

"sprout" the potatoes before planting. Medium-sized tubers are selected before they have begun to sprout and placed in single layers in shallow boxes or trays with the seed end up. The boxes are then put in a bright, airy, cool place, where the temperature is low enough to prevent sprouting. After a few days the potatoes will turn green and the skin becomes much tougher than before the potatoes were exposed. The potatoes are now given a little more heat, but still kept in a bright, airy place. From the seed end will now develop two or three strong sprouts and the object of exposing the potatoes at first to toughen the skin is now apparent, for most of the eyes do not start and practically the whole strength of the potato is concentrated in a few sprouts at the end. This is what is desired, as the fewer sprouts there are the larger proportion of marketable potatoes there will be. If the potatoes are given plenty of light and the place where they are kept fairly cool, the sprouts will become very sturdy and strongly attached to the tuber and will not be broken off in handling unless very carelessly used. Tubers will develop more quickly from sprouts made slowly in a bright, cool, place than from sprouts which have grown rapidly in a dark place, and furthermore, the yields will be much heavier. Potatoes which sprout in the dark are, moreover, very difficult to handle, as the sprouts break off very easily. It is not absolutely necessary to place the potatoes with the seed ends up as very satisfactory results are obtained when potatoes are emptied indiscriminately into shallow boxes or trays and then treated as already described. The sprouts should be about two inches in length at time of planting. If longer the sets are more difficult to handle.

The warmest and best drained soil that can be obtained should be used for extra early potatoes and the sets should be planted shallow so that they will get the advantage of the heat from the surface soil. The potatoes are planted whole, as they do not rot as readily as cut pieces, and the sprouts also have more to draw on. The sprouts are, of course, left uppermost when the potato is planted. As most extra early varieties have small tops the sets may, as a rule, be planted a little closer than for the main crop.

## PROTECTING POTATOES FROM INJURIOUS INSECTS AND FUNGOUS DISEASES.

The leaves of the potato vine must be kept intact and in a thrifty condition if a maximum crop is to be obtained, and both insects and diseases should and can be fought and conquered if the well-known and thoroughly tested preventatives and remedies are used.

Spraying for the Colorado potato beetle should not be delayed until the vines are badly injured, but preparation should be made to spray as soon as the larvæ or young bugs hatch. In about a week after the eggs are laid the young beetles or larvæ appear and begin to devour the foliage with a rapidity which is only too well known. The last brood of larvæ, which disappear into the soil before severe frost, pupate there, remaining in the ground in the form of perfect insects until the following spring. Fortunately, there are good remedies for this insect in Paris green, arsenate of lead, and other insecticides. The importance of preserving the foliage as nearly intact as possible has already been impressed on our readers. It is well known that the loss in a crop where the vines have been allowed to be devoured by potato beetles is enormous, the crop sometimes being scarcely worth digging. The longer the spraying is delayed the greater loss there will be. If cheap help can be obtained it will be advisable to spray the vines when they are quite small, or pick off the old beetles before they have deposited their eggs, but if help is scarce it may not be possible to do this, and the temptation to leave the old "bugs" alone is great, as they do little injury to the foliage. Unfortunately, on perhaps the majority of farms, nothing is done to destroy the potato