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Farm Crop Queries

CONDUCTED BY PROF. HENRY G. BELL

The object of this department is to place at the service of our farm readers the advice of an acknowledged authority on all subjects pertaining to soils and crops. Address all questions to Professor Henry G. Bell, in care of The Wilson Publishing Company, Limited, Toronto, and answers will appear in this column in the order in which they are received. When writing kindly mention this paper. As space is limited it is advisable where immediate reply is necessary that a stamped and addressed envelope be enclosed with the question, when the answer will be mailed direct.

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R. W.: I have a piece of ground I wish to let out to plant to corn on shares. I propose to furnish one-third of fertilizer (if any is used), and one-third of the time to harvest it. In return I want one-third of the corn put in the crib and one-third of the stalks put in the stack. Now, if that is not right and fair, what? What is customary for corn, wheat or oats let out on shares?

Answer: I believe the arrangement you indicate would be fair. You would probably contemplate an investment of about \$6 an acre in fertilizers. This would in all probability give you an increase of 15 bushels to the acre of corn, which would mean a return of about \$3 per acre for the \$2 that you had invested in fertilizer. In addition you would have the left-over effect which would increase your crop for at least two years following the corn.

G. R.: Last spring I planted some soy beans. I drilled them in twenty-eight inches apart with a grain drill and cut them for hay, but I found they grew almost too rank and the stalks were so large the cows would not eat them. Would it be advisable to drill them the same as wheat and oats? If so, when should they be sown and how many per acre? What variety will mature and ripen in Ontario?

Answer: I would not advise drilling soy beans broadcast like wheat or oats. They do better in rows. The common variety for use in Ontario

Poultry

A little more culling in the spring may take out a few hens that do not look as good breeders and layers as they did last fall. Sometimes a few hens become too fat. Maybe one or two will be heavy and listless and fail to scratch for grain or come from the roost promptly in the morning. A little about the condition of a flock can be told by opening the house suddenly on a sunny day. Watch the

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Using Hotbeds and Frames

Hotbeds are much more difficult to manage than cold-frames, especially in ventilation. Early in the season the sashes should be lifted at their lower ends and propped up with a stick having notches in it about an inch apart. The sashes should never be pulled down, thus exposing the growing plants to the weather changes. If the sashes are propped up it keeps the glass over the entire surface of the sashes and prevents chilling drafts from striking the young and tender plants. As the weather warms up, the sashes should be opened another notch or two. In early spring the beds should be closed about the middle of the afternoon so that the heat obtained during mid-day may be retained during the night. Do not open the sashes too early in the morning; use ordinary discretion in ventilating the hotbed.

If the nights remain cold, the beds should be protected with coverings laid over the sashes. Old blankets, straw mats, or even old newspapers are very good for this purpose. While the manure in the hotbed generally retains its heat for three or four months, it is sometimes insufficient to keep out the spring frosts. Covers should be laid over the sashes before sun-down and removed as soon as the morning air has warmed up some. If the weather proves very severe, extra warmth may be obtained by increasing the number of coverings and by banking the sides of the bed with fresh stable manure. If coverings are kept on the beds, the sashes must be raised a trifle every morning to allow the foul air to escape from the plants. This must be done no matter how severe the weather.

A cold-frame requires less care than a hotbed, as it contains no manure and frequently is made without glass coverings. The purpose of the cold-frame is to harden seedlings that come from the hotbed, that are to be transplanted to the garden later. This hardening is brought about by gradually submitting the growing plants to outdoor conditions by increasing the ventilation as the season advances. Ventilation of the cold-frame should increase just as rapidly as the weather warms up, until the sash or other protective coverings can be removed entirely without hurt to the plants. As the ventilation is increased, there should be a decrease in watering, so that conditions of growth within the frame may more nearly approximate normal garden conditions.

Setting Plants in the Garden.

After all danger from frost is past and the garden soil has warmed up sufficiently the young plants can be transplanted safely. Soak the soil in the cold-frame with plenty of water before transplanting. This causes the soil particles to adhere to the tender roots and helps them to get adjusted to their new garden environment more rapidly. After the plants are set in the garden they should be watered thoroughly once more.

Before plants are taken from the cold-frames for setting out in the garden, have everything ready for quick and effective work. The garden space should be marked off into allotments for the different crops, the paths should be clearly indicated and, in some cases, the furrows should be opened ready for the plants. The garden space should be so arranged that there may be successive plantings of certain crops at intervals of one or two weeks without interfering with other growing plants.

If fertilizer is to be used at the time of transplanting, it should be evenly distributed throughout the base of the furrows and should be well mixed with the soil. For safety, a layer of the top soil, an inch or two deep, should be placed over this fertilizer at the bottom of the furrow, so that the roots of the young plants may be protected from coming in contact with this strong plant food. All transplanting should take place on a cloudy day or just before sundown, never during the heat of a noonday sun.

Remove With a Trowel.

If the garden soil is very dry, water should be applied to the furrow and then the holes should be partly filled with soil before the plants are set. Remove the plants from the cold-frames with a trowel or spade, and place them in baskets to take to the place allotted to them in the garden. Be sure that there is enough soil about the roots of the young plants.

Plants should be set slightly deeper than they stood in the seed-bed. Some gardeners find it a great advantage to set the seedling plants up to their seed leaves. This helps the plant to stand erect and gives the roots better opportunity to penetrate the soil. Deeper setting protects the young plants from temperature changes. Spindly plants should always be set rather deep, especially when there is any danger from late frosts.

There are four groups of garden crops based upon the temperature conditions of their growth. The first group, consisting of beets, early cabbage plants, onion sets, kale, smooth peas, potatoes, radishes and cauliflower, may be planted as early as two weeks before the last killing frost. These are hardy growers and will withstand most temperature changes met with in spring. The second group comprises those that may be planted about the time of the last killing frost. Lettuce, onion seed, wrinkled peas, carrots, spinach, and sweet corn belong to this group. The third group can not be planted until all danger from frost is past. Salads, beans, and tomato plants belong to this group, and should not be planted out-of-doors until at least two weeks after the last killing frost. The fourth and last group consists of those heat-loving plants, such as peppers, eggplants and squash, that should not be put into the garden until four weeks after the last killing frost or until warm weather has finally set in.

Bedtime Stories

The Little Old Lady Who Lived in a Wood.

There was an old lady who lived in a wood. She wore a black dress and a tiny red hood; an apron of white with big bows out behind as lovely appearing as any you will find. But, oh, she was selfish! She lived all alone; no sharing of good things—not even a bone. No bidding to dinner, no bidding to tea; she could not afford it, she said; no, not she!

One noon she was cooking a chocolate cake; there came an old man to her door. "You can bake," he told her, "such wonderful, wonderful cake! Please give me a piece for humanity's sake. But mark what I say: I've no money to pay, but your very first wish shall be granted this day."

The old lady pondered how best she could bake a cheap little cake, then a wish straightaway make.

She bustled about with her eggs and her flour and made many cakes in the next busy hour; but all came from the oven too rich, big or brown to waste, she complained, on a silly old clown.

And so she kept trying, one eye on her caller, making cake after cake, each one smaller and smaller; until at last, scarce as big as a black-headed pin, one cookie remained, almost lost in the tin. But even that, too, she hid on the shelf!

"Too good for a stranger," she said to herself.

Then she offered her visitor one crust of bread.

"Very well. Make your wish, ma'am," was all that he said.

Just then an old peddler went by with his pack. She flew to the door calling loudly, "Come back! O dear, he can't hear, and I did want to buy some needles and pins if the price isn't high. If I only had wings! If I just were a bird!"

Too late she remembered the old beggar's word.

She felt herself shrinking; her arms became wings; her gown turned to feathers—good-by, apron strings! Her nose grew so long that it was really a beak. She tried to say something; no word could she speak.

Straight into a tree top, all fluttering, flapping, she flew and there perched and began tap-a-tapping; tap-a-tapping the tree as she searched for

If your grocer were greedy for profits he would not be content to sell and recommend Red Rose Tea at a less profit than he makes on other teas.

But it is a fact that he does make less on Red Rose than on other teas, and he recommends it because he knows its quality is the best.

The Sunday School Lesson

EASTER SUNDAY

The Living Christ, St. Matthew 28: 1-10, 16-20. Golden Text—St. Matthew 28: 20.

Connecting links: The dead Christ was carried by reverent hands to the tomb of a loving friend, Joseph of Arimathea. He is described as "a rich man" and "a councillor of honorable estate; who also himself was looking for the Kingdom of God." John says that Nicodemus (see John 3: 1 and 19: 39) also came bringing a great quantity of spices to embalm the body, which was wrapped in linen clothes and laid in the rock-hewn sepulchre, "a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid." Matthew tells us also that the chief priests and Pharisees, who had plotted His death, persuaded Pilate to let them set a guard at the tomb lest the disciples should come and steal Him away and pretend He had risen from the dead. The theory still held by some Bible readers that the body was really stolen away, and that other theory that He had merely swooned and afterward revived and went away, have really no ground to rest upon.

The Risen Lord.

V. 1. In the end of the Sabbath. Jesus was crucified on Friday, was buried on the afternoon of the same day, and lay in the tomb all day Saturday, which was the Jewish sabbath. According to the Jewish way of reckoning the sabbath ended at sunset, but there seems to have been a popular way of speaking which included the night following. At any rate, the time here indicated was the early morning of the next day, that is, of Sunday.

Mary Magdalene, that is "Mary of Magdala," was one of the faithful friends of Jesus. She had been healed by Him of a terrible affliction of insanity (Mark 16: 9). There is no proof whatever of the common notion that she was the penitent sinner who wept at the Lord's feet and anointed them in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7: 36-49).

The other Mary is called by Mark "Mary the mother of James the less and of Joseph." John seems to identify her with "Mary the wife of Clopas," the sister of Jesus' mother, but this is not quite certain (John 19: 25). These two women had been at the cross and at the burial, and now first at the tomb in the early morning.

Vv. 2-8. A great earthquake. Matthew speaks also of an earthquake on the day of the crucifixion (27: 51). The shock which opened the tomb must be regarded as occurring before the women came, otherwise they would have seen Jesus come forth. The angel, whom they saw, is described by Mark as "a young man," sitting in the tomb on the right side, arrayed in a white robe. Luke says that they saw two men standing by them "in dazzling apparel," and John that Mary Magdalene saw in the tomb "two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain."

It is impossible to explain all this as mere fancy, the result of an excited imagination. Something must certainly have happened, here and afterwards, which made these women believe beyond the shadow of a doubt that the unexpected and seemingly impossible thing had happened, and that their Lord was risen. The apostles and a multitude of others believed and went forth preaching a risen Christ. They were ready to stake their lives on the truth of the resurrection. Paul heard the evidence and believed, Pharisee and persecutor though he had been.

He is not here, for He is risen. This was the testimony of the angel. They saw the place where He had lain and the empty tomb, and they believed. This testimony was repeated by the women and by the apostles, and by the lips of countless evangelists and confessors all down through the years. "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we are all witnesses," said Peter at Pentecost. In the temple court Peter proclaimed Him "The Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead." Before the great council and the high priest he declared that it was in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, "whom God raised from the dead," a lame man had been healed. Again before the council, and on trial, the apostles declared of Jesus that "Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour." Peter, in the house of the Roman Cornelius, testified that "Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead."

Paul, in Pisidian Antioch, preached Christ, and said, "God raised him from the dead; and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses unto the people." In Athens he declared of Jesus that God had "raised Him from the dead." Writing to the Christians of Corinth Paul recounts the evidence for the resurrection, and says, "Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the

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