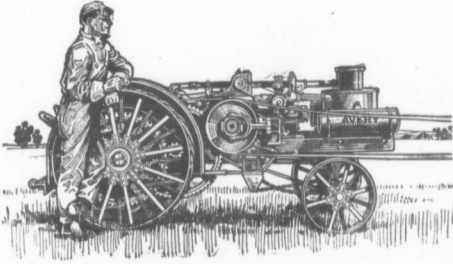


Don't put it off until it's too late!

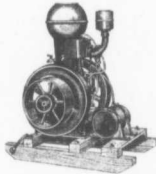
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On Smith's Garden

SMITH isn't naturally a gardener. He is a business man, well known in business circles. But he was raised on a farm—and there you are.

Early last spring Smith became fired with an enthusiasm to grow things. Everyone was going to have a garden. Men read the seed catalogues, street cars instead of the loose-leaf paper and the mania for gardening spread. It seemed to be infectious like measles or chicken pox. The Department of Agriculture helped along the movement by sending out much interesting literature on methods of gardening which if followed out would lead to the production (in the back yard, the window seat or under the bed) of apparently limitless quantities of baked beans and squash pie in the raw state. In fact enough literature was sent out if enough literature was sent out to reach quite a long distance and part way back again.

So when Smith called me up over our rural phone and asked me to bring him in a couple of sacks of seed potatoes, I wasn't much surprised.

The day I brought in Smith's potatoes I found him with pencil and straight-edge making plans. Smith said he gathered from the stack of bulletins that had come to hand, that if every resident of town or city in Canada were to grow one potato, or so, that the aggregate would knock the potato combine into a coked hat—and you will remember that last year was the "potato-combine-year."

Smith said he wanted any particular quarrel with the potato combine. He has no children and one fairly large tuber will do Mr. and Mrs. S. for dinner. But when it was pointed out that it was the country that had the last potato that would win the war, or words to that effect, Smith decided to raise that spud. As a peace-maker he would thereby make W. J. Bryan look like an Irish politician in comparison.

As spring advanced, however, Smith decided not to dig up his flower beds. He had a far better scheme. Why clutter up the croquet lawn with pumpkins and mushrooms when, a few miles out in the country, land was spilling for lack of gardeners? Smith had a Dodge that would have to be exercised every evening anyway, so he hired an acre of my farm (out of the hitherto district—six miles from town) whereon to have a garden. Smith wasn't sure whether there or not, "so" quoth he, smiling sweetly, "I'll combine business and pleasure thusly, for half a loaf is better than no holiday."

Smith's plans were far reaching. They included a little woods near the scene of activity where morals might be gathered in spring, a nearby lake where fishing and bathing might rest the weary gardeners after their strenuous exertions, and, chiefest of his plans, a number of young men from the office who would enjoy the ride on the country to work on a farm. Did he ever tell you he came back to the city to live? No? I don't blame him. Well, I'll tell you.

The second day he was on the farm he was called up before dawn and told to harness the mule to the sleigh. He was too tired to light a lantern, and in the dark he didn't notice that a cow was in the stable with the mule. The farmer, impatient at the long delay, shouted from the house:

"Jones, what are you doing out there?"
"I can't get the collar over the mule's head," Jones yelled back, "his ears are frozen."

rest was done with hoes and rakes. Needless to say the carefully worked-out "plan" was lost before the planting season arrived, so a system of catch-as-catch-can planting was followed. Mrs. S. said she had never had enough green peas, so a couple of quart-sized sows in rows 15 inches apart. Onions, carrots, and other small vegetables were painfully placed in rows varying from eight to 12 inches apart, and it takes a lot of such fine work to make much of an impression on an acre block. By the time all the small stuff had been hoed in, the weeds were ready for hoisting out. And most of the acre yet remained unseeded.

Early in the season Smith had an ingenious scheme whereby two crops of potatoes might be grown simultaneously. In each hole a late potato would be planted about nine inches deep, then after five inches of soil had been filled in, an early potato would be put in and the hole filled up. By this scheme the early potato crop would be dug in July and August without disturbing the growth of the late one. By the time Smith had planted half his acre once over to four dollar seed potatoes, however, he had decided not to overburden the soil.

Things looked good for the allies war ration during the spring, but presently the weeds got under way and the aspect of Smith's garden gradually changed. Summer came on. The Smiths left on a two weeks' vacation. The bugs didn't. Smith says he thinks the bugs made his garden a sort of rendezvous on account of the pleasant location. It was sheltered close enough to the lake that the bugs could have a drink whenever their throats got too dry from the starch of the potatoes.

The other day I had a phone call from him. He wanted a couple of bags of potatoes. They are not for planting this spring, but for immediate consumption to take the place of the potatoes that the bugs got.

Smith says his garden last year was not a success as a commercial proposition, due to an overabundance of advice aimed from every quarter, and a lack of the real cooperation in the way of good hoers. Of course the quality of the vegetables was superb. The quality of any fruit except where Smith's is above the standard of excellence. But he isn't giving up gardening. He has been too strongly impressed with the needs of the Empire and the size of his plot. His garden this year will have a good southern exposure overlooking his garage. The space at his disposal on the winter seat will be considerably smaller than he used last year and so will be unable to support as many weeds. But Smith says that the saving in gasoline and potato seed should about make up the small difference in the productive capacity of the two plots.

Sam Ray

Jim Jones was born in the city and while yet a young man went into the country to work on a farm. Did he ever tell you he came back to the city to live? No? I don't blame him. Well, I'll tell you.

The second day he was on the farm he was called up before dawn and told to harness the mule to the sleigh. He was too tired to light a lantern, and in the dark he didn't notice that a cow was in the stable with the mule. The farmer, impatient at the long delay, shouted from the house:

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