

CULTIVATION.

As soon as the weed seeds start to grow and appear above ground, cultivation should begin. A fine-toothed cultivator is the best. Stir the soil frequently to a depth of about two inches, especially during the early part of the season. Care must be taken not to stir the soil immediately around the plant or injury will result. Cut off all the blossoms and first runners until the plants have sufficient strength to send out several strong runners at once, (which is usually in July) when these may be allowed to take root. The soil between the plants in the row that cannot be worked with the cultivator should be hoed out as soon as the weed seeds start to grow. At this time a steel garden rake will often do the work better and more quickly than a hoe. If the weeds are allowed to grow until they are two or three inches high before hoeing more than double the labor will be required, and the results will not be so good.

MULCHING.

As soon as the ground freezes in the autumn sufficiently hard to prevent horses and waggon from breaking through the crust, a mulch should be applied. This may consist of coarse manure, wheat or rye straw or marsh hay. Most of the material should be placed between the rows with just enough immediately over the plants to nearly cover them from sight. In early spring, as soon as growth begins, rake the mulch from off the plants and leave it between the rows. If the mulch is left on the plants for a time after they begin to grow, it causes a soft weakly growth of plant that will not produce fruit.

KEEPING UP THE PLANTATION.

This is often the most difficult problem to solve in strawberry culture on the farm. The usual practice has been to plant out a plot and give good care the first season; result, a fine crop of fruit, with a promise that the strawberry patch shall be cleaned out and cultivated as soon as the fruit is off. This, however is rarely done; after the fruit has been gathered we do not expect any more until next season. The ground gets too dry to cultivate and the haying and harvesting has to be attended to. The strawberry patch then gets a promise that it shall be cleaned out early the following spring. When spring comes the grass and weeds have such a strong hold among the plants that it is usually decided to let them go without any attention. With this treatment, at the end of the third season the plants will generally be so exhausted that but little fruit is produced and the young plants seldom possess that vigor required for starting another plantation successfully.