

PROPER TIME TO PRUNE.

Work Should Be Performed Before Buds Begin to Swell.

Many orchard cultivators have been misled into the opinion that early summer is the best time to prune, from the fact that the wounds heal more readily. Pruning after the tree has commenced growth has a tendency in nearly every instance to check its vigor. For this reason, where the rapid formation of young wood is desired, the work must be performed before the buds begin to swell. Some planters have objected to shortening in the shoots of newly set trees because by doing the work too late, or after the leaves were partially or wholly expanded, they have injured and not benefited them. Any one may easily satisfy himself on a dozen trees early in the season, and leaving those of another dozen until the leaves have opened.

Exception to Rule.

There may be an exception to this general rule, where a slight amount of pruning in summer, not sufficient to produce any material check in growth, may be useful in improving the shape of the tree, such for example, as the removal of an occasional unnecessary shoot or one-sided branch. As fresh wounds always render trees more liable to be affected by intense cold, quite hardy trees only may be pruned any time during winter. On those inclined to be tender the operation should be deferred till toward spring.

As a general rule, the rapid formation of leaves and wood is adverse to the production of fruit. On the other hand, the slow growth of the wood favors the formation of fruit buds and the production of heavy crops.

Those two adverse tendencies may be more or less controlled by pruning. When the too numerous branches of a tree produce more leaves than can be properly supplied with nourishment, resulting in a feeble or diminished growth, new vigor may be often imparted by judicious pruning, directing the sap into a smaller number of channels and thus increasing its force. For example, peach trees after bearing some years and yielding smaller fruit than on fresh young trees, will assume all their former thriftiness by partly cutting back the heads. Dwarf pear trees which have not been sufficiently manured and cultivated, whose prunings have been neglected and heavy bearing allowed for a number of years, have been restored by severely pruning back the branches and thinning out the fruit spurs.

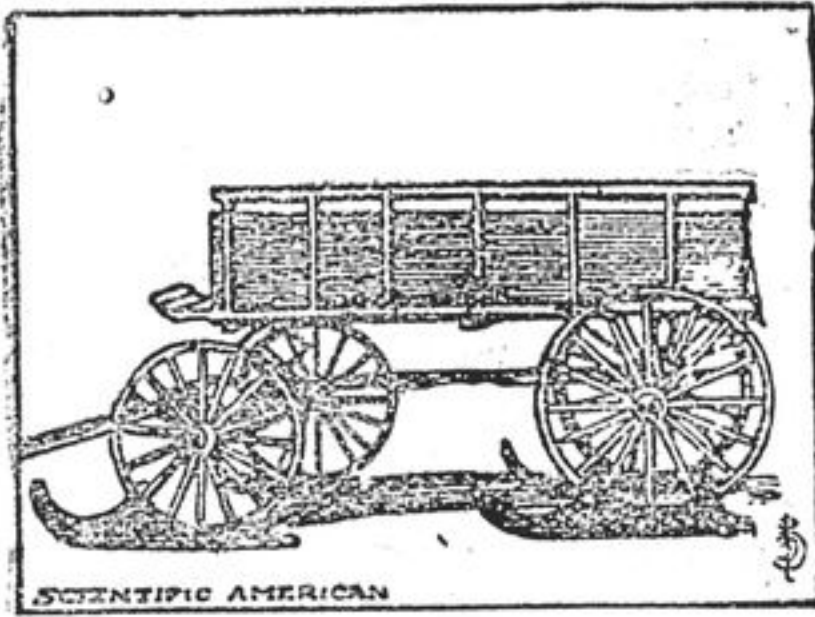
In Winter Or Early Spring.

In all such operations as these, it is indispensable to observe the rule often given to do the cutting back in winter or in early spring, before the buds have swollen. If trees are too thrifty and do not bear, a check may be given, and many of the leaf buds thus changed to fruit buds by a continued pinching back during the summer.

The production of fruit buds may be accomplished artificially by checking the growth of vigorous trees; but such treatment, out of the ordinary course of nature, though sometimes useful, should be cautiously applied, as the first crop gives still another check, and often materially injures the tree and the quality of its subsequent crops.

Snowshoes For Wagons.

It may seem rather a curious notion to equip an ordinary wheeled vehicle with snowshoes, and yet that is what F. W. Nightingale of Quincy, Mass., has done. By means of the invention any wheeled vehicle can be converted



WAGON EQUIPPED WITH SNOWSHOES. into a sled in a few minutes. The shoes are placed on the ground and the vehicle driven into them. Clamps are provided, by means of which the shoes can be firmly bolted in place. The inventor suggests that the runners may also be placed on the front wheels of automobiles to facilitate travel in the snow.

Disking of Alfalfa.

The disking of alfalfa is quite generally practiced wherever the crop is grown in this country. There are several good reasons for this procedure, varying somewhat in the order of their merit according to local conditions.

In the first place, the sharp disks, set at a slight angle, split and spread the crowns of many of the plants, causing them to stool and send up an increased number of stems. Little or no damage results from the operation, which should be carried on in winter or after a cutting, when the alfalfa is in stubble.

In some localities also the resulting mulch of loose earth is stated to conserve soil moisture at times when rainfall is slight or irrigating water scarce. To this should be added the observation that disking incorporates with the surface soil much fertilizing material, especially alfalfa leaves which are lost during the operations of haying.—R. H. Forbes, Arizona.

Starting Alfalfa.

Where one cannot get a start with alfalfa from a late summer planting, more exactly the middle of August, owing to a pest of grasshoppers, the seed may be sowed about the middle of April, with or without a nurse crop, at the rate of about 18 pounds to the acre. Owing to the rapid growth of weeds the field should be mowed frequently after the alfalfa gets a good start, as this not only kills the weeds, but tends to thicken up the legume. Before planting the ground should be thoroughly fertilized and the soil put in the best of tilling. Cut at the right time and properly cured, alfalfa makes the best and most nutritious of hay, while it provides an ideal pasture for hogs.

Angoras Healthy.

Angora goats are much less subject to disease than sheep, and taktosis, a contagious disease which created great havoc in certain flocks a few years ago, seems to have about run its course and, it is thought, will probably soon be eradicated.

Cleaning Dairy Utensils.

For cleaning and sweetening wooden utensils nothing is better than finely ground quicklime. Scour out with this and occasionally have the utensils full of lime and water. Soda and hot water may be used for all the utensils, but its regular use for wooden vessels is not advisable. It is not absolutely necessary to rub out the churn with salt or to treat the worker in like manner. If the wood is clean and not saturated with grease, the butter will not stick. Always commence by cleaning utensils with warm water and then scald with boiling water afterward.

When to Plow Land.

The proper time to plow land is when it is just moist enough to break up mellow, neither wet enough to leave a slick surface where rubbed by the moldboard nor dry enough to break up in large clods, or, as the southern farmer puts it, when the soil has a good season in it. If continued rain follows wet plowing, little harm follows, but hot, dry winds would soon leave only a mass of unmanageable clods. In spring and mid-summer plowing particularly it is of the utmost importance to run the harrow immediately after the plow. This prevents the formation of clods.—W. J. Spillman.

Birds Eat Scale Insects.

Few kinds of insects are so inimical to the health and existence of fruit trees and other crop plants as the scales, and owing to their small size and peculiar habits few are so difficult to cope with. It has been generally supposed that birds lend no assistance in the destruction of scales. This proves to be an error, for the biological survey has already found that more than fifty species of birds eat scale insects. Not only is this true, but in the case of certain species, as the grosbeaks, scales have been ascertained to form a large percentage of the food.

Foot Notes.

The best way to doctor a sheep is by the feed given. Cure-alls for sick sheep are dangerous things. Let them alone.

If you see big patches of wool loosening upon the backs of the sheep, look out for scab. Get those sheep out of the flock.

A good looking horse with a sound leg on each of its four corners and not afraid of anything is worth good money just now.—Farm Journal.

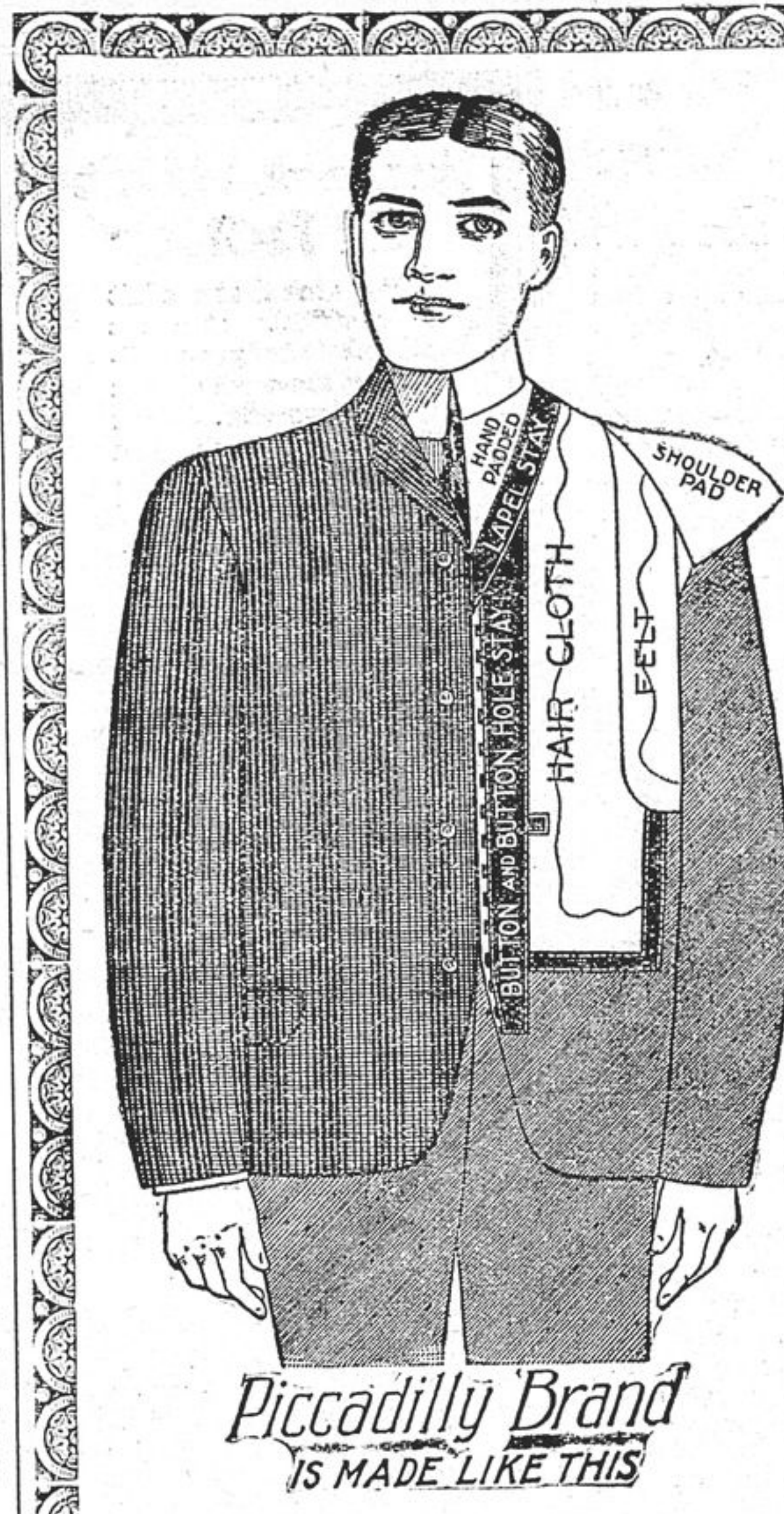
Sowing Seeds.

In regard to sowing seeds for an early start in the spring Country Gentleman has the following, among other things, in the way of useful hints: Sow some cabbage, cauliflower, beet, onion, celery and lettuce seeds and string beans in your hotbed, or, if you have neglected to make one, sow your seeds in shallow boxes with some cinders in the bottom and then filled with light, loamy soil. Sow thinly, cover lightly and put the boxes in a sunny window. In case you have hotbeds don't forget to give them plenty of fresh air on fine days, and water the seedlings freely.

The Task of To-Day.

A Nova Scotia subscriber writes: "The business of the farmer to-day is to hold on to all the wisdom of the past and reject all its folly and ignorance. For instance, it was folly and ignorance that robbed such a vast number of our eastern farms of their fertility. It is our business to bring to bear all the knowledge of the present and restore that fertility. When that is done we are more than even with the West. It was ignorance that lowered the productive power of our cows by wrong breeding. We must bring to bear better knowledge and correct that. It was ignorance that built those dark, ily ventilated stables and so helped tuberculosis on its journey. We must correct that. It was ignorance that caused so many to turn their back to the light. We of to-day must face the light, and so it goes."

Well, yes. So it goes, and so we hope it will go, and blessed be the man who help makes it go in the way our Nova Scotia friend so vividly defines.



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