

prevent branches from forming bushes and regretful confusion that cause a great harm to the circulation of the air. This is why we should not leave more than one or two plants a mound.

MAKING THE MOUND

I come back to the making of the mound: when the leaves touch the glass I raise the box a little; then when branches reach the edge of the window I remove the hot-bed. Therefore, I complete my mound. I dig the ground around the hotbed, stir the land, and with a rake again hill up the land a little towards the melon plants. I again put some mould on the top of the mound and on the melon plant as far as the seed leaves.

I make a circular mound with depression in the centre where the plant is in such a manner so as to form a basin, in order to contain the quantity of water needed. Afterwards, I put a thickness of

one inch or one and one-half inches of a black substance (like dung) all around the mound, in a manner so as to mask all the surface of the mound. This is done to have all the heat possible penetrate the depth of the mound. In fact, of all colors, black absorbs most heat, and the more a mound will absorb of solar heat the more melon plants will develop; the fruits then will be juicy and delicious. Therefore, the whole plant absorbs an excessive heat which is an advantage over flat layers.

My mounds finished, I put four shingles (about middle size) in each, leaving them a little larger than the branches of the melon, then I put on my hotbed with the frame entirely closed. I open it only to water or to warm the plants. I take off the hotbeds in June only when the heat of the temperature is strong. When the fruits are half grown, I gradually take them away from the leaves, or rath-

er, if the weather is cloudy, I place them on a large shingle which I sharpen at one end and which I put in the mound; at the other extremity I put a support.

The height of my mounds is eighteen or twenty inches, having a circumference at the base of 100 inches at least, and at the top, a circumference of seventy or seventy-five inches.

VARIETIES AND SEED SELECTION

I have cultivated a great variety of melons with seed coming from Los Angeles, California, but the best ones that I have found are those of Montreal and of Cantaloupe. Select those varieties that are known to give the best results.

We should always select the seed. The best seed is that which is taken from the middle part of the slice of the melon. This is the first one formed, and it reaches always its full development. A melon seed, well cultivated, requires four months to cover the period of vegetation.

A Few Facts About Potatoes

W. J. L. Hamilton, South Salt Springs, British Columbia

ALTHOUGH everybody grows potatoes there are a few interesting facts about them that are not generally known. To obtain an early crop of potatoes, not only should an early variety be chosen, but the tubers should be exposed to the sun under glass until they have turned green, and until the sprouts on them are an inch or more long. The longer these sprouts are, the better, if the sets are carefully handled so that they are not broken off. This sprouting has the effect of developing a number of short joints on the young shoots and, as the young potatoes form at the joints, it stands to reason that the more joints we have underground, the heavier the crop will be. If after planting, the potatoes are earthed up, more young tubers will form, but as these do not develop until the plant has made considerable growth, the ensuing crop though heavier is later than if the plants are not earthed.

POTATO CULTURE IN IRELAND

In Ireland, where the labor is not grudged, I have seen very fine crops of potatoes grown in wet boggy land by the following method:

After being plowed, the land is marked out in strips alternately four feet and two feet wide. Strawy manure is spread on the four-foot strips, and on this manure, the freshly cut potato sets are evenly distributed, at from twelve to eighteen inches apart, according to the variety of potato used.

The soil from the two-foot strips is then shovelled all over the four-foot beds, covering the potatoes to a depth of three to four inches. When the pota-

to tops have grown a few inches above the soil, the bed is given another top-dressing of the soil from the two-foot strips, which are by this time converted into deep trenches.

Good crops are obtained in this way, and a second crop is obtained from the land at the same time by inserting cabbage plants two feet apart along the edge of the trenches at about the level of the manure. These generally also yield a fine crop. By further deepening these trenches can be converted into drains, whereby the land can be easily reclaimed. This hint may be worth noting, although I doubt if the method would become popular in this labor-saving country.

GROWING EARLY POTATOES IN CELLAR

New potatoes in small quantities can be produced early in the year, when they will fetch fancy prices, by the following method:

Fit up a number of wide shelves in a dark cellar and on these place two inches of almost dry soil. Select good-sized tubers and half imbed these in the soil, setting them two and a half to three inches apart. Sprouts will shortly form with small potatoes at their base. The tops of these sprouts should be nipped off with scissors. The small potatoes can be gathered and marketed when about the size of a large walnut. Several crops will be borne before the bed is exhausted. The cellar must be perfectly dark. A very slight sprinkling of water may be given carefully from time to time to the potatoes, though too much does harm.

In fertilizing potatoes, sulphate of

potash and not muriate of potash should be used, as the latter tends to make the potatoes waxy. If nitrogen has to be supplied, nitrate of soda is preferable to ammonia salts. As a rule, however, this is not needed, especially if potatoes are planted on a turned under clover sod, which gives nitrogen equal to about fifteen loads of barnyard manure per acre. As potatoes like a strawy manure, this clover particularly suits them and it has another beneficial effect in that its fermentation produces a slight acid reaction in the soil which has a tendency to check potato scab.

Fertilizer for Lettuce

In what proportions should dried blood and nitrate of soda be used on lettuce?—M.A., Dundas, Ont.

I would suggest the following per 100 square feet of surface: Nitrate of soda, one-half pound; superphosphate, one pound; finely ground bone, one pound; sulphate of potash, one-half pound. To facilitate distribution, this may be mixed with four or five times its volume of dry loam. Work the fertilizer well into the surface soil, say to a depth of two to three inches, by raking.

If preferred, dried blood may be substituted in part for the nitrate of soda in the proposed mixture, say one third dried blood and two thirds nitrate of soda.

When the lettuce is, say, two or three weeks old, a further application of nitrate of soda, at the rate of four ounces per 100 square feet, may be made, if the growth is not vigorous.—Frank T. Shutt, Chemist, Dominion Experimental Farms.