

## THE VEGETABLE GARDEN.

### Mushroom Growing.

An inquiry comes from Bobcaygeon on the subject of raising mushrooms, and we are requested to give full particulars, including the kind of soil best adapted to the growth of mushrooms. The growing of mushrooms is a very easy and simple process, exceedingly simple and easy when one knows how, and yet requiring just that peculiar knowledge and skill which can be acquired only by patient practice, joined to intelligent observation.

The first requirement is a suitable place in which to grow them. The best place is in a cellar where the temperature never falls below 40° Fahrenheit, and never rises above 60°, and which can be made perfectly dark. Next to a cellar would be some vacant out-building or shed, well shaded from the sun and protected from searing winds, where the temperature can be maintained without much fluctuation day and night. We have never known any one attempt growing them in the open air in this climate, but at a favorable season of the year it might be done by making the beds on the north side of some building and protecting them from rains.

The second requirement is a good supply of horse droppings from working horses that are liberally fed with grain and hay. The droppings from those that are fed on roots, grass, bran and other soft food are not suitable. This should be gathered fresh every day, with as little litter as possible, and free from sticks, stones and especially any bits of iron. These droppings should be placed under shelter in a heap not more than four feet high, and of such length and width as may suit the convenience. They should not be allowed to heat violently, and to prevent this it will be necessary to turn the heap frequently, taking care when turning to throw the outside portions into the centre, so that the whole may be evenly fermented. The manure should not be allowed to become wet by rain or snow. When a sufficient quantity has been accumulated to form a bed say four feet wide, two high, and twelve long, it may be taken to the cellar, out-house or shed, and there carefully built up as one would build a hot-bed. It should be packed firmly, tramping each layer, and leaving the surface level. Layers of six inches in thickness will be about right to place on at a time. In about a week the bed will probably be ready for planting. And here is the critical point. Here is required that peculiar knowledge which only experience can give, for if the manure be not in the proper condition to receive the spawn, it will be of no use to plant it. It has been well said that "when the manure has become odorless, is of a brownish color, binds well, is soft, and on being pressed does not give out any water," then it is in the right condition for receiving the spawn. If it does not bind well, or is wet, it is not in a proper state. If it does not bind it may be moistened a little, the bed made over, turning it thoroughly, when it will heat again, and in a few days be ready to receive the spawn. If, however, the manure be wet, it will not be likely to be ever of any use. Care must be taken not to spawn the bed while the fermentation is too active and the heat too great. The experienced grower can tell by thrusting his fingers into the bed, the novice may know by using a thermometer,—not putting in the spawn where, after inserting the bulb into a hole in the bed, the mercury rises above 80°, yet not waiting for the bed to cool below 75°.

Spawn can be had of all our large seedsmen. This should be broken into pieces about as large as an ordinary hen's egg, and the pieces introduced into holes made in the bed about two and a half inches deep, and then covered with the manure taken out in making the opening for the reception of the spawn. These holes may be made in rows across the bed, making the rows about eight inches apart, and the holes eight inches apart in the row, but placing the

holes in one row opposite the spaces in the next row. After the bed has been spawned it will be necessary to cover it three or four inches thick with clean straw in order to keep out the light, unless the bed be in a cellar or tight shed that can be made quite dark. When the spawn is received from the seedsmen it will be very dry. This is as it should be in order to preserve its vitality. But the bed will be filled with spawn more quickly, or, in other words, the spawn will grow more rapidly after being planted, if it is allowed to lie in a damp place, not wet, as on the bottom of a damp cellar, for a few days before it is planted.

In from four to six days after putting in the spawn, examine the bed, to see if it be spreading in the manure. If it is, fine white threads will be seen running in every direction from the inserted piece into the surrounding manure. If, instead of finding an increase of white threads, the piece you put in has become black, take it out and put in a fresh piece in a new hole near the old one.

After the spawn has begun to spread itself well through the bed, it will be necessary to remove the straw covering if one has been needed, and put on a layer of fine earth. The best is sandy loam from an old pasture field. Let it be finely pulverized, and free from clods or lumps of any kind. It should be spread on very evenly an inch or two in thickness and pressed down firmly with the back of the spade. Now cover again, if necessary to exclude the light, with clean straw. In about a month the mushrooms may be expected to make their appearance. Gather them when full grown by a gentle twist, drawing them out of the ground, and filling up the hole with a little fresh soil. A good bed may be expected to continue in bearing about three months.

In our climate, where the heat in summer is so great and the cold in winter so severe, by far the best place for growing mushrooms is in the cellar. Yet they may be grown under sheds in moderate weather, though during the heat of summer it will be found necessary to give the beds a moderate supply of tepid water every few days. In cellars, where the evaporation is much less and the temperature nearly uniform, beds will continue longer in bearing and require watering very seldom.

### Asparagus Beds.

The use of asparagus as an edible plant is rapidly on the increase in this country. A large proportion of our farmers knew of it a few years ago only as an ornament for trimming the rooms of the house, or rather as a useful perch to attract flies from the mirror. As used upon the tables of hotels, it served more as a garnish than as a relishable article of food, owing to the foolish notion that it must be cut mostly under ground in order that it may be blanched, which rendered its outside coatings too tough for mastication. But we are getting over that notion, and learning that only when the stem has been submitted to the marvellous alchemy of sunlight is it really palatable food. We learned that lesson more than a dozen years since, and found that when that portion of the stem, growing above ground, is cut before the head begins to unfold into leaves, and cooked and served in about the same manner that green peas should be, it forms a delicious greens.

In giving directions for growing asparagus it may be well to make two divisions of the subject,—the growing of the plants, and the growing of the edible stem. To raise the plants, make good garden soil rich and mellow, and sow the seed in drills fifteen inches wide and two inches deep. If the seed is sown in rich ground, and well cultivated, the plants will do to transplant, when a year old, but under ordinary cultivation they are better when two years old.

It is well to select, when practicable, a deep, strong, sandy loam, work it up deep and fine, and incorporate with the soil an abundance of fine manure, and you ought to do about the same thing if you expect to raise large crops of any garden vegetable. The plantation may all be in one bed, or may be divided up into beds about five feet wide, with alleys

two and a-half feet wide between them. In the former case you would expect to walk upon the bed in hoeing, weeding, and cutting, while in the latter you would keep in the walks, and reach to the middle. With the wide beds, it would be well to plant in rows from two to two and a-half feet apart; with the narrow you could plant one row through the middle, and one within a foot of each side.

The trenches for planting the roots should be dug deep enough to admit the crown of the roots being covered three to four inches, so that the surface can be dug over two or three inches deep every spring. The plants should be set about one foot apart in the row, as they will spread enough in a few years to make a compact mass of roots all over the bed. The first year the plants should be well cultivated, kept clean, and allowed to grow pretty much at will, until they show a disposition to go to seed, when they should be cut off while in bloom. When they have completed their growth the stems should be cut down and raked off, and the bed covered with a coating of manure, which should be dug in the next spring. Contrary to the common rule, we have practised cutting some for the table the next spring after planting, but not much until the second spring, when it is usually strong enough to cut freely. It is still an unsettled question, whether salt is a special fertilizer for the asparagus. The notion arose from the fact that it is found growing without cultivation, near the sea. We have known beds to flourish without it, yet a light dressing will do no harm, and may do good.—*Rural Home.*

### To Destroy the Cabbage Worm.

Thinking, perhaps, the numerous readers of your journal would like to hear any suggestion relative to the destruction of the worm and louse upon the cabbage or turnip plant, I make the following suggestions as the result of experiments the past year: Being a full developed tobacco user, and knowing the deleterious effects the vile weed has on the human system, and the offensive perfume an old pipe in a man's vest pocket has on all society, or his breath has to every one that comes in contact with him, I began to study, as I had been defied in my gardens with these pests for the last four years. After testing everything that I could hear was a remedy for the worm and louse, I adopted the following, which with me has proved "a sure pop" remedy, with but little trouble or expense.



My process is this. I had a tin tube made 2 feet long, with a hole through it  $\frac{3}{8}$  of an inch; then I add to this tube a piece 6 inches long, with a  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch hole in this: fill the large tube one quarter full of the strongest smoking tobacco, made dry; put in a live coal, and then I am prepared for business. By blowing into the large tube, forcing the smoke through the  $\frac{3}{8}$  tube amongst the leaves of the plant, the louse will give way to this treatment at once, and the smoke has a penetrating effect on the louse, so as to make it very offensive to a second attack of the pests. If any one does not wish to get their face quite so near the tobacco as to blow in the tube, a common hand-bellows can be inserted in the tube and smoke forced out very rapidly.

The way to do with this remedy is to go over the plants before, or as soon as you see places eaten through the leaves; then I think it a sure thing. I give a sketch of the form of the instrument in question.—N. B. M., Locust Grove Farm, Saratoga Springs, N. Y.—*Rural New Yorker.*

THERE was a great stir, says *Punch*, in our garden the other day. The potatoes were ready to jump out of their skins. The beet turned red to its very roots. The celery lost their heads, and the cabbages their hearts. The peas spat their pods with excitement. The asparagus could with difficulty be kept in its bed. The parsley curled itself up in a corner. The cucumber alone maintained its habitual coolness. The cause of all this commotion was the presence of a noted vegetarian. The potatoes never took their eyes off him.