnips, corn, bell peppers, carrots, radishes and stringbeans.

Mr. Childs stressed the maintenance of the garden, saying that growers should research the field before planting and give their gardens the proper care.

He added, "You must watch your plants, growth daily if possible, and if not, at least every three days. Weeding out garden and purchasing a good spray to fight off bugs and wild animals is also very important."

Mr. Childs says his family will not be purchasing any vegetables this summer and throughout the fall and winter months which lie ahead.

"Everything in the garden is growing above their average sizes and we've begun canning and freezing the goods," says Mr. Childs.

Mr. Childs is a machine operator at Koppers Co., South Baltimore. He and his family run a Thrift Shop located at 2565 Greenmount Ave.

The Childs' children include: Fred Jr., 12; Jamal and Sharon, 10; Darrell, 7 and Ahmad, 1.

Sweet, juicy cherries

What could be more delicious than a bowl of large juicy sweet cherries just waiting to be devoured. You may never use sweet cherries for anything other than snacks or picnic desserts. Either way, there's no way to improve.

Once purchased, sweet cherries should be used as soon as possible. The high water content that makes them so juicy also makes them spoil easily. When buying, those that look best are best. Cherries should be plump and fairly firm with a bright, fresh appearance. Size has nothing to do with quality, but most sweet cherries are a fairly large size. Do not wash them before refrigerating. Save the washing until using time. With such treatment, the cherries' freshness and crispness will be kept intact and their keeping qualities prolonged.

Two principal varieties of sweet cherries grown for fresh market are Bing and Lambert. The Bing matures before the Lambert and is characterized by its large size and round, plump shape plus the dark "mahogany" color. The Lambert is similar to the Bing in many ways. It has the same rich flavor as the Bing but is more elongated or heart-shaped. It does mature a week to ten days after the Bing and is grown in the same producing areas.

Pits and stems are the only waste in cherries. One pound makes two and a half cups, stemmed and pitted. Here are several ways you might wish to serve sweet cherries this year:

Frosted: Leave stems on. Dip in egg white and roll in granulated sugar. Chill for about 30 minutes. Elegant when served atop a tossed fruit-salad.

Food clips

Unripe fruits should be left to ripen in open air at room temperature and out of direct sunlight, according to USDA home economists.

* * *

Don't wash those berries and cherries before putting in the refrigerator — wait until you're ready to use them. Leave the stems on cherries and caps on strawberries too . . . they'll last longer.

* * *

When you pare apples and pears — make parings thin as possible — don't waste the fruit. (To loosen it for peeling, dip your peach into boiling water for about 45 seconds, then into cold water — it helps!)

* * *

Iodized salt and seafoods are reliable sources of iodine. Regular use of iodized salt is the most practical way to assure enough iodine in your diet.

* * *

Nuts contain less linoleic acid (Linoleic acid is an unsaturated fatty acid) than most vegetable oils; among the nuts, walnuts rate quite high.

* * *

Avocados, mangos, and papayas should be held at room temperature to ripen, but when avocados are ripe they should be refrigerated promptly. Fully ripe mangos and papayas should be held at about 60 F and used as soon as possible.

Baked Flounder in Wine Sauce

2 pounds flounder of sole fillets or other thin fish fillets, fresh or frozen
1½ teaspoons salt
Dash pepper
3 tomatoes, sliced
2 tablespoons flour
2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
4 cup skim milk
One-third cup dry white wine
½ teaspoon crushed basil
Chopped parsley

Thaw frozen fillets. Skin fillets. Sprinkle fillets on both sides with 1 teaspoon salt and pepper. Place fillets in a single layer in a greased baking dish, 12 x 8 x 2 inches.

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