

FARM NOTES.

The onions sold in glass jars are grown by sowing the seed in rows as thick as possible. The object is to prevent the onions from reaching large size. For an ordinary crop of large onions the seed is used sparingly.

Any mistake in selecting seeds may result in loss of crop, unless the seeds are ordered early, as it may be too late to repair any damage done later. Upon the seed depends the crop, for the yield, adaptability of variety to soil and requirements of each kind depend upon the seed being true to name.

Any plot of ground not required for a regular crop should be seeded to something that may be plowed under. Cow peas, millet, rape or even corn or oats will cover the ground with a mass of green materials, which may be turned under at any stage of growth. Sow anything that will cover the ground rather than leave it naked.

The application of fertilizers to strawberries should be made this month, as a warm spell may start the growth of the plants, at which stage it may do injury to apply concentrated fertilizers. On sandy soil the use of a mulch between the rows, to remain until the crop is picked, will not only protect against drought, but enable the plants to produce better fruit, which can also be picked with greater facility.

The farmer loses profit by not having breeds that mature early. It does not pay to simply keep an animal alive to eat grass in the spring. If a steer or hog can be forced into market in the shortest time, there will not only be a saving of the keep of the animal but also of labor. If a steer can be sent to market when 2 years old the food necessary to keep it until 3 years old will destroy the profit. Time is money in raising live stock.

Although for half a century the question of the improvement of stock has received attention from agricultural journals and leading breeders, the fact is that even in this twentieth century over three-fourths of the cattle in the United States are scrubs. The experiment stations have issued hundreds of bulletins giving results of experiments with the various breeds, but the farmers seem to hold fast to the inferior cattle.

The question of how to cut seed potatoes, or how to economize in the use of seed, has been discussed in giving results, and opinions differ. It is conceded, however, that whole potatoes, or large pieces, are better than small, but growers make the mistake of cutting the seed into small pieces to allow the pieces to plant more space, but where they save in the seed they may lose more than its value in reduced crop. Now that the period for planting potatoes is near it would be well for each farmer to test the matter for himself by cutting a quart or peck of seed into several sizes and compare the results.

Pansies are favorites with all who are partial to flowers. The object is to secure large blossoms, and a sheltered location, with very rich soil, is suitable. An old hot-bed is better than any other place in which to grow them. The seed may be sown now in a box placed in the window, transplanting the plants as soon as spring opens. Some sow the seed in September and cover the young plants, removing the covering in the spring. The blossoms should be picked every day, so should the plants begin to bear seed they will cease to produce flowers.

One of the gravest mistakes made by those who keep pure-bred fowls is the crossing of the breeds. It seems to be the general desire on the part of many to cross the breeds because of the supposition that the good qualities of two breeds may be combined in one. The fact is that the qualities of both breeds are destroyed. Nothing is gained when Leghorns and Bantams are crossed, as the hardness of the Bantam is sacrificed, as well as its size, while the prolificacy and non-setting quality of the Leghorns are obliterated. All breeds are the results of judicious crossing in the first place, and years are required to improve them. Those who cross their breeds soon find their yards containing only scrubs.

One of the principal advantages in the keeping of live stock on farms is the manure that is accumulated, and this manure is the actual profit as well as the savings bank of the farm. The farmer, however, gives more attention to the manure, portions that he does to the liquids; yet the value of the liquids is much greater than that of the solids. The farmer's Adroccate in a former edition, remarked, and with much truth, that it is poor consolation when the ammonia from the manure heap is falling on surrounding hills and wood lots that belong to some one else. In order to prevent such losses it is necessary to make provision against the leaking away of liquids, as well as the volatilization of gases due to fermentation in the manure heap.

WHEN TO SPREAD MANURE.

The farmer cannot conveniently spread his manure every day, as frequently other work will prevent, especially in summer, which is the season when fermentation is most liable to occur, but from fall to spring such work may be done whenever the land is in condition to permit the hauling. It has been demonstrated that the maximum benefit is secured when the manure is applied to the land in the fresh state, which allows the process of decomposition to occur in the soil. On some farms this is done by having the doors and passageways of the stable sufficiently wide to allow a team to be driven in and a sled or boat loaded daily and the manure hauled to the fields. When this cannot be done the manure should be kept in a solid heap and firmly trampled, as suggested. It may be urged as an objection that the seeds of weeds and grasses are thus returned to the soil, but such objection should not be considered as an important one, as the true policy of the farmer should be to cultivate well and grow clean crops. Another objection is that the fresh manure, with its coarse litter, will render it a little difficult to work the ground compared with clean land; also, that as the manure is fresh and unfermented there will not be a large proportion of first appearance above ground. As to such objections it may be mentioned that all litter should be fine, hence the manure will be fine, and that if the liquids are carefully saved and absorbed there will be ample soluble plant food at all stages of growth of crops.

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FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN.

A skirt may have a lace yoke when its poor bodice has none.

Many a lovely collar is but tucked mousseline, with the tucks forming a ruffe around the neck.

Bad circulation affects the hair. The scalp grows tight, and must be loosened. Spread the hands on either side of the head and gently move the scalp forward and backward ten times each day.

Dusty brushes make dusty hair. Brushes should be washed every few days with hot suds.

The hair and scalp should be as clean as the face. They should be shampooed once a fortnight.

A little shaved Castile soap (or any pure soap), with a good pinch of borax, in hot water, will keep the hair clean and bright.

Falling hair means falling health. A tonic for the body will be better than one for the head. Both at one time is better still.

Weak dry hair needs food. A mixture of vaseline and coconut oil is excellent. Almond oil is also recommended, for blonde hair especially.

Have the ends of the hair singed once in three months. Cutting the ends causes it to "bleed," while singeing closes the hair tubes perfectly.

Persons who eat much meat, or food that has iron in it, usually have good hair. Vegetarians are said to be scanty haired.

Never allow the hair to be wet long. Dry it quickly with warm towels, dry heat and friction. Every day give it a few minutes brushing. Then rub the scalp until it glows.

When preparing an outfit for an infant, let the keynote be simplicity. Let the materials be of the softest and finest quality that your purse will allow, but never over-load the garments with showy and cheap trimmings. One should stop to consider the cost of each garment, and if only a certain amount may be spent, by all means select the finest materials that may be had for that amount, let the decorations depend on the quality of the handwork.

A six-inch hem, daintily hemstitched, is by far more elegant in appearance than a deep flounce of coarse material and machine embroidery. Embroideries should never be selected for trimming the necks of dresses, slips and nightgowns. Lace is much daintier, and less expensive than embroideries, it gives a much richer appearance to the little garment.

For night ware, flannel should have an admixture of cotton. This prevents shrinking. The day skirts may also be made of cotton and wool flannel, but silk and wool makes a much handsomer skirt, and with a little care, will last for years. A good quality of silk and wool flannel may be had for eighty cents a yard in the yard-wide goods. Only a yard and a half is required for a skirt. This same quality of flannel may be used for making little sacques and shawls, and with a tiny hand embroidered scallop may be made to have a very dainty appearance. For nightgowns there is nothing better than a cambrie, and if well made these night dresses may take the place of slips for the first two months.

For the skirts, cambrie or soft finished lawn is best. Nainsook or a soft finished cambrie is always first choice for the little dresses, and will always look dainty if well laundered. Let the little shirts be of the softest finest wool, and the socks knitted of the finest wool. A crocheted sock is apt to be stiff and coarse, and one should bear in mind how soft and tender the flesh of a young infant is. When purchasing a pair of drawers for an outfit, purchase a piece of Valenciennes lace, which may be had for a very small sum.

With the sleeves and neck of each garment edged with this lace, there will be a touch of refinement to the plainest garments. Young mothers also often err in providing too great a number of garments. Buy a dozen dresses, some of night-dresses, three white skirts (two will do if great economy must be practiced), two cotton and wool skirts for night, and two for day wear, four flannel shirts, half a dozen pairs of socks, four silk and wool flannel sacques, rather than knitted or crocheted ones, as these, when washed, are poor-looking; but the flannel sacques may be washed a number of times without injury; four flannel hands, a flannel shawl, three dozen linen napkins, one or two double wrappers made either of flannel or of cotton goods, two quilted flannel spreads made of cheesecloth or finer material if desired.

This entire outfit may be purchased for twenty-five dollars, or even less, and will be amply sufficient for all the needs of an infant for six or seven months. When the infant reaches the age when its clothes should be shortened, it is best to cut the flannel skirts. Each skirt will make two skirts of the shortened wardrobe. The white skirts also make over advantageously.

Never use a cheap powder for an infant, use rather the best quality of cornstarch than a cheap scented powder. A fine soap is always necessary. Castile soap is now looked upon as too drying for the skin of an infant, and even in grown persons is apt in cold weather, to cause what are known as frost splits.

Ask your physician to give you all necessary advice in regard to the care of your infant, and then carefully follow his directions, especially in the matter of feeding the child. Infants are often spoiled by too much attention, and the less handling the infant receives for the first three or four months the better it is for the child.

Low crowned hats, whether pressed flat or made up of straw braids or platenus, will be the favorites of the spring. They will be in true "pancake" effects, with undulating roll brims that can be drawn or folded to meet the requirements of every use. Huge bunches of flowers, great chases of fancy ribbon or plain satin, will be used as garnitures for these hats.

A simple method of removing grease spots from silk or woolen materials requires nothing but a hot iron, a sheet of brown wrapping paper, and some powdered chalk. Cover the spot that is to be removed with a thick coating of chalk, then place the paper, and then put the hot iron on top. The iron must not be so warm as to burn the paper, and must remain in place until it becomes cool. Two applications are generally sufficient to remove the most obstinate of spots.

Your best choice for an everyday shirt waist with a black tailor suit is a pale blue flannel with a white embroidered figure in it. Get the silky quality. Flannel and mohair are exceedingly stylish for morning waists. Nothing has taken the place of the former.

Root Spraying.

Sub-irrigation of Fruit and Ornamental Trees.

At the recent meeting of the State Horticultural Society, held in Philadelphia, there was much able and exhaustive talk on the subject of spraying fruit, ornamental trees, shrubbery, etc., to destroy injurious insects, but I failed to hear a single argument in favor of root spraying. The farmers' institutes in the fruit growing sections of the State took up the subject, and all agreed "with one accord" that it is wise to spray the branches.

Admitting the necessity for spraying the limbs and foliage, to keep down the fruit destroyers, frequently this is not the whole cause of failure of crop. It may be found at the root of the tree. I have for many years contended that root spraying is highly essential, not only to obtain good fruit, but to save the tree, and whatever insect may be at the root this system will destroy. Where there is a lack of fertilizing material this would furnish it, or when a worm is suspected the use of an insecticide will not injure the tree and obviate the necessity of digging and scarifying the root with a knife, which oftentimes is more injurious than beneficial, and again in time of drought, what is more reasonable than using water and ammonia, thereby producing sufficient moisture to save the tree. Spraying of the root will certainly cause the growth of the tree to be doubled in one season, and the increase in quality and quantity should more than compensate for labor expended.

Growers frequently notice signs of diminishing vitality; in fact, this was the gist of argument at the meeting spoken of, and the tree doctors called it "blight" for want of a better name. Now what is blight? It is solely confined to the soil. It has been noticed that in an orchard some trees were termed "blighted" and the others standing beside them were full of vigor. Why? Because the vigorous trees were capable of extracting from the soil and atmosphere all that was necessary for their sustenance, thereby depriving the weaker stock from absorbing it; hence we may hear of "blight." You must give the weaker trees that which is necessary to their growth.

Vegetable nature is very much like human nature; it will steal from its neighbor—and in vegetable life we must give back to the tree that which has been taken from it. Lack of moisture may prevent bearing the following year. The full annual duty of a tree is to perfect its fruit, and prepare for next year's crop. A continuous moisture supply is necessary to maintain activity in the tree, as it will make a large draft upon soil moisture while making new wood and large fruit, and if moisture fails then it may be forced into dormancy before it can furnish good strong buds for the following year's bloom.

I believe root spraying to be thoroughly practicable, not only because the fact seems to have been neglected. The keynote to success is to supply the tree with fertilizer and moisture at the proper time. Some years ago in damming water for an ice pond I observed a leak. Investigation showed it followed the course of a root and found exit at the end. This convinced me that water could be artificially supplied to the roots by a spraying process with success.

A Changeable Lake.

Of Great Extent, But Varies Curiously in Size and Depth.

Lake George is situated about four miles from the railway station at Angersville, Australia, and has for many years engaged the attention of scientific men by reason of the singular and inexplicable phenomena connected with it. The estimates of its size vary considerably according to circumstances, but when moderately full about twenty by seven miles will be found tolerably correct. At either end the lake is from 100 feet above the highest recorded surface of the lake, which possesses no known outlet, although it is fed by numerous mountain creeks.

The lake was discovered by a bushman in 1820, and was known to the blacks as the "big water." It was then supposed to form the source of a river having its mouth on the south coast, but subsequent visitors were much perplexed at the manner in which the blacks avoided the lake, of which they appeared to entertain a superstitious dread. One aged aboriginal stating he had seen it all covered with trees; another explaining that the whole of the water sunk through the bottom and disappeared, while others remembered the lake only as a series of small ponds.

During the following twenty years considerable variations were noted in the depth and extent of the lake. In 1841 the lake became partially dried up, the moist portions being simply greasy swamps. A few months later large numbers of sheep were pastured in the bed of the lake, but fresh water had to be carried for the use of the shepherds, that of the lake being too salt for human consumption. The place remained more or less dry until 1852, the year of the great floods in that part of the colony, when its again became filled, with an average depth of nine feet. Since then the surface level of the lake has varied considerably, but the bed has never been so dry as in former years. There are indications that many hundreds of years ago the lake covered a far larger area than any yet recorded, remains of trees over a hundred years old being found in spots formerly under water. The saline character of the lake is the more remarkable by reason of its being fed by pure and sparkling fresh-water streams.

Watch for This Fakir.

A new fakir is abroad in the rural regions. He drives through the country and sells soap at five dollars a box, which sum includes the price of forty yards of carpet selected from samples which he has on the wagon. He takes the five dollars, leaves the box of soap, promises to deliver the carpet of the selected sample within a week and drives away. The soap is worth probably fifty cents. It stays with the purchaser. The carpet is worth probably fifteen dollars, but it stays with the fakir and has not been delivered to a single victim. Farm families should be on their guard against this new fakir and against all other fakirs.

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