

Black Currants.

SIR,—We have some black-currant bushes which have been planted for seven or eight years and have borne no fruit, though quite healthy and flower every year. Could you inform us what to do with them.

B. C., Meadow Farm.

[Dig them up and destroy them; they are of no value at all. There are many thousands of this worthless variety of black currant disseminated over Canada and the United States which have been sent out as true Black Naples. Its distinctiveness from the genuine is only known to a few. We have no doubt to-day there are acres of good land in the country planted with this variety, that for all the return they will give might as well have so many thistles. There is no explaining now how it came to be introduced, but we think it a chance seedling, which from its growing so vigorously and throwing up so much fine wood for propagating, that it has crept in, and increasing yearly has nearly displaced the genuine. The evil has been in existence for a great many years, and we doubt very much if there is a nurseryman in the United States whose stock does not consist principally of this variety. The reason it has not been detected sooner is, that there this fruit is not such a favorite one as it is with us, and consequently no great attention is paid to its cultivation; but we now know attention has been directed to it by the following incident which we give, and we trust soon the evil will be remedied:—A gentleman living near Toronto desiring to grow the fruit for profit, purchased several thousand plants from a well known firm of tree dealers and planted them on his place. After growing several years he noticed that the majority of the plants produced no fruit; he accordingly notified them that the plants were not as he ordered, and they would have to make them good. Being surprised at this state of affairs, as they had filled the bill in good faith, he brought over with them a gentleman well known for his reliability and experience in nursery business to examine the stock in the growing season. He examined them, but reasoned that the plants not now in bearing must have borne fruit the previous season. One of our staff, being an expert in this line, was sent for, and on examination of the plantation pronounced one-half of it as being entirely worthless, and convinced those present of the difference between the real and the spurious. The genuine Black Naples makes a short, thick growth, upright, and having plump white buds. The other is a very rapid grower; willowy; leaves narrower, more serrated and pointed than the true variety, and has reddish buds. In the spring it promises to be very fruitful, throwing out a long string of blossoms, but all the fruit that ever appears is a few small black berries about the size of gunshot.—Hortus.]

Prickly Comfrey and Pearl Millet.

SIR,—Your issue of this month, page 12, contains remarks on prickly comfrey, which induce me to address you, giving my experience on its cultivation and use.

In 1878 I bought four pounds of the root, cut it in pieces the size of a white bean, making about 100 cuttings to each pound; planted in rows on twelve square rods, having the plants three feet each way apart, and giving each hill a little barnyard manure. This last year (1879) I set out an equal space, so doubling the lot. All the cows did not take to it at first, but as the fall came on they all eat it well. This last year (1879) a 3-year old Ayrshire bull was kept in the stable, having a bushel basket of the leaves three times a day, without other food, and did remarkably well, eating it greedily. The yield has been two cuttings the first year and four the following year. The result thus far is to me satisfactory.

The flaming accounts in the American agricultural papers of pearl millet, giving, as it was stated, five cuttings during the season, yielding 95 tons of green or 16½ tons dry per acre, induced me to try it on a small scale. I prepared a quarter of an acre, spreading seven loads of barnyard manure, and sowed in drills twenty inches apart; but instead of the above yield with five cuttings, I had only one, on the 29th September, of about 600 pounds dry, or 11-5 tons instead of 16½ tons per acre. This return will about pay for the seed, which cost 75 cents per quart, but not for labor or manure. I shall not try it again.

G. E. J., Dunham, Que.

Oshawa, Ont.

SIR,—Seeing your many useful communications from various sections, I thought one from South Ontario might be acceptable. The most of our land is a clay loam, of pretty even quality, though somewhat heavier toward the lake shore. We follow a mixed husbandry. For the past four years our crops have been very poor, which has caused the farmers much embarrassment, and was the true cause of starting a Farmer's Club in this town a year ago, which has continued ever since, with the exception of a few months at midsummer, and has been productive of the best results. The Club meets once every two weeks, the sole purpose being the discussion of farm topics and the farmer's interests generally, which have been hitherto ably and practically treated. Much benefit has been derived from a lecture delivered by W. F. Clarke last winter on clover, which was very practical, and we again wish to engage this gentleman to deliver lectures on agriculture. The most important facts brought forward by us are that clover must be grown more extensively, if we wish the productiveness of our farms to continue. Artificial fertilizers have been tried with varied results, but most of us agree they are too costly for general use. Salt is used considerably alone, and also mixed with plaster. The results are generally satisfactory, but barnyard manure is considered the great staple, and renewed care is taken of it. The approved plan with us for growing cereals is to top-dress and harrow the manure in. The majority of the meeting are decidedly against growing hay or oats for sale, but maintain they should be fed on the farm. Extensive root culture is considered very profitable by many, and should in all cases be fed on the farm. Two-rowed barley is attracting attention and growing in favor. Black-eyed peas are grown extensively, and are a very profitable crop, but do best on the heavier soil. The varieties of wheat most in favor are the Menonite, White, Russian, Baltic, California and Arnetta, which is almost midge-proof.

The Club has had the effect of making us more watchful in our farming operations. Much more attention has been paid to agricultural papers, and great benefit has been realized from hearing the views of the more experienced and successful farmers. The club is now on a firm basis and highly appreciated. Other clubs are being formed in adjoining vicinities as the result. There should be at least one well-attended club in each county.

T. W. H., Oshawa.

Kansas.

SIR,—We have heard much of the profits to be made in Kansas and other western States from farming and stock raising, and some farmers' sons having been induced to forsake Canada for that country. Would you be kind enough to insert in your paper the following extract from the New England Farmer, telling some truths about Kansas. What the writer says of New England is even more applicable to Canada.

A. C., Lindsay.

"Having lived four years in Kansas, the present Mecca of the stock grower and dealer, and having observed carefully the results of this branch of farming there, I feel prepared to form a fairly reliable opinion of the comparative merits of the two sections for stock farming. Knowing what I do of the West, I must say that it falls far short of the ordinary conception of that section of country, as a cattle raising section. One acre of well kept pasture among the well-watered hills of western Massachusetts and other New England States is worth four of Kansas grazing land and furnishes as much feed, of a much better quality, to say nothing of the other advantages in the way of superior water, shade, &c., presented by the former. The prairie grass presents a great want of continuity, so that scarcely more than half the soil or surface is covered, and the grass is coarse, hard, and far inferior to the fine, rich, velvety product of the pastures on our hills here in New England. Winter feeding in most parts of Kansas and other Western States north of Texas is equally necessary and for nearly as great portion of the season as here. The hay used, being made of the prairie grass, is of a coarse, inferior quality, and large amounts of grain are required to be fed in winter by the Kansas stock grower, to keep his animals growing and increasing in flesh. Shelter in winter is quite as necessary there, though cattle are much neglected in this respect, and on the plains in the western part of the State the large herders lose great numbers of animals every severe winter that occurs."

Pear Orchards.

SIR,—Which is the best kind of soil to plant out a pear orchard, sand or clay, or is the pear a profitable fruit to raise—i. e., in large quantities? If so, please name some of the best varieties—one or two early and one or two for the fall, the rest winter varieties. As I have so much faith in the ADVOCATE, I thought I must ask your opinion.

W. H. A., Weldon, Ont.

[The pear succeeds best in a clayey loam, well drained, or a sandy loam with clay bottom. We have seen so many fine pear orchards flourishing alike on sand and clay that we hesitate to lay down any rule as to soil, but confine ourselves to this fact—that it flourishes anywhere (no matter the soil), wherever good cultivation is given. By good cultivation we mean having the land in good tilth before planting. Apply plenty of manure (the pear is a good liver), and particularly plenty of bone fertilizers, ashes and lime. The pear is a profitable fruit to raise, but from its liability to blight is in some seasons a little uncertain. Taking it all round, however, it proves a good investment, and the varieties most profitable are, first, the Bartlett—and we feel inclined to say plant nothing else but the Bartlett, but this would be an injustice to such varieties as Sheldon, Flemish Beauty, Louise Bonne, Howell, Beurre d'Anjou, and Beurre Clairjeau. These can all be recommended, grown as standards, with Duchess d'Anjou as dwarf. We would not recommend planting early or summer kinds in Canada, as the early fruit from the States completely glut the market, and brings our prices down to nothing. If sufficient protection should be given and shut this fruit out, then it would be wise to grow such varieties as Manning's Elizabeths, Edmund's Early and Osband's Summer. Clapp's Favorite we recommend, anyway. The tree has the fault of coming into bearing slowly, but we think it makes up for this by bearing abundantly afterwards. Souvenir du Congrès also has its claims as an early, large fruit, but we fear the tree is entirely too delicate for our climate, unless in some very favored locality. To recapitulate, plant Clapp's Favorite and Edmund's Early for summer; Louise Bonne, Bartlett, Flemish Beauty and Sheldon for fall, with Beurre Clairjeau, Josephine de Malines, Winter Nelis and Beurre d'Anjou for winter.]

Spring Wheat.

SIR,—I enclose two heads of spring wheat. I have about a hundred bushels from five acres; I sowed it too thin or it would have done better. Most other kinds of wheat yielded but ten bushels per acre in this vicinity this season. I would like all the information you can give concerning it, the name, etc. Some call it "Imperial" and others different names.

W. M., Woodville, Ont.

[The wheat you have sent is now known in some sections as Arnetta. We believe it to be the same as was formerly known as Wild Goose; also, Rice and Chilian. It is of a hard, flinty nature, and the flour is generally considered inferior. Local millers, as a rule, will not buy it readily, though grain shippers buy it at from 3 to 8c. per bushel less than other spring wheat. Many practical farmers sow it extensively in various sections of Ontario, on account of its superior yield for several years over many other spring wheats; they claim that the superiority in yield exceeds their loss in the price per bushel.]

Nova Scotia.

SIR,—I have subscribed for the ADVOCATE for three years, and consider it an excellent agricultural journal. I think it would be well if more of our farmers would become subscribers, as many people appear to think that to go through a certain routine is all that is required to secure a good crop, and if they fail they exclaim that "farming is no business!" I suppose that here we have not such good soil as in Ontario, but the farmer who thoroughly understands his business generally receives fair remuneration for his toil. The raising of wheat has proven much more successful here of late than in former years; the midge in many places not injuring it to any serious extent. The largest yield in this township being twenty bushels to one sowing. If we could get the protective tariff repealed, or at least the duty taken off corn, I think it would be well. Long life to the ADVOCATE. I enclose my subscription, \$1.00.

R. D. R., Bass River, N. S.