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Opening Extract from...

The Austerity Book

Classic Tips for Enjoying Life Inexpensively

Compiled by Jaqueline Mitchell

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plants – form up to five runners to each plant and removing the blossoms. Peg down each runner when it has grown several inches, so that the end bud that will form the plant is kept in contact with the soil. An even better way is to peg each runner into a small pot filled with soil. The plants transplant well.

Recommended varieties are *Royal Sovereign* and *Brenda Gautry* (*Huxley*).

Planting

Dig the strawberry bed deeply. Manure well and make it firm before planting. August and September are the best months for planting, but you can plant in the spring if you take steps to prevent the plants drying out.

Rows should be 30in apart with 18in between the plants. Plant firmly and keep the crown above the surface. Don't let the plants fruit the first year: but, if required, runners may be taken to increase stock.

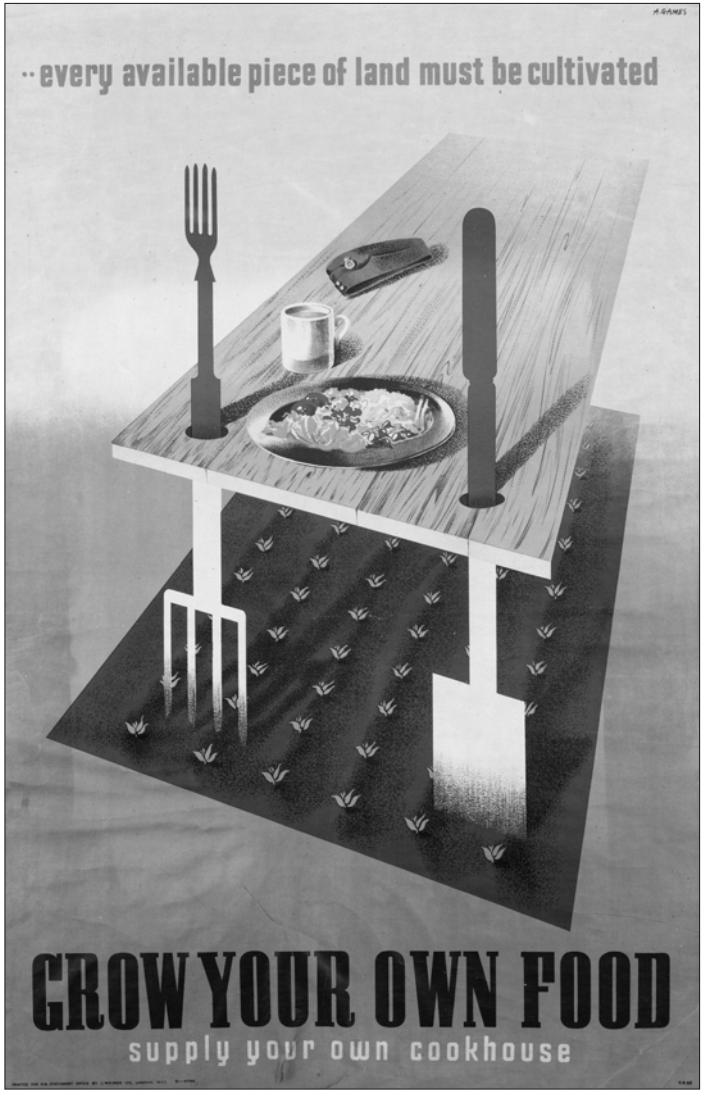
Keep the bed free from weeds by frequent careful hoeing. Hoe up to the plants – not away from them.

Just after blossoming, place clean barley or oat straw under the fruit trusses. If birds are troublesome, protect the rows with netting.

After fruiting is finished, clean up the plants and remove all runners. Lightly fork the soil between the rows in the autumn.

CURRANTS

A fairly heavy loam that remains moist and cool during summer is best for blackcurrants and gooseberries. Redcurrants and whitecurrants thrive better on light soils. All will thrive either in the open or in partial shade.



HOW TO PICK AND STORE FRUIT

The harvesting, and more particularly the storing, of the different fruits are most important operations. The fruits which are to be kept, namely, apples and pears, have to be picked at the correct time and stored under good conditions in order that the varieties will keep until their proper season and so maintain a supply of fresh fruit during most of the winter months.

PICKING APPLES AND PEARS

The best general indication is simply to take a fruit in the hand, lift it horizontally, give a slight twist, and if the fruit is ready for gathering the stalk should part easily and cleanly from the spur. Successional pickings are necessary, going over the tree at intervals of two or three days and removing only those fruits which part easily as described above. Never tug or pull fruits, and always bear in mind that apples and pears gathered before they are ripe will not keep. Use a pail or basket lined with straw for picking, and handle the fruit with great care. Bruised or damaged fruit must not be put into store but should be used immediately.

STORING APPLES AND PEARS

The early dessert and cooking apples will be used as gathered from the tree. Storing applies only to keeping varieties. Grade the keeping apples into uniform sizes as they are gathered, and set them out on trays, shelves, or boxes in a cool, ventilated, but not draughty, room or shed. They should be left for 10 to 14 days to allow the skin of the fruit to become dry. Each fruit should then be wrapped and placed in trays or boxes. Use a thin, oiled paper wrap [such as baking parchment], or if this is not available, soft tissue paper or any other clean soft paper. The best kind of store is one which provides darkness or semi-darkness, a steady temperature of 35–42°F, a moist atmosphere, and proper ventilation which can be adjusted as required. Ventilate the newly stored fruit freely for 10 days and then reduce the ventilation.

It is often possible to convert a room, large cupboard, cellar, or outhouse so that the conditions approximate to the ideal. For example, an otherwise suitable room may be too dry, in which case a large shallow tray of water in the middle of the floor will provide the necessary moisture in the atmosphere.

Where such a store cannot be provided, pack the wrapped fruit in wooden boxes or crates and stand them in a sheltered part of the garden on bricks or boards to prevent them from becoming damp, and to allow a free circulation of air underneath. Cover the boxes with straw, and thatch the top so that rain will run off. It may be necessary to provide some such protection as fine-meshed wire-netting against rats and mice. Alternatively, the boxes can be stored in an outhouse, but they must be covered to prevent draught drying the fruit. Dessert pears should, if possible, be stored indoors; they ripen better at a slightly higher temperature than apples, and do not require quite so much atmospheric

TABLE OF PLANTING AND PERIOD OF USE

Crops for a 10-Rod Plot

Crop	Time of sowing	Distance apart		Period of use
		Rows	Plants	
BEANS (Broad)	Feb–Mar	1 double row	6in by 9in	Jul
BEANS (Dwarf)	Late Apr–Early May	2½ft	9in	Jul–Aug
BEANS (Dry Haricot)	Late Apr–Early May	2½ft	9in	Winter
BEANS (Runner)	Mid-May		9in	Jul–Oct
BEET	(1) Apr (2) Jun	15in	6in (thin)	Jul–Apr
BROCCOLI (Sprouting)	Mid-May Plant Mid-Jul	2ft	2ft	Apr–May
BRUSSELS SPROUTS	Mar Plant May–Jun	2½ft	2½ft	Nov–Mar
CABBAGE (Spring)	Jul–Aug Plant Sep–Early Oct	1½ft	1½ft	Apr–Jan
CABBAGE (Winter)	Mid-May Plant Mid-Jul	2ft	2ft	Apr–Jan
CABBAGE (Cold Districts)	Apr	1½ft	1½ft	Autumn
CARROTS (Early)	Apr	1ft	6in (thin)	Jun–Sep
CARROTS (Maincrop)	Jun–Early Jul	1ft	6in (thin)	Oct–May
KALE	May Plant Mid-Jul	2ft	2ft	Jan–Apr
LEEKS	Mar Plant Jul	1ft	6in 9in	Mar–May
LETTUCE (Summer)	Mar and every 14 days	Between other crops	9in	May–Oct
LETTUCE (Winter Hardy)	Sep	1ft	9in	Spring
MARROW	May		3–4ft	Jul–Feb
ONIONS	Mid-Feb	1ft	6in (thin)	Jul–Jun
PARSNIPS	Mid-Feb–Mid-Mar	15in	6in (thin)	Nov–Mar
PEAS (Early)	Mar and Apr	2½ft	3in	Jun–Jul
PEAS (Others)				
POTATOES (Early)	Mar	2ft	1ft	Jul–Aug
POTATOES (Others)	Apr	2ft	1ft 3in	Sep–Mar
RADISHES	Mar onwards	1ft		May–Jun
SAVOY	Late May Plant Jul–Aug	2ft	2ft	Jan–Mar
SHALLOTS	Feb	1ft	6in	Jan–Dec
SPINACH (Summer)	Mid-Apr	1ft	6in (thin)	Summer
SPINACH (Winter)	Sep	1ft	6in (thin)	Spring
SPINACH BEET	Apr	8in	8in (groups)	Jul–Oct
or SEAKALE BEET				Jan–Jun
SWEDES	End Jun	15in	6in (thin)	Dec–Mar
TOMATOES	Plant end May		15in	Aug–Oct
TURNIP (Roots)	Jul	1ft	6in (thin)	Oct–Mar
TURNIP (Tops)	End Aug	1ft	Sow thinly	Apr

In the third year he should move them round again – on section A, the green vegetables; on section B, the peas, beans, onions and leeks; and on section C, the potatoes and root crops. Then, in the fourth year, he will begin the rotation all over again.

By this simple system you not only ensure that the ground is kept in reasonably fertile condition all over, but it helps you to gauge how much ground you should devote to the various kinds of crops. The rotation can be worked equally well in the garden as on an allotment, but in each case space must be left somewhere at one end (say, 6ft wide) for the seedbed, marrow bed, compost heap and so on.

It is much easier to arrange a proper rotation when starting from scratch; but even a garden that was worked last year could be brought into line by remembering where your crops were last season and trying to plant the appropriate vegetables this year to follow them up.

VEGETABLE SEEDS

Estimating your seed requirements is fairly easy, once you have sketched out a rough plan of your plot and worked out the number and length of the rows of each vegetable you intend to have.

1lb of shallots contains about 25 bulbs, and 2lb should be about enough for an ordinary allotment row of 30ft. Half an ounce of turnips or swedes will sow 100ft. A ¼oz of leek will give enough plants for six or eight rows 30ft long.

One pint of Longpod broad beans will sow a double row 50ft long. One pint of Windsor broad beans will sow 40ft of a double row. Half a pint of French or Haricot beans is sufficient for 150ft. This enables you to sow 2 seeds every 9in to allow for failures.

COMPOST — HOW TO MAKE IT

Here is what you can use to make compost and how to make it – in pictures.

What You Can Use

Leaves, grass cuttings, straw, sods, lawn mowings, haulms of peas, beans and potatoes, vegetable tops, hedge clippings, weeds, and faded flowers. In fact, any plant refuse not needed for stock feeding.

What You Can't Use

Cinders, paper, coal ashes, thick woody stems, sawdust, and any materials tainted with oil, creosote, tar or with any poisonous chemical. Avoid cabbage roots affected by 'club-root' disease.

1.



Choose site, in shade if possible, on ground not used for cropping. Width 4–7ft. Length depends on amount of material available.

2.



Cover with layer of vegetable refuse (the more mixed and broken up the better) to 6–9in depth. If dry, moisten and tread down well. If green and sappy, lay loosely.

3.



(*Left*) Cover with 2in layer of animal manure (horse, cow, pig, poultry, pigeon, rabbit) or sewage sludge. (*Right*) If animal manure is not available, sprinkle with one of the special proprietary chemicals or with sulphate of ammonia.

POULTRY DROPPINGS

The droppings of all types of poultry may be used in the garden as manure. They contain a higher percentage of nitrogen and phosphates than do stable and farmyard manure, but a very low proportion of potash, so would usually be in need of being balanced by appropriate chemicals [unless used in small quantities]. Being organic they must be decomposed by bacteria before they become available to plants. Weight for weight, poultry droppings are richer than bulky animal manure. Where 1cwt of the latter might be spread on 8 sq. yds of ground without doing any harm, one quarter that quantity of fresh poultry manure would be the maximum dressing desirable. In the case of dried manure the quantity would have to be even more reduced, and indeed such manure is best employed like a chemical fertilizer at 8–12oz per sq. yd. Because of this lack of bulk and also because of its comparatively sticky nature poultry droppings do not improve the texture of the ground like dung.



SEAWEED FOR SEASIDE GARDENS

Those who live in districts in which seaweed can be collected or purchased cheaply have available a valuable substitute for dung. Compared with the latter, seaweed is very rich in potash and almost lacking in phosphates, so, like poultry manure, it is usually even more in need of balancing with chemicals than dung. However, seaweed may either be dug in fresh as gathered at rates of about 1cwt to 8 sq. yds or may be dried and dug in at about 1cwt to 24 sq. yd. The bladder seaweeds and driftweed with long, broad fronds are the best kinds.

GREEN MANURE CROPS

Green manuring consists in sowing some quick-growing crop, such as mustard, rape, vetches or annual lupins, and digging the plants in just as they are about to come into flower. The idea is to add to the organic matter in the soil and so improve its texture and hold up soluble foods which might otherwise be washed out. In the case of lupins and vetches, the nitrogen content of the soil is actually increased, as these plants harbour bacteria which fix nitrogen from the air. The idea is sound, and may be put into effect in early spring on ground intended for late winter greens, etc., or in summer on ground cleared of early potatoes, peas, etc. It is advisable to dust the ground with nitro chalk or sulphate of ammonia at about 2oz per sq. yd as the green crop is dug in, both to hasten its decay and prevent any temporary nitrogen shortage due to the quantity of this element used by bacteria engaged in decomposition. This nitrogen is not lost but only temporarily locked up.



Members of Springfield Women's Institute make chutney at a table set up in the garden of the rectory, August 1941. Bringing the apples, on the right of the photograph, is Mrs Vigne, the leader of the group. Apples, rhubarb and onions were all grown in members' gardens or on allotments.

GREEN TOMATO CHUTNEY

4lb green tomatoes
1lb apples
1½lb onions
½lb raisins
½lb preserved ginger
3oz salt
1 level tablespoon cayenne pepper
2 bananas
1lb brown sugar
1 pint vinegar

Mince the peeled fruit and the ginger. Gently boil all the ingredients except the vinegar and sugar for 1½ hours. Add the sugar dissolved in the vinegar, and boil another ¼ hour.

RHUBARB CHUTNEY

3lb rhubarb
1lb sultanas
3lb onions
1lb brown sugar
1oz curry powder
1oz white pepper
½oz cayenne pepper
1 pint malt vinegar

Cut the rhubarb into small pieces, and remove as much of the skin as possible. Mince the onions and sultanas, place all the ingredients in the pan, and heat gently for an hour, keeping well stirred.

RIPE TOMATO CHUTNEY

12Ib tomatoes
1Ib onions
1½Ib sugar
1½oz salt
A pinch of cayenne
¼oz paprika
2 fluid oz tarragon or chilli vinegar

Spiced Vinegar:
1 pint vinegar
¼oz cinnamon bark
¼oz whole allspice
¼oz cloves
¼oz blade of mace

Add the spices to the vinegar, bring to the boil, allow to infuse for 2 hours with the lid on the pan, and then strain. Blanch the tomatoes for 1 minute in boiling water, remove the skins and hard cores, cut up and simmer with the chopped onions until a thick pulp is obtained. Then add the other ingredients and the strained spiced vinegar. The chutney should be cooked until it is of thick consistency.

pieces it is desirable to use for that particular design. For this cloche shape four pieces are necessary, a tip, a sideband, a brim and a headband. The brim will be cut on the bias so that it can be given a slight bell shape and also a thick double edge. The sideband is cut on the bias so that it can be drawn in to give a slight waist where it joins the brim.

Start with the brim. Cut a 6in wide strip of sparterie about 2in longer than the outer edge of the brim desired and with ends cut on the diagonal. Damp the sparterie and with the ribbon board (a bread board will do) in the left hand, draw the sparterie round the edge of the board so that 1in of it is turned over onto the other side of the board (Fig. 2). Stretch and smooth out all wrinkles and pin into place with drawing-pins. It may be necessary to run a draw-string round the inner edge of the brim to draw it into a small circle (Fig. 3). When brim is quite dry remove from board and work into oval shape with slight 'bell' to it by allowing ends to overlap (Fig. 4). When shape and size of brim are correct, pin ends together and oversew. Insert wire under outer edge fold and stitch to edge, taking care not to flatten soft edge. If a thick edge is desired, pad lightly. Measure head size, allowing 1in for thickness of material and headlining.

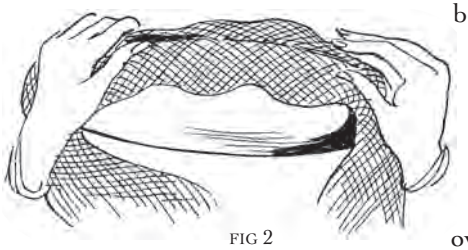


FIG 2

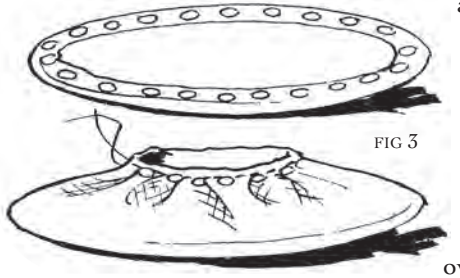


FIG 3



FIG 4

Make a securely sewn wire oval this size.

Pin wire oval all round centre opening of brim at points equidistant from outer edge. Stitch wire securely to brim and cut brim as Fig. 5. Cut a 1½in wide bias strip of sparterie for headband to correspond exactly to size of wire oval and stab-stitch all round as Fig. 6.



FIG 5



FIG 6

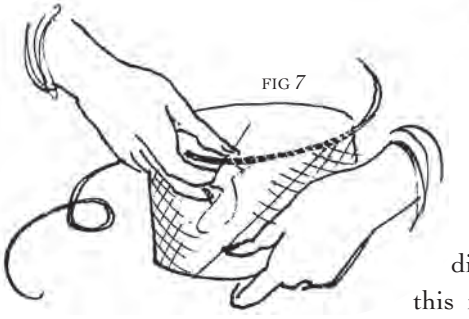


FIG 7

For the crown, cut a 4in wide bias strip of sparterie 3in longer than headband and with diagonal ends. Use 1in of this for overlap at join, the other 2in are to allow for the slight widening of the crown at top. Join ends of sideband and make a wire oval to correspond with size of top of crown. Stitch wire oval to top of sideband (Fig. 7).

Lay the wired edge of sideband onto piece of sparterie and trace a slightly larger oval for tip. Cut oval tip and join to wired edge of side-band

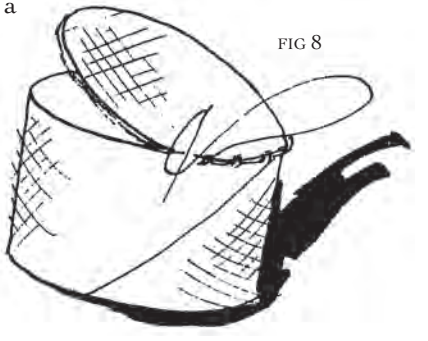


FIG 8

WITH LACE AT HAND: A FEMININE FRILL FOR GLOVES

A fairy godmother isn't needed to transform a pair of plain white fabric gloves into a pair, with delicious feminine frills. You can do it yourself in a matter of minutes with enough frilling 2½in deep to go round the wrist of your gloves (about ¼yd for each). Trim the glove to wrist length, or ¾in below gathers, turn in the raw edge and tack frilling in place. Stitch through the centre of the frilled edge. Seam ends of frilling together. Match with other glove.

1940S HANDY HINT

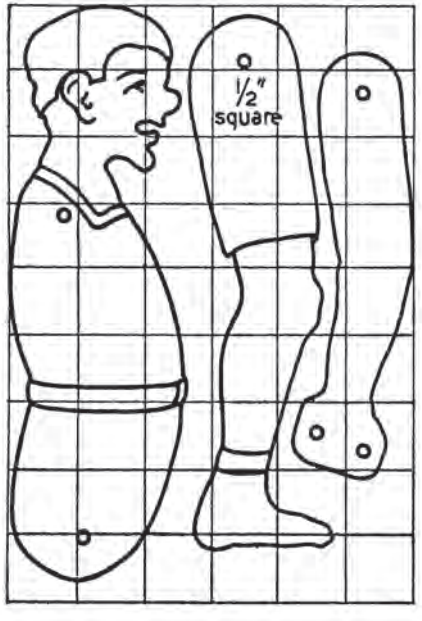
To Smarten Frayed Wrists

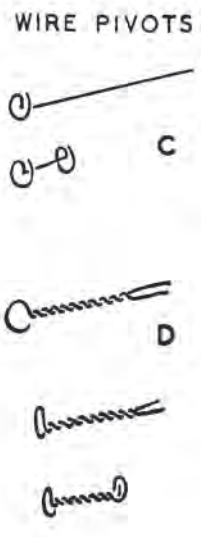
Joanna Chase

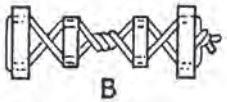
You may have a good suit or frock that is frayed at the wrists. In the case of a suit the frayed edge will be on a fold. Cut it open right round the wrist, and cut away the frayed part, keeping the amount you cut off even all round. Then turn the edges in towards each other, the lower edge slightly beneath the top one, and slip-stitch together. Press over a damp cloth. Where you have to deal with a frayed wrist on a single thickness of material, cut off the frayed part and bind it with ½in wide ribbon velvet to match the frock, or with wide braid in a dark colour.



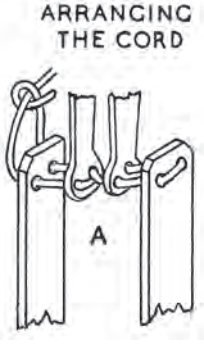
This photograph shows a model wearing an outfit which illustrates the way in which old clothes can be re-worked and worn as new. The model, seen here leaning on an ornate plinth, wears a black chiffon blouse made from an old dinner dress, a long black skirt made from another old dinner dress bartered with a friend, and a white turban which can also be worn with various daytime outfits.







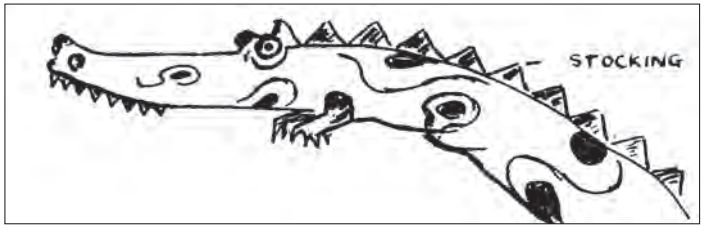
CORD CROSSED AS SEEN FROM ABOVE



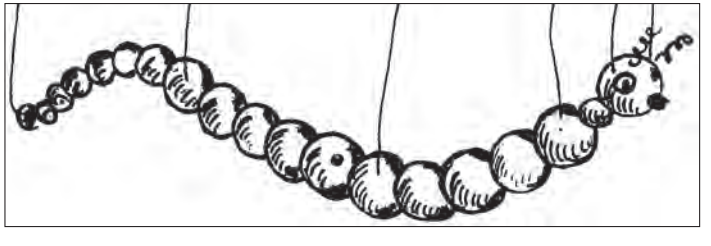
with finger and thumb on the spots indicated will cause the uprights to stretch the cord, and the acrobat will perform wonderfully the queerest antics.

PUPPETS MADE FROM WASTE MATERIALS

Margaret Beresford



1. Snakes and reptiles can be made from old stockings. Put the hand into the toe of the stocking, stretch the fingers and draw them together to a point to make a snaky head. Use old beads or buttons for the eyes and decorate the stocking with sequins or gilt paint.



2. Cotton reels joined together make a centipede, with springs fixed for feet; but small balls are more satisfactory.