

TO RENEW FURNITURE

PIANO FINISH IS GIVEN BY MANY COATS OF VARNISH.

Much Scraping and Sandpapering Necessary in This Method—Cracks and Holes Must Be Filled With Putty.

There are various ways of renovating furniture. The best consists in the application of successive coats of varnish, each sandpapered and rubbed to what is known as a "piano finish." This method is the finish you will find on almost all the old mahogany of our grandfathers' days. The first thing, then, is to get off the dust and dirt, and to remove every particle of the old cracked and blackened varnish from the piece of furniture you wish to renovate. To do this you will need a cabinet scraper. These scrapers come in various shapes and sizes, and are made to fit the different angles and curves of the wood to be scraped. They may be bought for ten or fifteen cents. The edges are draw-filled and ready for use. If the edge is rounded the scraper will do no work. If rough or nicked the wood will be scratched and perhaps ruined. With a good scraper you will be surprised and charmed to see how quickly and nicely you can get down to the bare wood.

If there is deep carving on the piece of furniture the operation must be varied. Take wood alcohol, and with a brush or cloth apply to every nook and crevice. Let it stand for a little while and then wipe it off and scrape the wood clean as before directed. The wood alcohol will soften the varnish, so that it may be easily removed. Care must be taken not to allow the varnish to turn white. Should it do so apply more of the alcohol and wipe dry at once. If the alcohol once reaches the wood it will turn it white, provided it is mahogany, which is the only wood on which alcohol has this effect. It merely bleaches other woods.

The wood being cleaned the surface must be made absolutely smooth. For this use double sandpaper. Smooth down all the rough spots, and fill all the cracks and holes with putty, which must be allowed to harden, when it may be stained to match the color of the wood. If the placing of the putty is carefully done even a large crack or a broken piece of veneer may be so hidden that it cannot be seen when the work is finished.

The wood will then be ready for the varnish. The average amateur cannot understand that the art of varnishing differs very materially from painting. Paint is better for rubbing in with the brush, but varnish, because of the rapidity in drying, must be flowed on to the work. The work must always lay flat and remain so until the varnish has set. A varnish brush is flat and fairly stiff and fine. Put plenty of varnish on the wood, avoiding too much rubbing with the brush. It will settle into a glazed surface if you have flowed it on evenly.

As to the varnish itself, buy the best that can be had. "Finishing varnish" of a good quality is what you want. Before applying it, however, you will find that time and expense will be saved by putting on two coats of fine white shellac, allowing each coat to dry thoroughly for at least twenty-four hours. If shellac is used only two coats of varnish will be necessary.

Custard Pie.

Two cups of sugar, one cup of new milk, three-fourths cup of melted butter, two tablespoons of flour, yolks of five eggs, any desired flavoring. Stir flour in sugar, add milk, then well beaten yolks, then butter and flavoring. Whip whites of eggs stiff, add five tablespoons of sugar for meringue.

Laundry Hint.

To iron "cold starched" pieces without any trouble whatever: Take the required amount of starch, dissolve in cold water, adding enough boiling water to make starch warm. (Not cooked.) Dip parts to be starched into it, rubbing or spitting the starch well in. Fold and let remain over night. Thus treated, the pieces will iron as easily and as well as the clothes ordinarily starched, without sticking and without starch streaking and rolling up on the goods.

Grapefruit Marmalade.

This delicious marmalade is easily made and quite inexpensive. Take one large grapefruit, one large orange, one large lemon. Wash and chop fine, using all but the seeds. Soak in an equal amount of water for 24 hours. Boil 10 minutes and let stand another 24 hours. Measure, bring to the boiling point and add an equal amount of sugar. Cook until it jellies—about half an hour. If the fruits are large and juicy this will make 18 jelly glasses of marmalade.

CAKES FOR AFTERNOON TEA

Recipes for the Making of Several Varieties of These Confections Needed in Entertaining.

The hostess who, like novel little cakes for afternoon tea will find these palatable. A sort of sweet biscuit shaped like a lady finger is made from the well-beaten whites of three eggs into which is beaten almost half a pound of confectioner's sugar. Add four ounces of melted butter, and stir in quickly at the last four ounces of pastry flour.

Put this paste into a pastry bag and force through a tube on well buttered baking sheets. Form finger shapes not too close together as they spread and bake in a moderate oven until a delicate brown.

For an almond cake beat to a cream three ounces of butter and half a pound of soft A sugar, then add gradually a half pint of milk and enough flour to make a light dough. Stir in a quarter of a pound of blanched and minced almonds lightly floured. Put on a floured board, roll about a quarter of an inch thick and cut into diamonds and squares.

Almond macaroons are made by beating the whites of three eggs to a stiff froth, then stirring in half a pound of confectioner's sugar and the strained juice of half a lemon, and last half a pound of ground almonds. Put paper on a flat baking sheet, drop the mixture on by teaspoonfuls and bake in a quick oven until a light brown.

Little German caraway cakes are made by mixing two cups of flour, a cup of butter, a cup and a half of sugar, four eggs, two teaspoonfuls of rose water and half a cup of caraway seed. Drop on baking sheet and bake in a slow oven from 20 minutes to half an hour.

PREPARATION OF POTATOES

Before Baking a Lengthwise Strip Should Be Pared—After Boiling Shake in the Wind.

When preparing potatoes for baking cut one paring around the largest side of the potato lengthwise, and when baked the skin will slip off from each side nicely.

After boiling potatoes pour off all water, take kettle of potatoes to the back door, or wherever the wind will blow on them, and shake several times, and they will be white and mealy.

A fine potato soup: Take three medium sized potatoes, one pint milk, one teaspoonful chopped onion, one stalk celery, one teaspoonful salt, one-half teaspoonful celery salt, one-half teaspoonful white pepper, one-fourth teaspoon cayenne, one-half tablespoonful flour, one tablespoonful butter. Cook potatoes until very soft, drain off the water, and mash them. Cook onion and celery with the milk in double boiler and add to the potatoes. Add the seasoning. Rub through a strainer; put on to boil again. Melt the butter in a small saucepan, blend it with the flour, and stir it into the boiling soup. Let it boil five minutes and serve very hot.

An easily prepared potato salad: Slice six cold boiled potatoes and two onions. For dressing, one-half cupful vinegar, one cupful of sweet cream whipped, one teaspoonful dry mustard, salt and pepper to taste, and at last add four hard boiled eggs.

Hot Biscuits.

Two cupfuls of flour, one tablespoonful of butter, one tablespoonful of lard, four teaspoonfuls of baking powder, one teaspoonful of salt, one cupful of milk.

Sift the flour into a basin, rub the shortening finely into it, add the baking powder and salt, then add the milk gradually. Turn out on to a floured board; toss with a knife until the whole surface is floured; pat lightly with a rolling pin until one-half inch thick. Cut in rounds and bake immediately on buttered tins in a quick oven, about twelve minutes.

Delicious Gingerbread.

One cup granulated sugar. Add two tablespoonfuls of molasses, four of melted butter, one even teaspoon of salt, one dessertspoon of cinnamon, and a teaspoon of mixed spices. Stir and rub well together, then add one beaten egg and one cup of sour milk (real sour). Then sift one even teaspoon of soda with two cups of flour, sift it into the other mixture and beat about two minutes. Then turn it into a nine-inch square tin, one and a half inches deep, sprinkle sugar over the top and bake 40 minutes in a moderate oven.

Cream Puffs.

One cup boiling water, one-half cup butter, one cup of flour, four eggs. Put the hot water and butter together, let it boil up, add all the flour at a time, stir briskly until it balls up from the dish, let cool, add four eggs one at a time, work with the hands and bake in slow oven about 40 minutes.

Cream for Puffs—Pint of milk, small cup of sugar, small half cup of flour, two eggs. Mix the flour and sugar dry, add it to the boiling milk, let it boil five minutes, then add eggs and boil a few minutes.

CARE OF HOUSE PLANT

PROPER WATERING THE MOST IMPORTANT DUTY.

Water Should Be of Same Temperature as Room and Not Administered Haphazard—How to Spray the Foliage.

Watering is by far the most important duty in taking care of the indoor garden. Sickly plants, in six cases out of ten, are the result of being watered just whenever the owner happens to think of it. A good percentage of the remainder are caused by an excess of water. Too much is as bad as too little. When over-watered the roots are unable to absorb all the moisture. This causes the soil to become soaked, thus excluding the air. Then the earth becomes sour, the roots decay, and the leaves of the plant turn yellow and fall off. When under-watered, the roots dry up with similar results.

All potted plants should be watched. Rub a pinch of the soil between the fingers. If it crumbles up without caking, then you know it is time to administer water; if it cakes, then there is still enough moisture unabsorbed. The water should be of the same temperature as the room in which the plants are kept and should be clear.

People who pour the hot water left the bottom of the tea kettle on their flowers must not be surprised if the roots are scalded to death. The plant should be allowed to stand and drain for some time. Then the excess in the saucer or jardiniere must be emptied out. When the flowers are in window boxes, by the way, holes should be drilled in the bottoms of the boxes in order to allow the excess moisture to drain off.

Syringing is also important. All plants should be so treated except those whose leaves are covered with hairs. The value of syringing is that it helps to keep the foliage clean, the breathing pores of the plants open and the leaves and stems free from insects.

On warm days this syringing should be done outside, putting the plants where they can get the sun while taking their bath. It is better not to use a nozzle, but place the thumb over the opening of the hose and spray the water so that it may fall on the leaves like rain. In cold weather this should be done in the bathroom.

Plants with large and tough leaves, such as palms and rubber plants, need to be sponged from time to time. Do this lightly and don't rub the leaves.

Dressed Meat.

A cheap, nourishing, delicious, and easily digested meat for luncheon or tea is made by boiling a "shankbone" of veal, one of beef, and one of mutton together until the meat will fall from the bone. Carefully remove all bone and gristle, chop fine, or put through meat cutter. Season to taste, sage and savory may be added if desired. Place half the mixture in a bread tin, have ready five or six hard boiled eggs, cut each end from them so they can be placed close, end for end, in a row on the meat in the center of tin. Then add the balance of the meat, press closely, and set away until firm. Slice in half inch slices with a sharp knife so that each piece will have a slice of egg in the center, garnish with parsley. This never fails to be an attractive dish and once made well is in constant demand. The stock can be used for soup.

Baked Hamburg Steak.

Two pounds chopped beef, one can of tomatoes. Season meat with salt, pepper, and little onion. Put meat in skillet, shaping meat well up around the sides. Pour in tomatoes and bake three-quarters of an hour. Peas or dressing may be substituted.

Economy Roast.

Take a pork steak with the round bone in it about two inches thick, salt and pepper on both sides, then make a dressing of moistened white bread, about two cups and a half; two large onions or three small ones, a half cup of raisins, salt, pepper, and sage to taste; lay dressing on half of steak and fold the other half over and sew up; put in a roaster and roast with a little water for two hours. When done serve with fried apples and slice down like bread.

Cold Tapioca Pudding.

Put one cupful of tapioca into a and soak over night. In the morning add two pints of milk stirred gently, and boil about 20 minutes; then add the beaten yolks of four eggs, one saucupan, add two cupfuls of water cupful of sugar, one tablespoonful of butter, and allow to boil for a few minutes longer; flavor with a teaspoonful of orange extract, and pour into a pudding dish. Beat up the whites of the eggs stiffly then gradually beat the pudding with this meringue. Serve cold.

Winter Months on the Farm

How to Improve Them

Work for Farm Mechanics

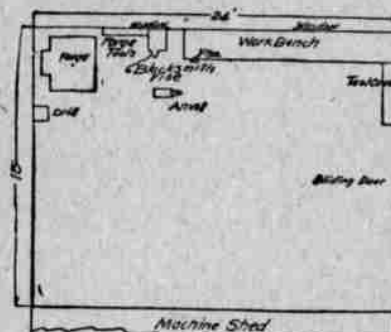
Improving the Dull Days With Handy Jobs of Construction or Repairing
By PROF. C. A. OCOCK
Wisconsin College of Agriculture

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Every farm should be equipped with a farm shop in which the owner can repair broken parts of farm machines or make new ones and thereby save both time and money by making use of the winter days when other work is slack. The shop may be either a small building by itself or simply corner of the barn or implement shed fitted up as a shop. One rule however should be rigidly enforced; that the shop is a storehouse for the tools, and that every tool should be returned to its place in the shop after being used.

The Farm Workshop.

Among the essentials in the farm shop are a strong, durable work bench, an iron vise, an efficient forge, anvil, and a supply of carpenter's tools corresponding to the needs of the individual farmer. A good forge suitable for general farm work can be purchased for \$5 to \$12, or where an extra large one is desired it will cost



Plan of a good farm shop to be built on the end of a machine shed.

about \$30. In some cases one can build his own forge and the only expense will be for the bellows, which will cost about \$4, second-hand. The best plan is to get a forge of No. 5 size, which will cost about \$10, and is both practical and efficient.

Home Carpentry for Farmers.

Among the various tasks which should occupy the farm mechanic during the slack winter period are building or repairing chicken houses, hay racks, wagon boxes, hog racks, portable panel hurdles, farm gates and various other implements, which the amateur carpenter can successfully construct or remodel. The matter of farm gates seems simple, yet on numbers of farms the makeshift gates in use are a disgrace. A serviceable and attractive gate can be easily built with double cleats at each end and the middle, and a double brace running diagonally from the top of each end cleat to the bottom of the middle cleat for re-enforcement.

The farm mechanic can use his forge to excellent advantage in repairing machinery parts, broken tools, horseshoeing, and in numerous other odd jobs which are continually turning up around the farm.

Concrete Work.

The farm shop, or a portion of one of the barns where it is warm enough to keep concrete from freezing, is an excellent place in which to make concrete feeding troughs, fence posts or other devices during the winter. The feeding troughs are made either V-shaped or half-round like a hollowed out tree trunk. The concrete posts may be either hollow or solid, and are re-enforced with steel or iron rods.

For the feeding troughs the forms are made of green lumber, in the form of two boxes, one about four inches larger than the other. Turn the smaller one upside down on a smooth floor and put the second, which has no bottom, around the first. Fill the space with concrete and cover the bottom of the smaller box four or six inches deep to form the bottom of the trough. After the concrete is thoroughly hardened these forms can be knocked off. In case of the V-shaped



PLAN OF HAY RACK.

trough there are two triangular end boards, and the two side boards united at the bottom of the trough.

The mixture used in feeding troughs is a 1-3-5 combination; that is, 1 part cement, 3 parts sand and 5 parts clean broken stone or gravel. The stone or gravel should not be larger than one-half inch in diameter. The sand should be free from sticks, straw or dirt, and the cement a good grade of

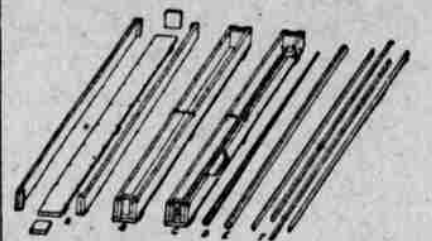
Portland. Place the cement in the center of the pile of sand at one corner of the mixing box and mix dry until the mixture has the same color throughout. In the opposite corner place the stone and wet thoroughly; after this mix stone, sand, and cement, adding water until the whole mass has a medium consistency. Use a mason's brick trowel to work out all air bubbles, leaving a smooth surface. When desired a finishing coat of 1 part cement and 2 parts sand can be used.

The re-enforcement can be either 3-16 inch steel or iron rods or double twisted barbed wire. Place the re-enforcement the same distance from the surface as its own diameter. The re-enforcements should run lengthwise of the trough, with a strand at each end and one in the middle running crosswise.

Making Concrete Fence Posts.

In making solid concrete posts a mixture of one part cement, 2½ parts sand, and 5 parts clean broken stone or gravel is used. The preparation of the concrete is the same as for the troughs. The post forms should be made of a fair grade of rather green lumber, should have the inner surface smooth, and all joints tight, to prevent the cement from leaking away with the water. The forms permit of the post being made 7 feet long and 4x4 inches square at the ends. The bottom board has holes to correspond to the dowel pin in the side boards, the iron clamps used preventing the side boards from spreading.

The same re-enforcement as for feed troughs can be used. When filling the form with concrete, place ¾ to 1 inch in the bottom of the form, then lay in two rods one on each side; continue the filling until within ¾ inch of the top, when the remaining two rods should be properly laid in. Each rod should have a hook at



Forms and cores for molding solid and hollow concrete posts. At A is shown the parts of a form for a solid post. At B those parts are assembled ready for making the solid post. At C is shown the same forms with the core in it for a hollow post. At D a tapering metal core, and at E a solid wooden core in four parts, which are separated at F to show details of construction.

each end about 1 inch long to prevent the steel from slipping in the concrete when a strain is put upon the post.

Hollow Concrete Post.

For hollow concrete posts the operation is the same except that there is a hole left in one of the end gates of the form to receive the galvanized iron core. This core should taper from 2½ inches in diameter at the bottom to 1 inch at the top. In using the core it should be covered with a coat of oil or grease and then it can be removed in from 3 to 6 hours after the post is molded.

The wood core is made in four pieces. The two sides are flat inside and curved outside. The two central pieces are 1 inch thick and taper from 1½ inches to 1 inch in width. This core is 2½ inches in diameter for its entire length. When using the wooden core it is more desirable to make the post square from top to bottom. To successfully use this core, wrap it with old newspaper or thin wrapping paper. This prevents the cement from coming in direct contact with the wood and permits of the removal of the core in 10 to 20 minutes after the post is finished.

Curing the Posts.

The side boards of the forms should be removed in 24 to 48 hours after pouring, but the posts should not be moved for at least one week and then very carefully. In the meantime they should be sprinkled with water several times daily and protected from sun and wind and from frost if it be freezing weather. Posts should cure at least 60 days before being set in the ground. During this period they should, if possible, be placed upon a bed of moist sand and thoroughly wetted each day. Prices of materials may vary in different localities, but the average price including labor will range from 25 to 30 cents per post.