

## Farmer's Department.

### Sowing and Covering Garden Seeds.

Mr. William Chilton remarks as follows upon this subject, in the *Horticulturalist*: "I would protest against that everlasting use of the rake in the garden, which some men are so guilty of. To cover seeds which are sown in drills, commence at the end, go along with a foot on each side, turn the heels inward and the toes outward; rub the feet lightly on the surface, and see how nicely the soil, pulverized in this way, will fall into the drill, and how evenly the seeds will be covered. This is far better than drawing the rougher, and often, through bad spade work, hard lumps, upon delicate seed, part of which are prevented from rising above ground, and others are left exposed to the atmosphere and drying winds. Thus many an honest seedman is very unjustly blamed for sowing bad seeds, when the fault has been in his ignorant procedure."

The following plan is highly spoken of, and may be found by some to work better than the above:

A correspondent, who has considerable clay in the soil of his garden, and who has found it difficult to get his seeds covered as they should be, has for some years resorted to the practice of wheeling several barrowfuls of well dried and finely pulverized muck into a place in his garden where he can conveniently shelter it, and of filling up every drill, after sowing seeds with some of this material, carried round in an old ash pail. Sometimes, when a brush pile or log-heap has been burned at a short distance, he has scraped up a barrowful or so of the top soil in such a place, as he thereby obtains a soil which contains no weed seeds, and which is easily pulverized. With one or other of these substances he fills the drills after he has sown his seeds, and draws on in addition a little of the natural soil or not, according to circumstances. In this way he obtains, he says, a seed-bed and a seed-covering which, by being pressed down with the hand or the foot, or with the back of a rake, hoe, or spade, will be sufficiently compact, and at the same time easily penetrated by the roots, or pushed aside by the crown of the young plant. The dark color of the muck, or burnt soil and muck, makes them absorb the heat of the sun's rays more effectually than the natural soil would do, and thus hastens the germination and growth of the seeds.

This practice, though somewhat troublesome has been adhered to very cheerfully, as our correspondent informs us, as he considers the advantages just mentioned, with some minor ones, amply sufficient to compensate him for his trouble, even when he goes his length in "particularism," of taking a board as long as his seed-beds are wide, and of getting down upon it on his knees, so as to allow him to fix the sowing and filling up of each drill by hand exactly as he may wish it. His weight upon the board is usually sufficient to press the soil upon the seeds as closely as is desirable.—*Country Gentleman, May 6.*

**HOW TO DESTROY CATERPILLARS ON TREES.**—Having observed several methods of destroying the caterpillars that infest apple trees in the spring such as rubbing them off, burning with shavings, cotton and turpentine, &c., I am induced to give you the simple and perfectly effectual method practised here. Take common soft soap and thin it with water so that it will slip off the brush, and a person may stand upon the ground and apply it to the nests with a common painter's brush, inserted in a hole bored through one end of a long strip sawed from a pine or other light board, and all that it touches it will instantly kill. If applied while the nests are small, very few will escape the first application. After the worms are larger, it is equally efficacious, but much more difficult to apply thoroughly.

Any thin oil or oil mixed with the spirits of turpentine, is equally destructive to the worms but the soap is less injurious to the trees.—*S. L. Manchester, Ct., Country Gentleman.*

**MANAGEMENT OF YOUNG TREES IN SUMMER.**—One reason, undoubtedly, why many trees fail the first season after transplanting is, that their roots were not matted on being sent out from the nursery. Every nurseryman should keep a barrel or pail of mud, in constant readiness for coating over the roots of trees which are to be moved any distance, and are in danger of becoming dry in the transportation. This coating not only preserves the moisture of the roots while out of the ground, but also helps to form an immediate contact between the soil and the roots when they are set out. Where this mudding or "pudding" has been neglected, it is important, in planting, to press the fine soil among all the fibres, and to fill up every cavity. Indeed, this should always be done. It is not enough to shovel in the dirt over the roots and tread it down with the foot. Get down on your knees, and work the soil into every interstice with your fingers. Are you too rheumatic, or have you too stiff a back-bone for such work? Then bring a pail of water and dash it on the roots when the hole is about half-filled, to wash in the earth, and then put in the rest of the soil.

But it sometimes happens that trees, however well planted, suffer from drought in summer. Watering them is only a temporary relief, and it often does as much harm as good. Thrown upon the top of the ground, only a little penetrates to the roots, and the surface soon becomes baked into a hard crust, which no moderate rain nor any dew can soften. If watering is resorted to—and it is sometimes necessary—the surface soil should be removed with a hoe, and a pail or half a pail of water poured into the cavity at the end of the roots, and then the top soil returned to its place.

The roots are thereby refreshed, and the earth above them is kept mellow. But instead of repeating such waterings, we should mulch the soil around each tree with tan-bark or sawdust or leaves, with a few stones to keep them in place. The straw portion of the manure-heap is a good mulch, imparting richness about the roots as the rain washes in the manure. Be sure that the mulching extends as far as the extremities of the roots. A good cultivator once said that, in his experience, "the best mulch was a long-pronged fork, by which he kept the soil about his trees clean and mellow. Perhaps he was right; but most farmers cannot find time to cultivate their trees so carefully; and for such, a good mulch, such as we have mentioned, is the best thing they can do.

"Keep your dog away from me," said a village dandy to a farmer's boy. "I can't replied the boy, "for he is always running after puppies!"

Pride arises from self-ignorance.

## Miscellaneous.

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