Homemade Driers for Fruit and Vegetables

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Four types of driers are illustrated in this circular. Choice of the type preferable will depend on the amount of drying to be done and the source of artificial heat available in the home.

The Oven Dehydrator

Fig. 1.—The oven dehydrator requires only the construction of trays on which the drying food can be placed in the oven of the kitchen stove. By courtesy of the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In making the trays for an oven dehydrator, first measure the inside length and width of the oven. Make each tray frame with its outside dimensions 1½ inches less than the oven’s length and width. Tack two
strings diagonally between corners of each frame to help support the netting. Stretch the strings tight and twist where they cross. On top of frame and strings, stretch a single layer of netting tightly across the frame, turn in a hem, and tack down on the under side of the frame.

Blocks of wood 1½ by 1½ by 8 inches are required to stack the trays.

Oven drying is small scale drying. An oven can take 4 to 8 pounds, preferably about 6, of a fresh fruit or vegetable as one drying load. It requires from 3 to 8 hours for one load to dry, depending upon the size of the load, the product, and the size of the pieces.

The Drying Rack

![Diagram of drying rack]

**MATERIAL REQUIRED**

- 20 Linear ft. 1½" white pine
- 18 Linear ft. 1" white pine
- 40 Linear ft. 1½" white pine
- 10 ft. screen wire 2½" wide
- 1 pair 1" Butt Hinges
- 1 yard 36" wide Cheese Cloth

Fig. 2.—The drying rack for hanging over stove or outside the house. Adapted from California plan.

The drying rack hung above the stove is especially effective if a metal base, as shown in Fig. 3, is used to help direct the heat through the drier.

Home drying of fruits and vegetables is especially important in wartime because it does not require sugar nor the metal, rubber and other materials used in the more common types of food preservation. A home-
made drier can be constructed at small expense. Often material found around the place may be used.

**Stove-Top Drier**

![Diagram of Stove-Top Drier]

**MATERIAL REQUIRED**
- 36 linear ft. 1"x2" white pine
- 28 linear ft. 1"x1" white pine
- 77 linear ft. 1"x1/2" white pine
- 4'x6' plywood
- 16" of 2' screen wire
- 2½ yds. 36" cheese cloth
- 1 pair 1" Butt Hinges

Fig. 3.—The stove-top drier. Adapted from the California plan.

The dimensions of the drier may be varied to fit the stove upon which it is to be used. If an oil, gas or electric stove is used, a sheet of metal should be placed over the source of heat to distribute the heat evenly.

**Electric Dehydrators**

The electric dehydrator with the fan will dry the food more rapidly than the other types of driers illustrated.
MATERIALS REQUIRED: 6 pcs. 1 1/8" lattice 8' long (trays); 4 pcs. 1" x 2" x 18' (framing); 2 pcs. parting stop, 12' long (tray supports); 30 sq. ft. panelboard; 3 yds. 36-inch cheesecloth; 10-inch electric fan; 9 150-watt light bulbs; 9 light bulb sockets; 10 ft. No. 14 insulated wire; 2 electric switches; nails, door hooks, door hinges.

For information on the procedure of drying fruits and vegetables see Missouri Extension Circular 477, "Drying Fruits and Vegetables."

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