

covering was of no benefit, if not positively injurious.

Keep off all runners at all times, and pull up all weeds that come up through the mulching. No stirring of the soil is needed if a good depth of mulch is sustained. It will generally be necessary to add a small quantity of mulch every fall, depending, of course, upon the nature of the material used. Salt hay is a material that is much used near New York, and it is cheap, lasting, and easily applied; but straw, hay, carpenters' shavings, leaves, tan bark, &c., are all good. Strawberry plantations that are kept well mulched, and freed from weeds and runners, will last for many years, depending, of course, somewhat upon the variety planted and the nature of the soil.

On very dry or sandy land it is well to mulch the ground very soon after the plants are set out, or so soon as they take root in the soil, as there is but little danger of being troubled by weeds the first season, and the mulch keeps the earth moist, a thing which it is very difficult to accomplish in any other way.

HOW TO CURE HAMS AND SIDES.

There are many ways to cure hams, but some of them are not desirable, unless we are satisfied to eat poor hams in preference to good. A ham well cured, well smoked and well cooked, is a favourite dish with most people; but there are very few indeed who can relish ham which has been hardened and spoiled by salt, or tainted for the want of salt in curing, and may be worse spoiled in cooking; but if ham is spoiled by too much salt, or too little, or becomes tainted before the salt has thoroughly penetrated through it, I defy any cook to make a good dish out of it. I have tried many ways in curing hams, and have lost them sometimes by having them become rancid and tainted in warm weather, and also by having them so salt and hard that they were unpalatable.

I have for some twenty years practised the following simple recipe in curing pork hams and shoulders, and find it preferable to any recipe I ever tried, and when I have had any to sell they have taken the preference of sugar cured hams with those acquainted with them.

I trim the hams and shoulders in the usual way, except I cut the leg off close up to the ham and shoulder, to have them pack close, as being worthless smoked; then sprinkle a little fine salt on the bottom of a sweet cask, and pack down the hams and shoulders promiscuously, as they will best pack in, and sprinkle a little fine salt on each laying, just enough to make it show white; then heat a kettle of water and put in salt, and stir well until it will bear up a good-sized potato, between the size of a quarter and a half dollar; boil and skim the brine, and pour it on the hams boiling hot, and cover them all over one or two inches deep with the brine, having put a stone on the meat to keep it down. I sometimes use saltpetre, and sometimes do not; consider it useless, except to color the meat. I now use my judgment as to the time to take them out of the brine. If the hams are small, they will cure in three

weeks, if large, say five weeks; again, if the meat is packed loose, it will take more brine to cover it, consequently more salt will penetrate the meat in a given time than if it is packed close; on this account it is useless to weigh the meat and salt for the brine, as the meat must be kept covered with the brine, let it take more or less. Leave the casks uncovered until cool. When the hams have been in brine long enough, I take them out and leave them in the collar if the weather is not suitable to smoke them. I consider clean corn cobs better for smoking meat than anything I have ever tried, and now use nothing else; continue the smoke until it penetrates the meat, or the skin becomes a dark cherry brown. I then wrap the pieces I wish to keep in paper, any time before the flies or bugs have deposited their eggs on them, and pack them down in casks with dry ashes, in the collar, both hams and shoulders will keep as good as when packed through the summer or year. Cured in this way, it is hard to distinguish between the shoulder and ham when boiled.

A large ham will often taint in the middle before salt or brine will penetrate through.

HOW TO CURE SIDE PORK.

So much for smoked meat; now if any one wishes to have his side pork a little better, and keep better than any he has ever had, let him try my way, and if he is not satisfied, let me know it through the *Ohio Farmer*.

Take out the bone and lean meat along the back, cut and pack the pieces snugly in the barrel, put more salt on the bottom and on each laying of meat than will probably penetrate the meat; then boil and skim the brine (if it is sweet,) and add enough to it to cover your meat two or three inches over the top, made strong like the ham brine; and as soon as you pack your meat, pour the brine on boiling hot; it will penetrate the meat much quicker than cold brine, and give it an improved flavor.

While I was making and pouring the brine on my hams and pork just now packed, I thought the public might be benefitted by a knowledge of my way of curing meats. I therefore publish it. Try it.

HEAVY IRON WORK.

The crank shaft about being forged at Bridgewater, Mass., for the Italian frigate, to weigh over 40,000 pounds, though exceeding in length previous forging of this character, is not the heaviest ever successfully made. The center shaft of the steamships *Illinois* and *Golden Gate* forged in New York city in 1851, each exceeded it, one of those weighing in the rough a little over 54,000 pounds.

Crank-shafts are forged much heavier than they are finally finished. They are found to be strongest and cheapest when hammered in a solid mass or lump, not crooked, and the shaping done by cutting away the iron cold. The cranks of most of our iron-clads and other double-engined propellers are produced in this way. The American forges make the heaviest work and form the strongest material in the world.—*Exchange*.