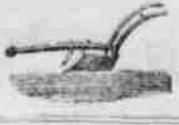


AGRICULTURAL.



STIRRING THE SOIL IN DROUGHT.

An old topic, surely, but one of the greatest practical importance. An old topic, but one about which men are not agreed in opinion. There is theory and practice on both sides. Some farmers hold that stirring the earth in dry weather, injures the roots of plants, and exposes the soil to the sun and the dry air so much, as to do more harm than good. But the other side of the question has, also, its good arguments. We will hint at one or two:

Frequent stirring of the soil in drought renders it more porous, and so fits it to absorb moisture from the atmosphere, and to draw it up from the wet subsoil. By being frequently broken up, it becomes like a sponge. Any one can easily satisfy himself of this. Go into your garden and loosen up the soil over a space of a few feet square, and then see if, for several mornings after, that patch is not moist, while the surrounding surface is dry? A neighbor of ours had a potato patch last Summer, which being in warm and sandy soil became badly parched in July. The stalks drooped, and a total loss of the crop was threatened. Here was a fair subject for a desperate experiment. Accordingly, on one of the hottest and driest days of the month, he gave them a thorough plowing, passing the plow four times through each furrow, first plowing two furrows from the hills, and then returning the ground back by two other furrows. No rain fell for ten days after. In three days, the vines stood erect and began to take on a dark green color and to grow again. The soil was moistened by the dews of every night; the crop was saved, and it proved quite an abundant one.

Again: the stirring of the soil in drought renders the earth a poorer conductor of heat than it would be if it remained unbroken and hard. Every one knows that a stone or any metallic substance lying in the sun, becomes hotter than a bunch of cotton, because it is a better conductor of heat. So, when the surface of the earth becomes baked and hard, it absorbs heat much more than when it is broken and pulverized. In a well-tilled garden, the ground, two or three inches below the surface, is quite cool at mid-day. It is partly on the same principle, that a few inches of mulching material will keep the ground cool and moist all Summer long. Hence, it is easy to see that stirring soil, in drought will keep the roots of the plants cool and moist, and so promote their growth.

But let the theory be as it may, the fact remains, that thorough tillage is the best possible security against drought.—*American Agriculturist.*

A GOOD CHEED ON PLOWING.—A correspondent of the *Country Gentleman*, gives the following plan: A large vat made of plank, about ten feet long, four feet wide, and three and a half feet deep, is placed near a stream where there is sufficient fall. Troughs are laid to conduct the water, with their lower ends standing about two feet above the vat. Two boys, each holding a sheep soaking at one end of the vat; while two men, standing on the ground outside, the vat, each hold a sheep under the stream running from the troughs. It requires but little squeezing of the wool, and much less time to wash them well than by the old method.

THE EYES OF HORSES AND CATTLE.—In the *New England Farmer*, a correspondent gives the following remedy, when horses or cattle injure their eyes so as to bring on a white substance or film. He says: Take fresh butter, newly churned, melt about a tablespoonful, and turn it into the ear opposite the eye injured, being careful to hold the ear tight together, so that they shall not, by a violent shake of the head, throw it out of the ear. This remedy, he says, may be safely applied, if you do not use them when the film is coming off.

DOGS AND BELL SHEEP.—An Indiana sheep farmer, in the *Stock Journal*, says that a number of sheep wearing bells, in any flock, will keep away dogs; he would allow ten bells to every hundred or hundred and fifty. When sheep are alarmed, they run together in a compact body, in which all the bells are rung at once; which frightens the dog, or makes him think some one is on his track—so he leaves without taking notice.

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Bloomsburg, May 15, 1860.

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