

Mrs Greenkeeper's Own Corner

with Ann Mawson

Damsons should be in the shops now, so here are a few recipes for them.

Damson Charlotte

$\frac{1}{4}$ pint of cream, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of powdered gelatine, 6 sponge fingers, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of sugar, 1 tablespoonful of water, $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. damsons.

Stone the damsons. Put them in a stewpan, moisten with a tablespoonful of water, add the sugar, stir until the sugar has melted, then cook very gently until very soft, stirring all the time. Rub through a sieve. Take a round mould, split the sponge fingers into halves, and smear the sides of them with the damson puree. Use them to line the mould, joining them close together. Melt the gelatine in the milk, over a gentle heat; strain and mix it with the sieved damsons. Whip together for two minutes. Whip the cream, and stir it in; continue whipping until the mixture is quite stiff. Turn it gently into the lined mould, and leave until it is set. Turn out carefully.

To serve four people.

Damson Meringue Pudding

3 oz. of castor sugar, 2 tablespoonfuls of water, 1 lb. of ripe damsons, 1 pint of milk, 2 eggs, 3 oz. of sugar, 1 breakfastful of fine breadcrumbs.

Mix the breadcrumbs with one ounce of sugar. Beat the egg yolks, mix them with the milk, pour into the breadcrumbs and let it soak for half an hour. Stone the damsons, put them in a saucepan, with two tablespoonfuls of water and simmer until they are soft. Put them through a sieve. Add the remaining two ounces of sugar and stir over a gentle heat, until the sugar has dissolved. Blanch about 10 damson kernels and add them to the puree. Put it into a pie dish and cover with the breadcrumb mixture. Bake for 20 minutes. Meanwhile beat the whites of the eggs until

quite stiff. Fold in the castor sugar. Pile this roughly on the pudding, return to the oven and bake until golden brown.

To serve four people.

Damson Pickle

This pickle is particularly good with cold mutton. You require:—

$\frac{1}{4}$ oz. of whole cinnamon, 8 cloves, 4 lb. of ripe damsons, 1 gill of vinegar, 2 lb. of loaf sugar.

Put the sugar and vinegar in an earthenware or enamelled pan. Place it in a moderate oven and leave until the sugar has dissolved. Remove any stalks from the damsons, and wipe with a cloth. Prick them well with a needle, add the syrup to them, also the spices (tied in a muslin bag) bring to the boil and gently boil for a quarter of an hour. Remove the spices, squeezing as much juice out as possible. Pack the fruit tightly in warm, dry jars, cover with the juice, cork and seal. When cold, cover with parchment.

Damson Chutney

1 pint of white vinegar, 2 lb. of demerara sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of salt, 6 peppercorns, 8 cloves, a good pinch of mace, 4 lb. of ripe damsons.

Remove any stalks from the damsons. Wash and dry them in a cloth. Put them in a saucepan with the peppercorns, cloves and mace, tied in a muslin bag. Add the salt and sugar, pour on the white vinegar and simmer for half an hour, or until the fruit is soft. Remove the bag of spices. Rub the fruit and liquid through a coarse sieve. Return the pulp to the saucepan and boil gently for 10 minutes, stirring all the time. Turn into wide-necked pickle jars. When cold, tie down with parchment.

—Until August . . .