

FARMER'S ADVOCATE

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Good Advice for New Settlers.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—I am glad to see some more Manitoba farmers beside myself are advocating the grass rotation system of farming in your columns. As one of the principal objections to it is the cost of fencing, I intend some day soon to send you a few notes on fencing, as it, like everything else, requires experience. I can put up a mile of fence now with about a quarter of the labor and expense that I could when I began, and make a better job of it.

In reply to yours of recent date, I will give you a brief account of how I treat new land. I consider it is much better on prairie land, especially if it is heavy soil with a tough sod, to break shallow and backset than to only plow once, as the crop is generally much better, and it is easier to backset land the year it is broken than it is after it has had a crop grown on it. If land is moist when broken the sod will keep the moisture in, and even if the fall is dry the backsetting can be well done, but if a crop is grown on the sod in a dry-summer it is almost impossible to plow the land deep that fall. I am a firm believer in deep plowing even from the backsetting, and also in taking a furrow no wider than the plow is made for. I believe this country loses more every year by bad plowing than it does by hail storms. My land is rolling prairie, with some stones, and a few red willow and poplar bushes. I like to take these out as well as possible before breaking. The buffalo willow does not matter; the breaking plow will cut it. There are some new kinds of breaking plows in use now that I have not tried. I still stick to the old wooden-beam, short-handled breakers we used in 1883 and 1884. These plows are awkward to handle if not set right, but if they are set right they are easier on the team, and will do as good work as any other. When a straightedge is laid along the landside the point of the share should be about $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch below the line. The rolling coulter should be about an inch out from the landside, and an inch higher than the bottom, and as far back from the point as it will work. There is nothing better than a good heavy yoke of oxen for breaking, and for backsetting, three oxen on a 16-inch walking plow make an outfit hard to beat. Of course, horses are just as good if heavy enough for the work, but for a new settler they are more expensive to buy and to feed. For backsetting, my choice of plows is the John Deere or Moline; they are good cleaners, and I have never yet sprung a beam by running into stones or roots. I like to take about two to three inches of soil below the sod, and then work down with the disk and common harrows till fine enough for the drill; then drill $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushels per acre of good wheat, well blue-stoned, and give one stroke of the harrow after the drill. I have grown very fine crops of wheat on new land by sowing two bushels per acre with the broadcast machine, with three strokes of the common harrow and no disk, but think the drill is safest. I never could see that it made any difference whether the grain was drilled east and west or north and south. On older land I always like to give a stroke of the harrow about a week after the grain is sown. This kills a good many weeds just before the grain comes up, and gives the grain the start of any that grow later. After the grain is up, the new "weeder" lately described in your columns can be used to great advantage. On sandy land there may be some danger of making the soil drift by working it too much. My experience has been all on land that does not drift, and on such land I think it is hardly possible to put too much harrowing at seed time. A heavy roller is a good thing on spring-plowed land to settle it down, but rolling grain after it is up has been abandoned by most farmers in this district. I have rolled pieces and missed pieces, and I thought if there was any difference, the crop was a little better where it was not rolled.

In starting a new farm, I would like to lay it out so that it can be divided into six or seven fields, and a grass rotation followed, such as described in your Jan. 20th and subsequent issues. The first breaking should always be done square with the section lines to avoid getting three-cornered pieces at the outside. Farm buildings should be placed as near the center of the farm as possible for convenience in drawing produce in from and manure out to the fields; but of course there are questions such as water supply, shelter, good site for buildings etc., which have to be considered. CHAS. E. IVENS.
Wallace Municipality, Man.

Small Fruits for the Farmers of the Northwest.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

SIR,—There are many ways in which our farmers could improve their condition and curtail the steady drain on their income for necessaries and luxuries, which is the bane of the Northwest farmer. Too much of our hard-earned money is sent out of the country for horses, cattle, meats, poultry, fruit, etc., most of which can be produced as well, and in some cases better, on our own farms. On the growing of fruit I will give your readers some of the results of a good few years' experience, leaving the others to someone better qualified. That we can grow most of the small fruits well has been fully demonstrated. That apples, plums, etc., will yet be found to do fairly well here I have very little doubt; at the same time, I do not think it would be advisable for a farmer to go into them very extensively at present. Better wait and see how our Experimental Farms and some of the private experimenters who are doing such a good work succeed first. Now, in a great measure success in the culture of small fruits depends on adequate shelter from the winds and thorough cultivation of the soil, and as the same essentials are necessary in growing to perfection most kinds of garden vegetables, there is no way that will give better results with a minimum of cost than growing them in the same plot. If you have natural shelter, by all means take advantage of it; if not, then you must supply shelter, and nothing is better for this than two or three rows of native maples planted round your garden, except, perhaps, a close board fence, and that would be too expensive for most of us. Say you wish to enclose about one-half acre. Lay off a piece of land one hundred and six feet wide and two hundred and ten feet long; plow deeply and give a thorough harrowing, then lay off three rows four feet apart, the first row three feet from outer edge, right around your plot, leaving an opening ten or twelve feet wide at one corner for an entrance. These rows should be planted with maple trees one or two years old or sown with maple seed. If maple is not available, elm or white poplar will make a very good substitute, or two rows of maple or poplar and one row of *Artemisia abrotanum* will make a very good wind-break; but if poplar is used, get your young trees from the outside of an exposed bluff, not out of a coulee, and do not transplant until the leaves are commencing to open. There is nothing imperative in the shape or size of your enclosure—that must depend on your own taste or on the position of the land available—but a long, narrow plot, crossways to the prevailing winds, is the most economical in planting and working, the best sheltered from wind, and will collect most snow in winter, which is of the utmost importance.

Your plot is now laid out. Open up a good deep furrow with a plow where the first row of trees is to be. Along this furrow enlarge a place for the tree every two feet. A man then takes the small trees, with the roots well covered with a wet sack, or, better still, in a large pail with water in it. He places the tree and firms the soil round the roots while another man shovels it in until the hole is a little better than half full, and just here the secret of success or failure comes in. Never let the roots of your trees get dry, and see that you tramp the earth closely and firmly about the roots. Do not be afraid to use your feet. I do not think there ever was a tree killed by over-firming, and I do know that thousands die for want of it. When all the trees are planted in a row, give them a good watering. A couple of barrels on a stoneboat is a very handy way to do it. When the water has all soaked in, fill up the rest of the hole and the furrow between the trees, but do not tramp. Then go on with the next rows in the same way, and that part of the work is done. A horse hoe run between the rows three or four times during the season, and the same with a hand hoe between the trees, should keep them in good shape. A shelter belt planted and cultivated in this way should by the time your fruit bushes come into full bearing afford full protection from winds. You may say that this entails

a great deal of work, but as all the heavy work is done with the plow and harrow, you will be astonished what a short time it takes, and then, remember, it is done for a lifetime. You have now a plot eighty-four feet wide and one hundred and eighty-eight feet long inside your rows of trees. Mark off fifteen feet from each end and twelve feet from each side for a roadway. This may seem a great waste of ground in a small plot, but you will find it none too much for getting in with manure, etc., and turning the horse in plowing and cultivating; besides, in a year or two very little would grow within six feet of your hedges. You will have room in this plot for seven rows ten feet apart, and forty bushes four feet apart in the row—in all, two hundred and eighty. In planting the bushes, follow the same method as that given for the hedges. Between the rows vegetables can be grown to good advantage, and will ensure the cultivation necessary for the well-being of the bushes.

I will now give a few varieties that have proved the most satisfactory in the Northwest. In red currants, Red Dutch and London for the main crop, and a few Fay's Prolific, a very large and attractive berry, but not an extra strong grower. In white currants, White Grape is the best; in black, Black Naples and Lee's Prolific are good enough for any garden, although old-fashioned. All these, with a reasonable amount of attention, can be grown just as well as in the older Provinces, and with much less trouble from insect pests. I wish I could say as much for gooseberries. Some years they do as well as could be wished for, but are not to be depended on for a crop every year. Houghton, Columbus, Smith's Improved, and Lancashire Lad are the hardiest, and all have good fruit. In raspberries, Dr. Reider and Turner in red and Caroline in yellow are the best and hardiest, and if covered with earth in winter are almost sure to give a good crop, but unless covered in winter there is no use trying to grow them, except in some rare and favored spots. Strawberries are not a very satisfactory crop, but always give some fruit, and some years a good crop. They do best if planted in some position where they are well covered with snow in winter and allowed to grow thickly, but kept clear of grass and weeds. Windsor Chief and New Dominion do fairly well, but I think the old-fashioned Willson does best of any.

Although not really one of the small fruits, a row of sand cherry is well worthy of a place in the garden, the growth being much the same as the berry bushes. Some of the varieties are very good, while others are worthless, as in the case of seedling plums, but by planting a row of them, as they soon come into bearing, the inferior ones could be grafted or budded from good trees. Now, Mr. Editor, this is written for our Northwest farmers, not for professional horticulturists, and I only give a very few of the hundreds of varieties of small fruits that are in the market, but those I have given will, like the Red Fyfe wheat, stand the test of trial. GEORGE LANG.
Indian Head, Assa.

Horse Breeding in Manitoba.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

I imagine many of your readers are not aware that at the present time there are at least 200 horses per week being imported into this Province and sold to farmers at from \$250 to \$325 per team. Surely this is not right, and, with the fact to face that horses are going up in price all over the world, the farmer in Manitoba will soon be paying the old-time prices for horseflesh, which, as we know, kept many farmers poor in the early days. I have myself, in the last six years, sold upwards of 2,000 horses in this Province at good prices, and have been wondering all the time why the farmers do not make better use of the few good sires we have in the Province, and form syndicates to import others which would produce the class of horse best suited to this district. Surely on almost every farm we can find at least one good mare which, if mated with a good horse, would produce just as good a colt as the farmer is at present paying \$150 for, with the prospect of having to pay much more for the same horse within the next two years. I have been interested in some good sires myself and know of others in the Province, and it is a sad fact that none of them are paying their owners, simply from the lack of interest taken in horse breeding at the present time in Manitoba. However, it is better late than never, and I would advise every farmer who has a good mare to breed her the coming season and he will find it will pay him even better than wheat. CHAS. KNOX.
Winnipeg.