

Experience in Growing Seed Potatoes

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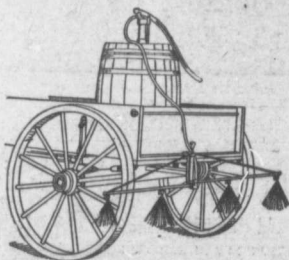
I HAVE been asked to give my experience in growing seed potatoes with which I have had very good success. The soil I have to deal with on my farm is a clay loam. This I cannot say is the best kind of soil for potato growing; a sandy land is more satisfactory. I will try, however, and explain my method.

I prefer a seed on which there is a good growth of clover to plow down in the first half of September. I plow medium shallow and then add 12 to 15 loads of manure per acre and harrow it thoroughly. The last thing in the fall I plow the field again, plowing deeply this time. In the spring, as early as the ground can be worked mellow, I disc, and from then till planting time, I harrow it a few times, at intervals with a sweep harrow to keep weeds killed and to preserve moisture.

When I get the ground in good shape I make drills with a plow 28 inches apart and five inches deep. For making the drills I use a riding plow, which I find most convenient, and cover by harrowing crosswise. I cut the sets by hand, and like to have from one to three eyes in each set. I drop the sets in the drills by hand 14 inches apart. I make a point to have my potatoes planted not later than May 24th, which I find is the best time for Muskoka.

After Planting Cultivation.

About a week after planting I harrow them with a seedling harrow and as soon as the plants show growth through the ground, I go through them with a one horse cultivator and cover them



Potato Spraying Outfit for Small Areas.

The piping can be purchased complete with nozzle and attached to an ordinary farm wagon. The barrel and pump may also be used for orchard spraying.

slightly, continuing this cultivation at intervals, slightly ridging as the growth of the potato advances, say, twice more. By that time the plants should be large enough to cover the ground and leave no room for cultivation. In spraying for insects I use Paris green and water and apply with a hand sprayer which holds about three gallons. I cannot mention any definite time for spraying, except to advise watching the bugs closely and keeping them under control.

Selecting the seed is a very important part in my success in potato growing. When digging the potatoes I have never used a potato digger. It may be all right, but I think it would not be very satisfactory on clay soil. I use a plow and potato fork. When selecting my seed potatoes, which I always do when digging, I use a fork so as to get each hill separate, that I can select tubers from plants which yield all good, uniform tubers and which are a perfect type according to variety.

Changing Seed Not Necessary.

As long as I have farmed and grown potatoes I have not changed from the seed of the Early Rose and Empire State potatoes, which I have grown for 33 years, but kept improving it by selecting the best tubers each year when digging, for the next year's seed. The Davies' Warrior potato I have grown for five years with good satisfaction. I have also grown the Early Boreas and Early Ohio also for about 10 years. To get good seed potatoes is just like getting into good stock. Always select the best shaped tubers and continue doing so from year to year. Study your soil and feed it if you want a good crop. Land varies so much in Muskoka District that a man needs to study his own soil.

To store seed potatoes I pit them on a side hill where the soil is sandy and there is good drainage. I find it best to leave the potatoes in the pit till time for planting and not allow them to sprout much, as sprouted tubers do not produce a good, uniform type of potato.

Success in Strawberry Growing

UNUSUAL success has attended the efforts of Mr. Geo. Johnson, of Peterboro Co., Ont., as a grower of strawberries. His start was made almost by accident. While busily occupied a few years ago farming ninety acres of land, he yielded to the suggestions of his family and put in five rows of strawberries at one end of a small field, "just for family use." That was four years ago. The small family-sized plot of berries proved a pleasant revelation to Mr. Johnson of the possibilities of intensive cultivation, as the five rows which had been intended to supply only the requirements of the family yielded an additional revenue of \$104 from berries sold.

The following year, Mr. Johnson set out half an acre. This also proved profitable, with the result that the next year he had one and one-half acres in bearing. Market prices favored his new venture, and all of the crop was sold at prices ranging from 12 cents to 18 cents a box. From his one and one-half acres, Mr. Johnson picked 5,100 boxes. When the boxes had been paid for and picking expenses deducted, he found that he had realized \$670 from the small area in fruit.

In 1915 the market was not so favorable, and equally satisfactory returns were not realized, but still they compared to advantage, considering the labor and capital expended, with the returns from the remainder of the farm, on which general farming was still practiced. Herbert raspberries have been added, and have proved almost equally satisfactory with the strawberries.

"Senator Dunlop and Parsons are my favorite varieties," Mr. Johnson informed a representative of Farm and Dairy who visited him in the picking season last summer. "We set the rows three and one-half feet apart, and the plants two feet apart in the row. We allow the runners to



A Lesson in Strawberry Planting.

From left to right, the first plant is set too shallow, the second one is set just right, and the third has the crown buried too deeply. The proper depth of planting is one of the most important details of the operation.

run freely, and all the training they get is that given by the cultivator. Of course we aim to cultivate the same way each time. We aim to take two to three crops off a bed. I have made more money by following this practice than by plowing down after the first crop has been harvested."

In one respect, Mr. Johnson's methods differ radically from the methods of other fruit growers in his section. "Many have the idea," he said, "that the strawberry plantation should be kept clean the first year but not touched the following spring until the crop is off. We followed the common practice at first, and one year the weeds stood a foot high over the whole bed, but we did not dare to pull them. That year was the first cropping season for the bed, and we should have got a maximum crop. Instead, we got a poor crop. The next year we cleaned that bed thoroughly in the spring, and the result was larger pickings throughout the season."

The cultivator is kept going constantly in the Johnson plantation, even during the picking season. "Moisture conservation is an absolute necessity to a good crop of berries," said Mr. Johnson. "Rain will spatter more sand on the berries than the scutler ever does."

Barnyard manure is the staple fertilizer. Mr. Johnson plans to grow roots the first year, applying a good coat of manure to them. Berry plants are set the following spring, and they receive a second and equally heavy coat of manure.

Factors which have contributed to Mr. Johnson's success have been the fact that the soil on his farm is particularly suited to small fruit culture, while one of the best markets in Ontario, the city of Peterboro, is only a couple of miles distant. These conditions have enabled him of late to secure a larger return from his what are now five acres in small fruit than he formerly obtained from his farm of ninety acres.

The marketing of apples may be a difficult matter for a few years until production and consumption again equalize themselves. For this reason many orchards will be rooted out and more orchards now in bearing will be wholly neglected. It is well to remember, however, that the easiest fruit to market will be the good fruit. Only with greatest difficulty will poor, wormy apples be marketed at all. My advice would be, therefore, to give the orchard thorough spraying, pruning and cultivation, even if there be little profit in it. The gross returns will be larger and the orchard kept in better condition for the time when the market returns to normal. This will be my policy no matter how bad the market goes.—E. L. Chambers, Norfolk Co., Ont.