Notes of the Garden and Farm.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

The reports of failure of the currant crop are general throughout the country this season. Black currants especially are scarcer, and, when to be had at all, dearer than we remember them. Insects have injured the currant bushes—in many instances destroyed them. One garden we know has come through unscathed, safe from the winter and spring frosts, and the insects of summer. How has it escaped? Well—what has been uninjured is owing mainly to two causes; first, it is shaded on the north by a screen of pines, separated from it by the width of a street, yet near enough to be a welcome and most desirable shade. And they are indebted to them for more than shade. Our "feathered friends" make their home in the pines, and right early in the morning they are making war on insect foes.—Second, our currant bushes are never left for a season unprotected, nor the ground they grow on untilled and unmanured. The best fertilizer we know of is a good compost. Ashes, lime, salt, sods, weeds, stable manure—all composted in a heap and further enriched by suds and so forth, and turned more than once, form the best manure for garden and orchard, as well as for the general tillage of the field. Fruit trees having a liberal application of such compost in the fall will not fail from want of plant food. Coal ashes—a summer mulch—is an excellent safeguard against insects. It was tried on these currant borders and paid well for the application. The sulphur in them was not very tempting to currant leaf or pith devourers.

BARLEY CORNS.—Barley is almost always a spring sowed crop in the United States. It may, however, be sowed in the fall or winter, and thus be early enough to escape early summer drouths. Spring barley ripens about with spring wheat; varieties vary as with wheat. It is rarely injured by the chinch bug, but we believe is occasionally attacked. It is the most liable to shell of any grain, and shrinks badly if cut too soon. The wagons need to be lined with sheets to the full extent of the racks, and the bundles to be handled when the dew is on, and with great care; hence the use of barley forks for lifting the sheaves "spoon fashion." Whatever you do with fall barley must be an experiment. Give it a good chance on a good unmanured loamy soil, not too rich, and drill it in at the rate of 1¼ bushels to the acre, or broadcast, 1¾ to 2 bushels. The two-rowed barley is regarded as best adapted to poor soil; four-rowed would probably be best for you. We find our seedsmen occasionally have calls for fall barley, and that which they sell is obtained from abroad and considered four-rowed.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

Chimney soot is said to be a valuable stimulant and fertilizer for garden flowers. A lady who had tried in vain to train a climbing rose and grape-vine over her windows was despairing over the stunted plants, when some one recommended "soot tea." Forthwith she made some "tea," taking a tea-cupful of soot to a quart of water. Two or three doses administered to both rose and vine effectually revived them. They grew rapidly.

LIQUID MANURE FOR STRAWBERRIES.—An English gardener has been very successful with his strawberry crop for several years on the same bed, and attributes the abundance and size of his fruit to the use of liquid manure, composed of one pound each of Epsom salts, Glauber's salt, pearl ash and carbonate of soda, and one-half pound of muriate of ammonia to 60 gallons of water. He applies this manure as soon as the plants show signs of growth in spring, watering them pretty freely without a hose, three times, at intervals of about a week, so as to finish before they come into flower; and, if the season be dry, he finds it absolutely necessary to supply them liberally with common water afterwards during the whole time of growth, or their increased activity, he thinks, would quickly kill them.—*Horticulturist.*

Birds and Grain

In England, many little girls and boys are employed to frighten away the birds from the ripening grain. The accompanying cut represents a little girl who is faithfully doing her duty. Birds in England were at one time so numerous that rewards were offered for their destruction. The result was an alarming decrease in the grain crop, and now, instead of destroying them, their presence is encouraged. Birds destroy considerable grain as it is ripening, but the countless millions of insects they devour more than counterbalances the loss. There are farmers who still continue to drive the feathered tribe from their fields, little knowing that, by so doing, they are losing their best friends. There is no doubt if we had more birds we would have more fruit and more grain.

WHEN TO CUT FENCE POSTS.—The best time to cut hard-wood for durability is early winter, before the sap has a thought of moving. December is far better than February, and November, or even October, often better than later. During the latter part of the growing season those substances which, with access of water, form and enrich the sap, are produced in the wood. They gradually become soluble as the winter advances, and before spring fairly opens (trees varying considerably in time) are in a soluble condition, and taxing the soil for water to carry them to every twig and swelling bud. If cut thus, when filled with water or when full of soluble substances, the durability of the timber is much less than when these substances are in a chiefly insoluble condition, as they are in the autumn. The above indicates a general principle. It may, however, be considerably modified in practice, for many trees may be cut in full leaf even shortly after midsummer to good advantage. For firewood it is important to cut soon after the leaves fall.

MIXED GRASSES.—At the annual meeting of the Agricultural Association a paper was read upon growing grass. In the discussion which followed it was remarked that farmers should be careful to sow together only those grasses which ripen at the same time.—This is a mistaken idea. The chief reason why a variety of grasses should be sown is that there may be a constant succession of growth. The weakest point of our meadows is that the grass ripens, fades and suspends growth for the season, leaving a brown, withered or bare surface. If there were a succession of consecutively ripening grasses there would be a continued greenness and verdure, and if the pastures were only not overstocked, this would be as great an approach as we can make with our peculiar climate toward a permanently green meadow or pasture. But if all grasses ripen at once, we may as well continue to grow one single good grass as several good and bad ones.

The British agricultural returns for 1874 tell us that during last year there were 47,143,000 acres under crop, and in Great Britain 2,187,000 acres were under wood, and in Ireland 225,000 acres. The acreage under cultivation is every year increasing. Within the last six years, 970,000 acres in England have been added to that under crop; 175,000 in Wales, and 166,000 in Scotland. The acreage of land under wheat last year exceeded that of 1873 by 140,000 acres. For green crops including potatoes, 4,957,000 acres were employed. The number of horses returned was 367,000, an increase on the year of 35,000. The increase of cattle since 1871 had been 788,000. The number of foreign imported stock has not increased for the last ten years, being about 200,000 per annum. Sheep increased over previous years by 886,000. Pigs decreased very markedly. Agricultural laborers decreased between 1861-71 by about 17 per cent. in England, and by about 12 per cent. in Scotland.

DOUBLE DAISIES.—The English daisy has been improved from time to time. Just now the "Victoria" strain is becoming popular in Europe. They are very beautiful, but are somewhat difficult to get through our hot, dry summers. The succeed best under the moisture of a hot-bed sash.