POISON WEEDS

BY WOODS HUTCHINSON, M.D.

Weeds are pesky things. No one who has ever lived on a farm has the slightest affection for them. They are the visible sign and aftermath of the fall in the Garden of Eden—"Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and . . . in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

We can understand the upstanding, open and above-board prickly kind of pests and even have a sort of grudging respect for them. They stand right out, with all their bristles up, and give us battle.

Also we can make some allowance for the regular "professional" weeds, which boldly try to "jump the claims" of our precious crops. They know a good thing when they see it.

Many of them indeed, like parsley, lamb's-quarters, dandelions and chicory, were garden vegetables or potherbs in Europe, though we must remember that they will eat almost anything as potherbs in Europe—they have to!

The dead bodies of these weeds are, in fact, beneficial when plowed under, while the work required in their destruction tears up and loosens the ground magnificently to let in the deep soil bacteria.

ENEMIES IN DISGUISE.

Yet when it comes to weeds which attack the cultivator instead of the crops, we lose patience entirely, especially when they deliberately try to lure us into striking distance by imitating friendly and harmless plants and by putting on lovely colors. Or, like the ragweed, having no dagger to stab or colors to attract, some launch literal gas clouds of sneeze pollen on the evening breeze.

The chief camouflaged Borgia of our fields and pastures is our ancient and far-too-familiar enemy, poison ivy. He is a fakir from start to finish, called ivy, but really a sumac. When he grows like a shrub we call him oak, and when like a vine, ivy, but he's "pizen" all the time.

You can tell him by his beautiful shiny trefoil, or three-pointed leaves, polished mahogany in the spring, vivid metallic green all summer, and crimson and gold in the fall, his livid, greenish white cluster of flowers and ashy-white berries.

But he is not so deadly black as he is painted. He does not spread his venom abroad upon the breeze. Yours is "the skin he loves to touch." The poison or toxin is a tough oily resin, and can no more evaporate into the air than could linseed oil. People who declare themselves to have been poisned by walking past ivy vines thirty yards away may have kept that distance from all the ivy they saw. But you never know what you touch without noticing it when you go into the woods, especially if you have your attention fixed on something besides the brush you brush up against.

Ivy's second redeeming feature is that he's slow to take hold, like mustard gas in war. A thorough scrubbing with soap, hot water and a nail brush any time within half an hour or even an hour after the encounter will wash off all the thick, slow-melting oil resin before it has had time to dissolve and penetrate the skin.

It's a good idea, if you know you are susceptible to ivy and have been in woods or pastures where it abounds, to scrub your hands thoroughly with sand or mud instead of soap at the first stream or pond you come to on your way home. This will prevent nine-tenths of all possible poisonings.

The third redeeming feature of ivy is that the worst poisonings blamed on him are really due to "bugs" scratched into the skin by exasperated finger nails trying to dig out the intolerable itching of his bite. Of course he is accessory before the fact, but he's not the principal offender.

In other words, those terrible inflammations that spread right up the lymph chains of the arm and make swollen and sore the glands in the arm pits are really secondary infections with our old friend, *Streptococcus A.*

If you don't discover that you've been "sumacked" till you feel the itching and see the rash, the cure is the same as the prevention. Scrub thoroughly with soap and hot water and finish off with some form of denatured alcohol suitable for wound use, or some mild antiseptic like iodine, boric acid, or one of the new coal-tar dye antiseptics which your doctor can suggest.

If by bad luck you have both the ivy and the infection, there is no use to scrub; it's a doctor's job then and a big one. Go see him at once.

But the best and surest means of prevention is to put a note on your farm calendar for September, "Get after poison ivy and other fence-corner brush and weeds." That is a good time, because ivy's in full blaze of color and as easy to detect as a prairie fire. While you're at it, you might take along also any of the other bushes or weeds that are making trouble in your section, such as barberries for the black rust of wheat and wild currants and gooseberries for white-pine blister.

Of late years we have been discovering other "unfriends" among our plant neighbors whose methods are even subtler and more distressingly effective; and some of these are literally members of our own household—not wild men of the woods, like ivy and briers and nettles. Indeed, the first shocking accusations involved two plant friends always regarded as beauty and innocence personified—the red, red rose of our cottage gardens and the new-mown hay of our meadows.

At first we repelled the absurd accusations with scorn, even resentment and indignation. The scent of the rose, the most ravishing perfume of all times, worshipped by lovers; the fragrance of new-mown hay sung by every poet!

For there's nothing on earth
Like making love
Except making hay in fine weather.

That these two most ethereal delights should be insultingly and prosaically linked with colds in the head, snifflings, sneezings and asthma! But unromantic scientists, blind to beauty or charm, proceeded calmly and ruthlessly to dub one form of summer catarrh as rose cold and another as hay fever. And the worst of it was the names stuck.

But the cold-blooded scientists showed that both rose and grass were actuated solely by the worthiest and highest possible motives—the perpetuation of the species by the spread of their pollen.

Broader studies revealed that they were by no means the only innocent offenders in this regard; indeed, quite a number of plants were literally broadcasting their pollen for purposes of fertilization. Perhaps it would be more correct to describe them as launching smoke screens of millions of tiniest pollen granules upon the winds.

Some of the pollen reaches its predestined mark, and all is well. But some of it, with apparently more of original sin than predestination, reaches a much less romantic mark in the back of a nose—and all is far from well.

But the question arises. Why does one human nose tune in with the broadcasted pollen of only one flower or plant, while another proboscis chimes in with meadow-hay radio and is deaf to ragweed melody?

A MATTER OF TASTE.

It finally all comes down to a question of individual taste or, rather, susceptibility. All sorts of pollens are radiated far and wide everywhere in their season, and all sorts and conditions of men inhale them. The vast majority pronounce them all harmless.

But it is just as strawberries are poison to one man, clams to another. The overwhelming majority cause no trouble to anybody. But when a small group of pollens get snuffed up into an even smaller group of touchy noses—probably not over 1 per cent.—trouble begins at once.

It is simply an instance of "what is one man's meat is another man's poison."

The hay fever, or summer catarrh, though caused by such tiny, infinitesimal trifling, is anything but a trifle.

Even in the milder forms, the sneezing, burning, running at the eyes, the "red-hot' headache, the wheezing, the swellings of nose and lips serevely interfere with both comfort and working power; and when they have grown into the full-blown haw asthma, and we have added to all these a constant wheezing and gasping for breath, which makes sleep impossible at night and only to be snatched in cat naps during the day, well, there comes a time when the victim begins to almost regret that the malady never ends fatally.

The number of snifflers attacked by this milder spring form of hay fever is small.

Usually all that need be done is to keep out of the woods and orchards as much as possible and to wear pledgets of absorbent cotton in the nostrils and goggles over the eyes to keep the pollen out. A few cases are more severe and must be treated by injecting extracts of the criminal pollen to produce immunity.

The next crop of the disease, in hay time, is more severe and increases in virulence and number of victims, probably because the number of pollen-broadcasting plants increases with the season.

Broadly speaking, there is little use trying to escape autumn hay fever.

What then is to be done. First go to your doctor and he can give you various sprays and washes and directions for the use of goggles and cotton plugs in the nostrils which will give great relief and often tide you over for the season.

But the one sheet anchor, the only permanent cure, is injections of alcoholic and watery extracts of the pollen at fault. These are gradually increased in amount until they produce that curious condition of protection known as immunity. With patience and skill, substantial relief and practical cure can now be hoped for in almost 75 per cent. of the cases.

There is nothing new about hay fever. It has probably been with us from the time when man first began to till the soil. For it is a farm disease caused chiefly by those "plants out of place" called weeds, which live on and around our plowed land.

As will have been noted by flower friends, very few real flowers, with colored petals, cause or spread hay fever, for the simple reason that these are fertilized by bees or other insects and have no need to fling their pollen abroad.

Kitchen Accessories.

One of the nicest things to have hanging in the kitchen, near the range, are several holders to use in handling dishes, pans, etc., and while one can buy fine ones in the household supplies sections of the stores, most women will prefer making their own. Every one has odd pieces of materials put away, so it should never be necessary to buy anything to make these holders.

Old ticking makes fine ones—using only a double thickness, sewing a small ring at one corner to hang it up by. These holders may be cut any size that seems convenient. To make them, turn in all the edges evenly and baste the two parts together, then stitch all around on the machine. They launder more easily when not made too bulky. Percale, linen, unbleached muslin, denim—one could almost continue indefinitely. Make six or eight at a time, then always keep them conveniently near, and use instead of taking silver or dish towels.

Some women like holders about twenty-seven inches long, and at each end a sort of pocket-shaped piece is stitched on. A hand is then slipped into each pocket and in that way one holder will take the place of two.

Cheesecloth — the medium-priced quality—makes good dust cloths, allowing one yard for each. It is better to buy the material and make them, if you have the time. Pull a thread to cut by, turn an even quarter-inch hem and stitch on the machine. Don't forget to fasten the threads. If well made, they will last much longer than otherwise. If you want cloths to use with furniture polish use the cheesecloth, making the pieces one-half yard long.

Ironing-board covers are another thing that careful housekeepers like to make. Shrink a rather heavy quality of cheesecloth, then lay a length on the board and cut out, being careful to allow for the thickness of the board, and a good seam besides down each side. The material should be wide enough to reach to the under side. Then cut pieces for each end—making them about eight or nine inches deep for the broad end. and deeper for the narrow end of the board. The piece for the narrow end should be hemmed across the bottom before stitching to the cover, and for the broad end of the cover, instead of cutting this end piece in one, it should be cut in two pieces, and lapped together at the outer end, finishing the ends and bottom with hems. This will allow you to slip the narrow end of the board in place and after the wide end is on fasten together with thumb tacks. Sew small rings at intervals each side of the cover and lace together with flat and narrow tape.

Two of these covers should be made at a time.

After Harvest Tillage.

Only the rich fellows can stand the losses. Robber weeds reduced the grain and pasture yields on many an acre this season. Conditions becoming worse each year, taking more profits than would pay the taxes.

Plow the land that you intend to plow immediately after harvest. Cultivate as frequently as possible with a springtooth up to the end of October. Rib up the land before freeze-up in November. This practice will help provide that the fence row and roadside weeds are cut in proper time to prevent seed blowing over the recently cultivated fields.

We have in our blackberry patch one cane that measures 211 inches in length. It is the longest I ever saw. —R. T. F.

Slapping a man on the back is not always striking him the right way.

Shrinkage in Harvested Fruit.

Loss of weight after harvest is an important factor in the handling of pears. It not only causes decreased tonnage, but is the main reason for wilting, and seriously impairs appearance of the fruit.

Wilted pears are dull and unattractive and do not become aromatic. Loss in weight of only 3 to 4 per cent. is usually sufficient to cause considerable wilt, according to investigators. In extreme cases loss of weight while in storage may total 15 per cent., it was found.

Two factors are responsible for loss of weight—natural decomposition and excessive loss of moisture. Since Natural decomposition has been found to be less than a fraction of 1 per cent. for an entire storage period, it becomes clear that loss in moisture is the main reason for poor condition of pears after storage. Relative humidity is one of the important points in storage. At a relative humidity of 80 to 86, loss of weight was found to be in the vicinity of less than 1 per cent., while the low humidity of 50 to 56 brought loss of weight to approximately 14 per cent.

Bartlett pears may lose 4 per cent. in weight if left a few days under the trees following picking, but if the boxes are covered with a wet canvas this loss is avoided. The type of wrappers has but little effect upon loss of weight in storage. Investigations in the use of oil wraps and common fruit tissues checked against unwrapped fruit showed little of practical significance.

Time of picking, however, has an important bearing upon loss of weight, which is also, of course, loss of volume. Fruit picked in an immature condition, it is well known, wilts readily. Loss also results very quickly with pears if any degree of overmaturity is attained before harvest.

Pressure tests are now used in many commercial orchards to determine the time of picking. In the investigations in question the pressure test was utilized to determine stage of maturity and therefore the best picking time. Bartlett pears testing forty pounds on a pressure test lost more than 90 per cent. weight during 264 days in storage, while those showing only twenty-five pounds' resistance to the pressure have lost 5 per cent. in the same period under identical conditions.

Twenty-five to thirty pounds resistance to the pressure test is the recognized stage for harvesting Bartlett pears. In making the pressure test several pears should be used, and the average taken rather than dependence placed upon a single fruit, since there will be some variation due to various natural conditions.

When putty cracks and drops off the windows within a comparatively short time after it is put on, it is because the wood was not painted shortly before the putty was put on. The best putty won't stick long on unpainted wood, or on old crumbly, dried-out weathered paint. Therefore, it pays to paint the wood first, let it dry and then put on the putty. A coat of paint applied on the putty after it has hardened will make it last longer.—H.

Two bushels of oats will take the place of one of corn for beef cattle over 800 pounds. If two bushels of oats cost less than one of corn, feed the oats, for it will be cheaper. For beef animals up to 800 pounds, oats can replace corn up to two-thirds of the ration.

Underfeeding is one of the greatest burdens of the whole dairy industry. The first purpose for which a dairy cow uses feed is to maintain her body, and before feed can be used for any other purpose, that part of the feed needed for maintenance must be supplied.

LACK OF SYSTEM IN HOUSE MANAGEMENT

BY MRS W. H. KING.

I passed a little house on the outskirts of town one warm day last week during the loveliest part of the day, to me, the late afternoon, just the hour when it is so pleasant to take one's sewing or book to the porch for a brief respite before beginning supper preparations; but on the porch of this little house sat no cool, calm housewife enjoying the pleasant lengthening shadows. No, indeed. She was on her knees instead, swishing a scrubbing brush and much soapy water and looking very hot and red and tired and, to tell the truth, somewhat cross.

"Work is never done in this house," she remarked with a sigh as she wiped her hands and prepared for a moment's chat. "I'm at it from morning to night, and then it's all to be done over again the next day and every day afterward."

As it was rather late to be cleaning the porch, I remarked that possibly she had been busy at some unusual enterprise, canning, perhaps, or ironing. But no, she said; she had merely prepared the meals and dusted and cleaned as usual, but that even these ordinary tasks occupied all her daylight hours.

While we chatted the soapy water cooled and the shadows grew longer and longer and I felt quite guilty to be delaying the process of cleaning the porch, but she was loath to let me go.

"If it were not for these little periods of relaxation I don't see how I could get through the day," she remarked plaintively. "I was saying that very thing to my next-door neighbor this morning when I ran in to see the new lamp shade she was making. It was such a lovely lamp shade, I just couldn't go home until it was finished. I would love to make one like it, but I cannot find time even to finish the mending."

And right then and there I discovered the reason why the porch was being washed in the late afternoon and why this woman's work was never done. She had never learned the secret of concentrating, of working steadily during proper working hours and getting done. Her work was dropped at the slightest provocation or whim—just a row to be crocheted on some lace she was making, just a page to read in some interesting book, just a few moments' telephone chat, just an idle half hour with some casual caller, and the golden hours of the day were gone, but the work was still to be done.

I did so wish I might tell this tired housewife that half her weariness was caused by lack of system, that planning ahead is the surest way of getting ahead in the matter of time as well as money; but I feared that she might resent my unasked advice.

Long ago I discovered that the only way to accomplish all the things I so earnestly wished to accomplish was to divide my day into working periods, playing periods and loafing periods.

In my working periods I really work steadily and vigorously; my play periods I devote to reading or fancy work or to doing some of the fascinating things that I enjoy. I have not so many loafing periods in my days, but I try to reserve a few odd moments for pure laziness or relaxation. In my opinion the loafing period is quite as important as the others, only it need not be so long.

It's sort of comforting to sit on the porch late in the afternoon just watching the sunset, with no pestering little prick of conscience telling me of some neglected task.

I wish my friend in the little house would try it.

Sweet Pickles That Won't Shrivel.

Since the delicate flavor of small sweet pickles is enjoyed by almost every member of the family, provide a number of jars of them for use on picnics and for the winter months.

To keep them from shriveling make them this way:

Select the small cucumbers, about 100 of them, and cover with cold water for an hour. Place them in a crock and add a brine solution in the proportions of 1 cup of coarse salt to a gallon of water. Allow the cucumbers to soak for 48 hours and be sure that they are tightly covered with a plate during the last 24 hours. While in the brine, the salt draws out the water in the pickles and leaves them shriveled and tough. If canned in this manner, they would continue to be tough, but they are not ready to be put in jars at this stage.

Soak the pickles in vinegar for an hour in order that the water may go back into them again and they may be made tender and turgid. (If the sugar is added at this time they are apt to remain shriveled). After soaking in vinegar, pack in sterilized jars, and pour boiling spiced and sweetened vinegar over them, and seal.

The amount of sugar may be varied according to taste, although 1 cup of sugar is considered a satisfactory amount for 100 two-inch cucumbers. The spices may be freshly ground in the coffee grinder and tied in muslin bags if the housewife prefers to have the vinegar remain clear in the jars. For this quantity of cucumbers, it is well to use 1 stick of cinnamon, 1 teaspoon of whole cloves, 1 teaspoon of whole allspice, and a bay leaf. If the vinegar is too strong it is well to dilute it, since too strong vinegar tends to soften the pickles too much.

In Abyssinia bars of salt are still in use as currency.

FRENCH DESIGNS ACKNOWLEDGE THE FLARE.

The interesting feature of this frock lies in the cut and arrangement of the panel, which gracefully ripples its way across the front and onto the back of the dress at the hip-line. The front and the back of the frock are plain. The edges of the panel are finished, or it may be lined throughout with contrasting color material. It is set in at the shoulder seams and tacked to the front and at the hips. The neck is cut in V shape and finished with a tucked collar of georgette crepe, the same material being used for the little jabot. The sleeves are long and simply gathered to a narrow band tying at the wrist. The diagram pictures the simple design of pattern No. 1077, which is in sizes 34, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust. Size 38 bust requires 4¼ yards of 36-inch or 40-inch, or 3⅛ yards of 54-inch material. The front panel requires 1⅜ yards of additional material. Price 20 cents.

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Father of Canned Food.

The father of canned food was a Frenchman, Nicholas Appert, who preserved foods by heat sterilization and sealing in 1795.

BRITISH SCHOOL TEACHERS ARRIVE IN CANADA

The above picture shows the party of one hundred school teachers from the British Isles who have come to this country to study educational methods here. They are shown outside the Chateau Frontenac, at Quebec, after they had landed from the Canadian Pacific steamship "Empress of Scotland."