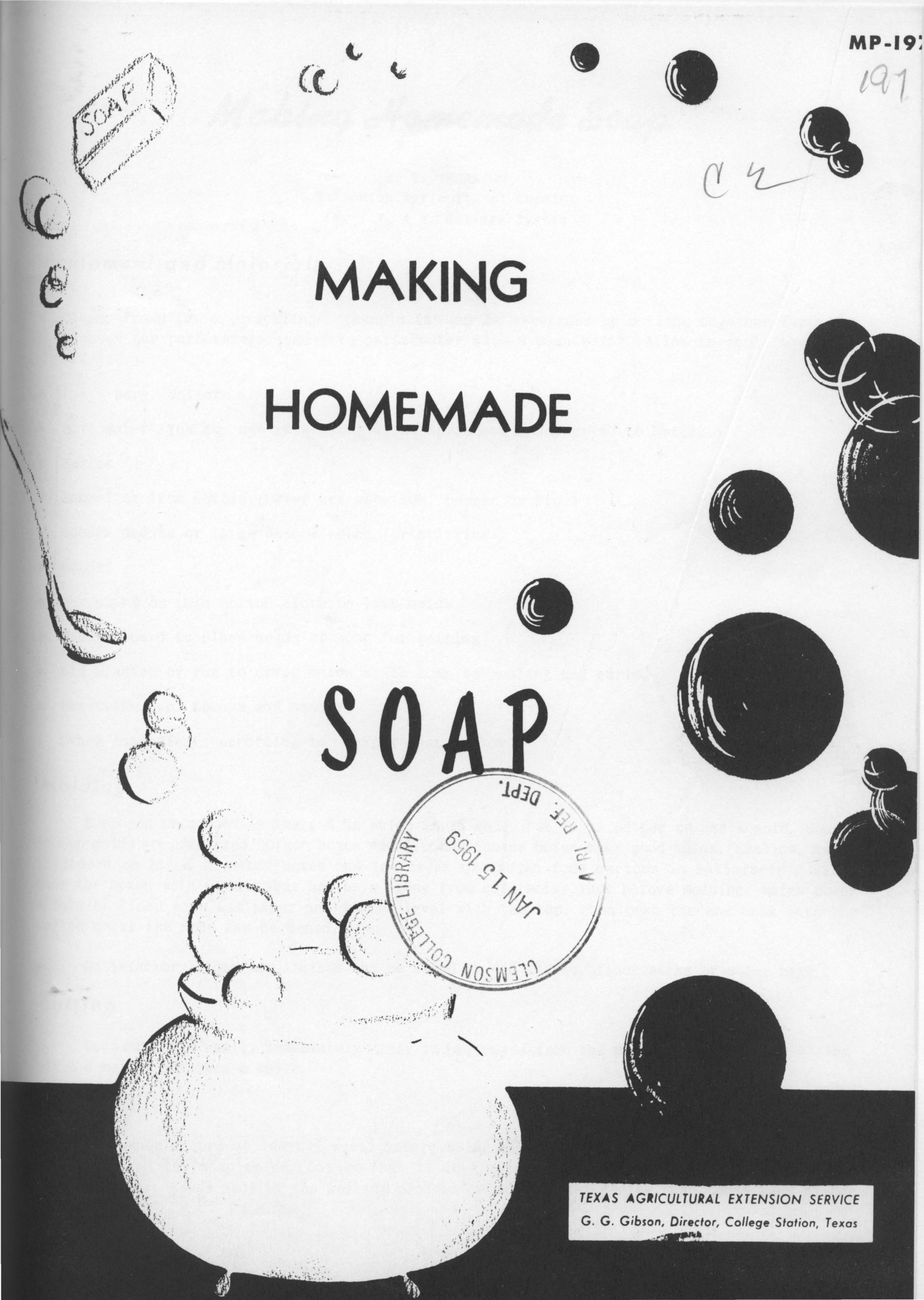

MAKING HOMEMADE SOAP

TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
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Making Homemade Soap

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Equipment and Materials

- Clean, fresh fat or cracklings. (Rancid fat may be sweetened by boiling together for a few minutes one part vinegar and five parts water with 6 pounds fat. Allow to cool; then skim off fat.)
- Lye - pure, uniform
- Soft water (You may use rain water which has stood a day or so to settle.)
- Scales
- Enamel or iron kettle (Never use aluminum, copper or tin.)
- Wooden paddle or large enamel spoon for stirring
- Molds
- Wax paper or thin cotton cloth to line molds
- Smooth board to place molds of soap for setting
- Old blanket or rug to cover molds while soap is cooling and curing
- Measuring cup, spoons and saucer
- Other ingredients according to recipes that follow

Molding

Soap can be molded in the pan in which it is made, but it is better to use a mold. Smooth wooden molds are preferred. Cigar boxes and 2-pound cheese boxes make good molds. Shallow, heavy cardboard as found in match boxes and ice cream or frozen food cartons is satisfactory also. Line the boxes with a cloth that has been wrung from cold water just before molding. Match boxes should be lined with wax paper and filled level with the top. Then push the box back into the carton until the soap has hardened.

Satisfactory cloth for linings can be found in old sheets, flour sacks or sugar bags.

Cutting

Soap cuts more easily immediately after it is removed from the mold. A fine wire or string gives a better cut than a knife.

Curing

Soap should cure at least 4 weeks before using -- and a 6 months' lapse is better. This waiting allows the soap to dry out so that it does not wash away so rapidly. The older soap is, the better. Soaps made by the boiling process require longer ageing than those made by the cold process.

Soap Recipes Using Pure Fat

Recipe No. 1

6 lb. melted fat

13 oz. lye dissolved in 2 qt. water

Melt fat gently to a liquid; strain through two or three thicknesses of cheesecloth. Mix the lye and water and stir to dissolve lumps; then cool to lukewarm before adding to the melted, warm fat. In a fine stream, add the fat, which should be "creamy" and continue stirring until the whole mixture is thick and light in color. Pour quickly into shallow pasteboard boxes or a dripping pan which have been lined with damp cloth. When firm and nearly cold, cut into bars or squares. Pack the soap with open spaces between the bars to allow for drying.

Recipe No. 2

13 oz. lye
1 1/2 qt. cold water
1 cup borax
1/2 cup ammonia
1/2 cup kerosene
5 lb. melted, warm fat.

Dissolve the lye in the cold water, stirring to dissolve lumps. Then add the other ingredients. Strain the melted fat when cooled and about the consistency of thick honey. Add the other ingredients. If a clear soap is desired, add 1/2 cup of sugar, stirring until the mixture becomes the thickness of porridge. Pour quickly into shallow boxes or pans and crease into cakes. When almost cold, cut and store as directed in Recipe No. 1. If the kerosene odor is objectionable, 1/2 cup of water may be substituted for the kerosene. Kerosene has excellent cleaning properties.

Variations

Either sassafras or oil of lavender gives a pleasant aroma to this soap. Perfume or extra cleansing material may be added during the saponifying before molding consistency is reached. A sandstone or scouring soap may be made by adding 2 pounds of powdered pumice to the above recipe or a very good "hand sapolia" may be made by adding 8 ounces of cornmeal or ground oatmeal.

Recipe No. 3 (White Floating Soap)

This soap can be used for any kind of washing.

13 oz. lye

6 lb. strained fat

1 1/2 gal. water

Dissolve the lye in 1 1/2 quarts of water. Pour 1 1/2 gallons of water slowly into an old porcelain or enamel broiler; add the fat and then the lye. Allow the mixture to boil slowly about 2 1/2 to 3 hours. The soap is ready to skim out when it becomes flaky and the liquid appears clear. Test the soap. If it sticks on the hand when squeezed and seems greasy, a little more lye is needed; if it is too flaky, more fat is needed. Skim out the soap and place it in a wet cloth-lined wooden box to drain overnight or from 10 to 12 hours. Next, cut the soap into bars; dry, pack and store. The liquid left can be used for scrubbing.

Recipe No. 4

Prepare a soda solution by dissolving 13 ounces of caustic soda in 8 cups of water.

Render the fat and clarify it by boiling with slices of raw potatoes until the fat ceases

to crackle. Strain while still warm through a clean muslin cloth. Whiter soap can be made if the fat is strained through fine charcoal or clay.

Combine 6 pounds of clean, warm fat with the cool soda or lye solution and stir with a stick until it is the consistency of honey and is ready to mold. Pour mixture into agate pans which first have been wet, or into wooden molds lined with wax paper, and allow to stand until cool. Before it dries, remove the paper and stack logcabin fashion for quick drying. Wrap and store in boxes.

Perfume or extra cleansing material may be added before molding consistency is reached. To this recipe add 1 1/2 tablespoonfuls of borax or 1/2 cup of ammonia.

Recipe No. 5 (Toilet Soap)

4 1/2 lb. olive, cottonseed or coconut oil
1 1/2 lb. white lard
13 oz. lye
2 qt. water

6 drops oil of lavender and oil of geranium - Add to soap and stir in just before putting in mold.

Follow directions in recipe No. 4. If color is desired, the soap may be tinted with vegetable coloring.

Recipe No. 6

Dissolve 13 ounces of lye in 1 quart of water. When all lumps have dissolved, pour the lye mixture slowly into 6 pounds of clarified, warm fat. Stir continually until the mixture is a stiff cream. Pour into a mold and allow to harden for 2 or 3 days. Then cut into bars and allow to age.

Note: Softer soap may be made by increasing the amount of water to 2 or 3 quarts.

Soap Recipes Using Cracklings

Crackling Soap (Boil Method)

4 1/2 lb. cracklings
13 oz. lye
3 qt. water
1/2 cup ammonia
1/2 cup borax
2 tbsp. citronella

Dissolve lye in 3 quarts boiling water in a large granite dishpan. Add cracklings and boil steadily and gently until a good soap test is obtained. Occasionally, stir with slow, even strokes in one direction. Time varies from 1 to 3 hours. (Frequently 1 hour is sufficient to give a soap test, but boiling should continue at least 1 1/2 hours.)

Pour a small amount of the boiling mixture in a glass; add an equal amount of hot water and stir. If the mass becomes like strained honey and if the mixture threads off in hairs when dropped from a spoon, soap has come. Let a little of this mixture harden in a saucer. Touch the tip of the tongue to the hardened mixture. If the taste is sharp and biting, it indicates the presence of free lye. Make other tests at succeeding intervals until the taste does not bite.

The soap is now ready to blend. Remove from the fire and add 6 to 8 quarts of lukewarm water gradually, stirring all the time with a slow even stroke in one direction. When the whole mass becomes like strained honey with the dark lye water at the bottom and the fat substance on the surface combined and blended, the soap is ready. Sometime the soap begins to harden before it is thoroughly blended. If this happens, place it back on the stove and heat gently without too much stirring. Add ammonia, borax and citronella just before pouring in the mold. Cover the

molds with an old blanket or quilt and leave in a warm place for 24 to 48 hours. Unmold and allow to cure.

Hard White Soap (2-Day Method)

15 lb. cracklings or fat scraps

4 gal. cold water

39 oz. lye

Dissolve lye in 2 gallons of water and allow to stand an hour or more. Place on the stove and add cracklings or fat scraps. Boil until every scrap is dissolved. Add 2 gallons of water, small amounts at a time to blend well and to prevent the soap mixture from boiling over. Leave to settle until the next day. Skim solid substance from the surface and place it in a clean kettle to boil about 2 hours. Discard the dark lye solution. Add boiling water slowly until soap becomes the consistency of strained honey. When dropped from a spoon, it should be hairy and stringy. If too much water is added, boiling will need to be prolonged. Pour into molds. Cover while cooling. Afterwards, remove the soap from the mold and allow to cure.

Crackling Soap (Cold Process)

4 lb. cracklings (pressed or unpressed)

1 tbsp. lye (for unpressed cracklings) *or* 1 tsp. lye (for pressed cracklings)

Crush or grind the unpressed cracklings. Cover the cracklings to twice their depth with water. Add the lye. Cover and boil 1 hour. Remove from fire and when boiling ceases add 1 quart of cold water for each gallon of liquid. Let stand until cool. Skim fat from surface and follow recipe below, or follow the recipe printed on the lye can.

1 qt. cold water 13 oz. lye 3 tbsp. Borax (optional)

6 lb. clean fat (Three lb. fat removed from cracklings and 3 lb. pure fat may be used more successfully than 6 lb. crackling fat.)

TYPE OF FAT	TEMPERATURE OF MELTED FAT	TEMPERATURE OF LYE SOLUTION
SWEET LARD OR OTHER SOFT FATS INCLUDING FATS REMOVED FROM CRACKLINGS	80° - 85° F.	70° - 75° F.
SOFT, RANCID FAT	97° -100° F.	75° - 80° F.
LARD AND TALLOW	100° -110° F.	85° F. +
TALLOW	120° -130° F.	90° - 95° F.

Dissolve the lye in cold water. Allow to cool to temperature listed in chart (about 1 to 1 1/2 hours). Melt the fat and cool to proper temperature listed in chart. When fat begins to solidify and when a track is formed by running a spoon through the surface, it has reached approximately the right temperature. Pour the lye slowly into the fat, stirring slowly and evenly. Add borax. Continue stirring until the mixture is firm enough to hold its shape, perhaps 20 or 30 minutes. Allow to set in mold 24 hours. Unmold and leave to cure.

One-bar Soap

1 cup clean, melted fat*
1/2 cup water
2 tbsp. lye

Dissolve lye in water in an enamel pan or bowl. Allow to cool. Add slowly the fat which is cool but soft. Stir constantly. Then beat with an egg beater until the mixture is like honey or cream. Pour into a small mold to set. Later, unmold and let cure.

White Soap (from Rancid Fats or Other Inferior Fats)

Dissolve 13 ounces of lye in 2 quarts of water. When all lumps have dissolved, let cool. Pour the cooled lye slowly into 5 pounds of warm fat. Stir continuously until the lye has been added and the mass is pasty. Then heat slowly until the mass is boiling slowly. Let boil until it is clear and there is no sign of fat. The hot soap will flake off a paddle at this time. Add salt slowly to the boiling mixture until the soap gathers and rises to the top. Let cool and lift soap out of the container, discarding the dark liquid. Then pour the soap in the kettle with 2 quarts of water and heat slowly until the soap has dissolved and the mixture is boiling slowly. The surface will appear wrinkled. Then pour into a container with straight sides and the top wider than the bottom. Keep hot, but not boiling, overnight so it will not harden and the impurities can settle to the bottom. Then cool until the soap becomes firm. Dump out of the container and cut off the black layers of impurities. The white upper layer can be sliced into bars and set aside to age. The black soap can be used for scouring or reworked with another batch and purified. The white soap can be used for any purpose.

* Note: To free bacon drippings or other meat fryings from salt and foreign substances, add 1 quart cold water to 1 quart grease. Bring to boiling point. Remove from fire. Stir well and add 1 pint of cold water. Allow to get cold and then remove fat from top and discard water and settlings. If fat is very salty or dirty, this process may be repeated several times.

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