

21 Feb 1924

Soils and Woods

Address communications to Agronomist, 75 Adelaide St. West, Toronto

AIR YOUR POTATOES.

Thousands of bushels of potatoes are lost to Ontario farmers every year, due to two diseases which occur frequently and are preventable with proper precautions.

These diseases are chilling injury, and frost, as it is sometimes called. The first of these is caused by slight chilling of the potatoes after they are dug from the ground or are in storage.

Breakdown of potatoes may be of two types—the one a superficial drying of areas of the skin, and the second a deep internal discoloration of the flesh.

The pitting of the tubers becomes more pronounced as the season advances, and with the coming of warm weather in the spring the most severe symptoms of breakdown are seen.

The enormous loss caused by breakdown each year can be prevented by giving more attention to ventilation in the construction of new potato storage houses or by remedying the defects of those already constructed.

1. Provide each potato cellar or storage house with inlets for fresh air and outlets for foul air.
2. Provide false floors and walls for the bins.
3. Provide air spaces between bins.
4. Never store potatoes in piles more than five feet deep without making some provision for air to get to the centre of the pile.

SOWING SEEDS IN HOTBEDS.

When using the manure-heated hotbed for growing the early plants, no seed should be sown for several days after the manure has been placed in the bed.

The soil of the bed should be loosened and made as nearly level as possible. For growing lettuce or radishes, maturity of the seed should be planted directly in the soil of the bed.

If the plants are to be grown for early transplanting, they may be started in the soil of the hotbed, but it is better to start them in shallow boxes or flats.

When the flats are used, the seedlings can be taken to a warm place when they are ready for shifting and the work can be done more easily than when bending over the frame of the bed.

The flats can also be shifted from one part of the frame to another and whenever necessary they can easily be transferred to cold frames where the plants are to be hardened in preparation for transplanting to the garden or field.

Some kinds of plants, such as melons and cucumbers, do not transplant readily, but if the seeds are planted in soil placed in some receptacle so that the plants can be transferred to the garden without disturbing the roots, much earlier crops can be secured.

A good soil for starting seeds and plants is made by composting sods and stable manure, but if a compost heap is not available, a satisfactory soil may be made by mixing together one part of well-rotted manure, two parts of good garden loam or rotted sods, and one part sand.

The date of starting seeds in the hot-bed is governed by the date that the plants can be set in the open ground. Cabbage, cauliflower and lettuce are cool season crops and the plants may be set out as early in the season as the soil can be worked in good condition, but it is not safe to set out tomatoes, melons and other warm season crops until the soil is warm and all danger of frost is over.

As a rule, cabbage, cauliflower and lettuce may be started about six weeks before the plants will be needed for setting in the garden or field; tomatoes and peppers eight weeks; eggplant, celery and onions about ten weeks; melons and cucumbers, four to six weeks.

POULTRY

I find that farm house floors are sometimes not exactly level, whether they are concrete basement floors or the wooden floors of upstairs rooms.

Absorbents in the Stable.

Approximately one-third of the excrement voided by animals is liquid. The liquid voidings of cows, according to analysis, contain in each ton 20 pounds of nitrogen and 27 pounds of potash.

From the above calculation it will be seen the liquid manure is worth \$4.40 for the nitrogen, it contains and \$1.35 for the potash, a total value of \$5.75 per ton, while the solids are worth \$1.76 for the nitrogen, 10 cents for the potash and 30 cents for the phosphorus, a total value of \$2.16 per ton.

One pound each of well dried peat, thoroughly dried sawdust, and dried leaves will absorb, respectively, 5, 4, and 1 1/2 pounds of liquid. It is difficult to dry peat thoroughly under our climatic conditions and to get good dry sawdust is equally difficult.

Tests show that one pound of straw will absorb in twenty-four hours from 2 1/2 to 3 pounds of liquid. Oat straw is found to be a slightly better absorbent than wheat straw.

Whenever possible the beginner should purchase one or two colonies in his own vicinity. These should be in modern hives.

Bees can also be bought in one, two or three-pound combless packages, and if obtained early enough in the season are often equal to overwintered colonies.

In addition to the colonies of bees a supply of supers is necessary for the storage of the crop, the equivalent of three deep supers being allowed for each colony.

According to official figures from Ottawa, the area sown to fall wheat in 1923 for 1924 is considerably less than in 1922.

Skin Disease in Livestock.

Farmer, Middlesex Co.: Question.—One of my animals seems to have some kind of skin disease. What had better do?

The farmer is going forward, even if only "on low." It will be but a short time when he can probably "hit on high" again.

Ontario Three-Month Schools

BY L. STEVENSON, B.S.A., SUPERVISING DIRECTOR. The three-month schools in elementary agriculture and domestic science for the rural young people of Ontario have this winter been increased to twelve.

How to Start Beekeeping.

Bees can be kept profitably almost anywhere in Canada and each year the number of beekeepers gradually increases. Anyone can keep bees, but it is advisable that persons having an unusually high nervous temperament and those who are badly affected by the poison of bee stings should not attempt it.

A thorough knowledge of modern beekeeping is not necessary to make a start; indeed, this knowledge can only come through years of practical experience.

When ready to take up the business the first consideration is one of location. A good location is one that will produce a fairly continuous supply of pollen and nectar from early spring until fall, with at least one heavy crop.

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Perhaps the greatest knowledge a man can have is to know that he does not know.

Totals of Livestock Movements.

Sales of cattle for the eleven months of the year ending November, according to Dominion Live Stock Branch returns, were 748,242 compared with 774,300 in the same period last year.

Save the Woodlot.

It is a shame the way some farmers neglect their woodlots. Trees that blow down during storms are allowed to remain as they fall, to rot and decay.

To Protect Trees from Rabbits.

To prevent rabbits from chewing trees, rub the bodies of the trees, as high as necessary, with smoked pork rind. This is an old German remedy which is much more valuable at present than the German mark.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

FEBRUARY 24

The Period of the Judges, Judges chs. 2-16. Golden Text— I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely— Hosea 14: 4.

CONTINUATION OF THE STORY.—The victory could be only in clever strategy and with picked men. He chose the period after Joshua, and in a way to test and pick the men he interpreted of the story. It tells us both what happened, and why it happened. It reveals the hand of God in the history, the just and yet merciful dealing of God with his people.

It may be argued that all this is too mechanical, and that it does not perfectly represent the ways of God. The fact that sins are not always punished in this way, nor is the repentant nation always delivered.

Ch. 7: 2-3. The Lord said unto Gideon. We turn from the general statement of God's way with Israel to the story of one of the judges. Gideon is raised up by God to deliver Israel from the Midianites.

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SALESMEN

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Free Information

to Farmers

Any of the following bulletins, giving timely information of value to farmers, will be gladly sent anywhere free on request. No postage required.

- Best Varieties of Grain.
- Feeding Beef Cattle in Ontario.
- Co-operation in Marketing Poultry Produce.
- Grading and Marking Eggs.
- Feeding Influence on Type of Hogs.
- Swine Husbandry in Canada.
- Dairying in New Zealand and Australia.
- Milking Machines.
- The Corn Borer.
- Storing Hops.
- Modern Orchard Practice.
- The Maple Sugar Industry.
- Fox Ranching in Canada.
- Bees and How to Keep Them.
- Hobbit.
- The Strawberry in Canada.
- Poultry Keeping in Town and Country.
- Bush Fruits.
- Weeds and Weed Seeds.
- Fertilizers for Field Crops.
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