The GREEN THUMB

by Gordon Smith

Last year, as many will remember to their sorrow, killing frosts arrived at an exceptionally early date, and the damage caused to both flowering plants and some of the more susceptible sorts of fruit in some sections was terrific.

It is hoped, of course, that there won't be a repetition of such a happening this fall. Still, frosts have a way of occurring when you least expect them, and there are simple and easy precautions that will protect flowers and even some vegetables until the coming of the warmer spell which usually follows the first "nip" and sometimes lasts for several weeks.

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Upturned bushel baskets, thicknesses of newspaper, or pieces of muslin or burlap give protection to tender annuals. Stakes driven between the plants before covering keep the blossoms from being broken or crushed; and if the area to be protected is large, light wooden frames covered with any one of materials mentioned can be placed together to make a tent-like shelter.

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Coverings of any kind should be removed in the morning and put in place again in the early evening if there is a prospect of frost. There are some gardeners who spray plants touched by frost before the sun reaches them the next day, using a strong stream from the hose. But others have found this to be rather risky, and believe that covering in some manner is much safer and more certain.

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Entire patches of tomatoes and peppers can be protected for several weeks after the first frost so that the fruit will still be in good condition. There have been years when tomatoes so guarded could be used, right from the plant until well on in November.

If you are one of those that grow your tomatoes unstaked you'll find that hay or straw, if available, is an excellent "frost-blanket" when tossed liberally over the plants. It can eaily be pulled away from them in the morning, and left lying on the ground between for re-use whenever required. Sheets of heavy brown wrapping paper, or pieces of sturdy muslin may also be used with good results.

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Finally, there is the plan of pulling tomato and pepper plants up by the roots, then hanging them upside down some place that is frost-free and where there is air circulation. The fruit will remain in good condition for several weeks, with what was pulled green ripening gradually Tomatoes, however, do much better this way than do the peppers.

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But maybe, after all, the Weatherman will be kind for once, and we'll have a nice, long frost-free Autumn. Still, it's best to be prepared, and there's nothing quite so disheartening as going out some morning and seeing the ruin of whole areas of fruits and flowers which could have been saved at the expense of just a small amount of time and trouble.

Measured to the head of Peace River, the Mackenzie River has a length of more than 2,000 miles and is navigable for 1,292 miles.

More Power—And Not Any Too Soon Either—This new hydro electric plant on the Muskoka River is different from most such installations in that it will be entirely automatic in operation, requiring only the services of a caretaker. It will add 1250 horse power to the supply for the Bracebridge area with the possibility of this amount being doubled on the completion of additional generators.

THE FARM FRONT

by John Russell

It's no secret that there must be something radically wrong with a good deal of the farming being done today. This is clearly proven by the fact that recently some farms are said to have earned as high as 40% to 50% on the investment in a single year while others barely made enough to make ends meet. In a period of good prices and general farm prosperity, there must be something that's gone haywire.

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Outstandingly successful farmers were asked, not long ago, to list what they thought were the most common violations of good farm-management practices, and their replies were so interesting that I think I'll boil them down and shoot them to you. As one expert put it, "Good management practices are generally disregarded when the operator doesn't know any better. There are few farmers who destroy their soil wilfully. They do it through ignorance." So here, then, is a list of a dozen or so of the most common mistakes.

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First; following a haphazard, year-to-year program with little or no thought to long- time operation. The best job is done when the farmer, the land he operates, and the enterprises on that land are fused into a pattern adapted to all three.

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Second; a poor cropping program, which includes the sort of crops grown and the way the land is treated. Too much guessing in the use of fertilizers and failure to follow a rotation which includes maximum use of the higher-value crops.

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Third; failure to attend to soil-conservation and prevention of soil erosion. It is probable that not even 2% of land which badly needs it is even begun to be terraced and contoured.

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Fourth; unwise livestock programs, which include the choice and amount of livestock and the way it is handled . A farmer who likes dairy cattle or hogs best should be handling them rather than beef cattle.

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Fifth; lack of proper records. It's impossible to merely guess at costs and income and still know whether or not the farm is making money. Well-kept records show up both the strong and weak points of a farm program.

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Sixth; far too little effort by far too many farmers in the following proper sanitary methods with livehogs . The same applies to proper stock, particularly poultry and feeding and the best possible use of pastureage.

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Seventh; too great investment in high-priced machinery for which you haven't a sufficient use. Many farmers find it more economical to own certain machinery in partnership with relatives or neighbors.

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Eighth; carelessness in the use of sires, and failure to cull out poor producers that don't pay their own way. Too many farmers are averse to spending enough on good sires to maintain proper quality in their herds.

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Ninth; failure to give proper attention to the weed problem which besets the majority of farms. Prevention of weeds going to seed is of vital importance, especially in the case of pastures.

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Tenth; buildings not suited to present day enterprises. Many farmers are losing money by repairing obsolete buildings. Even those who are building new ones too often follow plans designed for farming 25 years ago, when horsepower was the only power, and hay was stored loose.

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Eleventh; trying to operate on insufficient capital. Farming is a business and it's no disgrace to borrow money, after taking proper advice and consideration, in order to make that business succeed.

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Twelfth; sticking to old customs simply because they are old, and hesitating to make changes and take advantge of new practices proved by other farmers and by our agricultural experiment stations.

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So there you have them, a dozen in all, direct from the experts; and I hope that you'll find them all interesting and some of them helpful. Now I come to look them over I realize once again what a perfectly simple matter successful farming must be—so long as you do it, like myself, strictly from behind a typewriter keyboard.

The Whole Works

Little Willie tugged at his mother's apron strings. "Ma, didn't I hear you tell Aunt Mary I have your eyes and daddy's nose?" "Yes, you did," said his mother indulgently. "Well, look at me now ma," said Willie. "I got Grandpa's teeth."

Nice Niece — Swedish actress Greta Garbo, who came to the United States in 1926, wants to be a real niece of Uncle Sam. She has filed first papers for naturalization in Hollywood.

With the Movie and Radio Folks

By Grace Sharp

"Somebody's always taking the joy out of life"—or an English version of that ancient saying—is probably often on the lips of J. Arthur Rank these days. Mr. Rank, in case you don't already know which is unlikely, is just about the biggest thing in British pictures, and recently invested quite a heavy chunk in a picture entitled "Oliver Twist". (And a really grand picture it is, but that is only by the way.)

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Now you'd think a film based on a novel that has been a best-seller since great-granddaddy's day—maybe that should be "great-great"—a story that has been read and wept over and loved by generation after generation in all parts of the world, would be a pretty safe investment so long as the actors, directors and script-writers did a fairly decent chore, which they did. But it seems that it isn't so in these mixed-up days when anything can happen and usually does.

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Quite naturally, with a picture having such box-office possibilities, Mr. Rank expected to gather in quite a few of those nice U.S.A. dollars south of the border. But it so happens that in the story there is a character named Fagin — remember him?—who is quite a despicable party, and no fooling. And the Anti-Defamation League and other such groups down around New York are claiming that the representation of Fagin on the screen is manifestly anti-Jewish.

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Now because of certain happenings around Palestine, largely misrepresented by such folks as the Anti-Defamation League, there is already a mighty wave of anti-British feeling in the states—a wave stronger than most of us here in Canada even surmise. So rather than risk the chance of stirring up further antagonism, Rank and his associates have let all plans for showing "Oliver Twist" over there go by the boards, for the time being at least.

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You can make your own comments on such a state of affairs, there being no non-inflammable paper handy for printing mine. But can't you just imagine some of those Hollywood moguls — already hot under the collar over the praise being bestowed on certain British-made pictures—weeping big tears of sympathy for J. Arthur Rank?

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A reader of this column hauls me over the coals for some jabs I've been taking recently at the "give-away" radio shows and their pulling-power. "If the people didn't want to listen to such programs, they wouldn't do so," she writes. "Who are you to try and tell us what shows we should hear, and what we shouldn't?"

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The answer to the question is "Nobody; or even less than nobody". Far be it from me to try and set myself up as censor over people's listening habits, and if they want to tune 24 hours a day to programs whose only point of appeal is a ten-million-to-one chance of winning something for nothing, that's their business.

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My feelings toward such shows can be summed up like this:—If I had a rich relative whom I disliked very much, but who I knew would leave me a fortune if I stayed by his bedside till he had passed on, the chances are that I'd take up bedside-sitting in a big way. But I wouldn't try to make myself believe I was doing it for entertainment. And from my point of view "give-away" shows aren't entertainment. What is more, if they keep on the way they've been going, they're liable to kill a lot of entertainment which people of reasonable intelligence can really enjoy.

One He Missed

"Young man," said an angry father from the head of the stairs, "didn't I hear the clock strike four when you brought my daughter home?" "You did," admitted the daughter's escort. "It was going to strike eleven, but I grabbed it and held the gong so it wouldn't disturb your slumber." The father could only mutter, "Dawgone! Why didn't I think of that one in my courting days!"

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DAWES BLACK HORSE BREWERY

One of a series of advertisements in tribute to those Canadians in the service of the public

SIDE GLANCES — By Galbraith

'Think of it—there was I, after writing to him for three years, just sitting with him all evening and couldn't think of a thing to say!"

PENNY — By Harry Haenigsen