

Poultry-raising from a Farmer's Standpoint.

BY E. BEDFORD, GLENCROSS, MAN.

No doubt raising poultry would yield more pleasure and more profit if every farmer had a good henhouse and a first-class flock of birds, but I have found by experience that both pleasure and profit may be derived from the care of poultry under very ordinary circumstances. Our henhouse is a log one adjoining the south side of the cow stable, and has a sod roof through which the water sometimes drips in a very provoking manner, being neither good for the fowls nor yet for their caretaker's temper. Then our buildings are close to the bush, and the prairie wolves are ever on the watch, ready to run off with any unsuspecting bird that may wander very far from the yard. Surely any person might begin with as fair a chance of success! Yet, with a little care and perseverance, our hens return us a higher percentage than any stock on the farm.

By feeding a hot mash each morning, sometimes boiled potatoes with skim milk, sometimes hot skim milk mixed with shorts or crushed barley, and sometimes a hot cake (baked expressly for themselves), with plenty of warm water or milk to drink, and a feed of grain in the afternoon, which, by the way, is scattered on dry chaff, I have no difficulty in getting eggs through the winter months when the prices are high, and then the hens that lay during the winter months always hatch early in the spring and the chickens are ready for the early fall market. By exercising care in the preparation of the marketable birds and shipping to Winnipeg we have realized satisfactory prices.

Last year I kept a daily account of the eggs gathered and find that my hens averaged over ten dozen eggs each. There were but five days during the twelve months on which I did not get an egg.

Our flock is a cross of Plymouth Rocks; in number, about sixty. Though there may be better classes of hens, I like them best, as I know more about them. I find the work very interesting and am constantly learning more about my birds. To insure the henhouse being free of weasels we keep a cat in the cow stable and have an opening from it into the henhouse. To prevent scaly legs I sometimes wash my hens' feet with coal oil, and once in a while I dust insect powder through their feathers, and in one corner of their house keep sand and gravel, with an occasional pan of ashes.

Preserving Eggs.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR, - I notice in the ADVOCATE for Nov. 2nd several suggestions for keeping eggs fresh. For the benefit of your numerous readers, I give you my plan. Put say half a dozen at a time in a cotton bag or wire basket and dip them quickly three times in boiling water. A scientific friend of mine says it has some action on the lime of the shell, making it impervious. When using there is a thin white film inside the shell. The eggs after being dipped are simply packed in a box or basket and kept in a cool place. Nothing more is necessary. I have tried this plan several years and it works admirably. "HOUSEKEEPER."

GARDEN AND ORCHARD.

Packing and Shipping Apples.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR, - I notice in the Nov. 16th issue of the ADVOCATE that Mr. John Craig, Dominion Horticulturist, calls the attention of fruit-growers to the fact that the Minister of Agriculture wishes to obtain their views in regard to the best means of preserving and transporting our fruit product, with the desire of rendering whatever assistance lies in the power of the Government. This is certainly an important subject to Canadian fruit-growers; but there is a point in connection with the packing and shipping of apples to the British markets to which I wish to call attention, for I am convinced that some farmers and packers are doing an injury to our trade through selfish interests that neither cold storage, rapid transportation, or any other government assistance can wipe out. Never before in the history of Canada has there been such an opportunity for growers and shippers to raise the standard of our fruit in the eyes of the British people. But I am sorry to state that, to my positive knowledge, this opportunity in many cases has not only not been taken advantage of, but rather abused. The quantity of our apples was so great and the quality generally so good that every demand might have been supplied with fruit of perfect form, color, and size; but I have personally observed packers at work who first double-lined the barrels with the choicest specimens, then placed in a basket of "seconds," after which the barrels were filled up with small, unripe and imperfectly developed fruit. But the fault lies not so much with the packers as with the growers, many of whom are standing in their own light, as the future cannot fail to show. They appear to think that everything gathered should be placed in the barrels, and in some instances packers have been ordered off the premises when they failed to comply with such demands. Such growers appear quite delighted when a gang of men is found who are so indifferent to the interests of their employers and our national reputation abroad as to fill up the barrels with

whatever they find before them. Such a gang of packers were recently at work in this vicinity, and I was told by one farmer that in his orchard little green Baldwins, no larger than a walnut, such as he would not care to eat himself under any conditions, were placed in the barrels. Another farmer stated with the utmost satisfaction that he would rather sell at 40c. per barrel to the employer of these men, and have his fruit packed by them, than receive 60c. from another firm who were buying, apparently otherwise quite satisfied so long as the fruit was off his hands and the money received in exchange, never giving a thought as to future results. All such shortsighted and dishonest methods are suicidal to the interests of both grower and shipper, and they will suddenly awaken to a realization of the fact when buyers and consumers on the other side eventually become disgusted with such dishonesty and we find our fruit practically shut out from their markets when an ever-increasing trade might have been built up.

For my own part I have seen but little fruit left in our own orchard by buyers or packers that I would care to place in the barrels were I shipping myself. By the method now practiced of paying equal prices for superior and inferior fruit, a premium is placed upon negligence and carelessness, and the painstaking grower who trims, sprays and carefully gathers his fruit is made to suffer for the wrongs of his less thrifty neighbor. But there is a certain remedy for this within reach of the progressive grower, which is for him to ship his own fruit, and by careful gathering, culling, and branding, build up a trade for his particular brand which will eventually supersede dishonest shipments, for "truth is mighty and it will prevail."

ELLIS F. AUGUSTINE.

Lambton Co., Ont.

[NOTE.—Beginning with the able article by Mr. E. D. Smith in the September 1st issue of the ADVOCATE, repeated warnings have been given on this very point, so that apple-growers who read are without excuse. We are in hopes that the cases mentioned by Mr. Augustine are isolated, not general. We are not sure that his remedy will cure all, because men who connive with reckless packers could hardly be expected to be very scrupulous if packing on their own account, but experience will certainly teach the lesson, though it may be a very expensive one. It is an exceedingly difficult matter to reach such cases by any legislative enactment or inspection system. Our apple trade this season attained great magnitude, up to the middle of November nearly 780,000 barrels being shipped to Great Britain from Montreal and Halifax, 40,000 more than were exported from the United States. At Liverpool, Canadian apples sold from 25c. to \$1 more this year than American, but the unprecedented supplies had a ruinous effect upon prices.—EDITOR.]

Grape Culture.

BY MARTIN BURRILL, LINCOLN CO., ONT.

"The history of the grape is almost as old as that of man," wrote Charles Downing in 1845. There is a good deal of history to be written about the grape, however, since Downing's day. People are not generally aware of the fact that commercial grape culture, of at all a successful kind, is a very modern affair on this Continent. For two hundred years or so vineyardists were continually planting and experimenting with the European grape (*Vitis vinifera*), and meeting with failure after failure. In 1629 a settler in Massachusetts wrote home: "Excellent vines are here, up and down in the woods. Our governor has already planted a vineyard, with great hope of increase." Here is an early notice of the native grape, but it was not till well on in the present century that the potentialities of the native grapes were realized and any serious or general attention given to their development. Since then viticulture has gone by leaps and bounds, and to-day we have an embarrassment of riches in the way of good varieties of the American grape.

Twelve or fifteen years ago, when ten cents per pound was an ordinary price for grapes, there was lots of fun and money in the business. Now, with about four millions of vines in bearing in Ontario alone and the price down to zero, no wonder there is wagging of heads and a certain amount of pessimism. But this year was a genuine exception. Hard times and a vast apple crop helped to demoralize the grape market, and things are more likely to be better than worse another season. Anyway, grapes have come to stay—it is an indispensable fruit—and heaps of people are in the business for keeps. As in everything else, there is room "at the top," and the successful grower will be the man who reduces the cost of production, studies carefully the environment of the grape, and combats all adverse conditions.

Soil.—The best soil for the grape is a rich, deep loam, loose and friable. Gravelly soil is excellent, as it is for nearly all fruits. The vine, however, will do well in almost any soil with proper care, from sand to clay, providing always that suitable varieties

are selected and that the soil is well drained. In the case of clay the best results cannot be obtained without underdraining. On light, sandy soils it will be necessary, of course, to apply more manures, but while the vines will on such soil make a more rank growth, they will be more subject to disease and the fruit itself will not reach the high flavor of that grown on the heavier soil, though this last is a disputed point. The grape loves warmth and a dry, rich soil. For this reason underdraining is important in nearly all cases, for it not only carries off the excess of water, but allows the air to penetrate and circulate through the soil, thereby raising the temperature of the subsoil and improving the mechanical texture. It is easier and cheaper to put the land for the vineyard in good shape before



FIG. II.

planting than afterwards. Plow deeply, following with a subsoiler if possible. Land that will grow a first-class crop of potatoes or corn will do well for a vineyard. When the land is ready for planting it should be in as good shape as the seed bed for fall wheat. It will pay to have it that way when you come to staking out and planting, to say nothing of after benefit to the vines.

Planting.—When not cramped for room eleven feet each way is a good distance for the strong-growing varieties. This gives room to work a light harrow or almost any tool or wagon comfortably. Some of the weaker-growing varieties might be planted much closer in the rows—eight feet or so. Some growers plant very closely, with the intention of cutting out every other vine as they grow older. A fairly good plan—if they cut them out; but when it comes to the pinch it seems a too heroic business for them, and—they don't cut. Vines are cheap, and good, fibrous, two-year-olds are best to plant. Plant deeply enough and prune down to two buds. Cut off any bruised and broken parts, and if the roots are long and destitute of branching fibers, prune back to about eighteen inches. This will incite the main root to throw out quickly new feeders. Remember, it is not the

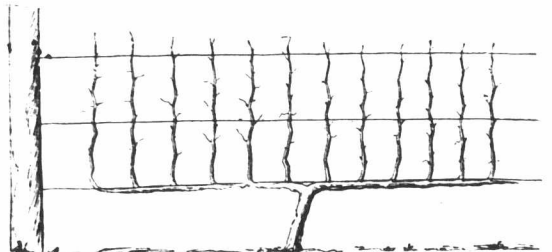


FIG. III.

length of the root that determines the quality, but the condition. It is a good plan to mix a handful of bone meal with the earth when planting.

Cultivation.—Cultivate thoroughly and often; success lies this way. Never let the ground get baked. Don't wait till you think the weeds are big enough to bother with; that's a small part of the business. The prime necessity is to keep the surface soil mellow and loose all the time, thus conserving as much moisture as possible. After the vines are in bearing do not plow too deeply; the whole ground will be full of fine feeding roots, and a shallower cultivation is profitable. In working away from the vines in the spring we find a grape hoe invaluable. A steady horse and careful man will, with this tool, save the work of three or four men with the hoe.

Fertilizers.—As to the manure question, if the ground is rich enough when planting it will carry the vines through to the third season. If, however, you grow other crops between the rows the first two years (and absolutely nothing but "hoe" crops should ever be grown), manure accordingly. When the vines come into bearing and are making abundance of wood, it will be better not to dress too heavily with barnyard manure. Compared to other crops, grapes remove more phosphoric acid and potash from the soil than they do nitrogen. Apply these two elements, the former by bone meal and the latter in the form of unleached wood ashes or muriate of potash. Directly you think the vines are not making vigorous growth, give another dressing of barnyard manure.

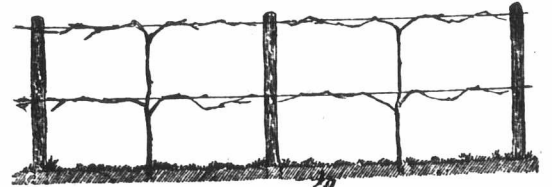


FIG. IV.

Pruning and Training.—In many respects this is the most important feature of grape culture. There are any number of systems, but the control of the growth of the vine within proper limits and the proper production of well-ripened wood and buds that will ensure a good crop of fruit are the principles that underlie all systems. In cold districts where vines have to be protected during the winter, what is called the low two-arm or "arm and spur" system is probably best. When planting, cut back to two buds; the second spring cut

FIG. I.—
Arm and Spur,
Second Fall.