

plow when the ground packs hard from the moisture it contains. Some sandy soils never pack thus, and never bake into clods, but loamy and peaty soils do, and a field is often greatly injured if plowed a day or two too soon, or if worked in any way while wet.

Fences.—Before the ground settles after the coming out of the frost, and while it is yet too wet to plow, embrace the opportunity to reset old fences, and put up new ones. Try the posts, and strengthen weak ones by stakes driven along side; replace rotten rails with strong ones.

Getting out Manure.—This is work for frosty mornings, as the wheels and teams would cut up the land badly at other times; or it should be delayed until the ground is somewhat dry.

Composts made now will heat and be in good order for the corn crop. Muck got out in the winter will be in condition to be thus used, mixed with $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ its bulk of barn-yard manure.—*American Agriculturist.*

The Garden.

THE ASPARAGUS BED—ITS FORMATION AND CULTIVATION.

There is, perhaps, no succulent vegetable more generally valued for its palatable, nutritious, and healthful qualities than asparagus, which can be successfully cultivated in any climate, from the tropics to the cold, bleak shores of Lake Superior, where it is found growing wild. Asparagus is also found in its wild state in low and often flooded fresh and salt meadows, as well as in the barren salt lands of the seashore, and, when brought under proper cultivation, it gives a greater return for the labor bestowed than any other production of the market garden. Its proper mode of cultivation is less understood than any other vegetable produced for table use. My first knowledge of asparagus, (when a boy,) some forty-five years ago or more, was derived from an old bed in my father's garden, which bed was put out by my grandfather before my father's recollection. There the asparagus was cultivated, on the same spot of ground, until about 1810, when it became necessary to have the garden in another location. The old asparagus roots were removed and carefully put out again, where they remained until 1852, when the bed was destroyed for the purpose of erecting a building. From the time of the removal of the roots until they were destroyed, forty-two years elapsed, and from the time of the first planting of the roots by my grandfather till they were destroyed was at least one hundred years.

MANURING ASPARAGUS BEDS.—The bed was always well cultivated; the old stalks were cut off in the fall; the bed was liberally covered with manure, which was forked in in the spring. Until its destruction, the asparagus never decreased in quality or quantity. These facts of my own knowledge are satisfactory to my mind that the limited production of asparagus is only from a neglect of its proper cultivation. I find a great variety of

opinions with writers in relation to the correct mode of propagating and cultivating asparagus. Some writers say it is necessary that the earth should be removed three feet deep, or more, and the bottom filled in with stone, old boots and shoes, and the earth removed should be mixed with manure and returned, and the plants or roots should be set out eighteen inches or two feet apart, and be planted twelve inches deep. Others say that six to fifteen inches apart, and four to twelve inches deep, is preferable. With such badly-balanced opinions among so many theorists, no definite mode of cultivation could be arrived at. Some ten years since, I made an entirely new garden where I now live, and always having enjoyed the luxury of asparagus without depending upon the market for my supply, I determined to make a bed to suit my own views of the nature of the plant. My soil is a sandy loam. I prepared my ground with a large quantity of well-rotted manure, and divided my ground into beds five feet wide and twenty feet long. The ground was then dug up one spit deep, the length of a long spade blade. Believing that asparagus required the warmth of the sun, air, and surface moisture, and having no fear that the roots would run down beyond my control, I had my bed trenched (or marked out) four inches deep and twelve inches apart. The roots were two years old, and were taken from a garden adjoining my own. They were placed in the trenches twelve inches apart, as soon as dug from the ground where they grew. Each branch of the roots was spread out horizontally, and they were all covered four inches deep. The asparagus grew apparently as well as though the roots had never been removed.

SALT FOR ASPARAGUS.—The next year I cut from the bed in sufficient quantity for my own table. Every season, when the weeds commenced growing, I sowed broadcast one half bushel of salt, and the same quantity twice afterward, as the weeds began to recover. I always have asparagus before any appears in the market from the market-gardens in the neighborhood, and cut it every day from the time I commence until the season ends. The productiveness of my bed has increased every year, and all gardeners and others who have seen it pronounce it the most prolific bed they have ever seen. The average growth of the stalks, at the time of seedling, is five to seven feet in height. I never cut my asparagus until it has grown at least four to six inches above the ground, and we never cut it over one inch below the surface. Some writers advise cutting two to six inches below the ground. But at that depth the bottom of the stem is always tough. Prof. Mapes once stated that there were twenty-eight species of asparagus. Some writers have attempted to classify the different qualities. With my experience in raising and largely consuming the article, I think that I could quite as easily distinguish between the taste of a white hen's egg and that of a black one, as I could tell the difference in the quality or taste of the purple or blue-headed asparagus from that of any other color or species of the plant.

PLANTS.—No plant will pay the market gardener so much money for the labor as the asparagus. But remember, always grow your own roots from seed; trust not the seed-shops for roots. If once you have got a good, healthy plantation, the bed will not run out

for a hundred years, provided it is always kept free from weeds, and manured well. I manure mine four inches deep each year. From my bed, eighteen by thirty-six feet, I take at least fifty dollars' worth yearly. To those who wish to grow their own plants, it is simply necessary to sow the asparagus in drills like onions; cultivate well the first summer; if they do well, they will be large enough in the fall to set out then, or during the next spring; in two years from that time they are of sufficient strength to stand cutting.

Asparagus comes only from one common centre, and hence it is not advisable to purchase old plants.

Many do this, thinking they can get a product so much quicker, but they are mistaken; young plants are invariably the best. Neither must the roots be planted too deep. If the roots are near the surface of the soil, the stems will start much earlier than if put a foot below, as is usually practiced.

THE ASPARAGUS BEETLE.—This asparagus beetle has become a formidable enemy to asparagus culture on Long Island, and it appears to be slowly spreading inland. It is now ten years since it made its appearance in this country, having been brought from Europe, where it has been known for a long time.

Mr. A. S. Fuller states: "When living in Brooklyn, a few years since, my asparagus beds were attacked by this beetle, and I tried salt, lime, ashes, and various other things, with scarcely any success. There is, however, one pretty effectual remedy, and that is, allow your hens and chickens to run in the asparagus beds as soon as the beetle appears. Birds will also assist in their destruction, if permitted to do so unmolested. In the fall the asparagus tops should be cut down and burned on the bed, and a little straw or other combustible material added, as many insects or their larva will be destroyed in this way."

THE PROFITS OF CULTIVATION.—Inquiries have been made of commission-merchants and market-gardeners as to the money value of asparagus per acre, and their opinion is unanimous in the statement, that if rightly managed, an asparagus bed of several acres will pay a larger profit per acre than the same space devoted to any of our smaller fruits. Figures from \$400 to \$700 per acre have been named. When we consider how easily the crop is marketed, requiring no expensive berry-baskets or crates, or the trouble of renewing the vines every three or four years, or the possibilities of loss in times of picking, because of rain, etc., and that, once well established, it will last a life-time, it should receive more attention. It certainly requires very rich land to grow large asparagus; but the yield is very great, very steady, and it always commands a good price in market.—*The Horticulturist.*

[Mr. Hutton of the Horticultural Gardens has usually a supply of good Seedling Asparagus plants, to supply those who wish to form beds of this delicious vegetable. It is the most valuable vegetable we have in Nova Scotia, because it is the first green thing we can get out of the garden in early spring time.—Ed. J. A.]

THE NEW TOMATOES.

The present season is fertile in new varieties of Tomato. The following ap-