

HOUSE AND FARM

Fertilizing Potatoes.

At the last meeting of the Doylestown (Bucks county) Farmer's Club, the question, "what is the best available fertilizer for potatoes?" was answered by Dr. Dickie. He said the potato was classed by agricultural chemists as a potash plant. The best fertilizer therefore is wood ashes, yet perhaps not the most available. The next best is a manure made from leaves, as these contain a large amount of potash. When manure can be had there is little need of seeking for any other fertilizer, and should be applied after the plants are through the ground. Fresh barn yard manure is not good for potatoes. His plan has been to manure heavily for corn, and to grow potatoes on the ground the following year. After preparing the ground in the spring he would use about 200 pounds of phuiue to the acre, applied in the row. If wood ashes could be obtained he would use this on potatoes after they were up. He would plant early. Mr. Trego had experimented with phuiue and other superphosphates on potatoes, and the result has been quite satisfactory. The quantity he had used was from 300 to 400 pounds to the acre, on ground that had been manured the previous season. He had found these fertilizers better than wood ashes for potatoes. Mr. Brower had not obtained satisfactory results from the use of wood ashes applied during the past season. Mr. Trego gave an account of some experiments made in Scotland in which sulphate of ammonia had been found highly beneficial to the growth of potatoes, but in which potash had not been shown to possess such qualities as are claimed for it as a fertilizer for this crop. Edward Rorer said that the best fertilizer he had found for potatoes was well rotted manure. Of the commercial fertilizers he had found phuiue was the best. He stated that Dr. Stavelly, of Solesbury, uses large quantities of wood ashes and regards it as the best fertilizer for his crop. Last year was an unfavorable season for testing manures. Wilson Malone preferred to plow the ground in the fall, and was not favorable to using fresh manure for potatoes. Dr. Dickie expressed his belief that the quality of the potatoes last season was injured by the heavy rains that fell before they were dug. Before that his potatoes were as good as at other seasons. P. J. Hawk said he had raised potatoes very successfully, and had used no other than stable manure. His observations as to the effect of the wet weather upon potatoes last season were similar to those of Mr. Dickie. The question as to what variety of potatoes is best adapted to this section was then taken up. Mr. Rorer had settled down upon two kinds—the Early Rose and the Peerless. They are both of good quality and productive. Mr. Malone thought we have no potato equal to the Early Rose, but he had heard the Peerless commended by most people who have raised them. Mr. Hawk had found the Peerless very satisfactory, but he would recommend the Early Rose and White Peachblow for planting. Dr. Dickie had not been able to find much difference in quality between the Early Rose and Peerless. He would recommend the planting of these two varieties. Matthew Gibney last year planted several varieties, and had found the Monitor the best and most productive, and he intended to plant the same kind the coming season. He had used bone dust and phuiue and could see no difference in their relative effects. Mr. Trego said he always planted some Peachblows. They are always good and last season was no exception. The Early Rose had deteriorated with him every year, and were poorer last season than ever. Dr. Dickie remarked that the market gardeners in some parts of New Jersey are discarding the Early Rose. A. H. Barber said he still adhered to the Mercer. Last year he had a fine crop of smooth good-sized potatoes, and now they are the best kind for table use he has. Mr. Trego suggested the propriety of the members clubbing together and procuring a quantity of seed potatoes from some

distant locality. The members were generally agreed that fair, good-sized potatoes are the best for planting. In reply to an inquiry as to the best time for planting it was agreed on all hands that they should be put into the ground just as soon as the weather and the nature of the soil will allow.

Fruit Trees.

It is truly wonderful how many fruit trees are planted, compared with the few which grow to perfection, and mostly for want of proper preparation of the soil, and careful treatment. It would be far better to plant a few trees only, and well, than to stud the ground with many trees, ill treated, which are sure to be an eye-sore rather than a pleasure, or a profit. A tree needs proper food and training as well as an animal. It cannot thrive if stuck in a little hole in an unsuitable soil. The roots must have room to strike in a well prepared soil, and the tree must be well pruned, and protected from the ravages of insects as well as from the attacks of cattle, otherwise it would be impossible to have trees pleasing to the sight, or profitable to the grower. In fact it is useless, and a waste of labor, to plant trees without providing for the necessary conditions of their growth. Practice has well established the fact that it would be far better to plant a few trees only, and to care them well, than to plant many trees and treat them ill. A lot of straggling, starved, stunted, wild-looking, bark-broke, insect-eaten, non-bearing, grass-bound fruit trees do not speak well for the thrift and intelligence of the owner. Such an owner will have planted for his heirs rather than himself, but even they will not have much worth of his memory. What a contrast between such an orchard and one in the full vigor of health and fruitage. The one looks wretched; the other gives pleasure and profit, so that it may be said of the orchard as well as of anything else, that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well.

How to Manage a Farm.

The farmer who owns but little stock and keeps it fat, is richer than he who, owning much, allows it to waste and become poor in the endeavor to keep more than his farm can carry. Much of the thrift and order about the farm lies with the children. However much the parents may strive, if the children are not interested in preserving order, if they have not constantly before them incentives to do so, one little dereliction will follow another, until in the end disorder will prevail, the farm will begin to run down, and it will be found that it costs more to bring it back twice told than it would to have kept it intact at first. Whenever you are through with a tool or implement for the season, put it away in a secure place. The objection sometimes made that it takes so much room for storage, is not valid. There is on every farm plenty of loft room for the lighter tools, and many ways will suggest themselves for raising comparatively heavy ones, as plows and harrows, and a little time spent at the right time will be money in the end. Even mowers, harvesters, and threshing machines occupy but little room, if properly taken apart, and the exercise of doing so and putting them together again often gives valuable lessons in mechanics, and renders the operator thoroughly conversant with the workings of the machine itself. There is more in the care of little things than most people imagine, for if these are thoroughly looked after greater ones are not apt to suffer.

Desirable Qualities in a Pig. Of all the desirable qualities in a pig, a vigorous appetite is of the first importance. A hog that will not eat is of no more use than a mill that will not grind. And it is undoubtedly true that the more a pig will eat in proportion to size, provided he can digest and assimilate it, the more profitable he will prove. The next desirable quality is, perhaps quietness of disposition. The blood is derived from the food, and flesh is derived from the blood. Animal force is derived from the transformation of flesh. The more of this in unnecessary motions, the greater the demand on the stomach, and the more food will then be re-

quired merely to sustain the vital functions—and the more frequently flesh is transformed and formed again, the tougher and less palatable it becomes.

This quality, quietness of disposition, combined with a small amount of useless parts of meat, has been the aim of all modern breeders. Its importance will readily be perceived if we assume that seventy-five per cent of food is ordinarily consumed to support the vital functions, and that the slight additional demand of only one-sixth more food, is required for the extra offal parts and unnecessary activity. Such a coarse, restless animal would gain in flesh and fat in proportion to the food consumed, only half as fast as the quiet, refined animal. To assume that a rough, coarse, savage, ill-bred mongrel hog will require only one-sixth more food than a quiet, refined, well bred Berkshire, Essex, or Suffolk, is not extravagant.

A Discovery About Corn.

In this thinking and observant age new ideas and discoveries are constantly being made known, many of which, if true, are never heard after, while others pass into the treasury of established fact, when their merit has been proven. We have just met with the following paragraph in an exchange: "An intelligent and reliable farmer, who has for many years been making experiments with corn, has discovered an importance and value in replanted corn which is quite novel and worthy of publication. We have always thought replanted corn was of no consequence; he replants whether it is needed or not—or rather he plants two or three weeks after crops are planted, about every eighth row each way. He says if the weather becomes dry during the filling time, the silk and tassel does not recover. Thus, for want of pollen, the new silk is unable to fill the office for which it was designed. The pollen from the replanted corn is then ready to supply the silk, and the filling is completed. He says nearly all the abortive ears, so common to the corn crop, are caused by the want of pollen, and that he has known ears to double their size in the second filling."

Sawdust for Stables.

A correspondent of the London Field says: I litter the horses on it to a depth of nine inches, raking off the damp and soiled surface every morning, and spreading evenly a little fresh, removing the whole four or five times a year. Its advantages appear to be many, of which I will state a few which give it, in my estimation, its greatest superiority over straw. It is much cleaner, and more easily arranged; and, of course, much cheaper at first cost, making, in the end, excellent manure. It is peculiarly beneficial to the feet, affording them a cool, porous stuffing, a substitute for the soil of earth we always find in the hoofs of a horse at grass, and presents the nearest resemblance to a horse's natural footing—the earth. We never had a diseased foot since the introduction of sawdust in the stable, now some years since. Horses bedded on sawdust are freer from dust and stain than when in ordinary litter; simply because sawdust is a better absorbent, perhaps, and testifies their approval of it by frequently lying down for hours in the day. It has also the recommendation of being uncleanable, an advantage which all in charge of horses with the habit of eating their litter will admit.

The Curculio.

Roger H. Kirk, of Pleasant Grove, Lancaster county, one of our most observant farmers, who has tried the experiment, says that the pre-treatment while the plum trees are in blossom, is the proper season to apply fish oil to kill the curculio, the great enemy of the plum. About a pint poured around the roots of each tree is sufficient. Mr. Kirk, by this practice has succeeded in raising abundant crops of this fine fruit. Let all who have plum trees try this experiment at once.

Good Biscuit.—One quart of flour, one tablespoonful baking powder, butter the size of a walnut; use water; don't mix stiff; bake quick.

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