

THE USEFUL RUBBER TREE

FROM THE WHITE SAP TO THE HANDY OVERSHOE.

Interesting Facts About the Growth, Preparation, Importation, and Manufacture of Rubber.

The tree which produces rubber is known to the scientist as "Siphonia elastica," and is found in Brazil, the north and west coasts of South America, Central America, Mexico, east and west coasts of Africa, and India.

The standard and most reliable rubber in quality, as well as the highest priced—the celebrated Para bisquit—is procured from Brazil, while from the west coast of Africa comes the lowest grade.

The so-called rubber plant found in many houses, and admired for its beautiful foliage, is not the tree which produces the rubber of commerce, for this tree, as found in Brazil, grows to the height of about sixty feet, without branches except at the top, where it is crowned with rich foliage.

SELECT SITTINGS.

Tea-smoking has become a craze. The number of churches burned last year was 182.

In Georgia it is unlawful for a man to marry his mother-in-law.

During the flood they caught carp in the streets of Washington.

Up to the time of Pliny lemons were considered a deadly poison.

A military pigeon station has been established in Switzerland.

Anonymous donations seem to be coming into fashion again in England.

Garlic, salt, bread and steak are first put in the cradle of a new-born child in Holland.

Smoking during service is said to be customary in some of the rural churches in Holland.

The smallest baby in the West was born recently at Woodside, Kan. Its weight was one pound.

A good woman in Brooklyn committed suicide when she heard that her husband had been arrested for stealing.

A Frenchman in Paris advertises that he will pay \$25 reward "for a strictly novel and original way of committing suicide."

James Gordon Bennett, of the New York Herald, paid a Paris doctor \$5000 for three minutes' work in cutting a wart off his neck.

An inn at Grantham is said to be subject to a rent charge of \$10 a year, originally left by a Mr. Solomon, for an annual sermon against drunkenness.

A company is being formed to recover the \$300,000 worth of specie that was on board the French warship L'Orient when Nelson sank her at the battle of the Nile, ninety years ago.

There is said to be a stream near Tucson, Arizona, which petrifies very soft substance put into it. A biscuit dropped into the crystal water is alleged to have turned to stone within a few minutes.

They had a queer element at Charleston, Ind., the other day. Joshua Mullen ran away with Lucinda True. Joshua had a wagon but no horse. He took a seat in the wagon and made Lucinda pull it.

A fisherman at Winthrop, Me., says he caught a pickerel in Lake Maranocook and found in its stomach a roll of undigested bank bills, amounting to \$300.

The "milkmaid" sitting by the chimney, from a small calabash pours a little of the milk on a sort of light wooden paddle or shovel, always careful by proper management to distribute it evenly over the surface. Thrusting the shovel into the thick smoke of the chimney, he turns it to and fro with great rapidity, when the milk is seen to consolidate and take a grayish-yellow tinge. Thus he puts on layer upon layer, until at last the caoutchouc, as the South Americans term it, on both sides of the paddle has reached a depth of from one to two feet. Cutting it on one side he takes it off the shovel and suspends it in the sun to dry. The caoutchouc, from its first color of a clear silver gray, turns shortly into a yellow, and finally becomes the well-known dark brown of the rubber, such as it is when exported.

The rubber is now in the form of the "fine Para bisquit" as imported. These bisquits vary in size, I suppose, with the strength or energy of the maker. Some weigh no more than half a pound, while I have seen them weighing 650, though about 150 to 200 pounds is the usual weight. The bisquit, when finished and cut from the paddle, contains fifty-six per cent. water, which must be wholly evaporated before it is ready to be put into goods. This loss is divided between the different parties who handle it. The greatest loss is between the crier and Para, where every bisquit is cut for grading of quality.

It is a very important feature in the preparation of the bisquit, that the men become very expert judges of quality, their judgment seldom being at fault. It is final between buyer and seller, and is accepted as well by the manufacturers in the consuming markets. They are of considerable local importance. The sweepings of the camp, the dripping of the trees, and cleanings from the basin, etc., are more carelessly rolled together into scrappy balls.

In Ecuador the sap is floated on water and coagulated by sprinkling with ashes, sometimes in goodly quantities, as it increases weight. In Nicaragua the sap is drawn in this dish and coagulated by mixing with the bruised leaves of a plant growing in the vicinity. In India and Africa rubber is obtained by allowing the sap from the gash to flow down the side of the tree into a kind of basin scooped out in the soil. It is then gathered with the loose bark and dirt into bundles for shipment. In sections of Africa the natives have a method of gathering by smearing the sap on their naked bodies, coming into camp veritable living rubber bags. This, and even more uncleanly methods, are to them, give to this product an attractive and odiferous stench such as embarrassing to a stranger if encountered.

THE FARM AND GARDEN.

STONE FRUITS.

It is these that exhausts in fruit production. This is especially true of large seeds enclosed in stones. The proportion of seed to the fruit is proportionately greater in the cherry, plum and peach than in the apple or pear.

After the seed is sown, the soil should be kept moist and free from weeds. The ground should be thoroughly loosened between the rows at once, and no other implement is better for this work than the common "bull-tongue" plow, which, when run in the middle of the rows, mellow and opens the soil for the spread of the roots.

After the use of a light harrow in the rows, with a dressing of gypsum, will help the crop very much.—New York Times.

GATHERING AND DRYING HERBS.

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For home use the cheap paper bags now so common answer the purpose well. These should be marked with the name of the variety and hung up or laid away in a dry place until wanted. Quite a number of plants that might be quite as well found growing in fields and along roadsides, of which some should be gathered and preserved for their medicinal qualities against a time of need.

This is something that should not be neglected, otherwise they will quite often be wanted at a season when they cannot be gathered, and besides this they are better for use when dried than when green. The leaves of the well-known savory herbs can be usually sold to butchers and grocers so as to pay quite well for raising and curing them.—New York Times.

HARVESTING AND THRESHING GRAIN.

Nine twine bound bundles are enough to put in a shock. Set up four, then break joints with four more and cap with one bundle. A shock thus set up will dry out evenly and will not mold.

It will stand as well as a large shock, and have but a small quantity of grain exposed to bleach. Cut no grain when it is wet with dew. Wheat, rye and barley should be ripe when cut. Oats may be cut a little green, but if afterward left in the rain, they had better be ripe. All grain should be threshed as soon as possible after it is dry.

The flint varieties of wheat may be threshed while damp, but the soft varieties. Barley and oats will not hold in bulk as readily as wheat, but no grain should be threshed wet.

Every farmer wants his threshing done as early as possible, he wants a quick job and his grain saved. If he would accomplish this he must be ready when the machine is. The requirements are, the best of fuel, plenty of hands, plenty of sacks, plenty of tools, and arrangement must be such as to have the work go on steadily and without interruption, with no rushing but with a will. When men are ready the men must go at once, for it is important to keep on the right side of the clock. Arrange so that as many may eat together as possible, and let those eat first who are wanted first. Two persons at least should stay with the machine—one of the owners and some one interested in the job of threshing. It is all ways safest.

The handling of grain is the next consideration. It is best to put only one bushel in a sack. It is more easily handled, can be loaded and unloaded more rapidly; is less liable to be wasted; is much easier on the sacks and saves tying and untieing.

Straw may be stacked with a view of forming a shelter for stock. Sheds are formed by placing posts twelve feet high at proper intervals for strength. On these place a strong ridge pole. The shed should be the full length of the stack, preferably in the center, though it may be put on either side or end. Let good ridge poles or timbers extend from the side poles to the ground, four feet apart and leaning at an angle of forty-five degrees. Commence at the top, and nail on both half way down, leaving the bottom open. Then build the stack upon the frame thus made. Such a shed is self-supporting and stack cannot waste the straw. If there is more straw than can be stacked on the shed frame, do not allow it to be thrown to one side and remain in a loose pile. Leave no loose straw around the stack. Clean all up and haul to the barn for bedding.

To owners of machines I would say: Keep the machines in good order, overhaul every day. Oil is cheaper than machinery. Castor oil and beeswax are the best materials to put on belts. Keep the cylinder on the exact divide and it will throw clean out of the head, and avoid cutting. Allow the cylinder little and play. Always set at right angles with the direction of the wind. This gives a clean side to measure on, keeps straw and chaff out of the threshing grain and helps the straw hands. Keep the boilers clean. Never run a machine when it is empty. Never belt nearly as tight as you can. Run it level as nearly as possible. Keep the belts from the dew and wet, and always use the best grade of lubricating oil.—American Agriculturist.

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