



The field.

### Time of Sowing Fall Wheat.

In order to success in raising fall wheat, much depends upon the time chosen for sowing. Early sowing exposes the crop to the danger of a visitation from the Hessian fly, which deposits its eggs on the young leaves early in autumn. Late sowing incurs the risk of damage from the midge, which attacks the wheat when in flower. To hit the happy mean between the two dangerous extremes is not so easy. As seasons vary somewhat, and localities differ in circumstances affecting all farming operations, it is difficult to fix an exact rule which shall be generally applicable. In this, as in many other matters, the farmer needs to cultivate habits of careful observation, and preserve the lessons of experience. No almanac can be constructed which shall say under a given date,—do this or that to-day; at least were such an almanac prepared, it would scarcely be of more value than those which profess to predict the state of the weather.

Nevertheless, it is well to caution our readers against the extremes of earliness and lateness—the Scylla and Charybdis of wheat culture, as matters now stand. A correspondent of the *Genesee Farmer*, who tills “a thoroughly under-drained and beautiful farm near Geneva, N. Y.,” wrote in reference to last season: “Early sown wheat looks bad owing to the ravages of the Hessian fly last fall; late sown wheat (not too late) looks excellent.” Another experienced farmer wrote as follows to the *Country Gentleman*:—“I wrote you last autumn that I thought my wheat was ruined by the so-called Hessian-fly; it is a total failure, and all owing to too early sowing. I sowed the 5th and 6th of September, and many sowed earlier. I have proof positive that if I had sown about the 20th of last September I would have had fine looking wheat now. By some imperfection in the drill, it missed dropping from one spout the whole length of the field for several times; these rows I had drilled over about the 20th, or a little later. Now these rows are as healthy looking wheat as any man can wish to see, while the other is worthless. It is folly sowing so early. I never knew one day difference of coming in ear, or of ripening, from that sowed on the 12th or 25th of September, if the condition of the land was equal; and I have no doubt if farmers generally will make notes of their sowing,

and the ripening of the different fields, they will find what I say is correct.”

Mr. Spearing, of Wallingford, England, in a lecture before the London Farmers’ Club on the effect of the temperature of the soil on cultivation, lays down the principle that in England wheat should not be sown until the temperature of the soil is reduced to 50°. This rule would require that we should not sow until the last week in October. Obviously, therefore, it will not apply here. The climate of England and of Canada are so different that only general principles can be made to reach the case of both. Of the general principle that the temperature of the soil is an important means of deciding the time of sowing grain, there can be little doubt. Careful experiment, however, is needed to lay down a law for these latitudes. Until some such law is established, farmers must use their best judgment as guided by observation and experience.

### Brush Firewood.

The editor of the *Genesee Farmer*, in “Walks and Talks” for August, discourses on this subject as follows:—

“Last spring I cut off some pretty large limbs from an old apple orchard, and drew them into a pile on the side of the fence. To-day a Dutchman from the city came along and gave me four dollars for it. A Yankee could not be hired to chop up such stuff for firewood. I hope the Germans will teach us to be more economical in the use of wood. We have too long regarded wood as an incumbrance on the land, to be got rid of in the most expeditious manner. Can we not afford to use brush? The undergrowth in the woods and the branches of trees make good fire-wood, if tied up in bundles and well-seasoned. This is all the wood that an English farmer uses. The wood from his old hedges is tied up into faggots with scrupulous care, and this in sections where the best coal costs less than \$2.00 per ton.”

Many a farmer will read the above and smile contemptuously at the idea of such “thrifty saving knowledge.” But it is worth while to think seriously over it, especially in this country where we have no coal-beds, and where it is desirable to economise our wood fuel, and make it last as long and go as far as we can. For winter fires perhaps brush need not be thought of except for setting them going, and there is no better kindling than a little dry brush. But for summer firing it would certainly answer a good purpose, and we are inclined to think that in the neighbourhood of towns and cities our farmers might pick up a few odd dollars now and then by drawing in a load or two of brush in bundles for firewood. Tied up with withes, and loaded on the hay-rack, a pretty large quantity could be carried at once. Lighter and more easily handled than cordwood, it might surely be teamed in for summer use to better advantage than logs of beech or slabs of body maple. A large proportion of the population of our towns and cities was accustomed to the use of “faggots” for firing in the old country, and would doubtless take to it again here, if the cue were only given.

### Midge and Manure.

THAT veteran farmer, John Johnston, in a letter to the Editor of the *Genesee Farmer*, makes some interesting and suggestive statements about the effect of manure on the wheat crop in counteracting the ravages of the midge. He has been trying an experiment the present season, the result of which speaks volumes in favour of a better system of farming. He applied manure quite liberally on part of his wheat; another portion received a lighter dressing; while one acre was left without manure at all. Now for the result: The straw on the whole was abundant, rather too rank on the best manured part; but the midge has done comparatively little damage on this portion, a great deal more damage on that less manured, and far more on that not manured at all.

The reasons Mr. Johnston assigns for the effects above described are these:—“That heaviest manured stood the winter best, came earlier forward in spring, and came in ear earlier. That manured less was a week later, and the one acre without manure was quite behind.” He adds, “I can have Soules wheat early enough if I only had plenty of manure of the right kind.”

The editor of the *Genesee Farmer* remarks on the above experiment:—

“This is just what I have always contended. If we could sufficiently enrich our land with rich manure, (not rotted straw,) and if it was well drained and cultivated and sown at the right season, we should have no reason to apprehend much damage from the midge.”

We hope our readers will make a note of this. Many of them can testify as to the prevalence of midge upon insufficiently manured land, let them try the other portion of the experiment, and see how the wheat fares on ground thoroughly manured and deeply tilled. We are quite aware of the difficulty that stands in the way of putting this thing to a proper test. Manure is scarce. Our best farmers could advantageously use a great deal more than they can make. John Johnston, in the above extract, tells us what he could do if he only had plenty of manure, and in the same letter says he has contracted for eight tons of oil cake, to feed the coming winter, mainly for the sake of the rich manure it makes. The droppings of animals fed liberally with oil cake, peas, and beans make the best of manure. What with the poor feed too often given to stock, and the exposure to which their dung is subjected, there is but a small percentage of fertilizing matter in the barn-yard manure that actually finds its way to the land. Manure making must take a more prominent place among the operations of the farm. It may be an unpalatable opinion, but we cannot help thinking that many of the ills which agriculture is heir to, owe their parentage to poor systems of husbandry. A poverty-stricken soil can only produce plants of feeble constitution, so to speak. Their growth is slow, and they have not vigour enough to contend successfully against insect and other enemies.