Soils and Crops

Address communications to Agronomist, 73 Adelaide St. West, Toronto

STRAWBERRY ROOT ROT.

During the last two years numerous samples of strawberry root rot have been sent in to the St. Catharines' Dominion Laboratory of Plant Pathology for examination. While some of these were without doubt directly due to winter killing, many were brought about by some other agency. This same trouble has been reported this year not only from most strawberry sections of Ontario but also from the States of New York, Illinois, Michigan and Idaho. The cause is given as undetermined, although certain soil organisms are suggested.

The leaves of root-rotted plants remain small, are bronze in color and often become yellow, but eventually the plant, roots and crown dies. Generally the diseased plant dies before picking time although it is not unusual to see patches of diseased plants remain alive till sometime after. Such plants produce small, green, immature and worthless fruit. In nearly all cases this trouble appears in isolated spots throughout the field. Some rows may be affected in their entirety but this is not the general rule. Much more often it is only a part of the row that is diseased. When such diseased plants are pulled up and the roots cut transversely it is noticed that the entire root and crown is brown or black. Healthy strawberry plants show a white central core.

On one farm this trouble has been present on the same piece of land for the last four years. Various fertilizers were tried but without success. However, this last year this grower set out his strawberry patch on another part of his farm and so far no evidence of root-rot has been apparent. While as yet we are not able to state the cause, we believe that conditions of the soil have a great deal to do with it. We should advise any grower who is troubled with root rot to set out any new plantation on a piece of land that has not previously been planted to strawberries.

This laboratory would be very glad to receive material of any such trouble from any grower no matter where situated. Any material thus sent in will be carefully examined and reported upon. In sending specimens kindly see that they are packed so as to arrive in good condition, and address the Dominion Laboratory of Plant Pathology, 204 St. Paul St., St. Catharines, Ontario.—G. H. Berkeley, Plant Pathologist.

GOOD-LOOKING FLOORS FOR FARMHOUSE ROOMS

BY ETHEL CARPENTER.

Floors are regular bugbears to the woman who is striving to make her home pretty. Like most necessities, conventional floor coverings are apt to make appalling inroads on the income, and even then there is the danger that they may be unsatisfactory from the standpoint of choice. Nine times out of ten a woman is uncertain how any floor treatment will look until it is tried; moreover she sometimes cannot afford what she would like, and must content herself with some second or third choice.

But if she gets the trick of knowing what will look particularly well on the floors of farmhouse rooms, she will find a certain economy no hardship, since the somewhat unconventional floor treatments that guarantee the most promising results for farmhouse living are usually quite within her means.

Floor treatments are just as important in creating a beautiful home as are wall treatments, window curtains and the actual furniture to be used in furnishing it. And an effective floor, which includes its paint and stain, as well as its covering, does not require a great deal of money to be spent on it to make it so.

What it does need, first, last and always, is intelligent thought.

The first thing that we must demand of a floor that is to be beautiful is that it be quiet in effect.

TRANSFORMING SOFT-WOOD FLOORS.

The second is that it has the proper value, which means that the lower part of the room should be heavier in tone than the upper part. This makes the room keep its proper balance.

The third is that the floor should act as an effective part of the room scheme.

The fourth is that the right floor covering should be selected with relation to beauty, cost, wear and personal preference.

I want to tell you what floor treatments I consider particularly beautiful and especially suited to the farmhouse.

These treatments may be divided into two classes: The bare floor relieved by small rugs, and the room-size floor covering.

In discussing the use of small rugs, the treatment of the bare floor must be solved first, and there are several good treatments that may be suggested for the floor of soft wood, which is the usual flooring to be found in the farmhouse.

If the boards have been carefully selected and laid, and the floor is in good condition, there is a special treatment that well repays for the trouble of applying. When finished it will resemble a hardwood floor.

Dissolve a sufficient quantity of burnt umber in linseed oil, thinning it with turpentine to impart a pleasant pale brown color to the floor. Rub this mixed coloring into the natural unfinished wood with a soft woolen cloth, taking great care that it goes on very evenly in tone.

When this is dry, melt about a pound of shaved beeswax in a kettle on the stove, remove from the fire and thin with turpentine. It is necessary to remove the kettle as the turpentine is combustible, but after this is poured in, the kettle may be replaced on the stove, so that the mixture may gradually heat and come to the right consistency to be applied easily to the floor.

This is applied evenly with another soft woolen cloth; it must be kept hot during the operation.

After allowing a day to elapse, polish the floor with a brick wrapped in woolen cloth or soft carpet, or else with a long-handled polisher, until the floor shows a soft glow.

This makes an ideal background for the laying of small rugs, and would have to be renewed only every six months or so. It may be cared for with a dry mop, with the addition of an occasional polishing when needed.

Varnish is another finish that is in high favor, and this is usually applied to a bare floor in the form of a varnish stain of the color desired. Walnut or dark oak are the colors to be advised for this.

The best varnish stain that money can buy is an economy in the end, and a new coat of it applied when needed is an economy also, because if the floor is allowed to get badly worn, the entire varnish finish must be removed before a new one is applied.

Varnish finish should not be applied on top of paint, or vice versa, but always the finish of a different nature should be first entirely removed.

If the old finish is cracking, flaking or peeling, it must always be removed by means of sandpaper or paint-and-varnish-remover before the new coat is applied.

But of all the finishes that may be used on the floors of the farmhause, there is none so satisfactory, so suitable and so beautiful as paint.

A colored floor, is not too garish, imparts just that note of style and character a room sometimes needs for good looks. Paint may be applied to bare boards that have never had any other finish, in which case it may be flat paint or gloss paint which contains an admixture of varnish. Varnish mixed with paint makes it wear better, but paint containing varnish had better not be used on a flat-painted floor, or vice versa, as the new coat is apt to flake off.

Painted floors may be richly colored, the choice of decorative hues being wide. Old blue; peacock blue, which is old blue with a nearly equal quantity of green added to it; leaf green, which is grayish in tone; dark apple green; taupe, which is a grayish brown; mulberry, which is a cross between ashes-of-roses and wistaria; and a gray which is not at all bluish in tone—a gray more the color of smoke.

The paint used on a floor should be darker in tone than the same color paint that is used for the standing woodwork.

On dull brown varnished floors, on pale brown waxed floors, and on floors that are painted, very delightful small rugs may be used. These may be of braided, crocheted or woven rags, or they may be hooked rugs, which in their revived popularity are more than the equal of real Oriental rugs, and much more suitable for use in the average farmhouse.

All of these small rugs may be made by the farm wife, as they have been since the beginning of time, and she is as capable as she always was in making rugs of beauty that the whole world copies with delight.

Therefore I want you to be sure to consider favorably the beauty and suitability of such small quaint rugs laid on the properly treated bare floor.

TREASURES FROM THE RAG BAG.

Woven rag rugs come in all sizes and attractive colors at very reasonable prices. Rugs braided by machine are very inexpensive; but rugs braided by hand are mostly so high priced that this furnishes an added incentive for doing the work at home.

Among room-size rugs there are also some that may be made at home; and these are the braided or crocheted oval rugs. They may be made absolutely without expense if the rag bag is made to yield up its treasures, and if these rags are sorted, torn into strips and dyed.

But it is possible to buy ready-prepared and dyed rags by the hank, which are made out of new material, and these are admirable for crocheting.

The woven rag rugs that come in room size are very inexpensive, and they have the added desirability of coming from the washtub like new. Rag carpeting strips may be sewed together to form a room rug.

These two types look especially well on a painted floor, painted the hue of the predominant rug color.

Quite a bit more expensive, but as durable as iron, are the plain-color linen rugs which are suitable for use in the dressiest farm room. These have no pile, but are woven thickly and evenly and lie flat on the floor.

Something like the linen rugs, but just so much more desirable as their increased price would indicate, are the woven wool rugs which have no pile. In plain colors these rugs are delightful and may be had with straight plain borders of contrasting or harmonizing colors.

These rugs may be had in small or room size.

Among the more conventional rugs that are suited for farmhouse rooms are the Axminsters and the Wiltons. The best quality Axminster rug costs about the same as a low-grade Wilton, and in choosing between the highest-grade Axminsters and the lowest-grade Wilton there is not the slightest question in my mind that the Axminster would be the wiser purchase.

In purchasing a rug like an Axminster or a Wilton it pays to put as much money into it as possible. If you haven't enough to get a fine Wilton, spend it for a good-quality Axminster.

Plain rugs are very fashionable the world over for every sort of house. They are decorative in the highest degree and no room can fail of beauty if it has one on the floor.

Some housewives object to them, however, because they show footmarks, though I myself do not object to this in the least, for a plain rug is expected to show them, and the handsomer the rug the more it is apt to show them. But run the sweeper over the rug, draw the flat of the broom over it quickly, seeing that the strokes all run the same way, and the rug is as sleek as a pussycat. As the pile of any rug flattens, the footmarks are less likely to appear.

When great wear is required in a room such as a dining-room. a piled rug had better show a small figure. This is also a convenience in the dining-room, where spots are apt to develop on any rug. But the figure need not be large, more of a self tone or two tone, and the rug should not have a central medallion. Medallion rugs are in very poor taste, and even if we are still having to wear out some of them, we know enough not to buy a new one of this style.

In selecting a new figured rug, I feel that the Oriental motifs are less suited to the farmhouse than to any house. The farmhouse idea is quaintness, and there is nothing quaint about Oriental patterns. In figured rugs, therefore, select the small all-over patterns that are not inspired by these sources.

Straw rugs, grass rugs and matting are suitable for the farmhouse. But these should show no pattern other than a stripe, a block, or an all-over tiny figure; and there should be no stenciled decorations. Linoleum is suitable for farmhouse use, and many people welcome this expedient for the covering of rough and unsightly floors.

Tapeworm in Sheep.

Some eight different species of tapeworm are harbored by the sheep, but the most common type found in the Province of Ontario is known as Toenia expansa. This species of tapeworm may run from eight to ten feet in length up to eighteen feet, and from about 1-25 of an inch wide at the head to nearly 1-2 inch at the tail. The entire worm is yellowish white in color, and is composed of segments about one-quarter of an inch long.

The experience of the Animal Husbandry Department has been that lambs suffer more from this trouble than do sheep. In 1918 and in 1922 the lambs in the O.A.C. flock were badly infested, but the ewes were practically free from the trouble. Infested sheep or lambs do not thrive, the skin becomes pale and weakness follows, accompanied by a dry condition of the wool and very often by digestive troubles. The surest symptom is the finding of segments of the worm in droppings. If this trouble is suspected close observation should be given the droppings of the sheep and lambs.

Fast the sheeps or lambs twenty-four hours before treatment. Then give one dram oil of male shield fern in three ounces of castor oil to a mature sheep or half the dose for a lamb. Give as a drench by means of a long-necked bottle. Kamala in 1½ dram doses to mature sheep given in thick gruel or treacle and followed by three ounces of castor oil in a few hours will expel the worms. Keep sheep in after treatment until all worms are expelled. This will take from 24 to 30 hours. Put out on new pasture, as if any segments of tapeworm are picked up by the sheep or lambs they will develop. The trouble is most common in wet years and on wet pastures.

A deep sense of economy is almost as effective as the "still small voice."

Growing alfalfa brings profits beyond the hay pay, many grow it alone for the land's sake.

Can You Beat This One?

Here's a fish story that makes the average rod-wielder look like the youthful George Washington. The gigantic musky whose portrait is seen above was landed by an Indian with his bare hand! This is the gospel truth. Some few weeks ago, setting out from Devil's Gap Bungalow Camp, on Lake of the Woods, Kenora, an ardent sportsman hooked this tremendous fellow, a 35-pounder, on a fifteen-pound test black Japanese silk line and an eight-ounce split bamboo fishing rod with a No. 3 Starr double-spinner as a lure. The captive, offering the type of battle anglers thrill to, struggled for forty-five minutes, then, at the critical moment, made a supreme effort, snapped the line and disappeared. The sportsman groaned, believing all was over. But the wily Indian guide, paddling round quietly, spotted the fish lying exhausted in four feet of water. 'Don move' he urged. 'She come up!' And, sure enough, the 'lunge presently rose to within a few inches of the surface. A lightning movement of the Indian instantly followed and, seizing the fish through the back of the gill, he flung him triumphantly into the canoe. Next time you swap yarns with your pals and want to cap their best efforts with something that is no less remarkable than it is correct in every particular, ask them "Can you beat this one?"

PACKING BUTTER FOR WINTER USE

BY BELLE MILLAR, DAIRY DEPT., O.A.C.

I attended an Institute meeting one day and heard one of the speakers close his address with this little verse:

"Good, better, best,
Never let it rest,
'Till your good is better,
And your better, best."

It is the very best butter that we can make that must be packed for winter use.

Butter undergoes changes in the keeping and two things necessary for good results when keeping butter for winter use are best quality of butter and low temperature for holding.

Use cream that has a clean, sweet flavor. Churn it at a temperature low enough to bring the butter in nice, firm granules in from 20 to 30 minutes.

If by any chance the butter comes soft, be very careful to get rid of the buttermilk. It will be necessary in a case of this kind to use an extra wash water.

Salt the butter in the usual way and work it thoroughly. Should the butter soften during the process of working, put it away in a cool place to become firmer before continuing the working.

As butter keeps best in a solid, crocks or boxes are used for winter use.

The boxes have a coating of paraffine on the inside and it is necessary to line them with heavy parchment paper.

While many people have a 56-lb. box filled for winter, in some cases it would be much better to have it put in two 28-lb. boxes.

The crocks should be in good condition, free from cracks or breaks in the glazing.

When packing butter, be sure to pack solidly. See that there are no openings in the sides and that the corners are well filled.

If there is 8 or 10 lbs. of butter in a churning, do not put the whole lump into the crock and then try to pack it down. Rather put it in in pieces, making sure that each piece is solidly packed.

Finish the top off evenly and cover with parchment paper. A thin layer of salt paste may be put over this before fastening down the lid.

With crocks it will be necessary to tie clean wrapping paper over the top after the lid has been put on.

All butter should be stored in a clean, dark place where the air is pure and the temperature low and even.

POULTRY.

It is sometimes difficult to say just where poor management stops and disease begins, but there is one ailment of partly grown chickens that is most always traceable to mismanagement. Poultrymen often speak of it as "fall colds."

As the growing birds increase in size they require more and more air while on the roost at night. If they are kept in close, stuffy houses where the air circulation is poor they are very likely to develop colds.

It is well to be on the lookout for this trouble and to guard against it by being sure that the roosting quarters are well ventilated at all times.

There is very little danger of draft harming a healthy, well-feathered chicken in warm weather, so it is a good plan to provide a ventilator of generous size in the rear wall of every colony brooder house. With windows in the front left open and the rear ventilator also open, there will usually be sufficient circulation of air to keep the chickens in a healthy condition so that they will not be subject to fall colds.

Taking a Milk Sample.

Several years of experience as a cow tester have indicated some points to me, some points in taking milk samples that are worth passing along. The sample for a milk test for the butterfat content does not need to be large. A half pint is plenty.

In taking a sample, when the cow is milked, stir or pour the milk from one pail to another two or three times. Then dip out what is needed.

If the first milking taken is evening and the cow gives twelve pounds, then keep that separate, and in the morning take another sample carefully mixed. If the cow gives eighteen pounds in the morning then save a proportionately larger sample of the morning milking. Mix the two and that gives you a pretty fair sample.

Taking the sample from two days' milkings is better, but one is more practical.

The reason for the two milkings is that most cows will produce a richer milk in the evening than in the morning and one sample would indicate little. Some cows, however, are freakish and produce just the opposite kind of milk.

Now that the half pint is saved, care again must be used in mixing the sample. It ought to be somewhat warm as cold cream and milk will not mix any too well. Pouring from one milk bottle to another is about the best way to mix. But too much pouring is apt to incorporate air in the milk and make a "shy" sample, because bubbles take up space in the pipette.

I like to make two tests of each sample. That is required in official work. The two samples usually are exactly the same. If there is more than two-tenths of one per cent. difference the official testers are required to make the test over again.

In reading the fat column I've found a black pencil makes the etchings easy to read by filling them with lead.

Cows that are just turned on pasture or have had their feed changed recently or have been or are coming in heat do not give a fair sample of milk. Wait until they are quiet. —E. R.

Starting At It.

Her Friend—"When you and Ferdinand were married he promised you the cream of everything. Is he making good?"

Mrs. Youngbride—"He's making a good start. He earns enough to keep me supplied with cold cream and himself with shaving cream."

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

JACKIE RABBIT AND WILLIE WOODCHUCK GO FISHING.

It was an excited little rabbit that went running over to Willie Woodchuck's house one bright morning soon after school was out.

"Oh, Willie," shouted Jackie Rabbit, "mother says I may go fishing this afternoon if I get the garden hoed. Can you go?"

Willie didn't wait a minute to answer. He just winked his eye at Jackie and waddled into the house as fast as he could. In a minute he was back again and the broad smile that stretched from ear to ear told how tickled he was.

"Mother says I may go just as soon as I get the berries picked," he said.

"Hurray," shouted Jackie. "I know where I can get some nice big fat wiggly worms that will be just fine for bait." And off he skipped toward home to finish the hoeing.

So it was that early that afternoon Jackie Rabbit and Willie Woodchuck found themselvse down by the Fishing Hole at the bend of the big creek.

Carefully they climbed out on the old log, that they always used to fish from. With their hooks baited with big ugly worms, the fish began to bite fast, but once when Jackie threw out too far, his fishhook caught on a log nearby. He pulled it and pulled it and wiggled it east and wiggled it west. Willie did his best to help him and finally off it came.

But what a frightened "Oh! Oh! Oh-h-h" it was that they both cried when they saw what had happened. In attempting to loosen Jackie's fishhook, the big log they were on had drifted away from shore and they were out in the middle of the big river, drifting drifting toward the Big Sea.

"Whatever shall we do?" asked Willie with a splashy tear forming in each of his little black eyes. We can't swim that far."

"Oh, no, no," said Jackie, "we can't swim hardly at all. But sailors don't cry, Willie, and we'll have to play we're sailors. Just sit awfully still so you don't fall off. Perhaps a merry little breeze will come up and blow us toward shore."

But Jackie was just as scared as Willie as they went drifting, drifting on toward the Big Sea.

Horse Barns.

Many horse barns, good in most every other particular, have poor floors in the stalls or, in case of a dirt floor, deep holes tramped out where the horse must stand or lie. After a horse works all day he is entitled to a good bed. Board floors should be kept in good repair and dirt ones well filled to provide proper drainage and an even surface.

Horses compelled to stand with their front feet in deep depressions in the stall will develop weak backs. And another bad practice is to leave hay in front of a horse slightly out of reach when, in his effort to get to it, he must press against a manger or other like obstruction. This constant pressure will bruise his breast and start a growth that is practically incurable and means the loss of the animal.

Wash Day.

The next time the wife complains of wet feet on wash day make a slat platform for her to stand on.

The platform is four feet long and two feet wide. The long slats are one inch thick and two inches wide, and the cleats underneath—there are four—are of the same material.

It is so light that it can be set up on end when the wash is on the line and quickly dried out.

The management of the farm has a two-fold aspect that of a business and that of a home.