

# BACK YARD FARMER

Interesting Pointers on Gardening for the City Man or Suburbanite.

## WHAT TO PLANT AND WHEN

Advice by an Expert on Agricultural Matters—Chickens and Winter Laying—Raising Small Fruit—Garden Information.

By PROF. JOHN WILLARD BOLTE.

If you want eggs next winter, you must get some of this year's chickens hatched early. This is the most important consideration in getting winter eggs. Get the pullets hatched early, keep them growing as fast as is safe, get them into their winter quarters before snow flies next fall, and you will have no trouble getting the eggs from your flock while most of your neighbors are paying five cents apiece for theirs.

Of course there are a number of other things that are of prime importance in securing a satisfactory number of eggs during the winter, but the one great essential feature is early hatching. With some breeds of chickens the middle of February is none too early for the first hatches, and Plymouth Rocks hatched then will often begin to lay early in August, and will lay right through the winter without skipping. The smaller breeds can come along in March and early in April, but pullets hatched later than this will frequently fail to mature before cold weather sets in, and will often be delayed several months in starting to lay.

The pullet that lays her first few eggs before frost stands an excellent chance of keeping it up right through the winter. The pullet that does not lay before frost is frequently discouraged from exercising her acquired function until the advent of the natural laying season, and that is when we need her eggs least of all.

Old hens do not, as a rule, begin to lay until toward the end of the winter. They molt late in the fall and are not in full feather before cold weather comes on. Getting, as they necessarily do, a long rest, their eggs are usually larger, heavier shelled, more fertile and more hatchable than those of pullets that have been laying during the cold weather. For this reason it is much preferable to set eggs from mature hens for hatching purposes.

When you are saving eggs for hatching, be sure to gather them as soon as possible after they are laid, so as to avoid the possibility of the germ getting chilled. Eggs will freeze in a remarkably short time in the nest. Never attempt to set eggs that have been chilled.

Bring the eggs into a room with an even temperature above the freezing point, place them in a receptacle with the small end downward, and cover them up to prevent evaporation. Set them as soon as possible after laying, as it has been proven time and again that every day which passes lessens the chances of an egg to hatch a strong lively chick.

Unless you are going to set at least a hundred eggs this spring an incubator will not pay you, except in the fact that it will enable you to hatch your chickens whenever you desire to do so, instead of waiting for hens to feel inclined to set. For the average city poultry keeper an incubator is an extravagance. The small flock will not lay eggs fast enough to fill up the smallest incubator, and it will be better either to depend on hens for your hatching under such conditions, or to buy day old chicks from some of the large hatcheries in your vicinity. The setting hen is a great nuisance in every way, and she is a persistent time killer, wasting not only her own time, but that of her owner, but man has never yet been able to develop a brooding device that would take her place in the small flock. For this reason, even if you do buy your little chicks, it will be well to have a hen about ready to come off when you get these chicks, slip them under her the night they arrive, and she will raise them as if they were her own.

## Raising Small Fruit.

April is the very best month to set out a new strawberry bed, although some climates will permit of this being done earlier, and many successful beds are set out as late as June 15. Select well drained, warm land which has been used for a garden patch the previous year, if possible. Perfect drainage is highly important for strawberries. Plow or spade the ground from six to eight inches deep, turning under a couple of inches of well-rotted stable manure, and then cultivate the surface until it is very fine and smooth.

Buy good plants from your seedsman, or, better still, from some man who has a good strawberry bed already started, and be careful to get good strong plants which are not run down. The variety which will do best on your soil depends so much upon conditions that it is not possible to give advice in this department, but getting your house

enough so that the plant roots are well spread and the crown of the plant, the point where the roots and the stems join, is just above the surface of the soil. Cover the roots deeply, and tread the soil firmly around the plants. Pick off the blossoms and dead leaves and keep the blossoms of the plants during the first season so as to conserve the energy of the plant and get it well established. Be careful not to allow the roots of the plants to become dry before they are placed in the ground.

Some of the plants are perfect and can fertilize the seed, while other plants in the same bed do not produce pollen, hence require pollen from other plants to produce fruit. For this reason it is a good plan to get one row of perfect plants for every two rows of the imperfect plants, although this rule admits of a great deal of variation.

As soon as the plants are set in the ground, water them well to bring the soil particles in close contact with the roots, and then either cultivate the ground between the rows or cover it with straw to prevent weed growth. The cultivation is much preferable during the first season. However, many successful growers find it advisable to cover the ground with straw until after the fruit is harvested from a bearing bed, as it not only prevents the growth of weeds by shading them, but it keeps the ripening fruit from being covered with mud when it rains during the picking season.

The plants should be set about 18 inches apart in the row, and the runners, or vine-like tendrils, must be kept back with a hoe the first season.

## Preparing the Garden.

Any one who has a little patch of back yard can have a vegetable garden this year. By all means make the effort. It can not only furnish you with delicious, fresh vegetables, but you will get health and pleasure out of its care.

If your soil is sandy it will produce the early crops to great advantage, and you can get radishes, lettuce, and similar vegetables several weeks ahead of your neighbor with a clay garden, but the sandy soil does not stand the hot dry weather of the summer months as well as the clay or loam. For this reason it is usually desirable to cover a very sandy plot with several inches of barnyard manure and loam or black muck soil to give it some body and moisture retaining power. This top dressing should be evenly spread on just before plowing in the spring and it should be thoroughly turned under.

A loamy soil is ideal for general garden crops, the sandy loam being a little earlier, and the clay loam a little better in the hot weather. Loam soils do not need any other treatment than manure, every other year, unless the location is too wet. If this is the case, either surface or tile drainage will have to be installed in order to secure the best results.

Clay, either blue, yellow or red, is about the toughest proposition the gardener has to tackle. It possesses plant food in abundance and can be made to bear profitably, but it will need a lot of cultivation and treatment of various kinds before it can be handled with ease. In the first place it must be plowed or spaded deeply in order to break up the solid texture of the soil. Large quantities of well rotted manure containing considerable straw should be plowed under every year and at the same time it will be well to plow under about two inches of sand, or sandy loam. After the last crop has been taken off a portion of the garden in the fall, sow the vacant ground to some fast growing cover crop and turn it under just before frost cuts it down. All of these factors will assist in loosening a heavy firm soil, allowing better penetration of air and water, and reducing the tendency of the soil to form large hard clods.

Don't strip the soil from a new garden. Turn it under by all means, as it will make the texture of the soil very much better. The greater the amount of decaying plant matter you can incorporate in the soil, the better will be your crop.

Plow or spade your garden as soon as the soil is dry enough to "scour" off the plowshare nicely. Plowing before this will leave the soil in a clodded or puddled condition and it will take a couple of years' hard work to correct this mistake, if the soil is heavy. With sandy or loamy soils the time of plowing is not so important as they are not liable to form clods, and they can be plowed when much drier than a clay. The owner of the clay patch or the muck garden, has to be extremely careful regarding this important feature, however.

After plowing, the treatment of all kinds of soil is practically the same. Cultivate, rake or harrow the soil until the surface, which is known as the seed bed is as fine as you can possibly get it. The finer the better for all kinds of seed. This is because the particles of soil can get into closer physical touch with the little seeds and plant roots. They hold the soil water closer, and make their food contents much more available for the roots.

## Good House Emulsion.

The following emulsion has given excellent results in ridding house plants of mealy bugs and scales: One pound of good white soap, melted, and add to it, while hot, one teacup of coal oil. Mix one part of this emulsion with ten parts of water.

# IDEAS FOR HOME BUILDERS

BY WM. A. RADFORD.

Mr. William A. Radford will answer questions and give advice FREE OF COST on all subjects pertaining to the subject of building, for the readers of this paper. On account of his wide experience as Editor, Author and Manufacturer, he is, without doubt, the highest authority on all these subjects. Address all inquiries to William A. Radford, No. 178 West Jackson boulevard, Chicago, Ill., and only enclose two-cent stamp for reply.

A rather pretentious house of very pleasing design is shown in the cuts. There are many new features about this house that are likely to become popular.

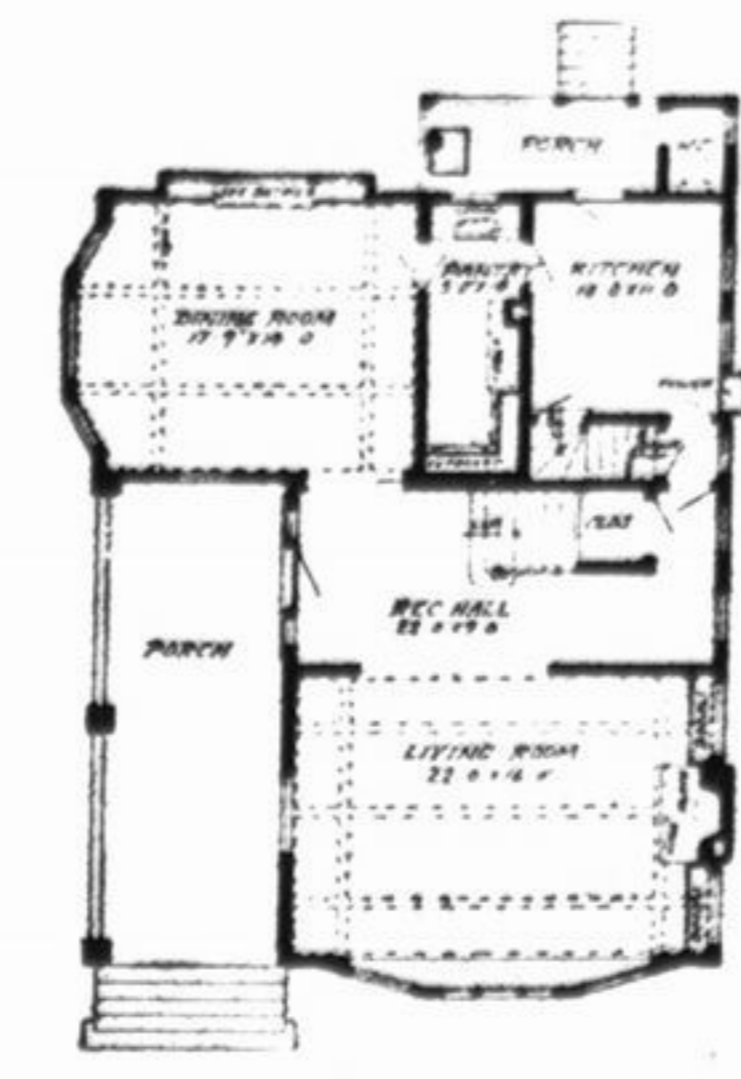
The idea of placing the stairway in the center or near the center of the house is a good one and I am pleased to note that the people generally approve of it because I feel that it is a sensible improvement in house building. In this plan the stairway is quite an innovation. While you start up from almost the exact center of the house the most of the space occupied by the stair is against the back wall, the least valuable space in the house.

The stair itself is what you might call a three way combination stair. Besides the main stairway there is a separate back stair from the kitchen leading up ten steps to meet on a landing. This landing is high enough to give head room for a passageway across under it leading from the kitchen to the reception hall. This gets back in a sensible way to the old idea of connecting the kitchen with the front door without being obliged to pass through the dining room. This passage way also gives access to the cellar stair, which is placed under the back stair. In this passage way also is the opening to the coat closet under the front stair.

Then from the landing up we have but one pair of steps and this is all that is necessary. By this arrangement every foot of space is made use of for some good purpose. The room ordinarily required to carry the back stair to the upper floor is saved and there is no corresponding objection.



It would be hard to find fault with the arrangement in any particular. In the living room and dining room are beam ceilings. There is something about a beam ceiling that seems to give an artistic tone to a room as nothing else will. Sometimes the idea is overlooked. When, like all other fashionable things, if overdone, the effect is spoiled. Beams in a ceiling should have a natural effect. A beam is primarily intended to support something. To appear right it must be large enough and heavy enough to fulfill its mission. Heavy beams are not placed close together ordinarily and they are not bedecked with fancy



First Floor Plan.

a big fireplace at the back flanked with book cases on either side with leaded glass windows above them you have something of more than ordinary value in a living room. This is a room that any homekeeper can take pride in. There are possibilities of decoration superior to almost any other arrangement. The old fashioned parlor and drawing room are left behind a hundred years in the march of progress by the adoption of such valuable room as this.

Turning to the business end of the house there are a number of features to study. The kitchen is a corner room 10 by 11 feet in size, intended just for a stove and the necessary working attachments. The sink is in the pantry directly in front of a win-



Second Floor Plan.

dow looking out onto the rear porch. A sink placed like this has the advantage of saving many steps when clearing away after meals. With this arrangement the china that should be kept in the sideboard or china closet is not taken to the kitchen at all and the other dishes that find lodgment on the pantry shelves are handled just as conveniently.

The stairway to the cellar is con-

venient to the kitchen and there is a chute reaching down into the cellar which is provided with a dumb waiter so that trips back and forth may be eliminated as much as possible. It will be noticed by a study of the many details that this is no ordinary house plan, for it contains more advantages than is ordinarily found even in elaborate designs, is not only a well arranged house, downstairs, but the upstairs plan is just as good. There are four bedrooms and a well appointed bathroom. Every bedroom has one or two clothes closets and there is a linen closet in the hall. This amount of room on the second floor is made possible in a house of this size by the manner in which the stairway is built. It not only economizes space, but it lands you centrally, within easy reach of the doors to the different rooms.

While the roof cuts off a portion of the upper walls of some of the bedrooms it does not interfere with the comfort of the occupants. There is quite a saving in building the roof in this way.

## Nothing Like Precision.

President Wilson, at a dinner in Washington, said of a statistician: "His figures are so precise that one inclines to doubt them. He is like the American sugar planter in Hawaii who, taking a friend to the edge of a volcano, said:

"That crater, George, is just 70,004 years old."

"But why the four? George asked. "Oh, I've been here four," was the reply. "It was 70,000 when I came."

## Different.

"And I thought you were a friend of mine?"

"So I am. I would give you my last cent."

"Your talk sounds big, but you don't live up to it. When I just don't ask me for

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| Hazeltin Bros. Parlor Grand rosewood                | \$350 | Ivory & Pond Small Baby Grand, mahogany  | \$350 |
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| Stromway Parlor Grand, "mahogany" finished rosewood | 500   | Stromway, nearly new, mahogany, mahogany | 950   |

**PLAYER-PIANOS**

|   |       |  |       |
|---|-------|--|-------|
| Aeolian Player-Piano, 6-note, walnut case           | \$200 | Wahlbom Player-Piano, mahogany   | \$400 |
| Leland Player-Piano, 8-note, regular \$50 style     | 325   | Weber Pianola Piano, mahogany, \$50 style  | 650   |
| Autoplayer (Krell-Auto-grand), mahogany, \$50 style | 375   | Wurlitzer Pianola Piano, mahogany, \$50 style  | 650   |
| Autopiano, \$50 and \$60 and \$70 in combination    | 375   | New Krumboltz & Bach Player-Piano reduced from \$100 to \$75, mahogany, prices range from 100 to 700 | 700   |

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