

How to Make Lye Soap

Collector: Marie Marshall

Contributor: Rosalie Cabot

Marie Marshall:

I'm here at Rosalie Cabot's house today, she's going to do a story for me on how to make lye soap. What her mother use to make all the time. Okay Rosalie, go ahead please.

Rosalie Cabot:

I can remember watching my mom, being down the stage dipping off cod oil from ah.... from the cod.... from the cod from the liver and she was dipping it off and put it in a container, she'd bring it up to the house and she'd put it on she'd put it in a big container and she put a can of gillet's lye in with it and she'd stir it up and then again... she'd put it over night, I 'spose. In the cold overnight and then she'd cut it up in blocks and we'd scrub our floor with that.

Marie Marshall:

Okay. Ah..... how old were you....when you helped at the soap the first time?

Rosalie Cabot:

I'd say I was around eleven years old.

Marie Marshall:

So you learnt from your mother?

Rosalie Cabot:

Oh yeah. And I scrubbed the floors with it too.

Marie Marshall:

Okay. And was that the only source of soap, that you can remember using.

Rosalie Cabot:

Yeah. But we use to ah... we use to wash the clothes with it too. And we use to ah.... take the lye, the ashes out of the stove and boil that and put our white tablecloth in with that and take the stains out of it.

Marie Marshall:

It was really good was it?

Rosalie Cabot:

Oh yes and then you get your clothes blue after that. And you put that in clothes blue, whiten it up and put it up on the bleach, we use to call it.

Marie Marshall:

Hmmm.. hmmm..

Rosalie Cabot:

Let it bleach out with ah.... with the sun. Take the make it right white then.

Marie Marshall:

So ah.... after you scrubbed your floor, what would you put on the floor then any mats or....

Rosalie Cabot:

No we use to go out and get the sand and heave over the floor.

Marie Marshall:

Really?

Rosalie Cabot:

Saturday, on Saturday and Sunday morning, you'd get up , you'd sweep all that up then and be just as white as that book.

Marie Marshall:

The floor would be really white?

Rosalie Cabot:

Yeah

Marie Marshall:

Very good.

Rosalie Cabot:

Yeah. Keep the dirt from missing up your floors.

Marie Marshall:

Well thank you very much for your interview.

Rosalie Cabot:

You're kindly welcome, my dear.

Marie Marshall:

And I'll call on you again later.

Rosalie Cabot:

Yeah.