A New Strawberry Method.

For a number of years we have been growing strawberries as a profitable sideline in connection with our farm of sixty acres. During this time it has seemed something of a hardship to cultivate the spring-set plants an entire year, getting no returns until the second year. Accordingly we did some experimenting and worked out a system which has proved very satisfactory in getting the most returns for our labor.

Interplanted Strawberry Bed

Last year in setting an acre of strawberries, instead of following our usual plan of spacing the rows four feet apart, we marked out the land in rows thirty inches apart, setting the plants in every other row. Between the strawberry rows, we planted quite a variety of vegetables, taking care to use only those things which made an upright growth and would interfere the least with the cultivation of the berries. We planted onions, potatoes, beets, carrots, cabbage and dwarf peas. The cabbage seed was drilled and thinned to stand eighteen inches apart in the row, the plants being sold as fast as they were pulled out.

We cultivated rather oftener than we would have had there been nothing on the land but the berries. Also, we did the usual amount of hoeing and hand-weeding, with the result that we never had a finer looking strawberry patch. The rows are perfectly straight and the constant cultivation has restricted the runners to a narrow fruiting row which can be easily mulched and handled at picking time.

As to the returns from the vegetables, we have credited this acre as follows:

6,800 cabbage plants at 25c. per 100	$ 17.00
5½ bushels of peas	5.95
50 bushels of table beets	24.30
80 dozen cabbage	16.00
30 bushels of potatoes	30.00
21 bushels of carrots	8.10
14 bushels of onions	17.50
Total	$118.85

With the exception of the cabbage plants which were disposed of locally, nearly everything was sold to hucksters from the city who loaded up on the place.

As a result of our experiment, we have decided to use the Irish Cobbler potato to fill in the first year. Some other variety with an equally small top would do as well. Hereafter we shall check-row the land so that before the vines begin to make runners, we can cultivate both ways and save hoeing.

Fertilize Strawberries

When freezing weather comes we mulch with straw and before the mulch is raked off in the spring fertilize with five hundred pounds of high-grade fertilizer.

We expect next year to go a step farther and sow dwarf peas between the fruiting rows and plow up the whole thing for whatever crop the season will let us raise in the summer and fall. We hope to be able to put in potatoes if the peas and berries are off by July 1.

EFFICIENT PRUNING TOOLS

When the orchard business is managed on a scale large enough to make it a factor in the farm income the expense for pruning becomes a large item. Men who know how to prune are scarce in some sections. Whether experienced or inexperienced men are used for pruning the use of proper equipment is necessary to reduce the expense of the work. The writer has worked in commercial orchards where the amount of work finished in a day was greatly reduced because the men frequently worked with dull saws and poor shears. In the morning there was usually a scramble to get hold of a tool that was fit to perform the work. Possibly one fortunate man would obtain a saw that was sharp. The remainder of the men would do the best they could with a dull saw. The foreman made no provision for sharpening the saws and unfortunately most of the men did not seem to care how long it took to sever a branch as long as they were making their arms move most of the time. That may be the attitude in many pruning gangs. Of course, it is up to the owner to make provision for sharp tools and an employe can scarcely be expected to argue with the boss over the quality of the saws and shears that the boss owns.

Keep Saws Oiled

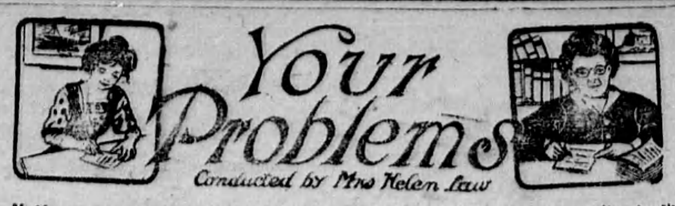
The first item in the pruning equipment should be files for keeping saws sharp so they will bite into the wood and make the cut smoothly and quickly. At least one man in the gang should be able to file a saw. He should be responsible for keeping the tools in good condition for the remainder of the workers.

The quality of shears is important and there is much difference between a pair of pruning shears with a good edge and strong springs, and the dull edged shears which stick and tear the branches instead of neatly snipping them from the tree. The double-cut pruning shears which cut the branch from all sides at the same time, will be a good investment as no tearing of the bark will result. Shears on long poles will save much work on the step-ladders when young fruit trees are pruned. The worker can size up the tree from the ground and do much of the heading back of the limbs without using a ladder. This saves time and enables an experienced pruner to do a good job.

The curved pruning saws seem to work better than the straight blade. They enable the operator to take a better grip and make the cut a little more rapidly. Some growers use the thin saw blades which fit into a frame. The old blade can be removed and a new one inserted in a short time. With a tool of this kind it is possible to work in crotches where it would be impossible to use a wide blade without scraping the bark on the adjoining limb where no cut should be made. A saw of this kind enables the orchardist to have plenty of sharp blades on hand when beginning the work and there are no delays for sharpening tools.

Keep Tools Sharp

The care of pruning saws and shears is important. If they are allowed to become wet they will soon rust and deteriorate in value. It pays to rub the tools thoroughly with an oiled cloth and this film of oil will keep the moisture away from the metal and prevent rust. When storing the tools they should always be protected in this manner. It also pays to oil all of the joints in pruning shears, as this will make them work more easily. The small hand shears which work with a coiled spring should have the spring protected from rust and dirt by frequent cleaning and oiling. These small hand shears frequently become out of repair. The springs break or slip loose during a busy time in the orchard and cause no end of wasted time. When the orchardist is employing several men to prune, it certainly pays to have additional pruning equipment on hand for an emergency.



Mothers and daughters of all ages are cordially invited to write to this department. Initials only will be published with each question and its answer as a means of identification, but full name and address must be given in each letter. Write on one side of paper only. Answers will be mailed direct if stamped and addressed envelope is enclosed.

Address all correspondence for this department to Mrs. Helen Law, 233 Woodbine Ave., Toronto.

Rose:—The trouble with your complexion may be the result of constipation, and very probably your diet is at fault. Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, drink water only anr plenty of it, sleep with windows wide open, and walk or ride out of doors everyday. Wash your face well with a good soap and warm water at night, rinsing it first with warm and then with cold water, and doubtless the pimples and blackheads will gradually disappear. Write again.

The New Broom:—Your hint about the containers is very timely. In view of the fact that next season many housewives will avail themselves of the canning products of the "war gardens" it is "good business" to overhaul the empty containers at this time with their rubber and other attachments and get them in readiness for next summer's canning. Glass cans should be thoroughly cleansed after their contents have been removed and their rubber bands should also receive careful attention. If the containers are packed securely in boxes much expenditure will be saved in again filling the cellar with canned fruits and vegetables.

Curious:—Most decidedly, buy your cereals in bulk. While it may cost more at the time it is genuine economy to do this. For one thing in buying the small package you are paying for cardboard, decorations and frequently for premiums. When you buy in bulk you are getting full value for your money. Are you aware that the Food Controller has passed regulations which provide that the cereals shall not be sold without a license in packages of less than twenty pounds? This is going to make a good deal of difference to the consumer. He is going to get better value for his money. At the same time the Food Controller will be able to curb the use of wheat in the manufacture of cereals, wherever he deems it to be necessary. Already a number of manufacturers have signified their intention of using corn and other substitutes for wheat in their breakfast foods.

A Country Cousin:—It is strange that you should feel that it is a sacrifice to give up certain things to eat at this time. There is no question of sacrifice. It is straight duty. Do you know that your cousins in England are joining the food queues in some cases at 5 o'clock in the morning and waiting, perhaps with 3,000 other women, for their supplies of tea, butter and margarine? Remember, too, that the situation in England is not nearly as aggravated as it is in France, Belgium and Serbia. The food situation is becoming increasingly grave and the Food Controller is emphatic that every person who can possibly produce food must do so, no matter how small his or her contribution may be. Those who cannot produce food can at least conserve it. The utmost economy is imperative. The situation is critical and the world is rapidly approaching that condition when price will not be the most important question. It is obvious from your letter that you live on the farm and, therefore, you are in a position to do work of inestimable value. You can not only economize but you can produce. Why don't you take a young porker under your wing? You would be really and practically helping the Allies in doing this.

Stay-at-Home:—The most useful thing the stay-at-home can do is to save and economize. Watch everything! Guard against waste in the kitchen and on the table. Be on the look-out for waste in cellar and dining-room. As much food is wasted in the eating as in the cooking. Waste is one of the greatest of crimes. It is a sin against the men who are fighting for Canada overseas. It is hampering the Allies in their efforts. It is undoing the work of the farmers of Canada who are producing the much needed supplies. Teach the children to clean their plates. Remember that the slice of bread, the half cup of milk, the morsel of butter that is left over, when considered in the aggregate, represent the wastage of millions of pounds' worth of good foodstuff. Then save! If you have a garden set about making plans to grow potatoes, peas, beans and other vegetables. Never mind about flowers now. Grow something to eat. Keep chickens and pigs. Make butter and cheese. There are a hundred useful things that you, on the farm, can do.

Jean:—If you want a new rice dish that everyone will like, here you are: 3 ounces of unpolished rice, 1½ pints of water or water and milk, 2 ounces of dates, ½ teaspoon mixed spice. Cook rice in milk and water until soft, and add chopped dates. Put into mould. Allow it to cool, and turn out.

Housing affects the fowls in many ways. Without proper housing success can not be secured, even though feeding and all other conditions are as they should be. Housing affects the comfort and health of the fowls and unless it supplies the conditions that make for good health and the material comfort of the flock, it is not of the most useful kind.

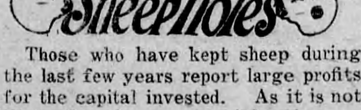
A poultry house must be warm enough so that it will protect the flock from the coldest weather in the locality where the house is used. In warm parts of the country where the temperature seldom gets down much below freezing, a single-board house is sufficient. Where the temperature goes to zero, walls must be thicker and where it goes down to twenty below zero, or thereabouts, it is plain that the house must be of rather warm construction or the cold will affect the fowls so as to decrease from their usefulness by too greatly lowering their bodily heat and energy.

A house must be so ventilated that it will not be warm during the day when the sun shines, and cold at night. During the day the fowls are on the floor scratching for grain in a litter, and exercising more or less of the time. At night, on the roost, they are inactive and they wear no more clothes or plumage than during the day. Therefore, if the house is so constructed and ventilated that the midday sun runs the heat to a point above freezing or higher, and at night the house cools down to a temperature of below freezing or perhaps below zero, the birds are overheated during the day and chilled in the night. Such extreme conditions result in colds and these colds often develop into roup. In addition, such conditions cut down the egg production to a degree where it is not profitable and subtract so much from the strength and vitality of the fowls that they do not give good service as breeders in the following spring.

Not in a long time have dairymen been called upon to use products of such uncertain food value as they have this year. The extreme lateness of the growing and ripening season left farmers last fall with large quantities of inferior grain and fodder which they have to feed on their farms or allow it to go to waste. High prices have tended to encourage the sale of all merchantable products, thus further depleting the dairyman's supplies of standard feeding stuffs.

As a result of this condition, the feeder of dairy cows must exercise additional precaution to keep the animals in good health and producing condition. Where one has feeds of known value, it is a comparatively easy task to figure out proper rations; but where the quantity of digestive food nutrients in the feeds vary within a considerable margin the balancing is made a more difficult and unsatisfactory job. However, this is the problem before many dairymen this winter.

In the absence of exact chemical analyses of this immature fodder and inferior grains, the feeder must take recourse to the old method of "feeding and watching." The cow's health and her performance at the pail are the feeder's best guide when dealing with this class of feeds. Even when using grains and roughage of standard quality, where the most scientific methods are employed in parcelling out to the animals, the feeder must make the animal the court of last resort in deciding the value of the ration. With a large number of dairymen this winter, however, they will be obliged to look to the animal almost entirely in compounding the food rations. This naturally will require more skill and careful attention than is needed where the scales and tables eliminate most of the chance in going wrong.



Those who have kept sheep during the last few years report large profits for the capital invested. As it is not likely that the present high prices received for wool and mutton will decrease, sheep raising is bound to increase.

We have kept sheep for a number of years and even during times when there was but little encouragement in the business we have seldom been without a small flock. Our experience has been that they require but a small amount of work or care. In the winter they do not need as much labor as other kinds of stock, and in this age of labor famine this is a very important matter to consider. If properly cared for, they are much more free from diseases and accidents than other cattle, and if one is lost from any cause, the loss is much less than if a hog, sow or horse is lost.

There are yet many farms having more or less rough land and steep brush land. A flock of sheep would not only do well on such land, but would aid the owner to clear the land besides. Then, too, a flock could be kept with profit on some of the old, wornout farms where the owners have been selling off hay and grain. The sheep would keep the weeds down and scatter more or less fertility on the land, and thus help to restore some of the lost fertility of the soil.

The principal objections that may be offered against sheep raising are the dog, and the necessity of good fencing. But at the present time, the progressive and up-to-date farmer cannot attach much importance to these objections. As to the dog, the laws are now so favorable to the sheep grower that it is not such a great bugbear, and if the flock is molested the loss is made good, and anyone has the right to destroy any dog found trespassing on his farm.

Sheep should not be expected to winter well around a straw stack, or in a shed with a poor roof, or in a draft, for they want a warm, sunny place. A bank barn is the ideal thing in which to winter sheep. Old sheep, if not too many in number, will do better than where old and young are kept together, and care should be taken not to herd too many together. Good ventilation should be given in the stables.

If soup is found too salty add a few slices of raw potatoes and cook a little longer. The potato will absorb the surplus salt.

Corn bread with rice is an economical dish, requiring two cupfuls of sour milk, one teaspoonful of soda (scant), two cupfuls of boiled rice, one cupful of cornmeal, one tablespoonful of shortening. Combine the ingredients in the order named and bake in a greased pan until firm. Serve from the pan with a spoon.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON FEBRUARY 3.

Lesson V. Jesus Lord of the Sabbath —Mark 2. 13 to 3. 6. Golden Text, Mark 2. 28.

Verse 23. Grainfields—"The sown lands." Not breaking a path through the standing grain, but following the path through the fields, as one does in Palestine to-day.

24. Pharisees said—Mark's second mention of this leading religious sect, whose name, "Pharisee," "the separated," indicates their aloofness from the masses. They were known by their peculiar garb and their ostentatious piety, so roundly scored by the Master. A prominent element in the creed of the Pharisee was his Sabbath law. How could Jesus and his disciples be religious leaders for the Jews if they violated the Sabbath? On the sabbath day that which is not lawful—Not unlawful in itself, but unlawful on the Sabbath. Reaping on the Sabbath was forbidden (Exod. 34. 21), but Jewish rabbis had decided that even picking a few heads of wheat and rubbing them out in the palms was reaping, hence, the offence of the disciples.

25. Did ye never read—He refers them to their own history for a glimpse of the larger meaning of the Sabbath. Under stress of emergency that may be done which at other times might be condemned as sacrilege. He enunciates a principle which the world has been slow to recognize, that the individual man is greater than any institution; than men are not to be sacrificed to bolster up institutions; that rigid restrictions must give place to the higher requirements of necessity and mercy.

26. House of God—The "tent of meeting" at Nob (1 Sam. 22. 19), a locality in the northeast of Jerusalem. The showbread—The law of the showbread is found in Lev. 24 5-9. It consisted of twelve new-baked loaves placed every Sabbath on a table in two rows of six, sprinkled wth incense and left for the week.

27. The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath—The Sabbath is vastly more than the punctilious observance of injunctions; rather is it for the highest interests of man in every respect. He places man above institutions. Everything in state and church ought to serve to bring the individual to his best.

28. The Son of man is lord even of the sabbath—He will do what he pleases on the Sabbath, but he will not please to do anything save for the ministering to the highest needs of man.

1. Into the synagogue—This was again in Capernaum with no definite indication of time. His hand withered—The text suggests that it had become so; that is, by injury or disease. Luke tells us it was the man's right hand.

2. Watched him—The traditional law allowed help on the Sabbath if life was in danger, but would Jesus cure this paralyzed hand on the Sabbath?

3. Stand forth—Jesus realized their critical attitude, but now publicly and formally challenges it. There is to be no question of his position concerning the Sabbath and this case will determine it.

4. Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good or to do harm?—He appeals to their knowledge of the law. He is here the challenger. Matthew introduces Christ's words about the sheep fallen into a pit, thus showing that it was not contrary to the law to do a beneficent work on the Sabbath. Held their peace—This is peculiar to Mark. Evidently they could say nothing to his challenge for he was really backed by their traditional law.

5. Looked round about—An expression used several times, by Mark, indicating the sweeping glance around the listening circle. With anger—Not evil passion in this glance but a righteous indignation which is perfectly consistent with holy character. To be angry and sin not is the New Testament standard (Eph. 4. 26). Stretch forth thy hand—The healing is immediate, without contact with the sufferer.

When Dad Got His Car.

I'll tell you about last winter. I needed an automobile very badly. My name is Smart, and I fully intended to live up to that name—or bust! I informed my wife I purposed to purchase a car. "Don't go in debt for it," she said. "I certainly don't intend to," I answered.

"What's the idea?" neighbor Twiler inquired next day. I was chopping firewood in a blinding snowstorm.

"To buy a touring car," I replied.

"Pooh-pooh!" he laughed. "I always thought you were foolish, and now I'm sure of it!" However, criticism had no more effect on me than pouring water on a tin roof. I said nothing and sawed wood. I put up two cords of black oakwood per day. Neighbor Twiler and others sat near the stove at the village store and discussed the war and ways and means to run the government.

Day by day my firewood mounted up. I had set my limit at 150 cords. People said I was entering upon my second childhood. I said nothing, but sawed wood.

At night the children would help me rick up the wood; then after supper we'd sit around the parlor stove and comment on the journeys we'd have "when dad got his car."

"Heard you were getting a car," neighbor Twiler's eldest son laughed at my son Frank.

"We intend to get one. Dad and I are getting wood for it now," Frank replied.

Frank skidded most of that wood over to the barn on Saturdays and in the evening. It was indeed comforting to hear him say, as he finished hauling a load of wood and corded it up: "Three dollars more toward our automobile!" He had that car all figured out in dollars and cents a hundred times. Each cord of firewood would purchase some part of it.

I have tackled some jobs in my lifetime, but no time in my life have I ever had a job loom up so large as the last ten cords of that firewood. But the next day I received encouragement from an unexpected quarter. I had been "sizing" up a whale of a black oak tree that should make at least eight cords of wood. I secured eleven gallons of honey, four coons, and nine cords of wood from that tree!

I secured an interview with Mr. Somms, of the Dominion Bank.

"I want $400, Mr. Somms," I stated.

"What collateral security?"

"One hundred and fifty cords of oak wood," I replied.

"Is it insured, Mr. Smart?"

"It is," I replied.

"Sign this." He handed me a paper. "Do you want bills or gold, Mr. Smart?"

And that is why my folks are looking so happy these days!

Onion soup is a savory dish to serve on a cold night.

The Doll Slackers.

Tillie and Tommy were the best dolls that ever lived, until a few months ago. They did exactly as their little mother Marian wanted them to do. They kept their clothes neat and tidy, and were as contented and happy as dollies should be.

That was before little mother Marian began to neglect her dolls. She would let them lie all day long in their little doll house, and she would sit hour after hour working with two long white needles and a ball of gray yarn.

So Tillie and Tommy made up their minds to run away. They dressed up in their very best winter clothes, and started to the door. Suddenly they heard Winnie, the little girl next door, say:

"Why, Marian, what are you knitting? Leave that tiresome work and let's play with our dolls."

"I'm making a warm muffler for a soldier," said Marian. "Mother says if I don't do my part to help the soldiers that I will be a slacker."

"What is a slacker?" asked Winnie.

"It's a man who is afraid to be a soldier or a person who shirks his duty in wartime, Mother says," said Marian.

Tillie and Tommy looked at each other, and then they said, both together and almost in tears: "We are slackers."

They ran back to the doll house as fast as their stiff little joints would let them. They knew that their duty was to be as good as gold and not cause their little mother Marian any trouble, so that she could knit many warm mufflers for the brave soldiers across the sea.

An hour later Marian came in and said: "I've finished my muffler, and you have been such good dollies that I'm going to take you for a long walk."

How glad they were that they had not run away!

Catching the Sly Rat.

Although it does not seem to be generally known, rats are wary creatures, and all sorts of camouflage must be resorted to if they are to be trapped successfully, says a successful farmer. Several years ago these pestiferous little rodents began to get overfamiliar with our poultry, killing the little chicks and carrying off the eggs. On each of two successive nights I caught a rat in a steel trap and, although the trap was hidden in various ways, still the other rats continued their depredations and avoided capture.

In order to use the steel trap inside the poultry house with no danger of catching the chickens, I use a wooden box of convenient size, with the top and one side removed. The trap is set in front of the rat-hole, the box is then turned bottom up over the trap and hole, with the open side against the wall, admitting the rat and excluding the chicken.

Mother's Little Bit.

"Do your bit! Do your bit!" is all I hear 'em say.
"Do your bit, do your bit, morning, night and day!"
So ladies fine give up their time, their money an' their play;
An' merchant kings clip their wings—give Tommy right of way.

But here I sit—don't even knit—just patch an' cook an' darn.
Count the pence I strive to stretch—can't even buy some yarn.
Each kiddie has a Victory bond—an' how I scrimped to pay!
An' make good soup from out o' stuff mos' folks 'd throw away.

I try to bring a little cheer, a tiny ray of joy
To neighbor friend across the way who's lost her only boy.
An' not a night that closes when the kiddies start to pray,
But "Don't forget our boys in France," I whisperingly say.

An' so it makes me kind o' blue to hear 'em always say,
"Do your bit, do your bit, morning, night and day!"
For think an' plan an' figure in no matter how I may,
It's such a tiny bit of bit that seems my only way.

But somehow now an' then it comforts me to think
That maybe the Recording Angel waiting at the brink
Will nod a welcoming to those who who didn't duty shirk;
An' in the final reckonin' make up The Book to show
That all the little bits of bits when added up together
Have made a big, big, big bit an' a little extra measure!

—Anna Wall Edwards.

Honey is a wholesome sweet that agrees with children and the children like it. It is better to give children honey than too much candy. Bread and honey is fine for lunch and tea.