

The Maple Syrup Crop.

By J. H. Grimm, Montreal, P. Q.

The ground being frozen deeply insures sweet sap. A liberal amount of snow, together with occasional thaws, with the proper climatic conditions in season, will bring a large flow of sap. Having had a number of poor seasons in succession, a good one is sure to come. Summing up the predictions from various sources, the season of 1904 will be a record-breaker, and syrup and sugar makers should be on the alert, and prepare for it. See to it that all utensils are in good working condition. Too much attention cannot be given for the production of good quality. Old-time blackstrap no longer has favor in the market. Customers are becoming aware that the lightest-colored syrups and sugar only contain the true, delicate maple flavor, which in darker shades has been absolutely destroyed by prolonged evaporation, uncleanness, mixing of rain and snow with the sap for lack of a bucket cover, improper tapping, and not cultivating the bore.

Tapping the bush is the most important step in the production of maple sweets. It either brings success or failure, in both quality and quantity. A contaminated bore deteriorates the quality and retards the flow of sap. Improve the bore by reaming, and insure prime sap and increase the flow equal to a fresh bore. Removing bark from the tree, boring deeper than two inches with improper-shaped bits, driving a spout that has shoulders, spears, sharp edges, which come in contact with the inner layers of bark and fibres, spouts that require hard driving and prying when removed from the bore, all prevent the flow of sap, and are very injurious to the tree. They should not be used. A spout can be had that draws the sap from the bore, one that can be removed by turning, one that is perfectly smooth, and will not come in contact with sap fibres, one that does not require the removal of the bark, and will fit a 13-32, 7-16 and 1-2 inch bore, which makes systematic reaming of the bore possible, thereby increasing the flow of sap and insuring a better quality of product. If removed from the bore by turning, the wound will heal in one season.

The boiling apparatus should have sufficient capacity to convert the sap into syrup as fast as the sap is gathered. Large storage and lack of evaporating capacity are detrimental to the quality of the product. The sap and wood should be stored outside of the storage-room, under cover, but well ventilated. Steam and heat will hasten the fermentation of sap and dampen the wood. Without dry wood, speed in evaporation is impossible. The boiling-room should be well ventilated at the ridge of the roof for the proper escape of the steam, otherwise the building must be tight and well lighted. To avoid dust, a floor well laid is indispensable to secure the necessary cleanliness. Without the latter, the production of a prime article of syrup is out of the question. The sap should not be boiled to exceed three-quarters of an inch in depth over the surface of the evaporator. It must be converted into syrup with dispatch, which can only be accomplished with a properly-constructed evaporator, one that makes skimming possible in the compartment where the sap is cool. Skimming agitates the sap, mixing it with semi-sweet and syrup, which prevents its conversion into syrup. Straining off the sap from the receiving bucket on the spout to the gathering tank, and from it to the storage tank, and, finally, through a felt strainer, from the syrup draw-off of the evaporator to the syrup can, insures a quality of syrup incomparable as a table luxury.

Canning the syrup requires care. The air must be entirely excluded from the package. Use square cans: round cans are not desirable, and, if used, the syrup must be heated to a temperature of 125 degrees. A label, bearing the maker's signature and address, should be placed on every package, and let it say to the consumer, when he opens the can, to place any surplus syrup not required for immediate use into bottles, at a temperature of 125 degrees, and well cork them. It will save him vexation and the maker's reputation. A gallon of standard syrup weighs thirteen pounds two ounces; if lighter, it will ferment; if heavier, it will crystallize. The malate of lime should be absolutely removed from the syrup before it is canned, as it gives a cloudy appearance. When it is apparent, bring the syrup to a boiling point; when cooled, the syrup will be transparent, and the malate of lime will be found at the bottom of the vessel. The syrup canned, wrap each can with paper, and place it in a nicely-made box or crate, mark the package to whom, and from whom, in a businesslike way. Bear in mind that an attractive package appeals to the buyer. With the necessary care in this respect, a higher price and more demand for maple product is assured.

No Injury from Frost.

Mr. Murray Pettit, Wentworth Co., Ont., in writing the "Farmer's Advocate," says that in his locality fruit buds are not injured by frost in the slightest, not even the peach. In that district he thinks farmers might grow more Bradshaw and Rieu Claude plums, Bartlett pears, Elberta and Smock peaches, and the standard varieties of grapes. One of the most noticeable improvements in the orchards of Wentworth is in more and better pruning, but as yet thinning overloaded trees is not sufficiently practiced.

Satisfied with Mail Service.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Sir,—We are hearing a great deal nowadays about rural mail delivery, and it is gratifying to see so many taking an interest in so great a question. One enthusiast, in a recent issue of the "Farmer's Advocate," shows how to force rural mail delivery upon the Government. That system, I would think, would not have many sympathizers. In last issue, J. I. covers the ground admirably. I quite agree with him, but before the Government gives rural mail delivery to a few well-located districts outside of cities and towns (for be it understood that it is absolutely impossible for us to have the system throughout Canada), there should be a daily mail given to those places which at present only get it twice or three times per week. We are not asking for any improvement in the mail service in this vicinity, but are willing to walk to the office, and will continue in this satisfied frame of mind as long as we have as good mail service as we have at present, unless we become a city, then we will expect to be treated like the rest. Rural mail delivery would help the few, while a daily mail service all over would help the many.

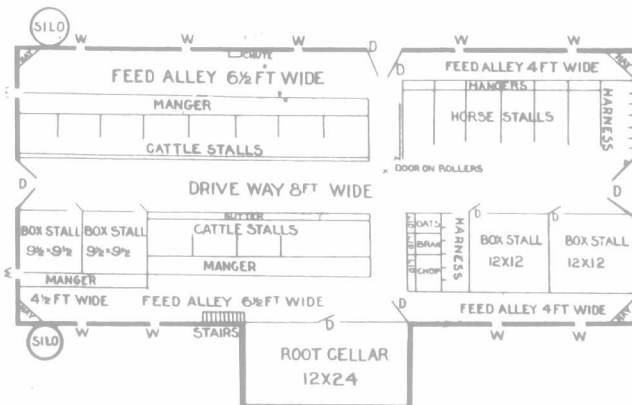
JOHN J. AITKIN.

Muskoka, Ont.

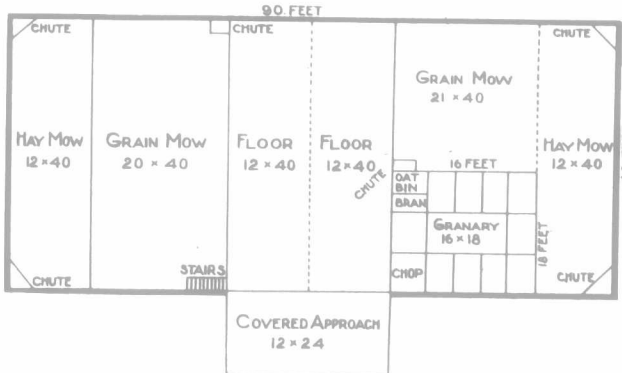
An Oxford County Barn.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Please find enclosed herewith another plan of basement barn. The size is 40 x 90, inside measurement, and contains stalls to tie 26 head of cattle, also two box stalls, 9½ x 9½, for cattle. The horse stable, which is separated from the cattle stable by a board



partition, has stalls for six horses, and two box stalls twelve feet square. In each corner of the barn, a feed chute is situated, so that hay from the mows can be dropped to the basement below in the feed alleys convenient to cattle or horses. A silo on each side of the barn also opens into these feed alleys. Root cellar under approach. Bins for oats, bran and chop are built under the ledge at the front of the granary and extend to the basement below for feeding purposes. A driveway runs through the center, the entire length of the building, so that stables may all be cleaned out with a horse. An alley, five feet wide, extends across



the basement, with a door leading to the stack-yard, through which bedding can be carried or stock let in or out. Water should be brought in and piped to basins in each stall, so that stock could drink at any time. Where cattle are kept in almost constantly, it is perhaps better to tie with chains, thus giving them more freedom, although most of us are using stanchions for convenience. The floor of the basement should be high enough to prevent water from running into our stables in time of rain or thaw. The upper barn contains two drive floors, side by side, so that one can be used as a mow when necessary.

W. H. K. & SONS.

I received the wrist-bag you sent me for a premium for sending you two new subscribers, for which I thank you very much. It is a very nice premium for only two new subscribers. I think a great deal of the "Farmer's Advocate." Although I am a retired farmer I would not like to be without it. Wishing you every success.

Oxford Co.

JOHN COOK, JR.

New Way of Threshing.

To the Editor "Farmer's Advocate":

Sir,—I have received numerous letters of enquiry from farmers, concerning the success and advantages of combined threshing and straw-cutting. The farmers around Springvale formed the Progressive Threshing Co., with a membership of forty, and purchased a Challenge separator, with self-feeder, straw-cutting attachment and wind stacker, from George White & Sons, of London. We are well pleased with the work done. The self-feeder works well, and feeds very evenly. The straw-cutting attachment is at the rear of the machine, and cuts the straw nicely and as rapidly as any machine can thresh. I have timed it, and found it cut the straw as well when threshing wheat at the rate of three and one-half bushels per minute as in ordinary work.

The wind stacker is a very powerful one, as one man can with it pack the cut straw away in mow or building at any angle within seventy-five feet of threshing floor. We use extra pipe in blowing straw long distances. Six or seven men are all that are necessary to do a good day's threshing, as the sheaves are dropped down about the center of barn, making it very convenient for mow men. We charge by the bushel—two cents for oats and barley, and three cents for other grains.

An experienced thresher furnishes power with a 20-horse-power engine, and manages the machine for one-half the proceeds.

All farmers interested in stock-raising should have all their straw cut, as it can be stored in nearly one-half the space. It is also advantageous to have it to mix with ensilage and concentrated foods. But its chief value is gained when used as an absorbent. It is the best absorbent available on our farms to preserve the liquid manure, which is more valuable than solids. The manure can be drawn out and spread in winter, when labor is cheap, and harrowed in with the spring grain, making a clover catch almost certain.

I will illustrate the difference in the "old and new way" by the actual work done on my farm of one hundred acres. Crop threshed with new straw-cutting machine in 1903, in one and one-half days:

Oats, 750 bushels, at 2c. per bushel.....	\$15.00
Barley, 400 bushels, at 2c. per bushel.....	8.00
Wheat, 300 bushels, at 3c. per bushel.....	9.00
Millet, 100 bushels, at 3c. per bushel.....	3.00
Wages for 7 men, at \$1.25 per day, for 1½ days.....	13.12
Board for 10 men, hands and threshers, 1½ days, 50c. per day.....	7.50
Fuel for 20-h.p. engine, 1½ days, at \$2.50 per day.....	8.75

Total\$59.37

The following are the figures for the same work had it been done the old way:

In previous years we have paid one and one-half cents for oats and barley, and two cents for other grains. We were never able to thresh with less than thirteen hands. I have had the experience of cutting all my straw for five or six years, and have never been able to cut the straw of a full day's threshing in one day, with the best cutting boxes we have here. Therefore, I figure two days' cutting for the one and one-half days' threshing, which I think is about right.

Oats, 750 bushels, at 1½c. per bushel.....	\$11.25
Barley, 400 bushels, at 1½c. per bushel.....	6.00
Wheat, 300 bushels, at 2c. per bushel.....	6.00
Millet, 100 bushels, at 2c. per bushel.....	2.00
13 men, at \$1.25 per day, for 1½ days.....	24.37
Board for 17 men, hands and threshers, 1½ days, at 50c. per day.....	12.75
Fuel for 14-h.p. engine, 1½ days, at \$2.00 per day.....	8.00

Cutting Straw.

2 men, engine and cutting-box, at \$7.00 per day, for 2 days.....	14.00
5 men, at \$1.25 per day, for 2 days.....	12.50
Board of 7 men for 2 days, at 50c. per day.....	7.00
Fuel for 14-h.p. engine, for 2 days, at \$2.00 per day.....	4.00

Total\$102.87

I think, by a careful study of the above figures, the reader can easily see that the cost is reduced by nearly one-half by using the combined machine.

The machine made about \$2,000 last season, and, after all expenses were paid, it paid a dividend of thirty per cent. on money invested.

GEORGE H. HALL,

President of Progressive Threshing Co.

Haldimand Co., Ont.

Codling Moths.

Dr. William Brodie, of Toronto, who is an expert student of parasitic insects, and whose studies have been carried on for many years, has offered to follow up his investigations into the parasites of the codling moth, and place his findings at the disposal of the Ontario Department of Agriculture. To carry on this work it will be helpful to procure from time to time burlap or other bands in which the codling moths have been caught. Some have already been received. Any fruit-growers having bands now on trees will confer a favor by corresponding with the Department of Agriculture at Toronto. If parasites can be obtained that will be effective in destroying the