

The Bloomfield Times.

Tuesday, September 8, 1874.

FARM AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

We invite communications from all persons who are interested in matters properly belonging to this department.

Top Dressing Grass Lands.

The success or failure of farming operations depends largely upon the mode and time of applying manure. No matter how applied, manure never fails to benefit the soil, and rarely fails to benefit the growing crop. But it may be used so that it will do comparatively little good either to soil or crop. In this section most of the rotted manure from barnyards in the Fall is used as top-dressing on wheat. The "patchy" appearance of top-dressed wheat, however, results from an attempt to make a small quantity of manure produce a crop on poor soil. To have the best effect on wheat, manure should be applied on the surface some time before sowing, and thoroughly incorporated with the surface soil by frequent harrowing. But the best farmers in this section apply manure as a top-dressing for grass lands and young clover. To produce its best effect clover should have as large a growth as possible. In a large growth the long top roots strike down deeper, and not only loosen the subsoil, but bring up fertilizing mineral elements that have leached down during years of shallow culture. Even if the clover be cut for hay the extra growth of roots leaves the land much richer than if no manure were used, and the entire crop ploughed under. A good plan is to apply all the finer and well-rotted portions of the manure to the young clover of this year's seeding. This will be washed down among the roots by Winter snows and Spring rains, and give the clover an early and vigorous start next season. Manures are much more apt to wash away on wheat fields than on clover, especially if the wheat has a small growth. This is one point which our able correspondent, Mr. Geddes, did not mention in his recent advice to young farmers to top-dress wheat. While I agree that top-dressing wheat is generally beneficial, I think it still better to use the same amount of manure on clover. There is a temptation to apply the manure directly to wheat, for that is a crop which brings the money most readily. But if the land can be most benefited and after crops largely increased by top-dressing clover, that is the best policy. It is rare that several loads of "scrapings" cannot be found at this season in barnyards. These should be drawn and spread on young clover. Even good rich soil from the roadside will pay to draw, if not too far. The droppings of cattle and horses should also be knocked to pieces in clover and other pasture fields. There is great advantage in this, even if the field is to be plowed next Summer. Gypsum (or plaster) should always be sown on surface manure land. It is a specific manure for clover, and though not always uniformly beneficial, generally does enough good to warrant its use.

Growing Strawberries.

The Rochester Union tells of a strawberry grower who states that to two barrels of rain water be put one-quarter of a pound of common nitre, and with this solution he sprinkled his strawberry beds every night when blossoming. The result is said to have been double the amount of large strawberries to that on the beds just adjoining, not so treated. The trouble with the inexperienced is the fancy that in proportion, as stimulation is increased, the result will be more and more beneficial—the fact being that, while a moderate stimulus may do good, excess is the precursor of destruction.

To Clean Blankets.

The Boston Journal of Chemistry gives the following method of cleansing blankets: Put two large teaspoonfuls of borax and a pint of soft soap into a tub of cold water. When dissolved, put in a pair of blankets, and let them remain over night. Next day rub out, and rinse thoroughly in two waters, and hang them to dry. Do not wring them. But this is not the only use to which borax may be put. Borax is the best cockroach exterminator yet discovered. This insect has a peculiar aversion to it. As the salt is perfectly harmless to human beings, it is much preferred for this purpose to the poisonous substances commonly used. Borax is valuable for soap. For laces, cambrics, etc., use an extra quantity of this powder. It will not injure the texture of the cloth in the least. For cleansing the hair, nothing is better than a solution of borax water. Wash afterwards with pure water if it leaves the hair too stiff. Borax dissolved in water is an excellent dentifrice or tooth wash.

To Renew Old Orchards.

Early in the spring plow the entire orchard and enrich the whole soil with a good dressing of manure, swamp muck and lime; scrape off the old bark with a sharp hoe, and wash the trunk and larger limbs with strong soap-suds. Apply half a bushel of fine charcoal and the same quantity of lime around each tree.

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J. LEIBY & BRO., Newport, Perry Co., Pa. FRANK MORTIMER, New Bloomfield, Perry Co., Pa.

New Pension Law.

UNDER an act of Congress approved, March 3, 1873, widows of officers who were killed, or died of disease contracted in the service, are now entitled to \$2.00 per month for each of their children.

The guardian of a minor child of a soldier who heretofore only received \$5.00 per month pension is now entitled to \$10.00 per month.

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