

FARM AND GARDEN

ASPARAGUS CULTURE.

The following is part of a paper read by Edward Y. Teas, of Centerville, at a recent meeting of the Wayne County Horticultural Society: I consider asparagus the most delicious product of the garden, as well as the most healthful, least understood and most neglected.

My first attempt to make an asparagus bed was more than fifty years ago; to be exact, in 1853. We dug a trench three feet deep. In the bottom of this we laid boulders about a foot deep and then filled in with soil and manure and in this planted the roots. In spite of this labor and expense, we had in due season asparagus for our table. In later years I have planted asparagus seeds to raise plants in the nursery for the general nursery trade, and I find plants that are grown by planting the seed, like you would beets or beans, yield quite a cutting of young shoots the second year from seed, and thereafter, good enough for all practical purposes. If the plants do not stand too thick in the row the yield will be satisfactory for twenty years or more.

Rich soil is essential to the production of fancy stem, and that the plant should be a reasonable distance apart for the proper development of each. If I were making a permanent bed in the family garden, I would have the rows two feet apart and the plants one foot apart in the row, setting the crown of the plant about three inches deep. Cultivate the same as you would other garden stuff the first year. In November remove all the tops and cover the bed with an inch or two of stable manure, this to be lightly forked under the following spring. After this, little cultivation is required, only to destroy the weeds as they appear. An occasional mulch of manure is desirable, but not every year.

Mr. Conover, an enterprising gardener of Long Island, planted a field to asparagus some years ago, setting the plants four feet apart each way, cultivating with a horse. The result was that he astonished New York markets with shoots, or grass as it is termed, of such extraordinary size as to command fabulous prices. Mr. Conover sold the seed and roots from his famous garden at Conover's Colossal, and this for a dozen years was leading variety. Since that time, others have obtained shoots of extra size, by careful cultivation, and now we have Palmetto, Barr's Mammoth, and Columbian White Mammoth, the latter of a decidedly light shade of green. All these are good, the size depending largely on soil and cultivation.

I would not advise any cutting the first year. Some may be taken off the second year. In cutting over a bed or row I aim to cut every stalk, thinning out the inferior ones so the bed is smooth and clean as far as I go. We usually begin cutting the last of April, and continue until the middle of July. This allows the plants to make considerable growth the latter part of the summer, and recuperate so as to be ready for the next spring's work.

Our first cutting of asparagus this year was on April 4th, and we expect to have a supply for at least four months, from our rows of two year old plants.—Indiana Farmer.

POPULAR TOULOUSE GEES.

By far the most popular of the varieties of geese is the Toulouse, and is a very rapid grower and reaches a large size.

The standard weights are twenty pounds for full-grown ganders and eighteen pounds for females, but even this weight is often exceeded. The color is gray—in some strains a light gray, other darker, the under parts and fluff white, bill and legs reddish orange.

As layers the Toulouse rank medium, being rather less prolific than the African, but more so than the Emden. The season's output is from twenty to forty eggs per bird, geese two or three years old laying more than very young geese.

Their disposition is quiet and they are less troublesome to care for than some other breeds and will get along very well in a field without much water. A cross of the Emden and Toulouse has been pronounced the best all-round cross for general market purposes for both early and late markets and for the production of large geese for the holiday markets. The cross breeds are large, rapid-growing and make a good-looking carcass. Geese are generally considered more profitable than duck, although only a small number can be kept, because they require wider range, but when provided with sufficient pasture they require little attention, and will secure a good part of their living if they have access to marshy lands or small stream. Sometimes they begin to lay as early as January, but usually not to any extent until March. At nesting time they should be provided with barrels containing straw or hay, so that they will nest where they can be kept in sight. The first litter may be taken away and hatched under hens or by incubator, after which the goose will lay another lit-

ter. Breeders usually keep the geese laying as long as possible, hatching most of the eggs with hen. The eggs hatch in thirty days, and a goose of average size will cover about fifteen. For the first few days they are liable to be chilled, but after the first week they are more hardy and require little care.

The usual plan is to confine them in small pens or yards which can be moved to fresh grass every day, because they require considerable pasture. Besides the grass or clover, they are fed on a mixture of Indian meal and shorts mixed with water but squeezed almost entirely dry before feeding. When three or four weeks old, they should be given wide range, but within an enclosure. When fattening, they are confined, and fed a mixture of ground grains with beef scraps, gradually increasing the proportion of corn meal and beef scraps until the food is about ten per cent. beef scraps and ninety per cent. meal. Toulouse geese reach a weight of ten pounds at ten weeks of age, and as a rule are sold more profitably at that weight as green geese. The market for these begins in June and lasts until March.—G. B. F. in Massachusetts Ploughman.

MARK THE BROODING HENS.

Where one keeps the one breed of hens, there is difficulty in distinguishing one sitting hen from another, so if they exchange nests the way to tell is a great help. If one is supplied with numbered leg bands and will put the number on a card with the date of sitting, and tack the card in a conspicuous place, on or near the sitting hen, the difficulty is overcome with but little trouble, but all are not possessed of them.

Different colored strings tied around the leg, would serve the same purpose. Of course no long ends will be left. Make the cord something like this.

April 10th red—if the hen is set on the tenth of April and has a red string on her leg.

This all necessitates lifting the hen, with perhaps disturbance of the eggs; some otherwise gentle hens, resent being lifted, a dab with a paint brush will do the work; but one must have several sorts of paint, or else touch plainly on paper or cardboard, back of the comb, another on back, one on left wing, one on right and so forth; this touch of paint will not injure or inconvenience any of the hens or anything, and will last until the brooding season is over.

Whatever mark is decided upon, whether string, paint, leg band or even clipping certain feathers, be very sure to mark the distinguishing touch plainly on paper or cardboard, and tack securely on or near the sitting place. You may be sure to remember just where each hen belongs, but it may happen that some one else will need to see after the sitters some day; then there might be trouble.

Keepers of pure breeds have trouble that the keepers of "all sorts and some mixed" have no idea of, but these very troubles teach us to be careful and methodical. By a look at the card anyone can tell when the chicks are due, and whether the right hen is on the right nest.

To be really sure, it is best to have the nests numbered, and the nest number, together with date and distinguishing mark, written in a book kept in a safe place; so should a card be destroyed, you would yet know.—E. C. in Indiana Farmer.

SCOURS IN HORSES.

In nine cases out of ten the cause of scours in horses is due to improper feeding, and while the trouble is a bad one to deal with at any time, it is especially bad at a season when considerable hard work is expected of the horse. Some horses are given to scouring easily, and when such is the case, care must be used not to furnish much feed that is laxative in character, and also to feed more largely of concentrated foods than of roughage.

A horse that scours and is doing a hard day's work should have whole oats mixed with a small quantity of bran as the main grain food, and the morning food should be whole hay, all that he will eat in half an hour, then what water he wants within reason, and then the grain making the ration the quantity experience has shown is proper for the particular animal. The same feed should be given at noon and at night, but the quantity of water may be increased at night. In working a horse liable to attacks of scours, begin the day with him in an easy manner, and for the first two or three hours do not push him. Handled in this manner he will probably go through the rest of the day in good shape, and do a fair day's work. Such horses should be well groomed after a day of work to keep up the circulation of the skin, and the bedding should be clean and plentiful.—Indianapolis News.

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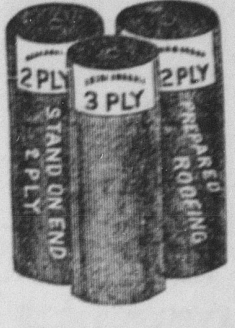
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In Haunts of Elephants

"In certain regions of Africa," writes an old hunter, "elephants are still numerous. This is particularly the case in the country lying between the Victoria and Albert lakes, which is very hilly and covered by much forest. Their tracks are visible everywhere, although they themselves are but rarely seen. The damage done by elephants to these forests is incredible. I have more than once come upon spots where these huge beasts would appear to have held a kind of elephant carnival, apparently for no other purpose than that of wanton destruction. A large area covering many acres would be completely stripped of trees, nothing but jagged stumps sticking up a few feet from the ground, remaining of what had once been thick forest. Masses of large trees would be uprooted and hurled about in every direction, many of them being tossed bodily to a long distance from their original position. In many cases the entire foliage would remain intact, showing plainly that food could not have been the primary object of this wholesale destruction.

"Elephants are but rarely seen in the forest, however numerous they may be. This is due to many causes. In the first place, they are naturally extremely shy animals and detest the neighborhood of man. In the second place they are largely nocturnal feeders, and rarely drink or bathe except at night. They often travel immense distances to and from the water and retire during the day to the remotest portions of the forest, where they doze away the long, hot hours under the shade of trees that they can find. Lastly, their scent is extremely keen.

"This sense is so largely developed that they can recognize danger at a very long distance and as soon as the alarm is given they move quickly but noiselessly away. As an elephant disturbed or frightened will frequently travel twenty or thirty miles without a stop, and as his pace under such circumstances is a good five miles an hour, it is easy to understand that travelers in the forest, although often coming upon absolutely fresh tracks, but seldom see the herd that has caused them."

Webster and the Brandy

Mr. Webster's fondness for brandy gave one of his important clients a very bad twenty-four hours. He was called to Philadelphia to defend the Goodyear rubber patents and the head of the firm met him at the station. When they had entered the carriage he at once turned to Mr. Webster and referred to one feature of the evidence to be presented in the trial the following day.

"I speak of it, Mr. Webster," he said, "as it has a peculiarly important bearing on the case, and I thought you might not have understood its significance."

Mr. Webster, who was looking dreamily out of the carriage window, was recalled to a consciousness of his client's presence. He yawned and, settling back against the cushions, remarked:

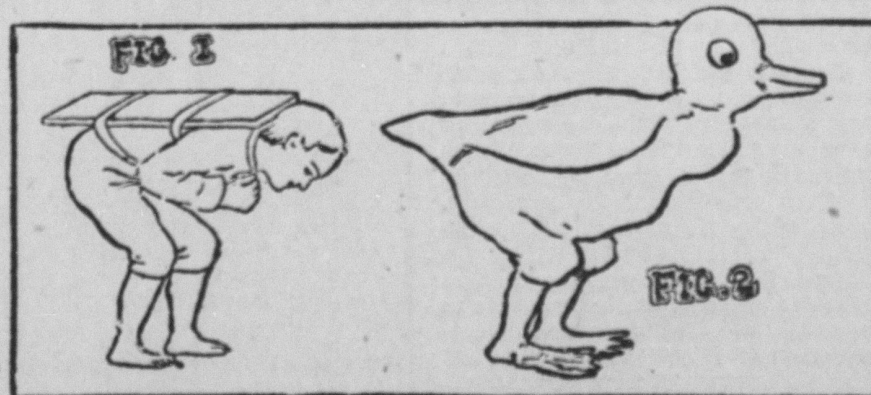
"I've always hoped I might some day come to Philadelphia, because I've been told that there is no place in the United States where they serve finer brandy. When I came away from Boston I said to some of my friends: 'Boys, I'm going to find out

about that Philadelphia brandy and if I find that it really is the best I shall have made a useful trip.'

Several times Mr. Goodyear tried to draw his distinguished attorney's attention to the particular point at issue, but he never seemed to take the slightest interest in it. The brandy of Philadelphia was apparently the only topic which interested him and he always returned to it.

Mr. Goodyear left him somewhat brusquely at his hotel. When he returned to his office his story was anything but inspiring. "We've got a man who is supposed to be the greatest lawyer in the United States and the only subject in which he takes any interest is Philadelphia brandy!" That night, though, Mr. Webster worked in his room until after 2 o'clock, occasionally walking the floor and marshaling his case into battle array. His plea the next day was one of his most impressive utterances in its power and logic, and the case, involving hundreds of thousands of dollars, was given to the Goodyears.—Harper's Weekly.

TALKING WACKADILLO



The principal ingredients of the Great Talking Duck, Billed Wackadillo are very easy to assemble. First, there is the skeleton shown in Fig. 1. This consists of any medium-sized small boy with a backbone in the shape of a wide board strapped or tied securely to his back.

Then pile on and stuff around it small pillows, wadding and rags, to help fill out the body, which is now incased in a sheet wrapped and pinned about the boy, and the board, as in Fig. 2.

Now make a large ball of rags, with two flat pieces of wood fastened upon it for a bill. Paint eyes on either side with black ink or colors. Pin the head firmly on the body. Then make the webbed feet from an old pair of leather driving gloves. If you cannot procure them, stout brown wrapping paper can be used instead.

If you've carried out these directions carefully, and look, or have made your friend look, like Fig. 2, the great Duck-Billed Wackadillo is now a reality and is ready to perform in any manner, from a dance to a lecture on his prehistoric ancestors, of which he is the only up-to-date specimen in existence. Whatever he does is sure to be a delight and joy to his admiring audience.

Raising Minks for Their Fur. Charles Ellic: of East Barnet, Vt., has a scheme to raise mink for the fur. He believes in his idea and has placed at old hen house on the banks of the river as a start in the business. Woven wire will keep the animals where he can find them and a part of the stream thus fenced off will give them the water required.

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