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RICHMOND HILL, ONT.

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Cultivation of the Soil.

By Agrarius

Cultivation is the mainspring of successful cropping, providing all other conditions are equal, viz., a soil containing enough nitrogen, potash and phosphoric acid to produce the crop. Of course we all know that no amount of cultivaiton will make a crop grow and mature if not planted at the proper time, or from immature seed, to the degree of perfection that all tillers of the soil aspire, or will it supply the lack of plant producing elements if they are entirely wanting in the soil.

In cultivating the soil we ought to keep before us this three-fold object: First, the preparation of a suitable seed-bed, and the pulverization and liberation of the plant food; s condly, the destruction of obnoxious weeds from our land; and lastly, the preservation of soil moisture. The preparation of a suitable seed-bed is very important. It should be fine and not too deep. It should vary with the variety of grain to be sown, as some grain will stand a deeper soil than others, about one inch and a half is the average for cereals. I cannot lay too much stress on the importance and necessity of the thorough preparation of this bed, because the plant is very tender and the quicker it can get to the surface and get a root in the ground the better it will thrive. If it has to force its way among lumps to find root-hold it is quite possible that the supply of available plant-food in the grain sown is exhausted and the plant dies, or else it lies among the lumps and never sprouts on account of lack of moisture, such as we have experienced in our locality. Another serious mistake is to work the ground too deep, especially in the spring. This is sometimes done by cultivating the hard ground and then broadcasting. Of course this can be remedied, as I will speak of later.

Of course, what I have just spoken of covers in a measure the last part of the first object, the pulverization of the soil, and the liberation of plant-food. Scientists tell us that it is necessary to have moisture to make plants soluble and available, then consider how much moisture it would take to make a lumpy field into proper condition. Then the grand result of the action of the frost is the pulverization of the soil, thereby liberating and making available plant-food. Look at its action on soil that has never been cultivated; its action is perfect.

Now let us copy nature's method and seek by artificial means to prepare a good seed-bed and thereby pulverize and liberate plant-food enough to raise a crop that will fill our hearts with joy. I think this oftimes is neglected in a measure when we are in the midst of busy seeding, the chief object seems to be to get the furrows filled, and that regulates the condition of the soil in many cases. As long as they could drag enough soil into the furrows, it was sufficient, and the implement that dragged it into the furrows the quickest was the one that suited best, regardless of its effect on the land. But this method is gradually disappearing with the narrow lands. I think we as farmers are apt too often to allow our fields to go without enough working in our anxiety to rush through seeding in order be be ahead of our neighbors. Remember, brother farmers, that thoroughness is necessary to have the grand results we all so much desire.

Now for the second object, and a very important one. It is namely the destruction of obnoxious weeds. We can accomplish much by thorough cultivation. In fact it is the method advocated by ex-Superintendent, Mr. Rennie, and others, for the eradication of the nuisance, for they are indeed such. Not only do they spoil the sale of nice, plump seed grain that would command fancy prices. but they are leeches drawing the life-blood out of the soil; they are taking dollars out of farmers' pockets, and they return nothing to the soil. They are not nitrogen-restorers, they put no available potash or phosphoric acid to the ground, and they are not a thing of beauty, because there is nothing more disgusting or revolting than to see a person allowing obnoxious weeds to beautify his farm.

It would be surprising if we could measure the amount of water drawn from the earth by a thistle stalk during the summer season. I was noticing in particular one day last June. The hired boy was hoeing a few thistles in the root ground, and I noticed that one stem the size of a lead pencil moistened the ground the size of a fifty cent piece inside of the twelve hours as wet as if a half inch of rain had fallen. Professor King had calculated that an elm tree of 25 or 30 years growth will absorb through its roots and pass through through its 72 tons of water in 12 hours. ... of meadow in June takes 106 tons of water in 24 hours, that is 21,200 gallons or about 8,833⅓ gallons per hour, 147 gallons per minute, an enormous amount of water indeed. Now consider for yourself how much water an acre of weeds would pump out of the soil in one dry summer. You fully understand that water is necessary to make plant-food soluble, so as to pass through the roots into the plant. The elements are retained, and the surplus water ejected and evaporated by the leaves. Hence the necessity of the eradication of obnoxious weeds.

Now for the last part—the preservation of soil moisture. As I have already shown to some extent the necessity of moisture in the soil; the great problem that confronts us is how to preserve it. In order to solve this allow me to explain the action that is going on in the soil. We have what we call capillary action. It is a law of nature, perfect in its actions; we cannot stop or start it, but we can control it to our advantage. It is simple. The moisture coming from the depth of the earth to the surface, if not checked, passes into the atmosphere. This action commences when the frost leaves the ground, and continues with more or less abundance until ice grasps the throttle, when it lies inactive till the following spring. Nature has a method of checking it, namely, the loosening of the surface by the action of the frost, and the appearance of vegetation acting as a mulch and preventing the rain from dashing on it, rendering it hard and causing rapid evaporation. When we plow the land in the fall we stop nature's method by destroying plant-life. Of course we have the action of the frost, but it is not sufficient to withstand the rain, Experiments have proven that to have a half finish of loose soil as a mulch, gives us the same results as nature does, and evaporation by capillary action is checked. It would seem to us that to harrow all our fields over as soon as we can in the spring, is useless labor and a waste of time, but bearing these things in mind I think we would receive larger crops, because a field will evaporate in one hot week in spring enough moisture to cause six weeks' growth, providing it is allowed to become baked and hard, as a great deal of our soil does, our time spent in harrowing will be well paid.

I will give you an example of the benefit of a soil mulch. I put in an early crop of potatoes and harrowed them frequently, till they came up, and then started to scuffle as soon as I could follow the rows. We had a dry spring, and you could go any time and scratch the loose ground aside and the ground was as moist as could be.

Now, brother farmers, don't you forget to put a soil mulch on your crops next spring and keep it there. Put one on your wheat fields with the harrows. If the rain spoils it, put another on; they are worth the time spent.

One thing I am in favor of is rolling the ground after the crop is sowed and leaving it rolled. The most of farmers leave rolling until all done seeding and then do it, but I am convinced it is a wrong practice. We get the same results as I spoke of before, a hard surface conducive of evaporation. I would say roll right after sowing and give a stroke with the light harrows. Should the ground be cultivated rather deep in the sprihg, it will make it solid and moisture again comes to the surface just where we want it. As a proof of this let me ask you did you ever notice in a loose field in the morning the footprints of the horses' hoofs as they sink in was quite moist. It could not be dew, because dew falls alike. It cannot be rain. So how do you account for it? It is this. The horse presses the soil firmly and capillary action is started right to the surface. I say roll, and roll it firmly, and then give it a stroke with the harrows. But somebody may say if it rains it will get hard and bake worse than it would have before. I say if it rains, harrow again. Money has gone into the ground, keep it there.

Now, in conclusion, let me sum up. When you enter a field let this be your object—good preparation, weed destruction, and moisture preservation. Tell your hired man what you want. Buy implements that will do these things thoroughly; anything that won't do it right is worthless. Above all be thorough and careful; don't rush your seeding through at the expense of the crop. Of course you will have good seed, so give it a chance and reap a good crop.

Maple

An entertainment under the auspices of the Royal Templars of Temperance was held in the Masonic Hall last Friday evening. The programme consisted of a debate, and singing and recitations by members of the society, also solos by Master George Milford, a member of the boy choir of Sherbourne St. Methodist Church, Toronto ... the Children are Asleep," in a very pleasing manner, and was warmly applauded. The chair was occupied by Rev. Mr. Hilty of Sherwood.

The farmers are busy at their spring work, and rain is needed to freshen the fall wheat.

Mr. E. Nixon has been laid off work for a few days with a severe cold, but is able to be around again.

Mr. T. McCormack spent Easter vacation in Toronto and Streetsville.

Miss Minnie Lewis of Richmond Hill, is visiting her sister, Mrs. F. Line.

Mr. W. Robinson is recovering from an attack of rheumatism.

Miss Emma Byam returned last Saturday to take charge of her school at Duntroon, after spending her vacation at her home here. Miss Ella Powers, who is teaching near Lakefield, also spent the week with her friends at Maple.

The License Inspector of West York paid an official visit to the hotel here on Sunday last.

Vaughan Council

Council met on Tuesday, April 9. Reeve Kirby in the chair. Members present, Messrs. Malloy, Devins, Boyle and Longhouse.

Minutes of last meeting read and adopted.

A communication was read from Mr. T. F. McMahon asking for the usual grant to Richmond Hill Agricultural Society.

On motion of Mr. Devins, seconded by Mr. Malloy, the treasurer was authorized to pay Mr. McMahon the sum of $10.

On motion of Mr. Malloy, seconded by Mr. Devins, the treasurer was authorized to pay the following accounts:

A. Black, cleaning ditches	$5 50
J. L. Card, labor, material, etc.	8 40
J. J. Cameron, felt for table for Town Hall	2 00
Yonge St. Account	
D. W. Clubine, work	7 60
E. J. Legge, work	50
Jno. Simpkins, breaking stone	10 00
Wm. Chatterley, breaking stone	2 50
Wm. Chatterley, work	12 60
Wm. Lowery, work	4 00

Longhouse — Boyle — that two men be employed to operate road grader, one for each side of the township.—Carried.

By-Laws Nos. 731 and 732 were passed apportioning the interest which accrued from the Clergy Reserve and Municipal Loan Funds among the several schools of the township.

Council adjourned to meet at the Town Hall on Saturday, May 25, as a Court of Revision.

Jas. B. McLean, Clerk.

NOTICE TO

CREDITORS.

In the Estate of Archibald McQuarrie, late of the Township of Vaughan, in the County of York, Farmer deceased.

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to R. S. O. cap. 129, sec. 38, that all persons having claims against the estate of the said Archibald McQuarrie who died on or about the third day of March, A. D. 1901, are required on or before the 27th day of April, 1901, to send by post prepaid to the undersigned solicitor for the Executors, a statement of their claims with their names and addresses together with the nature of the security, if any, held by them.

And take further notice that after such last mentioned date the executors will proceed to distribute the said estate among the parties entitled thereto, having regard only to the claims of which they shall then have received notice and shall not be liable to any person or persons of whose claims they shall not have received notice.

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Toronto.

39-5 Solicitor for the Executors

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Apple to THOS. COOK, Carrville; or JOHN ELLIOTT, Richmond Hill, Executors; or to WILLIAM COOK, Solicitor, Freehold Bldg., 60 Victoria St., Toronto. 40-tf

To Cattlemen

Farmers and all those who have Cattle to Dehorn should call on or write to the undersigned, who is prepared to dehorn cattle by the latest improved method. Satisfaction guaranteed and charges moderate.