



Ben Burk, Delta, the chief coordinator of this year's applebutter making day, pours a dishpan full of sugar into the kettle of applebutter. It takes nearly an hour to put the necessary 90 pounds of sugar into each of the seven kettles.

# Applebutter

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sugar at a time, adding it when the applebutter is ready.

"You have to just know by looking - when the applebutter is ready," Burk stated when asked how long it takes before the sugar can be added.

"I can tell just by the way it bubbles," says Inez Maglaughlin, Delta, who is Burk's sister and one of the original applebutter makers from 50 years back. "I can tell just by looking when I make preserves, too," notes the pro.

From all that could be gotten from the "old timers: who know when to add the various ingredients, there is no set time before adding the sugar and spices. The point is mostly to cook out the proper amount of water from the liquid before adding the sugar, and this knowledge can only come by standing beside the experts and learning by experience.

After the sugar has been added, the apple butter has to cook about two and a half hours until it "looks right," and then spices must be added. Four ounces of cinnamon go into a kettle.

"If you use cloves or allspice, you don't use as much cinnamon," advises Ben Burk.

Once the spice is added, the mixture should cook only about 10 or so minutes and then be taken from the fire - completely finished.

By this time it has

changed from the off-white color of pared apples to the deep, rich, familiar brown of applebutter. This darkening occurs slowly during the 12 hours of cooking, but really speeds up after the sugar has been added and a chemical reaction has taken place. The four ounces of cinnamon also help to change the color.

Once the long process of making the apple butter is completed, the majority of the work changes hands from the stirrers to the women who bottle the applebutter.

Mrs. Margaret Harrington, Delta R1, was responsible for taking this year's orders. After 50 years, the applebutter has become a part of the area's way of life so orders come in until they have to be turned away. As has been the case for the past several years, only enough orders were taken to fill 160 gallons of the applebutter. Usually, there is a little more than 160 gallons made in the seven kettles, but to insure that everyone's orders are filled, Mrs. Harrington curtails them after 160 gallons have been accounted for.

"This year there were 115 different orders," she relates, "and the largest order was for 12-1/4 gallons." In this case, the buyer probably stocked up for a year or more. Everyone involved assures that applebutter can be kept for at

least two or three years without spoiling.

This year the youth group of the Mt. Nebo Methodist Church, who sponsored the event and who will receive the proceeds from the sale, charged \$6 per gallon for their applebutter.

"Some churches charge \$10, so we're really reasonable," Mrs. Harrington remarked. While it may sound as though the Mt. Nebo applebutter makers have a lot of competition, this is really not the case.

There are very few churches around the area that have an annual applebutter making day. So, the Mt. Nebo group sometimes has to get together several times in a year to fill all the orders and ease the demand of those wanting some of the delicious condiment. This year the community will be having another applebutter making day in the beginning of November.

## HISTORY

The history of the Mt. Nebo applebutter making day goes back as far as possibly 50 years, or at least as long as the old timers can remember. At that time, the women of the Mt. Nebo Church decided they needed to have a fund raising event, and applebutter making was suggested and decided upon.

"That first year we only had one kettle," says Inez Maglaughlin, whose mother was the women to suggest this particular project. "The

next year we had two kettles and we kept increasing until we finally had seven," she continued.

There were a few years out of the 50 that applebutter wasn't made, however.

"During the depression, you couldn't get sugar unless you had sugar stamps," says Ramsey Burk, brother to Inez.

And, then, to the opposite extreme, there were years that the group had to get together as many as four

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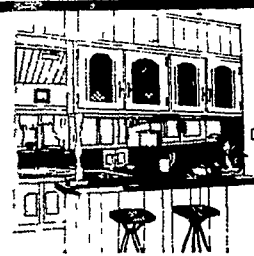
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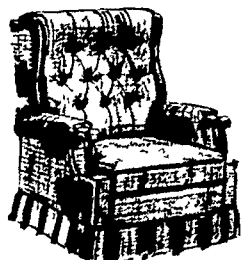
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