

# Soils and Crops

## SUMMER VERSUS WINTER PRUNING

The subject of summer pruning has long been a moot one among fruit growers. Some men have claimed that summer pruning produced fruit and winter pruning produced wood. Some have claimed that if the trees were pruned in summer they would bear fruit at an earlier age than those pruned in winter.

In the writer's own orchard a block of ten acres was summer pruned in order to get a comparison with the rest of the place that received only winter pruning. After a period of several years no difference could be seen in this ten-acre block.

It did not come into bearing noticeably earlier than the rest of the place nor has it produced any more fruit. To look at it, to-day no one could tell where the ten-acre block ended and the rest of the orchard began.

This one experiment does not prove that there is no value in summer pruning. One experiment seldom proves anything. It is only by taking the results of many experiments that we finally arrive at a little of the truth in horticulture. Even then we may occasionally go wrong.

Other growers have felt that summer pruning increased the fruitfulness of their trees. In some cases there has been a distinct increase in the number of fruit buds produced after a year of summer pruning. In such cases emphasis is laid on the fact that the work was done early in the summer before the trees had finished their annual growth.

In most of the apple-growing sections this would be before the first of July. The fruit buds for the next year are developed early in the season and the tree must be pruned before these buds form if any results are to be secured. If the pruning is done after the buds are established no more would be accomplished than by winter pruning.

## THE BEST STRAWBERRY MULCH

The questions as to what materials to use for a mulch on the strawberry bed is often a serious one, and if one must grow some crop especially for that purpose it ought to be decided upon at once.

Of course, if wheat, oats or rye is grown largely in a section, that settles the question very satisfactorily. Or, if one is in a section where pine needles or straw can be had, they make a very good mulch.

But in sections where none of these things can be had, one is often at a loss how to supply the need.

To begin with, if there is any low, swampy land on the farm which grows grass in abundance, this ought to be cut and the hay used for mulch, since one is almost certain that such material will contain seeds of no plants that are likely to come up as weeds in the strawberry bed.

There may also be available some hay fields on which the grass is so poor as not to have much feeding value, and which may therefore be added to the mulch supply.

But under the best of conditions the man who grows a half acre or more of strawberries is often obliged to grow some special crop for the mulch.

Various crops are grown for this purpose, the choice depending on one's locality and to some extent on the soil available. Two of the best are Japanese millet and sorghum, the latter sown thick enough so that the stalks do not become too heavy. An advantage of sorghum is that it is heavy enough so that it is not easily blown about.

The one solution which ought to be avoided at all costs in this strawberry mulch problem is to mow all the odd corners about the farm and use the hay thus secured for the purpose.

Such material is certain to contain all sorts of weed seeds.

## LATE-HATCHED BROILERS

Almost every year, on the average Canadian farm where fowls have free range, some hens will steal away in the late summer months to appear again a few weeks later with broods of baby chicks. What to do with these youngsters is often a serious problem.

It had been my practice to give away such late broods, hens and all, to avoid the trouble of raising them; but a few years ago when I offered some to a farmer acquaintance he advised me to force-feed them for the broiler market.

"Pen them up," he said, "and begin feeding for quick development. This is September and by Christmas you should have a fine shipment of broilers weighing from one to two pounds each."

Chiefly out of curiosity I agreed to experiment, and the sixty-five baby chicks, all White Wyandottes, with their respective mothers were confined in an unused shed with a small yard for range.

From the very first the feeding methods prescribed by my friend for this flock were almost identical with those I had practiced with other young stock, the only exception being that the percentage of flesh-building elements such as beef scraps, ground bone, and chopped green clover or alfalfa, were increased gradually until

they constituted almost a half by weight of the entire ration.

At this time the chicks were weaned and the hens removed so that self-feeding hoppers could be installed for the entire flock. Wheat was fed in clean litter every morning to induce exercise, and charcoal, grit and fresh water were kept before the birds at all times. The hopper feed was cracked corn and oatmeal, and, as the chicks became more developed, some cracked corn was soaked in sour milk and fed in the evening.

Fifty-seven chicks were raised to broiler size and by the last of December were ready for market. When dressed the total number weighed ninety-four pounds net.

Before shipping I wrote a reliable commission merchant for prices and advice on shipping. The shipment netted me forty-three cents a pound after express and commission charges were deducted—forty dollars and forty-two cents in all.

Since that time I have raised several broods of late summer chicks for broilers with slightly varying success and, although I could not advise any poultryman to take up this branch of work as a specialty, I do affirm that it offers a profitable means of disposing of late chicks.

The American, or general purpose varieties, such as the Wyandottes, Rhode Island Reds, and Plymouth Rocks, rank as the best broiler breeds.

A first-class broiler when ready for market should be plump and full feathered. Comb and wattles should be small—here the rose-comb variety takes precedence—and if skin and legs are yellow these points will add to appearance and value.

The poultryman specializing in White Leghorns is not in a position to raise the large or medium broilers, but his late-hatched chicks are especially fine for squab broilers when force-fed in a similar manner. They can be made to average one pound or better in eight or nine weeks.

In dressing broilers for winter market dry picking is better than scalding, but all other work is conducted in the same manner as for adult fowls.

## PLENTY TO DO IN THE ORCHARD

From this time on the cultivation in the small-fruit plantations should be made especially thorough.

We are getting into the period in sections where there is likely to be dry weather. We have also approaching the period, or have reached it, when the bush fruits are ripening their crops. And the combination of dry weather and a heavy draft of water by the plant to mature its fruit is likely to result in a shortage of soil moisture.

Moreover, as the picking season comes on, one is very likely to let down a little on cultivation, partly because of the extra work involved and partly because cultivation makes the conditions not quite so comfortable for the pickers.

Don't do it! Keep the cultivators going. It will pay in the extra size and attractiveness as well as the extra yield of the fruit.

## Australia to Build North-South Transcontinental Railway

A despatch from Adelaide says: It is understood the Federal Government has definitely promised the South Australian Government to undertake the construction of at least a portion of the north-south transcontinental railway. Premier Gun, in conference with the Federal Minister of Works, claimed the completion of the line should precede all other Commonwealth projects, and understood the Minister gave his assent subject to the conditions which the Government is considering. When the northern territory was transferred by South Australia to the Commonwealth, Validating Act gave South Australia first claim to construction of the first big railway by the Federal Government.

## Duke Works as Laborer to Build Belfry on Estate

Those who would care to see a duke acting as stonemason's laborer should go to Inverary, Castle, Argylshire, says a Glasgow despatch. Here, minus his coat and waistcoat and with his sleeves rolled up, the 52-year-old Duke of Argyll is working daily on the erection of a belfry in the castle grounds, which is to house a fine peal of bells of great antiquity.

Wearing kilt, Balmoral bonnet with bright red toorie, and a gray woven shawl, the Keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland can be seen carrying heavy stones and acting as assistant generally to the skilled stonemasons, whose orders he accepts like any other workman. And he keeps to trader union hours.

Many have got into the habit of being dissatisfied.

He's true to God who's true to man. —Lowell



The above photograph shows D. H. Warren, dairy expert of Washington, who, with the aid of the x-ray, can examine the holes in Swiss cheese and determine whether it is fit to eat.

## A HOUSE PARTY ON THE FARM

The question of entertaining and having company is one that interests every family, especially where there are young people. One of our contributors, a college girl who lives on a farm, writes that her family gave an enjoyable house party last summer in spite of conditions that did not at first seem advantageous. We thought of a house party, she writes, but did not know we could have it. We were in moderate circumstances. The house was not large. It was seven miles from town. It was summer, and there was nothing to offer in the way of entertainments, concerts or other attractions. The farm was a half section with the usual fields, pasture, grove, and a creek running through one end. The barn was only of moderate size. No mountains, lakes, forests or natural wonders were near to help entertain our guests.

"Let's take account of stock and see what we have that will help," suggested mother. The "we" included father, mother, two brothers, an older sister and myself. But all were young enough to enjoy a good time.

"Six rooms we might have beds in," said one. "A big fine dining room," added another. "Three teams, a hayrack, a wagon, a surrey, a pony and lots of good walking," said father. Each added his contribution to the general list.

But there appeared fourteen names of guests whom we wished to invite, and where could they sleep and what could we feed them? There were the potato patch, the garden, the orchard and the poultry yard to draw from. A meat wagon passed every day. We had plenty of milk, cream and butter. Finally some one suggested a tent for the boys to sleep in. We knew where we could get a good-sized tent at a reasonable cost. So we decided that we could have the party.

We sent the following invitation to fourteen young people: "Father and mother are going to turn the farm over to us for a week beginning August 14. They are to be our guests for the week. We invite you to be a guest also. Bring your old clothes, a blanket, your musical instrument and some music." All four of us children signed it.

Of course we took care in making the list to leave out the fussy, the sentimental, the very sensitive and all others who would not "mix" well. We asked only those who could enjoy wholesome, hearty pleasures, and who would appreciate our friends and neighbors. They all accepted.

We carefully planned everything in detail and wrote down suggestions for each day. We set the tent up in a grove, dug a ditch round it and made it ready. We put down some horse blankets and canvas to serve as rugs. The beds were straw ticks on homemade frames. We do not extra cooking in preparation except bake a lot of cookies.

We met our guests at the railway station. All the girls rode out in the surrey, the boys and baggage came along in the wagon. They all brought comfortable old clothes. The list of musical instruments included: three cornets, a flute, two mandolins, two guitars, and a clarinet. Several could play the piano.

Before our guests had been at the house an hour they agreed that two boys and two girls from among them should be deputed every day to help us with the cooking and dishwashing. On our side we had planned that two of us, a boy and a girl, should alternate with the other two in doing the housework. One of the two would look after the outside work and the other to the comfort and entertainment of the guests. So there were six of us each day, to do the housework.

For breakfast we had a cereal, eggs, bread and butter with fruit. The dinners were also simple, consisting of a meat, vegetables and dessert. For supper we had a salad, cold meat, or fish, one warm vegetable, cooked fruit, and usually cakes. One noon a big chicken stew with dumplings was the principal part of the meal. On the only cool evening we had a supper of baked beans and brown bread. One evening we paired off, and each couple got its own supper and cleared up afterwards. We gave a prize to the pair who prepared the best supper.

Mornings the guests played, read, wrote, sang or did whatever they pleased. We had planned that they should have some time to themselves. This gave the home boys a chance to do the odds and ends necessary about the farm. The pony did not get much rest, for all the girls wanted to learn to ride.

Of course the evenings were the best time of all. One evening we invited all the young people of the church and their friends. For another evening the fathers and mothers were invited. On both occasions we had music, games and simple refreshments. We wanted the neighbors to enjoy the guests and get pleasure from their visit. The night we camped we sat around a small camp fire and told stories. One evening we played such games as hide-and-seek in the moonlight.

Every one of our guests declared it was the "best time ever"—YOUTH'S Companion.

## Camera Supported This Family

My camera has been to me, not only a source of pleasure to myself and friends, but I have made it of commercial value.

When my husband died, leaving me with three children to care for, he also left me a camera and some knowledge of how to use it.

I not only did view work, but portrait work as well, learned to finish them myself, and supported myself and children mostly with it for several years.—Mrs. E. D.

## Progeny of Six-Year-Old Sow Already Number Over 140

For productivity Arthur Clow, R.R. No. 4, Rockwood, is the possessor of a sow that has broken all breeding records for Western Ontario. Although only six years old, this hog has given birth to no fewer than ten litters of pigs, "two litters a year," numbering, all told, one hundred and seventy, of which one hundred and forty were raised. On May 16 she brought into the world a litter of nineteen, sixteen of which are living and thriving. Of this number the mother is raising thirteen, the other three being bottle-fed by their proud owner.

## British Treasury Coins for Soviets

The population of Russia will no longer be handicapped in the matter of coins with which to carry on democratic commerce, provided they can overcome the difficulty of gaining possession of these monetary conveniences. The British treasury has already started on an order to mint 45,000,000 coins for the Soviet Government.

The contract for these coins is the first that has been received from the Soviet Government, since the two countries patched up their diplomatic difficulties. These coins will also be the first Soviet coins ever minted.

The coins are mostly one, two and five ruble pieces. The design for the money is the work of an Englishman, although suggested by the Soviets. It is exceedingly plain, one side of the coin carrying the Soviet coat-of-arms and the other the value of the coin and the date.

## Too Much Tidiness

"That place is so tidy I would go mad if I had to live in it," a man said the other day, after paying a visit to a friend, whose wife had the "just so" mania.

One can certainly have too much tidiness, as the small European business community in Persia discovered when the telegraph was first introduced there in the days of Nasr ed Din.

The Persian clerks in charge thought that the messages being transmitted were too untidy, so they carefully rearranged them, putting all the consonants together, sending them over the wire, and then following up with the vowels.

Twenty-five hundred sea lions have been killed by the Dominion Government patrol boat "Givenchy" during the last two weeks off Vancouver Island. The sea lions prey upon the salmon and other edible fish, and also destroy large numbers of them. The boat worked along the productive salmon areas in the vicinity of the Virgin Rocks with great success. Machine guns and rifles were used in killing the sea lions.

## THE RIDDLE OF THE TIDES

The sea bristles with problems of which few are more puzzling than the tides and their action. To-day, although we have proved that the tides are influenced largely by the moon, we know almost as little as the ancients did of the vagaries of the tides and of the various phenomena connected with them.

At Bournemouth, England, for example, there are what are known as double tides, caused, it is believed, by a tidal stream running from Spithead. This stream tends to keep back the tide in Southampton Water, with the result that at various points along the coast the tide rises for seven hours, ebbs for an hour, then rises again for about an hour and a half.

Near Arklow, on the Irish coast, there is no perceptible tide at all. Yet in the Bristol Channel the tides are among the heaviest known round our shores. Here the spring tides sometimes rise to a height of nearly fifty feet.

### What the Ancients Believed

The world's highest tides are those experienced in the Bay of Fundy, where they often rise to a hundred feet.

This variation in the height of tides has claimed much expert attention. What are known as spring tides are changes that occur at or near the time when the moon is new or full, while neap tides coincide with the moon's first or third quarter.

The seaside visitor, if he is observant, will have noticed that periodically the tide reaches its greatest height and then ebbs to its farthest point. This rise and fall diminishes for a week and then as gradually increases, until at the end of a fortnight the maximum ebb and flow is reached once more. It is these highest tides that are termed spring tides, while the lowest are known as neap tides.

Plato recorded his belief that waves and tides were the result of the convulsions of a mighty marine monster, whose rhythmic breathing caused the ebb and flow.

### The Moon's Powerful Pull

Aristotle attributed tidal movements to the sun in which he was partly right, the sun's influence, however, being much less marked than that of the moon. A satisfactory explanation of the problem was not forthcoming until Newton propounded his theory of gravitation two centuries ago.

This influence of the moon is still imperfectly understood by large numbers of people. Briefly, it may be explained in this way: The moon's pull on the earth affects the near side more than it does the centre, while the sea responds more readily than the solid surface. The result is that the waters on the side of the earth nearest the moon are drawn together in a heap, as it were, high tides being a result.

So far as the far side of the earth is concerned, the moon's pull affects the surface less powerfully than the centre, the water being still farther away, "giving" less than the land. Hence we have high tide on this side of the earth also, with low tide occurring halfway between the two sides on which there is high tide.

### Six Hundred Miles An Hour

What are known as tidal waves are the result of the sun, moon, and earth being in a straight line, the pull of gravity then affecting one part of the earth more forcibly than any other. Such a wave may sweep right round the world at a speed of six hundred miles an hour.

Contrary to popular belief, the wind's effect on waves is comparatively slight. It has been proved that the fiercest gale has no influence on water below a depth of fifty feet, whereas a tidal wave moves the whole bulk of the ocean in its path, causing an upheaval that may do in an hour or two more damage than a century of gales.

### Less Sugar in Goat's Milk

Goat's milk is richer in fat than cow's milk, but contains less sugar.

### That some are rich shows that others may become rich

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