

COAL ASHES AS A FERTILIZER.

SIR.—I have frequently noticed the statement, that coal ashes are of no value as a fertilizer. If so, can you explain my experience?

In the spring of '96 I put, at the east end of the woodshed, the ashes from five tons of coal, making a bank about six feet by three feet, and about one foot deep. I threw over this less than an inch of clay soil. There grew up a curious crop of weeds, among other things a tomato plant. As it was late in the season it did not give much fruit, but the uncommon growth led me to try an experiment. So last spring I put on the same bank the ashes from eight tons of coal. On this, with about a gallon of soil in each hill, I set eight tomato plants. They grew to an enormous size, some branches trained

against the wall reaching over seven feet. The fruit was abundant, uniform in size, smooth and firm. They seemed more acid than usual. I think it was the Acme variety.

I shall try again without putting earth in hill. There was certainly not earth enough within reach of the plants to account for the growth, besides the soil was very poor, as I put three plants from the same lot in the soil at the edge of the ash bed, and they were not worth cultivating.

From my experience I know tomatoes and weeds grow well on coal ashes, and I don't see why they might not be used for something better than the roadway.

C. H. LOWRY.

Hagersville, March 28th.

CULTURE OF ASPARAGUS.

IN all applications of fertilizers, it should be remembered that the roots store up during the summer for the following year's crop, and fertilizers applied late in the fall will have little effect on the crop the following spring. Nitrate of soda or a similar quick-acting agent applied at cutting-time will produce a noticeable improvement, but we would recommend a heavy coat of stable-manure applied each fall, winter or early spring, in order to feed the roots during summer growth for the following year's crop.

In the spring take a cutaway or disc harrow and work in thoroughly the manure and dead Asparagus tops. This will leave the bed in fine condition for cutting, as, to start with, the bed should be about level. Some growers object to turning under the dead Asparagus tops

with the manure, claiming that the seed will grow and make a mass of worthless, small Asparagus, to ruin the bed. This would, no doubt, be the case where beds are allowed to run wild and take care of themselves from cutting time to cutting time again; but where a bed receives proper care and cultivation there will be no trouble from this source. After the bed has been cut a few times, and weeds start, plow up to it lightly with a one-horse plow, and go over it with a light harrow or Universal weeder, to smooth the surface a little. Repeat the operation of plowing up to and harrowing down each week during the cutting season or as soon as the weeds start. These plowings will gradually work good ridges above the rows by the end of the cutting season.—American Agriculturist.