Mrs Greenkeeper's Own Corner

with Ann Mawson

I always make my mincemeat in October, then by Christmas it is just nice and mature. You require 1 lb. currants — 1 lb. raisins — ½ lb. candied orange, lemon and citron peel — 1 lb. suet — 1 lb. apples — 1 lb. demerara sugar — 1 oz. mixed spice — grated rind of one lemon — grated rind of one orange — ½ pint sherry — 1 lb. sultanas — ½ lb. finely minced almonds — juice of one lemon and one orange.

Stone and mince the raisins or use seedless raisins — mince apples, candied peel, almonds and sultanas. Mix these with currants, sugar, spice, lemon and orange rind, and shredded suet. Mix well, then add the sherry, lemon and orange juice. This mixture should be put in jars, covered and kept at least six weeks — but the longer the better. This quantity makes about 8 lb. mincemeat.

Now is the time to make your Christmas pudding — this is a very old recipe: ½ lb. plain flour — 6 oz. currants — ½ lb. finely minced suet — ½ lb. brown sugar — ½ teaspoon allspice — ½ teaspoon baking powder — 1 oz. ground almonds — pinch salt — a little brandy, old ale or milk — ½ lb. bread-crumbs — ⅔ lb. Valencia raisins — ¼ of a grated nutmeg — the grated rind of one lemon — 4 eggs — 3 oz. mixed peel. Wash and dry all the fruit. Put all the ingredients into a bowl, mix thoroughly with the eggs well beaten and enough brandy, old ale or milk to moisten the whole. Pour into two well buttered basins, cover with a butter paper and steam for eight hours. Store in a cool place and resteam for four hours when required. Serve with brandy sauce: 1 oz. butter — 2 tablespoons sugar — a little lemon rind thinly peeled — 1 oz. cornflour — ½ pint milk — 1 glass brandy. Melt butter in an enamelled pan, stir in flour, add milk, sugar and lemon rind and stir until smooth, boil for five minutes, add the brandy, reheat and strain.

Until November.