

Coal Ashes.

We reprint underneath an item from the *American Cultivator* on the value of coal ashes applied to land. We have for some years proved its efficacy as a fertilizer, especially for fruit. Applied as a mulch over the roots of fruit trees, they are of great service. As a top-dressing to gooseberries and currants they have proved a good remedy for the mildew, to which the gooseberries especially are so subject, and they are a check to our insect enemies.

"One great want of the old soils of New England generally, and Massachusetts particularly, is potash. Coal ashes certainly contain a trifle of this, the result of wood used in kindling. Again, careful observers claim that all heavy soils need ventilation, or "lightening up," to permit the free action of air. A Nantasket man, who had land so poor it would not spindle corn, applied coal ashes two or three inches deep, mixed with a little yellow loam, then plowed and harrowed, and in three years the soil was so much renovated that he cut a ton and a half to the acre of the best clover. A compost of three parts of muck to one of coal ashes was used in alternate strips on another field, by way of experiment, and sown with clover, rolled, but not harrowed. Wherever the compost was spread the clover germinated and developed handsomely, while the strips without the compost were barren. In Cambridge, a gardener, last year, covered his very sandy land with fine coal ashes, and on this he put a layer of loam, all of which he spaded in. This month of June he had the finest-looking garden he ever had.

Roses in Pots.

The ever blooming roses are best for house culture in pots, because they bloom quicker and more continuously than any of the others, and besides this, their style and habit of growth is more bushy and better adapted to the purpose. They can be kept nicely with other growing plants, and with proper attention to their requirements, will bloom freely.

Do not use too large pots—if possible, not more than three or four inches. The rule is, one size larger than the plants have been grown in. The smaller the pot—provided, of course, it is large enough to contain the plant—the quicker and stronger the plant will start. It is very difficult to get a small plant to live and grow in a large pot. A rose will not bloom much till the pot is well filled with roots; therefore, small pots facilitate quick bloom. If the pots are old, they should first be thoroughly washed. If new, they should first be soaked in water, otherwise they will absorb the moisture from the plant.

Have good rich soil—mellow and friable. That made from old decomposed sods is best. If manure is used, it should be old and thoroughly composted; fresh manure is injurious.

Put some bits of broken crockery, charcoal or other similar material, in the bottom of each pot to facilitate drainage, then enough fine earth to raise the plant to a proper height. It should not be much deeper than it was before. Next put in the plant and spread out the roots as near their natural position as possible; then fill in fine earth and press firmly down with the hand. When done the pot should not be quite full; a little space is needed for water.

When well potted, water thoroughly, and, if the sun is strong, shade for a few days; then give full light and air. Though the plant should not be allowed to wither for want of water, the earth should get moderately dry before watering again. Too much water is worse than not enough. Very little water is needed until the plant starts to grow.—*Guide to Rose Culture.*

PRUNING IN WINTER.—The *Gardeners' Monthly* of December says: If you want a branch to push strongly at the point where you cut a part away, prune in winter. If your tree has branches crossing each other, or has half dead branches, or any tending to spoil the form or symmetry of your tree, prune in winter; but, as a rule, the less pruning that is done the healthier will be your trees, for it may be accepted as a rule in gardening that all pruning, whether in winter or summer, is a blow struck at the vitality of the plant.

The Guernsey Lily (*Amaryllis Belladonna*.)

Lilies in October are a treat, and that is really what this fine old plant places within reach of all who have a yard or two of ground to spare. The bulbs are cheap to purchase, and may readily be had from any nurseryman. October is, perhaps, the best season for planting this fine bulb. The situation should be warm and dry; in fact, no better one can be found than in a border immediately under the parlor windows with a southerly or warm western aspect. See that the bottom is dry; if not, whip out the soil bodily to the depth of a yard, and fill up a foot or more of the space with broken brickbats or other porous material. Then return the soil, if suitable, or fill to the surface level with a compost consisting of equal parts loam, sand and leaf-mould or peat, for the plant delights in a rich sandy loose soil. It often, however, does remarkably well in light sandy loam; it will, in fact, thrive in most soils, if not too adhesive, providing the site is warm and dry.

This beautiful lily flowers without any leaves somewhat in the way of a gigantic autumn Crocus. Some have complained of this as a fault; it seems to us to add to its charm. To see the huge stalk raising up alone, unsupported by a single leaf, for the latter generally lie down in August, and unfolding such a cluster of glorious blossoms, while all other plants are hastening to decay or already fast asleep, is one of the most unique and inspiring pleasures of the garden. The flowers are not only beautiful in the garden, but invaluable for cutting, and form welcome additions of floral decorations either cut and used in whole trusses or stems, or as separate or individual flowers. Soon after the flowers fade the leaves begin to grow, and the precocity of growth constitutes one of the chief dangers and weaknesses of the *Belladonna Lily* in our climate, for in consequence of this early growth they are above ground during the severities of our winter and early spring. The covering of a few branches of shrubs, a mat, or a piece of canvas, is most useful during these stages of early growth, and will mostly carry the plants safely through the danger period. The leaves should also be carefully preserved during summer, and not encroached upon in any way by other or stronger growing plants. Neither should they be cut away, but allowed to die down and decay of themselves. The succession bulbs of this plant form on the crowns of the old ones or nearly so, and thus rise year by year nearer to the surface, till in the end patches of *Belladonna Lilies* have a tendency to throw themselves out of the earth. There are two obvious modes of meeting and mastering this tendency—frequent takings up and replanting in fresh ground or deeper down in the old sites. This, however, tends to check the flowering, so that a better and more successful means of counteracting any injuries that might arise from cold through the bulbs getting up too close to the surface, is to apply about two or three inches of light rich dressing to the bulbs every autumn, just before the plants come into bloom. This will at once conserve the surface roots from the frost, strengthen the plants, and encourage the bulbs.—*Agr. Economist* (Eng.).

Twig Blight.

There have been many enquirers for any information regarding this prevalent disease. Its appearance in our fruit gardens has been attributed to many causes, and many remedies have been suggested. The following remedy we copy from the correspondence of a New York paper:—

Dr. Frankenberger writes as follows: "I desire to call attention to a disease commonly called twig blight. When this disease overtakes a fruit tree, the leaves first begin to wither, and finally the whole tree slowly dies. Whatever may be the true cause of this disease, it is sometimes ascribed to a borer. My experience, however, refers more to the remedy than the cause. I know by experience that there is a simple remedy that will not fail to restore every tree afflicted with this disease, if applied in time. It consists simply in boring with a small auger or bit into the tree, filling the cavity with sulphur, and plugging it in. The sap will carry the sulphur to every part of the tree, and he will 'git up and git.' The cause of the disease being removed, the tree will soon begin to put forth fresh and tender leaves, the withered foliage will slowly drop off, and the tree in time will be restored to its natural growth."

Pear Blight Remedy.

I have had a little experience in pear blight, and believe I have used a means that will secure the desired end. My experience is limited, but thus far it is entirely satisfactory and an entire success in my hands, not a single failure occurring.

Two years ago about twenty of my pear trees (or more) were attacked with blight in June and July, and very severely, and so rapid was the disease that I gave the trees up as lost, but at the same time determined to experiment with them by first cutting a gash deep in the tree from the roots of the tree to the tips of the branches. Every limb of one-half inch or more in diameter I slit full length, gashed deep, and continued those gashes from all the larger branches down the body to the roots; many of the larger branches I gave two of those long gashes. I immediately covered all parts of the tree with linseed oil. Not a tree died after the oiling. Some had died before treatment.

Those trees are healthy up to the present time. About August 1, 1878 (this is September 3, 1878), one large dwarf pear tree, loaded with fruit, began to blight, and in a week the disease showed itself in all parts of the tree; I gashed and oiled it after the disease had thus spread over the tree, and it checked the disease at once, there being no further spreading of it. I think the fruit was caused to drop from the tree by the oiling a little more than they would in a normal state.

One of my neighbors used the same treatment one year ago on his pear trees and saved them. The same party tried it on one fruiting tree this season and saved the tree. I believe it an efficient remedy if used in time.—[J. V. Anderson in the Farmer's Home Journal.]

Garden Fertilizers.

If I had the choice of one fertilizer only, I should select genuine guano, and if my garden soil were heavy I should require nothing to mix with it; but if light and hot in its nature I should covet some common salt. Guano alone, or mixed with one-third of salt for dry soils, and spread over the surface during damp weather at the rate of, say, two ounces per square yard, will increase the value of any crop to which it is applied. To destroy slugs, half the quantity, or less in dry weather, will be found highly beneficial. Superphosphate of lime is a safe and valuable fertilizer, and is suitable for sprinkling among small seedling crops of flowers and vegetables which guano might injure. These two mixed together are excellent for potatoes, being quick in their action and lasting in their effects. But the most prompt of all the fertilizers is nitrate of soda. It will, if spread at the rate of two hundred pounds per acre, change the appearance of a grass or a wheat crop in a few days, as it will that of any garden crop, especially of the Brassica family; it is a valuable stimulant for early cabbages and cauliflower, also for celery lettuce, etc.; half an ounce, or less, to the square yard is sufficient for these crops. Soot is a real gardener's friend if he is not afraid of using it. It consists of finely-divided charcoal, and contains salts of ammonia. It must not be mixed with quicklime, or those salts will become decomposed, but it may be mixed with a small quantity of salt with advantage for dry soil. I know of no crops to which a liberal dressing is applied that are not benefited thereby. It is excellent for onions. Salt alone is very useful for dry soils on account of its great affinity for moisture. The soil of asparagus beds, where it has been used freely, is often cool and moist in summer when the surrounding ground is hot and dry—even dusty. If a gardener has at his command any or all of the fertilizers named, and uses them judiciously, he will not only be able to increase the productiveness of the garden in his charge, but will not require such large supplies of stable manure as would otherwise be necessary to sustain the fertility of heavily-cropped ground. An important advantage in the case of guano and soot is their value for making liquid manure of the best quality.—[Letter to Journal of Horticulture.]

The easiest and most simple way of protecting young fruit trees from mice, is to carefully remove from about the stem all sods or litter that may be there, then mound up with fine dirt about them to the height of one foot. Half this height will do, if the land is clean. The ground should be made level about the stems of the trees in spring.