FARMING

In this department each week will be given general information to farmers and stockmen. No attempt will be made to criticize the work already being done by Canadian farmers; but an effort will be made to present to the farmers of the country summarized information contained in government reports, and the actual experiences of men and women who have achieved success in farming by following modern methods. Farmers who have found new "wrinkles" or have made a success in any special line of agriculture are invited to send short letters to this paper giving their experiences, or criticizing any of the information contained in these columns.

Vegetable Growing

Artichokes

The tuberous rooted artichoke is grown to a very limited extent in Ontario. Commercially, it is not a money-making crop on a large scale, and only a few growers have anw artichokes. Kitchen gardens do not generally have this crop, because of the rank growth of the plant, and also because the crop, if not given attention, soon develops into a weed.

The tubers should be planted in rows at least 30 inches apart, and many prefer to set them 3 ft. by 4 ft., which allows for clean cultivation and gives the plant plenty of room to grow. Oftentimes a steep hillside is planted to this crop.

Cultivate as for potatoes.

Dig in the fall, and all the land should be thoroughly turned over, for any tubers left in the soil will soon infest the ground as weeds.

Crop should be stored the same way as potatoes.

The demand for good artichokes is increasing.

Asparagus

Asparagus is one of the first garden crops which come through the ground in the early spring. In a well cultivated, healthy patch the tender shoots appear very early and afford a pleasant, fresh vegetable food. This crop is easily grown and requires very little care during the season as compared with many of the other vegetable crops. It has a peculiar flavor which most people relish, and, considering the comparative ease with which it can be grown, should be found in the back-yard gardens of many city people, as well as in the kitchen gardens on every farm. Vegetable growers find in this crop a source of income in the early months of the season before many of the other vegetables are barely planted. Truck growers, or those who grow this crop to any large extent for outside markets or for canning purposes, consider that a well-established patch of asparagus is one of their best money-makers. In the Niagara district some large fruit growers have adopted this crop as an inter-crop and also as one to which they can look for considerable income while waiting for young orchards to come into bearing. Asparagus requires sufficient cultivation and manuring to keep the orchard in a good state of fertility, and yet it is not such a gross feeder as to diminish to any appreciable extent the supply of plant food required by the orchard. Asparagus needs cultivation and attention at such times of the year that it does not hinder in any way the operations of the orchard.

Asparagus roots are grown from seed. This does not in all cases come true to name. The seeds are usually sown rather thinly in rows three feet apart in the months of April or May, as soon as the soil becomes warm. With a seed drill use five pounds per acre. When the seedlings are from 2 to 3 inches high they are thinned out so as to stand about three inches apart in the rows, the strongest plants being left. Frequent cultivation is advised, and it is necessary to keep down all weeds. Where one has the convenience of a greenhouse, the seeds can be sown during the winter in flats and in the greenhouse temperature the plants will quickly grow and be ready to be transferred during the spring and summer. The seed should be sown thinly in rows three inches apart and at a depth of one-half inch. Slightly cover the seeds with soil and place flats on or near the heating pipes. Many plants can be grown in this way and a year gained on the outside method. Of course, care must be taken to carefully harden these young plants off in cold frames before attempting to permanently plant them in the field.

Asparagus will grow well on any soil from a sand to a heavy clay, but does well in a good garden soil of a sandy loam nature. Stony and gravelly soil should not be used for an asparagus bed. The soil should be rich, and be in a good condition, well cultivated and not worn out. It will prove worth while to fit a soil one year previous to its being used as an asparagus bed. Thorough ploughing, disking and harrowing will give results on this crop. Twenty-five feet of a row will be sufficient for an average family.

Needs Lots of Food

This crop is one which must be well fed. Many vegetable growers annually top-dress their asparagus patches with from 20 to 50 tons of good manure per acre. This should be applied directly after the cutting season is over. Contrary to the general belief, this is the proper time to apply any manure to this crop, for it is at this time that the plant commences to store up its food and prepare the shoots for the next spring's crop. As above stated, 20 to 50 tons per acre is a good dressing or on a smaller plot three or four inches of ordinary horse or barnyard manure will not be any too much. A top dressing of nitrate of soda of 200 pounds per acre will hurry the crop along in the spring. This can be applied by sprinkling the nitrate around the root and by raking or harrowing it in. Care should be taken that none of this should touch the tender shoots, as considerable damage will result from burning. Hen manure has been found to give excellent results on this crop, but on account of its high percentage of nitrogen cannot be used in such large quantities. More good than harm will come from a thorough disking of the asparagus patch immediately following the cutting season. It is the custom of many large asparagus growers to disk the ground between the rows and over the rows to a depth of three to four inches. This should be done so as to loosen the soil to allow air to circulate and allow moisture to get in and also to work in the heavy coating of manure, so that the plants will receive immediate benefit. This point is one which many gardeners will do well to pay more attention to, and it is certain that large yields of asparagus of a superior quality will result. Another good method is to open up a furrow between the two rows and pile the manure in this. The earth can be drawn back over the manure with a disk harrow or cuffler.

One-year-old plants give the best results in setting out a new asparagus bed, because there is less danger of the plants receiving any serious check at this age than at any other. Good healthy, stocky plants should be used, and great care should be taken to ensure that all weak, spindly ones should be discarded. On this depends a large amount of the success that is reached when the crop comes into bearing. Where this practice has not been rigidly adhered to, it is quite possible to pick out the weak crowns from the strong, healthy ones in a patch some five or six years old. It is possible to secure asparagus crowns of two or three years of age. These are sold by all seedsmen, and some years ago this was considered the best way in which to start an asparagus plantation. This idea has practically been given up by all up-to-date vegetable growers. The one-year-old stock will give a cutting just as soon as a three-year-old crown, and it is much easier to handle in the younger and smaller state.

(To be continued.)

THE CHICK

Removal from Nest.

Ordinarily, chicks should be left with the mother hen in the nest in which they were hatched until it is certain the hatch is complete. Sometimes the hatch is delayed considerably by a few weak chicks due to some of the eggs being chilled during incubation, to the setting of eggs varying greatly in age, or to one or more of various causes. Should the hen wish to leave the nest she should be allowed to do so else she is liable to become uneasy and trample some of the chicks. In such cases chicks not yet dry and strong and those which have pipped the shell but have not emerged should be given to another hen until strong enough to be added to the flock.

Adoption of Chicks.

It is frequently advisable if a number of hens are set at the same time to give the chicks to some of the hens and reset the others which should be those in best condition and which prove faithful setters the first time. A hen in good condition when first set, and properly cared for, may be used for two hatches, but should not be trusted for a third. The hens to be reset should not be allowed to remain with the chicks too long lest they turn their attention to raising the chicks and take a dislike for brooding. Just before pipping the eggs may be given to another hen to hatch, but this hen should be one which has previously hatched chickens. If it is wished to reset a certain hen the sound of hatching chicks should be beyond her hearing. She should never be left without eggs or substitutes at this stage. Give her a few door-knobs, round, smooth stones or imitation eggs to keep her contented. It is usually useless to try to make a hen set once she has left the nest in disgust or anger after being robbed of her first hatch.

In transferring chicks to another hen great care must be exercised. Usually it is best to give dark colored chicks to dark colored hens and light colored chicks to light colored hens. Should a dark colored hen hatch light colored chicks and mother them well, if other chicks are added they too should be light colored, and vice versa. Hens are sometimes very peculiar in this respect. Some will not accept chicks unless of their own color, some will accept only those of the same color as they hatch, others are not particular and will gladly take any they can get, irrespective of color. When the chicks are introduced to a strange hen they should be placed beside and in front of her. If she calls them under her she will in all probability adopt them, but if she picks them they should not be trusted further to her care. If she seems to regard them with suspicion or indifference watch them closely until it is perfectly evident whether she will adopt them or not. This work should be done during the day. If chicks are given to a strange hen during the night and she objects to them on seeing their color in the morning she may kill them before she can be prevented.

Occasionally, after the hens and chicks have been placed in their coops a chick will go into the wrong coop. Many chicks have made this fatal mistake and it must be guarded against if one or more of the hens objects to chicks of a certain color. Coops should be placed far enough apart to reduce the danger to a minimum.

(Continued next week.)

"MENTAL INDIGESTION

That we digest with our minds as well as with our stomachs, is the assertion of Dr. Chavigny in the Paris Medical. He says that most of those who seek the stomach specialists cherish special fads in regard to their diet or about going farefoot, or have other odd ideas. They often seem to thrive on a diet that normal persons could digest only with difficulty.

And he cites several cases in which "mental dyspepsia" was cured by retraining the mind with gymnastic exercises and military discipline.

Too Many Egg Hunters and Not Enough Easter Bunnies

Sheep Require Water

Some farmers seem to think that sheep do not need water and will do just as well without it. Although not heavy drinkers, sheep certainly need a regular daily supply of water in winter as well as in summer. If they cannot get clean water, they will find dirty water or eat snow.

Experienced sheep men see to it that water for sheep is always and easily accessible. The best of feeding with hay and grain is useless without water, the appetite is lessened and a poor, run-down animal is the result. Besides water, the sheep need salt. All these things are necessary to keep sheep in good condition during winter months.

POULTRY

THE EGG

How to Make the Nest.

The nest for the average hen should be fourteen or fifteen inches square and about the same height. A box of this height and width but twice as long, with a board four or five inches wide across the box at the base, dividing it into two equal parts makes a good nest. This board holds the nesting material together and provides a place for the hen to stand if she wishes to come off the eggs for a few minutes and you do not wish her to stray away. This nest must be covered, the entrance being in the end opposite where the hen sits. A barrel cut in two parts crosswise, covered, with an entrance in one side makes a good nest. It is very necessary that the hen be able to walk directly on the nest and have plenty of room in which to turn around. Do not make it necessary for her to jump down on the eggs.

If the nest is on the ground it is well to have only a piece of wire netting, say half inch mesh over the bottom, but if on a cement or board floor, place a sod or a few inches of moist earth in the bottom. Have it on the ground if possible. On the earth place an inch or two of fine oat chaff and round it out into a saucer shape. If it is too flat the eggs may roll away from the hen and become chilled but if too low in the centre the eggs may pile up and be broken or heated unevenly.

Transfer of the Hen.

This should be done after dark. Place a few door-knobs or round stones, if not too cold, in the new nest before getting the hen. Then gently remove her from where she is sitting, carry carefully to the new nest, place her gently on the door-knobs or stones (she thinks they are eggs), hold her there for a short time and if she cuddles down upon them and clucks as if perfectly satisfied with the change in all probability she will set. If she seems uneasy and inclined to walk about she may or she may not set. If she stretches her neck apparently looking for something which isn't there, commences to cackle, or gets up and walks around she resents the change and will likely be balky and refuse to set. All these operations should be carried out in the dark and without the use of a lantern. Cover the nest so it will be dark next day, but still so plenty of fresh air will be admitted and do not go near or molest the hen until almost dark the following day. At that time the nest may be opened up and "biddy" allowed off for supper. She should be watched carefully at this time. If after eating and drinking she walks back on the nest she is almost sure to set. If she is inclined to not go back she can often be persuaded to do so by a little attention. Do not place eggs under her till it is perfectly evident she will be a faithful setter.

CATS ON THE PAYROLL

There are many business concerns, chief among which are the dairy products companies, that make provision for the maintenance of from six to twenty cats as a protective organization. These cats are considered as necessary a part of the operating expenses as the employment of a night watchman, and it is said that they save hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of food yearly from destruction by rats and mice. The best possible rat catcher is a wary, semi-hungry cat.

Chickens in an Orchard

BY C. C. PARKER

Before having had any experience in the art of poultry keeping, I had always heard it said that an orchard was the ideal place for a chicken yard. This seemed to me very logical and an excellent scheme. In the first place the chickens would eat all the insects, bugs and pests which harm fruit trees and, also, they would fertilize the orchard, thus benefitting the crop of the orchardist. On the other hand the orchard would produce shade for the chickens in summer and food, both in the form of insects and rotten or poor fruit which would otherwise waste on the ground .

Therefore, in our chicken yard was set out a nice little orchard composed of apples, peaches and plums. The chickens were supposed to have free range in this entire orchard, which comprised about an acre. It was on a southern slope, with an eye to pleasing and benefiting both chicks and trees. It was all inclosed with a high wire fence. It also had a hedge and trees across the northern end.

Early in the spring we bought 200 baby chicks in addition to our seventy-five fowls. Of course, the chicks when quite young had colony houses and small temporary inclosures within the large one.

At the usual time the insect host arrived with its variety of caterpillars and bugs. These derived sumptuous meals from the tender young leaves of fruit trees, but the meals the hens made off these pets were nil. Such fare did not appeal to their gastronomic taste. The time came for spraying the fruit trees on the rest of the farm and this spraying was shortly done. Hadn't we better spray the hen-yard trees also? we asked. But no! The poison spray would fall from the trees to the grass beneath, and woe to our chicks now on free range. So no spraying was done and the trees suffered the consequences.

The next year the same thing happened. In due time a few peaches appeared. The hens pecked at a few that fell near by, but were not enthusiastic enough to range far for them.

The trees were most inconvenient in teaming to and from the hen houses and they also prevented the entire yard being plowed.

Hence that orchard-poultry theory seems to me rather a poor one, as it benefits neither fruit nor fowl. If the hens were asked, they would much the hens made off these pests were nil. from the trees to the grass beneath, prefer the vegetable garden. They scale the fence from the orchard to the aforesaid garden on every possible occasion.

It seems to me that the large free yard clear of trees except round the edge is best. This can be all plowed up, and if a little lime is added the entire ground is sweetened and a crop of rape, oats, grass or any other green stuff palatable to poultry can be easily grown. If planted in the fall the hens can come out on it early in the spring and it will be right for the young chicks.

This will furnish food and shade and keep the ground in good condition, free from disease germs and contamination. Keep the chicks out on this green in smaller yards, which can be moved easily, with wire tops to prevent their getting lost or taken by hawks, crows or cats. Later take the small yards away and move the colony houses often. The yard, of course, can be divided in two, and one-half of it planted in fall and one-half in spring so that the chickens may be out on one or the other at all times.

Sour Milk for Poultry

Sour milk is an important food for laying hens at all times of the year. It is a conditioner, and enables them to consume more feed and to make better laying records, without injuring their health, than they would without it. When fed to breeding stock during the winter it produces better egg production, higher fertility and higher hatchability. Stronger chicks may also be expected. The results warrant buying some skim milk for breeding stock if it is not otherwise obtainable, even if as high as two cents a quart has to be paid. So valuable is sour milk in the estimation of some of the most expert poultry men that they purchase milk powder and prepare sour milk from it.

Keep Hens Scratching

It is important to keep the hens scratching during the summer, but it is doubly so during the winter. It is by work and exercise that the fowls are kept contented, their blood is kept in circulation and their bodies made warm. Never be without litter on the floor, into which grain is scattered. This plan has been proved excellent by nearly all practical poultrymen, for in addition to the advantages named it also keeps the fowls busy and prevents such vices as egg-eating and feather-pulling. Fowls naturally like to scratch, especially when rewarded by finding a good meal in the bottom of the litter. Whenever we visit the poultry house we want to see the hens busily at work, for experience has taught us the idle hen seldom lays.

A Few Don'ts

Don't expect chilled or off-sized eggs to hatch. Use normal eggs only.

Don't fail to let plenty of sunlight into the poultry house.

Don't buy a cheap incubator and think it should hatch every egg.

Don't blame the weather when you find that leaky brooders are full of dead chicks.

Don't leave repairs to the incubator and brooder until eggs and chicks are ready to go into them.

Don't think you can make a success of poultry because you have failed at everything else.

Don't give up hope, however, without a fair trial, it may be just where you belong.

Don't keep a male bird with hens not intended for breeding.

Have You Noticed The Improvement in This Newspaper ?

Of course you have.

Every member of the family must read this paper every week. There's something in it for each.

Forst of all comes the local news of the district. Then the general news, and a review of the principal news events of the week.

There are features in this paper which up to now were published only in the city dailies.

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Patronize the advertisers in this paper and Buy Goods Made in Canada.

A Little of Everything

First English Newspaper.

The first English newspaper was a weekly issued in London in 1642.

IT MUST BE GOOD.

"That Beloved Cheater of Mine," a song written by L. Wolfe Gilbert and Edna Williams, has sold in excess of half a million copies. It was inspired by the Robertson-Cole special, "The Beloved Cheater," with Lew Cody as star.

10,000 LOVE LETTERS.

Lew Cody, "the man of a thousand loves," received more than 10,000 love letters in a contest to find the best one. The Robertson-Cole star is screendom's male authority on affairs of the heart.

Pocket Coat and Hat Hanger.

A recently patented coat and hat hanger which can be carried in a pocket and attached to any wooden surface without tools will sustain a weight of sixty pounds.

Dr. E. D. W. Greig, of Calcutta, reports that biscuits made of peanut meal are rich in the vitamine that prevents beri-beri.

LONGEVITY OF ANIMALS

Elephants are perhaps the longest-lived members of the animal kingdom, averaging between 100 and 200 years. There are records of elephants living 350 years. Most naturalists allow the whale about the same length of life as the elephant. The camel comes third, averaging about 75 years. The average life of a lion and a tiger is 40 and 25 years, respectively.

It is the boast of the dairymen of Holland that in their country there is a cow to every inhabitant.

A bridge in Peru, more than 200 feet long, is supported by ropes of cactus-fibre.

WILL IRRIGATE BRAZIL

Brazil's new President has urged on his congress the irrigation of more than 2,000,000 acres of land in the north-east of the republic, where famine has cost more than 1,000,000 lives since 1877.

TESTS AIR ABOVE TOWNS

By means of an instrument invented by Dr. J. S. Owens secretary of the British committee for investigation of atmosphere pollution, it is possible to measure and record the dirt in the air over a town at any and every hour.

MEMORIALS TO JAMES WATT

Permanent and practical memorials to James Watt, who died a century ago this year, are planned by a number of British scientific and engineering organizations.

ALCOHOL FROM COAL GAS

An English engineer, Ernest Bury, claims that he has succeeded in extracting ethylene alcohol from coal-oven gas on a commercial scale, says the Scientific American. The practical working of the process at the Skinningrove works, where 5,800 tons of coal are carbonized per week, reveals an average yield of 1.6 gallons of alcohol per ton of coal. The total weight of coal reduced to coke in this country during 1918 was 14,635,000 tons, so that the application of Mr. Bury's process to this quantity of coal would yield 23,416,640 gallons of alcohol, which would be available as liquid fuel. Coal treated at gas works would yield a further 27,000,000 gallons, or, taking alcohol and benzole together, 114,000,000 gallons of liquid fuel per annum could be produced from the carbonization of coal in this country toward meeting the total requirement of about 160,000,000 gallons.

PRICELESS POSSESSION

This charm of manner is of far more value to the possessor than mere perfection of feature and form. It warms and attracts where beauty leaves one cold and uninterested.

The charming woman thinks of the feelings and comfort of others before gratifying her own wishes. She is tactful, and her speech never rubs people the wrong way.

She says only kind things of all men, and has a happy way of making people feel pleased with themselves, and encouraged by her society. She listens attentively to the most boring details and sympathizes with the reciter, sharing her joys or woes as the case may require.

The sad she soothes and comforts with genuine feeling; the glad she laughs with, and encourages their happiness. She is a human ray of sunshine that thaws the most frozen and bitter of human hearts, and radiates with selflessness and sympathy.

The Brotherhood Movemet.

A British delegate from the National Brotherhood Movement of Great Britain, speaking at the meeting of the Federation in Montreal recently, said that he had revealed to him in a dream a theory of the universe, the underlying principle of which was the unity of all life from which he deduced the necessity for brotherhood. He is a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society of Great Britain, and says that the spirit of brotherhood had its source in the gospel of Christ. but he found it expressed in other forms in the Far East. The Brotherhood movement is active in a large number of Ontario towns.

"What am I putting these little sleds under the pumpkins for?" said the California farmer to the curious Easterner. "I've simply got to do this or have the pumpkins worn out by the fast-growing vines dragging them over the ground. But notice these teeth on the sled runners? Well, while the vines are dragging the sleds over the ground these teeth are plowing the ground for the next crop, or we would never be able to keep up with the seedings."

Animals Killed for Skins.

Nearly 70,000,000 wild animals are killed yearly for the sake of their fur.