Grew Corn Before Columbus Landed

It is something of a shock to realize that, except for the recent development of hybrid corn, the ancient Americans knew just about as much as we do now.

Think what the Indians were doing before Columbus sighted the New World in 1492! They were using fertilizers, building terraces and irrigation ditches. The ydeveloped special planting methods to fitdry-land areas. They had found that two non-competing crops grown in the same field—such as corn and beans or corn and squash—gave a greater total yield than either crop grown separately.

They had developed practically all the basic varieties of corn by the time Columbus came—pop, sweet, waxy, dent, floury, flint. The Indian corn grower didn't know anything about genes or chromosomes, but he did notice that certain plants yielded more and stood drought better.

He saved the best plants for seed instead of eating them. And that's all white men did about corn breeding until 30 years ago.

Origin of corn is lost in the distant shadows of time. Archaeologists have found ears of corn cobs in tombs, campsites and trash heaps that existed a thousand years before America was discovered. Central or South America was where corn originated, researchers guess.

By the time Columbus came, corn was grown from southern Canada to southern Chile. Most intensive corn production area was in three distinct sections—Mexico, Peru and the Guatemala-Yucatan area. Those areas supported the three ancient American civilizations—Aztec, Inca, Mayan.

But what is now the great American corn belt supported comparatively little corn. The open prairies did not have trees to give Indians shelter and water. And the tough prairie grasses made a sod that the Indian cultivation could not lick.

Indians found it easier to terrace mountains, dig irrigation ditches and kill trees. Cultivation methods were simple. If ground was bare, corn was planted in holes punched in the soil with a sharp stick. Sometimes the soil ws worked over with wooden hoes or mussel shells. If there was much vegetation, it was cut, left to dry, then burned off.

Indians learned long ago, how to get rid of trees without a lot of work. They girdled them (hacked away the bark in a circle around the tree). Then corn was planted between the dead trunks.

Once cleared, ground was planted to corn until continuous cropping and erosion drained fertility from the soil. Then the Indians either moved on or used fertilizer.

A fish was placed in each hill of corn. One acre planted with fish was said to yield as much corn as three acres without fish. In South America, the guano beds were prized as highly then as now.

Special tillage methods were developed to fit dry-land conditions. Along the sandy Peruvian coast, dry sand several feet deep was dug away. Then corn was planted in the moist soil underneath.

In what is now the southwest United States, corn was planted in hills 6 to 10 feet apart, with as many as 15 or 20 plants in a hill.

This practice persists to this day. Why? It produces more corn than any other method. Plants on the outside of the hills protect the inner plants from the hot, dry winds.

Indians used the corn grain principally as food. They parched, popped and ground it. They ate it as roasting ears. Early records also tell how Indians fermented corn, made alcoholic beverages.

Other parts of the corn plant were not wasted. Husks were woven into sandals and mats. Stalks were tied to horizontal railings to form walls of buildings and fences. In Mexico and Guatemala, these buildings still are common today.

Anne Adams

One yard, 35-inch fabric for this darling pinafore-jumper in size 2. One yard for bolero, three quarters of a yard for blouse! She wears jumper as sundress now, later the whole outfit will make a hit at Kindergarten! Pattern 4827, Toddler sizes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

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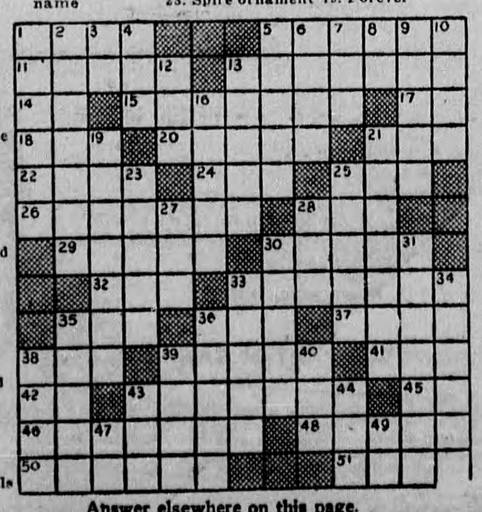
11. Hires
13. West Indies climbing plant
14. King of Bashan
15. Shoulder ornament
17. Mixed-up type
18. Tablet
20. Color
21. Cistern
22. Ancient Greek city
24. Sense organ
25. Cook in fat
26. Changes
28. Samuel's guide
29. Eating car
30. Think
32. Atmospheric moisture
33. Slender rod
35. Footlike part
36. Novel by Rider Haggard
37. Small valley
38. Contemptible fellow
39. Look steadily
41. Operatic heroine
42. Three-toed sloth
45. Needle-shaped
46. Near
46. Obtain
48. Become less violent
50. Ancient chariot
51. Lacrosse goals

DOWN
1. Right
2. Entertained
3. Supported by
4. Took food
5. Horse trained to run a certain distance
6. Electric light inspector
7. Man's nickname
8. Correlative of either
9. Requite
10. Sailing vessel
12. Mineral spring
13. Musical instruments
16. Oriental potentate
19. Separated
21. Streaked
23. Mathematical ratios
25. Hurl
27. Stitch
28. Spire ornament
30. Musical show
31. Lift
33. Partake
34. Relatives on the mother's side
35. Couples
36. Kiloliter
38. Headland
39. Fly before the wind
40. Greek letter
43. High card
44. Flow back
47. Bone.
49. Forever



Answer elsewhere on this page.

Super-Marketing—Two Berlin housewives try out their new "shopping car," designed by Helmut Butenuth, German automobile engineer. The car weighs 540 pounds and has a 6.2-horsepower rear engine. The designer says it could be sold for $450 if produced on a mass scale.

CHRONICLES OF GINGER FARM

by Gwendoline P Clarke

With so many storms wandering around in this district during the last few weeks it seems marvellous that our wheat should be cut and stooked without damage or hindrance. But so it is. However, it is still in the field and we have had another bad storm this afternoon so it will be a few days yet before wheat will be fit to come in—although a good, drying wind can work wonders in a hurry.

It has been quite a week, especially last Thursday. In the morning while the men were busy with the binder I went off to get my cherries for canning. In the afternoon, in the middle of the inevitable cherry-pitting job along came Johnny — who makes his home here in between jobs. He was in distress, his latest adventure in farming not having panned out the way it should —although through no fault of Johnny's. So here now was Johnny, bag and baggage, including a week-old calf! Then came milking time—and I had reached the stage of getting some of my cherries into jars. Before I could finish Partner asked me to phone the "vet" and to call Bob from the field as he would probably be needed. Why? A young heifer was apparently going to have plenty of trouble giving birth to her first calf—she had already been uneasy most of the day. So I pushed my cherries to one side and did as I was told. Bob, of course, was at the far end of the farm. In due time he and I came down the back lane; the vet arrived from the opposite direction and when we all assembled in the barn yard we found the heifer had produced her calf unaided and alone—probably about two minutes previously. Actually the vet wasn't needed at all but that is something you can never be sure about. It is better to be safe than sorry anyway—especially with beef the price it is. Imagine what we would have lost if the heifer had died!

Well, it was after supper before I got back to my cherries and 10.30 when I finished them. But don't accuse me of being too terribly slow —I did four small baskets before I was through.

Next morning at breakfast I asked Partner if the heifer was all right. "Sure," he answered, "but her sister also calved during the night so now we have two fresh heifers and two bull calves."

And that's the way it goes . . . never a dull moment on a farm. And when you're the busiest that is always the time when the unexpected happens.

Oh dear, another storm coming up. Well, it may not be good for the wheat but it's grand for the clover and gardens. I am particularly interested in my vegetable garden this year because I am trying a few experiments. For one thing our garden isn't where it should have been. The garden plot and the yard surrounding it was fenced off and given over to the cows for a cuple of weeks. That was in the early spring when there was so very little pasture and Partner figured feed for the cows was more important than garden for ourselves. Eventually I was allowed a little corner off the oat field. It was the end of June so it didn't seem worthwhile putting in very much anyway—a few beets, carrots, peas and beans and one dozen tomato plants. But what we had we looked after properly. Partner carried gallons of water when the weather was dry and I hoed and weeded our little patch very thoroughly.

My first experiment was in planting the tomatoes. Following directions which I had read in the Farmer's Magazine I dug a hole 18 inches deep for each plant; stripped off all the leaves except the last two which just rested on top of the ground when planted. Those plants are now bigger and more healthy looking than some plants I have seen started several weeks earlier than mine. I have them staked and keep the suckers nipped off. I expect the fruit will be too late to ripen but at least it will be an experiment in growing.

And then the peas and beans. Peas, as you know, don't like hot weather so I am giving them a mulch treatment—pulling up weeds and laying them in thick rows either side of the peas and beans. The beans are in bloom and the peas have ever so many pods. Now I am anxiously waiting to see if the pods will fill properly with this treatment which should prevent the roots from drying out. And of course, once you mulch the plants your hoeing job is over as none of the rows are much more than a foot apart. That is one of Louis Bromfield's theories—less ground under cultivation, mulch treatment and better results. And less work! Another idea I heard about—but which I forgot at the time—is to sprinkle corn meal thickly around the root of the tomato plants when setting them in the ground. That is supposed to prevent stem rot.

The SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By Rev. R. B. Warren, B.A., B.D.

John, Preacher of Repentance
Luke 3: 7-29

Golden Text: Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. Luke 3:8a.

John the Baptist was the last prophet before the presentation of the Messiah. He had been preannounced. (Isaiah 40, Malachi 4). His mother, Elizabeth, was a cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus. John was a few months older than Jesus.

John was sent of God to prepare the way for the ministry of Jesus. He called the people to repentance. Repentance, as John saw it, was not merely regretting that you had done wrong. It was turning from that wrong forever. These people who expressed, even with tears, their concern over their sin, but did not break with it, had no place with those in need. If there were more of that today, the seeds of Communism would not find such fertile soil in our country. To the inquiring tax-collectors he said, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." While our taxing system is different today, John's thrust at the spirit of greed and extortion has a thousand applications. Likewise, the soldiers, who were the police of the day, must not use their authority to procure bribes. They were to be content with their wages. The three points recorded have to do with wealth. Those who have it, are to share it. Those who are making their living must do it in an honest and upright way.

But John was merely preparing the people for the coming of Christ, who was greater. John baptized with water; Jesus Christ baptized with the Holy Ghost.

John got into trouble for his rugged preaching on repentance. Herod, living in adultery with his brothers wife, did not like being reproved. He imprisoned John. Later, at the instigation of the wicked adulteress, John was beheaded. But the judgment will vindicate John in his faithfulness to God and his message.

Other Papers Pull Boners Too!

The Better to Pull 'Em?

Dentist, long established, wants to purchase small tractor.—Chicago Herald and Examiner.

Powerful Pussy

The cat picks up the house in its mouth, carries it upstairs but never harms it.—Terre Haute paper.

High Time

U.S. Scentists to visit America.—Ann Arbor paper.

May Blow His Top

Pumping steam from a threshing machine engineer has been continuous for several days.—Council Bluffs paper.

Ideas Other Women Have Found Helpful

Our small boys have avoided many bruises on the edge of their sandbox since we've placed their sand inside the circle of a large, discarded tractor tire. Painted a bright color, this adds a gay note to their corner of the yard.

* * *

A rubber heel nailed on each "foot" of our household ladder prevents slipping on uncarpeted floors. It keeps the ladder from marring them, too.

* * *

Use a handy half-bushel basket for serving popcorn at parties. Make a lining for the basket from bright red oilcloth. (This can be removed easily and washed after use.) Then, enamel the outside of the basket and add gay designs, such as a scallop around the top or firecrackers. For serving bowls, I decorate coffee tins to match the basket.

* * *

When making pot holders, I had no "stuffing" handy so I tried using a few of the strainer pads from our filter-type milk strainer. They quilt beautifully, wash equally well, and are already cut for round pads. I intend to try them in a fancier "dress" to use as hot-dish pads on the dining-room table.

* * *

When a recipe calls for crumbled potato chips, cooky or cracker crumbs, there's no fuss or muss if you place them in a transparent plastic bag, then roll quickly with a rolling pin. You can see when the crumbs are just the right consistency, and there's no spilling. A zipper-top refrigerator case is ideal; otherwise, simply fold the open end over and fasten it firmly with a paper clip.

* * *

To prevent furniture scratches on your floors, remove the cork sections from bottle caps and glue to the legs of offending chairs.

* * *

Treat your next batch of cupcakes to a simple and tasty frosting that's made in a minute. Just add a thin chocolate-covered cream mint to the top of each cake as you take the pan from the oven. The mints will melt and add an unusually delicious touch.

* * *

When bedroom - slipper soles wear out before the tops, I trace the outer edge of each slipper on heavy mattress ticking. Then I cut around the outline and press a ¼-inch edge under. I sew the new sole over the old one, tucking and tacking the edge under carefully. The result looks fine, wear well, and slides easily across the floor. For added comfort, the soles can be innerlined with cotton padding or comfortable sponge rubber cut to fit.

* * *

Pockets on dresses and aprons won't tear at the corners if you lay a small pleat in the top of the pocket before sewing it on. This leaves plenty of room to put your hand in without strain on the corner.

* * *

A flat curtain rod such as used for draperies makes an ideal shoe rack if fastened about four inches from the floor.

* * *

Machine-stitch down the center of your cloth tape measure (a long, loose stitch) to keep it from tangling easily. Makes it last longer, too.

* * *

Though our own children are grown up, I still have a box where I put my cut-outs that come on cereal boxes, paper dolls from Sunday comic strips, and other little trinkets that youngsters might enjoy. When friends come calling with their families, my surprise box keeps all the children royally entertained.

Crows

Those who look into such matter professionally insist that crows eat bugs, beetles and worms. Such dietary habits are much to be admired in birds. But the layman, particularly the country layman who cherishes his final hour of sleep on a summer morning, wishes that more robins, say, and fewer crows, were addicted to the early bug, beetle, and worm. Crows, to be blunt about it, get up much too early in the morning. And they get up much too full of noise. Noise, not song. Compared to a crow, a robin is a shy, retiring —virtually—voiceless bird.

How a crow can eat anything and still make all the noise he does is a major mystery. Particularly in the early morning. He doesn't pause long enough between squawks to swallow a gnat. When he does pause for breath it is only to fly to the next tree. Three crows can keep everybody within a mile's radius from sleeping. Four crows can rouse the whole countryside.

It wouldn't be so bad if a crow could sing. All birds have a vested right in song. But the crow is simply the loudmouth of birddom, the antithesis of song. If his diet were keyed to his voice he would subsist entirely on coarse gravel, cockleburs, rusty nails and broken glass. Instead, he eats corn and beans and fruit and little birds and small chickens and eggs—and, of course, bugs, beetles and worms. And on such a diet he manages the roughest, toughest, least musical sounds on wings.

Of one thing we can be thankful. Nature saw to it that crows don't cross with owls or whippoorwills or other night birds. It sometimes seems that that fortunate circumstance is all that enables anyone in the country to get any sleep at all.—The New York Times.

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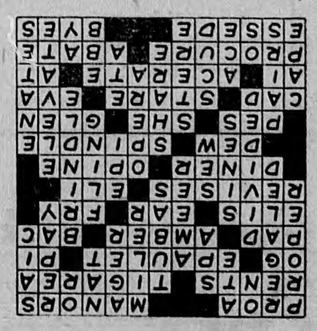
Upside down to prevent peeking.



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