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Questions and Answers. Miscellaneous.

Growing Onion Sets And Seeds.

1. Give details of growing sets and onion seeds.

2. What varieties of onions give best results for marketing? P. R.

Ans.—1. The growing of sets requires more skill and experience than the growing of either domestic or pickling onions. Soil and preparation are about the same as for a crop of the latter. Clayey soil should be avoided, but the ordinary soil which is considered good for onion production does very well for sets. The drills are made about a foot apart, and the ordinary seed sowers can be used to distribute the seed. The row is sown about two inches in width, and as much as twenty to fifty pounds of seed per acre is used. In the vicinity of Chicago, which is the largest set-producing section in America, the rows are one foot apart, and from 60 to 85 lbs. of seed are used per acre. Where it is only desirable to produce a small patch, the seed can be sown with a small tin can with a diameter of about two inches. Punch a number of small holes in the bottom, slightly larger than the seed, but not large enough to permit two seeds to escape at once. Fill the can with seed and shake it lightly along the open drill, cover the seed in the drill with fine soil from one-half to one inch in depth; the light covering is recommended for medium heavy soil, and the deep covering for light soil. One ounce will sow about forty feet of drill. The varieties used for growing sets are Yellow Flat Danvers, Yellow Dutch or Strasburg, Australian Brown, White Portugal or Silverskin, Extra Early Red, and Red Weathersfield. The cultivation and weeding are practically the same as for market onions. In Huron County, near Hensall, the harvesting methods are somewhat different from those employed elsewhere. Three rows are pulled and placed in a window and left to dry in the sun until such time as the tops will rub off when going through the cleaning machine. For winter storage they are placed in trays and stored in much the same manner as are domestic or pickling onions.

In seed production the bulbs should be selected very carefully in regard to shape, color and size. Good rich clay or sandy loam is a desirable type of soil. The bulbs are planted in rows three feet apart, and about six inches apart in the row. This admits of horse cultivation. About 125 bushels of bulbs are used in planting an acre. The crop varies according to season, from one pound to upwards of four pounds of seed from each bushel of bulbs planted. In gathering the seed, the field is often gone over four or five times, cutting off those that are ready. About two inches of the stock is removed with the seed ball. They are generally gathered in bags or sacks and are taken to the seed-drying house, where they are spread out on shelves. A free circulation of air is permitted in order to aid in the drying of the seed. After the balls are thoroughly dried, the seed is beaten out with a stick. It is then gathered up and run through a mill to clean it and blow off the light stuff. After it is cleaned it is placed in barrels or tubs and water poured over it until all the good seed is entirely immersed; the light and poor seed floats to the top, and is discarded. The good seed is then thoroughly dried as quickly as possible; if it remains damp for any length of time it will mould or germinate.

2. Southport Yellow Globe, Southport Red Globe, Red Wethersfield, Danvers Yellow Globe. There is a long list of useful varieties but these give good results when grown from seed.

"The 'orn of the 'unter is 'eard on the 'ill," sang the little boy at the Ragged School treat. But somehow his version of that line in "Kathleen Mavourneen" jarred on the nerves of the old squire.

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