

FARM AND GARDEN.



Talk about Potato Planting. Joseph Harris, author of "Walks and Talks on the Farm," gives a long and useful "Talk" on Growing Potatoes in the American Agriculturist for March 1st, from which we extract the following:

Last year I planted 13 acres of potatoes of different varieties, including Early Rose, Early Vermont, Snowflake, Brown's Beauty, Compton's Surprise, Genesee King, Jones No. 4, and Thorburn's Late Rose. And the Deacon in the adjoining field planted Peachblow, Peerless, and Late Rose. He had a fair crop of Late Rose, but the Peachblow and Peerless were hardly worth digging.

In my field the Late Rose gave the largest yield, but the Early Vermont, on the whole, was the most satisfactory crop. The potatoes were more uniform in size. We had three acres, yielding 120 bushels per acre. The Late Rose had not come to maturity, when the drouth and the second crop of bugs struck them, and consequently we had a great many small potatoes. Snowflake did tolerably well, but not as well as the Vermonts. But it is not worth while talking about the varieties that did well last year. It was an exceptionally bad season. As a rule, the only good potatoes we had were the earliest varieties—and this simply because they had nearly got their growth, before they were seriously injured by the drouth and the bugs. The Early Vermont, planted side by side with the Early Rose on the same day, came up earlier, and made a more vigorous growth. The plants were stronger, larger, and more robust. I do not attribute this wholly to the variety. The Early Rose has been grown on this farm for several years, without a change of seed. The Vermonts are comparatively new. Had we got Early Rose from a distance, instead of planting our home-grown seed, the plants might have been as vigorous as those of the Early Vermont.

"It is not clear to my mind," said the Doctor, "that a mere change of seed is so important. I know that the New Jersey potato-growers often send here for their seed, and we sometimes send to New Jersey for our seed; but I have never yet seen any positive evidence that anything is gained by it. And then," continued the Doctor, "one farmer thinks it very important to plant large potatoes, another thinks small ones just as good—and the results of careful experiments are quoted to sustain both opinions."

"The thing is certain," said the Deacon, "we shall have to plant small potatoes this year. The spring of 1875 potatoes were scarce and high, and a great many small potatoes were planted—one not larger than a marble—and yet we never had such a good potato crop. The next spring potatoes were not worth marketing, and we planted the best and largest—and never had a worse crop. And so it is evident that the character of the season has more to do with the results, than the size of the seed."

The best crop of potatoes I ever raised on this farm happened to be from small seed. But it was a bit of prime light land, in high condition. The root of the plant penetrated into the fine, mellow soil, and needed little nutriment from the seed.

Shall we plant in rows or in hills; shall we plant small seed or large; shall we cut the potatoes or plant whole; shall we cut the sets from the top or bottom, or middle of the potato; shall we cut the potatoes a few days before planting, and sprinkle lime on them; shall we plant one or two sets in a hill; shall we plant deep or shallow; shall we earth up, or shall we cultivate on the flat?

To all these, and a dozen other questions which are frequently asked, I answer: "Do as you have done, or change if you feel like it, but whatever else you do, or leave undone, make the land dry, rich, mellow, and clean. If you cannot do it this year, make up your mind to do it next year, and begin to prepare for it now. Farmers must look ahead. We must keep our land rich enough to grow a fair crop in an unfavorable season. We shall have high prices, and low prices, in the future as in the past—and the man who will make money by potatoes will be those who take the most pains to keep up and increase the fertility of their farms."

CROSSING POULTRY.—"Subscriber," N. Y. The crossing of breeds must be done with judgment, else no good is likely to come of it. To cross the Houdan on the White Leghorn, for instance, can scarcely have any good result, as they are both non-sitters, and the cross can not be any improvement on either of them. Such a cross seems to be purposeless, and is therefore not a judicious one. There should be a distinct purpose aimed at in crossing. For instance, a hardy fowl, but a poor layer, might be crossed on a tender one that is prolific, with the prospect of getting a hardy layer. Occasionally fowls are improved by crossing, and then slow breeding, as the Plymouth Rocks, which are a cross-bred race originally, but far off from being pulled. A new breed that is of value, is produced but once in many years.—From the American Agriculturist for March 1.

A German contemporary advocates the glazing of the interior of butter tubs as a means of preventing the possibility of their contents becoming tainted by contact with the new wood of which they are often made.

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