



THAT UGLY BOARD FENCE

THE board fence in the town garden is on its way to doomdom. The reasons for abolishing the war, or the slave traffic, were never more convincing than the arguments against the lumber fence that now makes the backyards of any average town or city look like a wilderness of box stalls for horses.

The board fence is ugly. It is black, weatherbeaten, and rotten. It keeps light away from some parts of the garden more successfully than a cloudy day. It keeps out the wind that any garden needs to dry it in a wet season. On the scantling side it is a rendezvous for old tins, semi-bricks, defunct bottles and wandering, gymnastic cats. The cats alone would make a chapter on the reasons why the board fence is doomed.

The board fence lasts a few years and begins to rot. When you begin to jack up a decaying board fence you are making an ugly thing twice as ugly. Your new boards don't match the old; the scantlings won't hold the nails. The posts are rotted off just above the ground where the air strikes along with the wet. Patch it and cobble it if you will—it only looks uglier than ever.

There are several serious indictments against the board fence. It is undeniably ugly. It keeps out the light and harbours the cats. It keeps one corner of your garden so wet that you are lucky in a wet spring to get anything in it at all. Hence it wastes land which is valuable either for vegetables or flowers or both. It gets rickety and falls down. If your neighbour has chickens no amount of wire-netting on top of a board fence will keep hens from crawling through holes in the bottom. It costs as much to build one around a decent sized garden as it costs to put coal enough in your cellar for a winter. Lumber has climbed faster than coal—and about as much as potatoes. And when you have it, there's nothing about it that isn't absolutely ugly.

The wire fence is taking the place of the old board partition. And it is the only sensible successor. The wire fence costs less, last longer and is much more useful. It has none of the objections urged against the board fence. It lets in light and wind and puts an embargo on cats and rubbish. When you have a wire fence you don't chuck all the old junk into a corner to

The Man who made this Pergola wouldn't have done it if he hadn't pulled down an ugly board fence to put up a wire fence. Notice how he has decorated the fence.

If you have any experiences you would like to hand on to other would-be gardeners, send a letter to the Editor. It may help somebody and it won't hurt you.

accumulate year by year. You put there a clump of cosmoses or a shrub. If you want privacy you line your wire fence with a hedge of hollyhocks, or ever-blooming stellars. Of if you want to encourage climbers your fence becomes a natural trellis for nasturtiums, scarlet runners, morning-glories, canary creeper or woodbine.

CONCERNING SWEET CORN

By WM. Q. PHILLIPS

LAST summer I had occasion to go into the shop of a grocer who makes a specialty of fancy vegetables. A basket of corn attracted my attention, and I asked him if the variety was Country Gentleman?

"I don't know what it is," he said, "probably not Country Gentleman. That's done, I think."

"Anyway," I persisted, "I suppose it's not field corn. That is what some farmers are selling on the market, although it's hard to believe—perhaps you have noticed it."

The grocer chuckled. "Have I noticed it? About half the corn offered from farmers' wagons is field corn. And they have the nerve to call it Golden Bantam! Can you beat that?"

"That is adding insult to injury—but how do they manage to put it across?" The grocer shrugged his shoulders.

A few days before I had occasion to hand a few cobs to a lady who would perhaps give me a testimonial if required. "Thanks," she said, "your

corn is better than anything we get in the country. "I have just been home for two weeks"—which meant in the country—"and all the corn they had was what they could hook out of the fields."

Something for nothing—that must be the temptation. Why anyone with ground available for a garden should munch field corn is a puzzle. At certain stages it may be eatable, but as a rule, tasteless. For selling on the market it affords a rake-off, and at 20 cents a dozen runs into money. But no one familiar with choice table corn will knowingly buy ensilage.

It may be well to explain the difference. Field corn produces a robust cob, generally with thick centre, and as the grains mature they become hard and coarse. Picked at the milky stage it may be tender, and slightly sweet, but a liberal buttering and peppering are necessary to make it eatable. Quite often a cob of fair appearance will prove altogether delusive—a collection of tasteless warts on a thick club that contributes liberally in the form of splinters. Of course, field corn is not selected or bred up for table use, and the farmer who hooks his own supply from prospective cattle feed is really fooling himself.

Sweet Corn, of standard varieties, is tender and sweet just when the grains attain full size, and before they take on any trace of hardness. The grains are also deep and rich, and come away from the slender stick without irritating tags of the material of cob pipes. Long and careful selection has been required to get just the right balance, and even the best sorts are in prime eating condition for only a limited period. Needless to say, the best-known and most advertised is Golden Bantam.

The curious thing is that it was introduced only 17 years ago. Several sorts of small-cobbed yellow sweet corn have been known, but they were out of fashion, the larger white sorts having the call. Burpee, who introduced Golden Bantam, described it as from the private stock of a grower who had always refused to distribute seed. It has proved to be the one great hit in table corn, and so far has no rival. I happened to grow it the year it was first offered, and at once became interested.

Many extravagant things have been written about Golden Bantam, but they are all true.

As most people know, it is a dwarf corn, about as early as any worth growing, bearing one or two small cobs to the plant. It can be planted closely, five

seeds to a hill, in fact, as close as it can be cultivated. Owing to its dwarf habit it stands up well against windstorms, a matter of importance for small, unsheltered patches, and it also comes back pretty well after a knock-down. Middleton, of the Toronto News, who has a microscopic farm, and entertains his readers with bulletins in verse, had the following after an exceptionally bad summer storm:

A Letter and an Answer.

"Midland, Ont.—Sir: Re Golden Bantam corn. Don't worry, old top. My GBC was all down, but it is standing nearly straight again now. Hooray! O. B."

My corn was down,
I was the bluest gentleman
In all the town.
But though I did not lend a hand
It rose.

That Golden Bantam now stands up
And CROWS.

GOLDEN BANTAM is fit to use when the grains are creamy and the cobs stand away a little from the stalk. They look small, but swell up remarkably when cooked. There are differences of opinion as to how long, but my preference is for 25 to 30 minutes in slightly salted water.

As to the eating quality, one is tempted to use superlatives. Caught at the right stage, Bantam is absolutely tender, and parts from the stick at a touch. The grains are distinctly sweet and of a slightly musky flavour. They are good enough to eat even without butter, and a piece of cold boiled cob tastes like nut candy. The sugar content at this stage must be high. Unfortunately it does not last long, but there is often a secondary growth of suckers which bear small and usually imperfect cobs, which are of good eating quality and later than the main crop. Successive plantings are worth trying, and on a small scale. A few hills may be started in pots in the cold frame, and set out about the first of June.

Bantam responds liberally to careful selection. When first on the market many imperfect cobs were produced. My own experience of saving seed and sowing only from a cob of perfect form has been to produce a high percentage of similar cobs, and of the full average size.



Dad's
Leisure
Hour.