The GREEN THUMB

by Gordon Smith

The Compost Heap

Books have been written on compost heaps and it is a worthy subject. The good gardener throws nothing away that will rot or decompose and that means almost anything. He piles them on his compost heap. Green weeds, leaves and other trash should all be tossed in, covered with a layer of soil and if obtainable some manure. If watered occasionally and perhaps treated with some of the special humus-making chemicals this material will break down rapidly and make the finest sort of garden soil. Most experts regard the compost pile as an essential part of their gardens. Where the pile is large it can be screened with some quick-growing annuals or some permanent shrubbery. If each new addition of refuse is covered well with a fresh layer of soil there should be no odour and no attraction for flies.

* * *

Something Will Grow

No matter how unfavorable the location there is some flower, vegetable or shrub that will thrive in it. Some flowers, vegetables and certain varieties of grass actually prefer shade, some want acid soil rather than sweet, some like heavy clay better than loam or sand. The thing in planning is to consider these special likes and dislikes, then to select those plants that suit one's special location.

Most vegetables, however, are pretty keen on a generous amount of sun, but they have distinct likes and dislikes in the matter of soil.

For deep-rooted carrots, potatoes, etc., it is important that the soils be fairly loose at least a foot down. Certain types prefer sandy soil to clay. But no matter what the soil is to start with by a little planning and care one can change it fairly easily.

* * *

Can't Do Without Cultivation

Killing weeds is only one of several reasons for cultivating flowers and vegetables. Even if it were possible to have chemical weed killers which would destroy all but the flowers and vegetables we would still need to cultivate. This stirring of the soil with a rake, hoe, or whatever is used, is essential to let in air, to absorb moisture and to distribute plant food. In dry parts of the country it also keeps the soil from drying out. A good practice is to cultivate gardens or hoe crops regularly, after every good shower. Wait, of course, a few hours or so until the soil is just dry enough to work.

* * *

Plenty of Time

Too early sowing is definitely not recommended. It is all very well to sow a few short rows of vegetables a week or two before the regular time just on the chance that there will be no late frosts, but the main sowings should wait until the time recommended by the seed catalogue or the local experts. For plants that are tender nothing is gained in planting in cold soil and before the weather has definitely turned warm. Of course, where extra protection is provided one can get started earlier but otherwise it is better to wait.

Even if tender plants do survive a late frost they are quite likely to be so retarded that later and normal plantings will overtake them.

In the vegetable garden, of course, one should never sow all seed at once. The experts urge spreading sowings over several weeks so that the harvest will likewise be spread out. In most parts of Canada one can go on planting beans, beets, carrots, lettuce and such things every ten days or so from the time of earliest possible planting right up to July.

In a schoolboy's exam. paper: "To keep milk fresh it should be left in the cow until needed."

In Line Of Duty—Rhett Butler, a Dalmatian fire dog gets new bandages on his foot and leg, burned by flaming gas in a meat market fire. The nurse is fireman Bob Arwine, who answered the fire alarm with Rhett.

SPORTS-&c

by A SIXBIT CRITIC

We wrote, not so long ago, some fairly uncomplimentary remarks regarding the torrent of books about baseball, baseball teams and baseball players which, for the past couple of years, have been gushing from publishers' presses faster than the Red River ever flooded, and with almost as depressing an effect. Now, after perusing—or at least glancing through — what seems like a long cord more of these volumes, we would say that the lads are rapidly writing themselves clean out of material; and if we have to read just once more about what Dizzy Dean said to Frankie Frisch during the World Series, or about how Old Pete Alexander threw his hangover at the N. Y. Yankees and beat them with it, we are going to toss the book out the window and holler "Copper."

* * *

(Here we would like to state again, however, that Ed. Barrow's reminiscenses, still running serially, by no means belong in the above category. But then Big Ed was an exceptional baseball man — one whose influence on the growth and development of the game was probably greater than that of any other individual.)

* * *

Anyway, fairly well fed up with baseball as reading material, it was a refreshing change to run across a book about a quite different sort of sport—the sport of Lawn Tennis. And when you consider what a gruelling, punishing, nerve-racking affair modern tennis has become, it seems strange to recall that, not too many years ago, it was considered a lady-like sort of pastime, and men who indulged in it were liable to be called, by crude hangers-on around Dolans Tavern or Cassidy's Pool Parlor, "Sissies" or worse.

* * *

The book we refer to is called "Romance of Wimbledon" by John Olliff, profusely illustrated with portraits and scenes from earliest times down to the present day. We are sure anybody who likes to either play or watch tennis will get a real bang out of this book; although some of them will undoubtedly be surprised to learn that Wimbledon — the greatest tennis centre in the world—was actually started as a place for the playing of Croquet. But facts are facts—and it was Croquet that really kept Wimbledon going for the first thirty years of its existence.

* * *

It was back in 1870 that two brothers named Jones formed a Croquet Club and, after searching for a ground that wouldn't put too great a strain on their limited bank-roll, acquired four acres at Wimbledon at a rental of fifty pounds a year. And their All England Croquet Club held its first championships there in June, 1870.

* * *

Some five years later Henry Jones, who was always proposing startling innovations, suggested devoting a small piece of the grounds to lawn tennis. This was at first regarded as "just another of Henry's little jokes"; but Hank was apparently a persistent sort of bloke, and he had his way, the rather frightening sum of twenty-five pounds being spent on the necessary equipment. The tennis folks rallied around, and the first Wimbledon championship was held in 1877.

* * *

But, according to Mr. Olliff, Croquet kept the club together till after the turn of the century—in fact until 1904 when Lawn Tennis showed a profit of thirteen hundred pounds, while Croquet was in the red for six pounds. But for all that the suggestion that Croquet be removed from the official name of the club was twice scornfully rejected.

* * *

It was around this time that the two famous Doherty brothers—"R.F." and "H.L." as they were known—began to put Lawn Tennis on a really solid footing so far as the general public was concerned. And from the Doherty's stems the long line of tennis stars right down to Gorgeous Gussie whose lace panties last year caused almost as much stir at Wimbledon as Suzanne Lenglen's actions did in 1926 when she kept Queen Mary waiting —and lived to regret doing so.

* * *

Suzanne, in case you don't remember, was the French girl who won the Ladies Singles five times in a row, and whose opinion of herself was almost as great as her ability. In those days they didn't "seed the draw" as they do now, and Suzanne—finding that all the leading ladies were in her section of the draw—threw something like a conniption fit.

* * *

Dealing with this incident the author quotes the official referee's tactful—extremely tactful—version. "Storms were caused by Mlle. Lenglen,:" he wrote. "Her unquestionable superiority of the past few years to any other woman player had apparently led her to think that Wimbledon ought to be run to suit her convenience without regard to any other interest whatever. Possibly too much attention had been paid to her wishes in previous years. But in 1926 she presumed too far on her position in the tennis world."

* * *

Boiled down to more everyday language this means that Suzy said they had to play it her way—or else. Queen Mary, there to see the great Frenchwoman play, was kept waiting for half an hour with nothing to watch. Possibly Her Majesty didn't like this treatment. Certainly the Wimbledon folks didn't. Anyway, Suzanne scratched—and never played at Wimbledon again. Sounds like a tempest in a teapot at this distance; but it stirred up plenty of talk and excitement then.

* * *

The author says—and who are we to dispute his word?—that the most extraordinary Wimbledon match of all occurred in 1921 between Randolph Lycett, of Australia, and Zenzo Shimidzu of Japan. It was played on one of the hottest days in memory, and by the third set the Aussie had to be revived every time they changed ends. And we fear that his revival methods wouldn't appeal very greatly to some of our temperance advocates —for what Lycett used, as a stimulant, was plain gin.

* * *

In the final set, which ran to twenty games, it was plainly to be seen that the Australian was on his last legs, the combination of heat and gin having taken its effect. Lycett knew that it was impossible to carry on without further stimulant, so he did the most audacious thing the Centre Court at Wimbledon has ever seen. He ordered a bottle of champagne to be placed for him on the umpire's chair—and as the battle went on, he drank the lot.

* * *

However, virtue was its own reward; and as the Jap eventually won, perhaps we'll be forgiven—in spite of the gin and champagne—for calling attention to "Romance of Wimbledon" by John Olliff. As one reviewer puts it "this is a book that contains the statistics which lawn tennis enthusiasts will wish to consult, but is also packed with drama and, in some cases, tragedy."

MAD AT OWN VOICES

Do lions recognize their own voices? Edgar M. Queeney, an American naturalist, thinks not. When he was filming big game in the Lake Amboseli area of Kenya recently, he pitched his camp one night beside a small river.

The party was awakened next morning by a pride of five lions roaring a few yards away on the opposite bank. Queeney switched on sound-recording apparatus and made a film of the din. Then, because the animals would not go away, he played the record back through a powerful loudspeaker.

Were the lions frightened? Not a bit. The sound of their own voices drove them to fury and they made frantic efforts to cross the river. Queeney struck camp very hurriedly.

'Chance Takers' Don't Belong on Submarines

A man who likes to take chances has no place in a submarine—even though he may prove to be a good commando or paratrooper. And though a man who fears being alone may be unhappy in many jobs he can be a competent member of a submarine's crew. Loneliness is no problem in the crowded quarters of a sub.

These conclusions result from research conducted by Ernest A. Haggard, on the special psychological stresses suffered by sailors in submarines.

Best fitted for submarine service, according to the findings so far, are men who are seemingly independent but who actually enjoy team work. Good submariners can channel aggression into the performance of their duties, instead of releasing it against themselves or their shipmates. Their thoughts tend to be specific and concrete, rather than abstract and general. Such men are realists and not philosophers.

"Sweat out" the Attack

One cause of great stress aboard submarines is depth bombing. In such a situation there is nothing to do but to "sweat out" the attack. Nervous energies cannot be released in activity. "That is perhaps why submariners, after a depth-charging episode usually delight in a surface battle and then feel 'satisfied' about things," says Haggard.

To obtain his facts, Haggard interviewed a large number of submarine sailors who had several successful war patrols to their credit and who still liked undersea service. He found that when the men were told the purpose and risk of particular operations, there was a reduction in psychological breakdowns and friction. Unnecessary withholding of information about a situation on the part of officers has a bad psychological effect and interferes with morale and efficiency.

Members of a submarine crew have definite ideas about officers. Above all, they respect only officers who know their business and keep a craft in good condition. They want both strictness in maintaining efficiency and fair dealing.

Gleeful Gorilla — "Arno," an 8-month-old gorilla flown from Africa, looks forward to the good life in some zoo. Animal dealer Henry Trefflich, holding Arno, calls the animal "ugly and vicious enough to grow up to be a second Gargantua."

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JITTER By Arthur Pointer