

on proper principles, September was well advanced before the fruit changed colour. To have *large* and *early-ripe* tomatoes, the land must be rich.

Hotbeds for tomatoes should be ready to sow by the 10th March. If you like to sow aubergines—egg-plants—in the same frame, you may, but I would rather let them have a home to themselves, as the tomatoes may sometimes require a slight check, which would be the death of aubergines. Sow the seed half an inch deep, in rows four inches apart and press the soil down firmly. As soon as the plants can be handled, pull up the whole lot, and prick them in again 3 inches apart every way. Repeat this as often as you care to take the pains: frequent transplanting makes hardy, stocky plants. Don't water too much.

By the 20th April the plants should be ready for the cold-frame; this should be opened every day, if there is no wind, as soon as the chill of the morning is off, but kept well covered up all night: were not my best tomatoes severely touched by the frost on the 3rd May this year? On or about May 16th, if your place is well sheltered from the cold winds, the final transplantation may take place, but the date must of course be left to your judgment, the custom of your locality being worth considering.

To my mind, it is a matter of indifference whether the manure for this crop be applied in the previous autumn or just before planting, provided always, in the latter case, it be in a fairly rotted state. The bastard-trenching spoken of before will help this crop amazingly through the dry weather of the latter summer. As the plants, whether in pots or in the plain earth of the cold-frame, will, after so many movings, be a mass of roots and soil, they will need a larger hole to fit them: this may be made with a trowel, taking care to loosen the soil all round each hole before planting and to press the plants firmly in afterwards. I need hardly say that, in both cases, they should be copiously watered an hour or so before setting out; they will need no further water. Keep the hoe going, and fork between the rows as often as possible.

I see, by my diary, my tomatoes this year were planted 14 inches apart in the rows on May 15th, and were suckered for the first time June 2nd, and the first ripe fruit was gathered the last week of July, not nearly so fine in size or quality as in ordinary years.

You can grow tomatoes anywhere: in a gravel walk, if you take about a foot square out some ten inches deep, and refill the hole with good, rich earth.

This year, I allowed some of mine to form six bunches of fruit before topping; but, generally speaking, four bunches are safer than five, unless the exposure is due south and the plot perfectly sheltered from north and east. My home-garden is so completely protected that as I write—October 4th—tomatoes, lettuces, vegetable-marrows, and scarlet-runners, are as green as in August! Geraniums, pansies, and phlox, are still untouched. This must, in a great measure be due to the effect of the great body of warm water—Lake St. Louis—that flows past the place, as I hear that all tender plants in the neighbourhood, lying a little inland, were cut off by the frost of September 20th.

Vegetable-marrows.—I have been revelling in this delicious vegetable all the latter summer. They are easy enough to grow, but if people will allow them to exceed four inches in length before gathering them, they are no better than any other kind of squash. Start them in small pots, in a moderate hot-bed, harden off, and set them out about the 20th May, providing some sort of protection for them against frost, and, particularly, against wind. I prepare the land for them in this way: make a trench 18 inches deep and as much in width, which fill with fresh, hot horse-manure—

rather strawy than otherwise—; return the earth, mixing it with thoroughly rotted dung, and set the plants, four feet apart, on the ridge. In a wet season, like 1890, they will run like anything, and they must be allowed to run, as I never saw any good in checking them, more than stopping once when the plants have about 5 or 6 leaves: this is for the first crop. For later use, I got some pots of plants ready to set out about the 25th June, as soon as the first few young potatoes are dug, and put them in on the level ground, digging in plenty of dung around them as the ground is cleared. These late ones keep us supplied all September.

To cook vegetable-marrows: as I said before, they should be gathered when not more than 4 inches long; dressed the same day they are plucked, for if allowed to get the least limp, they are ruined; boiled rapidly in salted water, but not too much done: the skin—the best part—should be rather crisp; and they should be served on *dry-toast* with melted-butter—*sauce blanche* won't do—and black pepper. I prefer them with salad oil; *Lucca* is the right sort, though Italians do like their oil a little rancid!

After the hotbeds have done their first work I find a use for them in two ways: either I sow mushroom-spawn on them, or gherkins for pickles. For the former, they must be kept dark and damp, but not sappy.

DE OMNIBUS REBUS.

Butter.—I see by the English papers that the best Normandy butter is quoted on the London market at 21 cents a pound, and best Corks at 18 cents. I am paying 30 cents a pound for butter that is only fit for cooking!

Wheat.—The best white-wheat has been fetching as high as 44s a quarter in some of the English markets, but the price has fallen off 4s. since, a dollar and a quarter a bushel is about its value now, and as the same quality would sell for \$1.10 in Montreal, I don't think we shall export much this season profitably. Impossible to find out the real truth about the Manitoba crop. As for the States, they are past praying for: wheat won't average more than ten bushels an acre—spring and winter together—and only 60 lbs. to the bushel! Corn 19 bushels an acre. Of oats the indications are for but 64 per cent. of a full crop, or a reduction, as compared with last year, of fully 250,000,000—and possibly 300,000,000—bushels by measure, and the grain is from 10 to 15 per cent. below the normal weight, and probably 25 per cent. below the normal feeding value. So decided is the inferiority in weight of new oats, that Chicago vessel-owners are now insisting on a premium of one-fourth of a cent per bushel over regular rates where they load with new oats. Considering the shrinkage in yield and chaffy character of the grain, it is evident that this year's oat crop has not half the nutritive value of that of 1889, and that of feeding grains we have produced but 1,875,000,000 bushels as against the 2,863,000,000 of last year—the difference amounting, in round numbers, to the enormous quantity of one thousand million bushels, with every probability that the recent frosts (severe enough to kill corn here in latitude 35° north) have reduced the corn to be harvested by another 100,000,000 bushels. *Ex.*

Potatoes.—This crop is very poor in yield about here. On the Cross farm, where nothing could exceed the pains taken with its cultivation, there cannot have been more than at the outside 120 bushels an acre, and that in spite of extraordinary dunging, three horse-hoings, and two hand-hoings, in