

Orchard, Garden and Yard

Keep the Garden Clean.

The value of such advice as is given in the headline of this article is so apparent that the wonder is that it should to so great an extent be practically ignored. The true remedy for weeds in the garden or out of it is found in giving them no quarter. Many persons keep the portions of the garden quite clean so long as the crop is growing, after which their care of that particular piece of land altogether ceases. From this neglect very many of the sorrows of the gardener arise. So long as weeds are allowed to mature their seeds, just so long will they continue to multiply and to increase the labor of removing them.

It should be remembered that after a crop of onions has matured, there is still ample time left to mature a splendid crop of weeds on the same piece of land; and unless preventive measures are applied, they will take care to avail themselves of the inviting opportunity. It is not enough to keep tufts of grass away from the roots of currant bushes during the growing season. A little watchfulness later in the season will prevent much trouble the next spring.

The argument is not valid that after the crop is reaped it does not matter in what condition the land is kept. It does matter. In one season sufficient weed seeds may be matured to infest the ground for several seasons afterwards. It is very much easier to destroy them while growing and yet immature than after they have ripened and fallen again to earth.

It is difficult sometimes for farmers, with their pressing cares, to give the garden sufficient attention, especially in the late summer and early autumn months, but where the earnest desire exists the way of doing it will be found. If the young people of the household could be interested, it would be fine work for them. If they could be got to feel a pride in having a clean garden, it would be well. The garden would then be kept clean.

The work of cleaning will be much facilitated if the weeds are never allowed to get ahead. It can then always be done at a minimum expenditure of labor. When it gets covered with weeds, the labor of cleaning is not only greatly increased, but the work of cleaning it is a most discouraging one. We cannot well imagine a more discouraging work for young people than to get them removing weeds which are growing in a solid mat.

Strawberries for the Gardens.

This delicious fruit is not found in very many of the gardens of the farm. Indeed the same is too true of nearly every variety of small fruit. It arises in part from the busy life of the farmer and the large amount of time spent by him in the wider sphere of the farm. Yet it should not be so, for if there is any man in the country whose family may have an abundance of the finest fruits it is the farmer.

A very small space, indeed, will suffice to grow strawberries for one family; more than this the average farmer does not want. The form of the bed will depend upon the way in which the garden is laid out. For ease in cultivation, whatever is grown in it should be kept in rows, so that the work may be done to the greatest possible extent with the aid of horses. But where horses cannot be used, the strawberry bed may assume any desired shape.

A plot 20 feet square, or at the most 20 feet by

30 feet, will usually be found sufficient for an ordinary family where the soil is good. The ground may be well manured in autumn. In most soils the manure should be kept near the surface. Heavy soils may be trenched in autumn. The planting should be done quite early in the spring. Where hoed by hand, the rows need not be more than 18 inches apart and the plants 12 inches in the row. Keep the ground clean for one season with the hoe, being careful not to disturb the young vines which root from the runners. In late autumn cover with a moderate mulch of coarse litter. Straw will do, but is easily blown away. In spring remove this with the rake or by fire, and keep the plot clean by hoe and hand-weeding until the berries are formed. Another plot of the same size may be planted the following spring, and the old one may then be turned under. If the old plot is to be kept fruiting for two years, the weeds and runners must receive careful attention after the first crop has been secured. Taking all things into consideration, where land is plentiful it is better to be satisfied with one crop and have a fresh one come on every year. Now, young people, get the ground ready this fall and grow lots of strawberries for yourselves.

The Habit of Growth in Small Fruits.

In practice there is a difference in the way in which small fruits, as the currant and the gooseberry, are allowed to grow. Some confine the growth to a single stem and turn the bush into a miniature tree. Others allow young stems to come up around the parent stem, and so form a bush in the true sense of the term. With all the varieties of the currant and gooseberry we decidedly favor the latter mode of growth.

When the growth is confined to a single stem with a spreading top, it is much more easily swayed with the wind. Indeed a violent wind will often snap off the stem when heavily laden with fruit. This may be prevented by tying to a stake. But tying thus means labor and trouble which are unnecessary when there is a better way. When there is but one stem the growth of new wood is always restricted, hence the quality of fruit produced becomes inferior as the shrub becomes older. On the other hand, where strong and vigorous sprouts are allowed to come up, the old ones may be cut away. Where this practice is followed up, the quality of the fruit should always be good in favorable seasons. Weak sprouts should also be cut away, as they draw sustenance from the plant and give little or no fruit in return.

The chief objection to the method of growing shrubs by thus allowing them to send up suckers is found in the increased difficulty in keeping them clean. Grass, in one form or another, is liable to grow between and around the stems composing the shrub. There will be no difficulty here, however, if constant watchfulness is exercised. This is wise policy in any kind of culture. It is when the plant or shrub is neglected for a time that the seeds of evil are sown.

The life of the shrub will also be prolonged by allowing it to send up stems from year to year. In fact, it would not be easy to say how long a shrub would continue to grow if thus treated. The shrub should be renewed occasionally notwithstanding. When they become old there is more difficulty in pruning them, and the subsoil is more and more exhausted of the elements of growth, hence the desirability of occasional renewal.

Morning Glories.

The love of flowers is implanted in mankind; and although in some cases the feeling lies dormant, yet there are few that do not feel pleasure in gazing on a well-kept flower garden or experience a desire to cull one or other of the brilliant and fragrant blossoms. Horticulture is more often appreciated by the dweller in cities than by his brother in the country, and he often wonders that his country brother, with such opportunities at his command, neglects to avail himself of them, and that he does not attempt to improve the bare-looking verandah which often surrounds his home by planting some of the hardy creepers and climbing plants that are so easily grown, and thus form a shady arbor where he can take his noonday siesta.

In our climate the Virginia creeper, or the common hop, make a lovely bower; while the clematis Jackmani, with its glorious purple flower, and the more easily cultivated morning glory, with its numerous and many-hued blossoms, from white to crimson down to the darkest purple, make a brilliant contrast to the more sombre green of the foliage. To turn a verandah into a cool, shady retreat by means of the morning glory is simple in the extreme, and an easy method is thus described by a writer in *Vick's Magazine*:—"Spade a narrow trench the whole length of the verandah, make the soil rich, sow morning glory seeds thickly in the prepared trench, and string twine from the top of the verandah to the ground, six inches apart. Secure one end of the twine to the verandah by small nails, allowing string enough to reach the ground, and make the other end fast to wooden pins, which can be driven into the ground. Or, if the expense is no object, a much neater, more satisfactory trellis can be made by stretching wire-fencing (such as is used for poultry yards) along the side of the verandah in place of twine. After they are a foot or more high, a good mulch of leaf mould or chip dirt will be of great benefit to them. If well mulched and given plenty of water, the leaves and blossoms will be 'im-mense.'

"Nothing is more dainty and sweet for a winter window-climber than the morning glory. Make an arch of two feet wide wire-fencing over a window and at the two ends set pots of morning glories. If you make the soil rich and give plenty of water, it will soon be a bower of green, and you will have to be an exceedingly early riser to get up ahead of the 'glories.' In the house their beauty does not fade in an hour or two, but they remain open all day. Florists now offer morning glory seed especially for winter flowering, but the seed saved from the glories that have made the summer's mornings glorious will grow and blossom in the house."

For The Household Companion.

The Sitting Hen.

Sitting hens do best if each can have a pen entirely to herself, but this is not always practicable; still in any event they should have an apartment where they will be free from the intrusion of other fowls. As to the best kind of nest, no two poultry-keepers will agree, and the new beginner is often bewildered by the advice which is tendered him on the subject. Natural instinct, however, is usually unerring, and close observation will often place one on the right track. The satisfaction with which hens steal away and make their nests in concealed places indicate the attraction that privacy has for the hen. The nest made by

these in such places is usually a slight hollow in the ground with a little grass or a few leaves which have fallen or been blown thither, and the results, except in the case of accidents are usually a larger number and stronger brood of chickens than are produced in the best constructed nests in the hen house, notwithstanding that in such places the hen and nest are exposed to all the vicissitudes of the weather. It is altogether probable that the earth has a beneficial effect by preserving an equable temperature, and also in communicating a certain amount of moisture to the eggs. Following the instinct of the hen, the nest should be always on the ground. It is a good plan to place a good thick sod as a foundation for the nest, and after making a slight depression in the centre, so as to keep the eggs from rolling off, to line it with a little straw or dried leaves. The sod should be kept moist, not wet, by pouring water around the base of it; and provided the water is not cold, we should have little fear of it injuring the eggs even if a little was sprayed over them; indeed one of the most successful broods we ever hatched was during the warm weather when, as the date of hatching approached, we sprayed eggs and nest through the use of a watering-pot. In cold weather, however, it is not advisable, as the eggs are easily chilled, and it is safer to merely keep sufficient moisture in the sod. One of the simplest nests either for laying or sitting hens is made out of a box with the top and one side removed. The box is set bottom upward over a sod and with the open side placed about eighteen inches or two feet from the wall of the room. It is readily cleaned or removed; the sod laid under it forms a raised floor, and the entrance to the nest being at the back pleases the secretive nature of the hen and encourages her to lay there instead of seeking parts unknown.

The sitting hen should be supplied with good nourishing food and pure water; and if she will not leave the nest to come out and feed, she should once a day be lifted up gently by the wings, but care must be taken that none of her eggs are tucked up by them and drawn along with her. Some hens will not come off the nest at all if left alone, but such a course is not only injurious to the hen herself, but also to the eggs, as the absence of the hen from the nest permits an ingress of fresh air to the eggs and is beneficial to the embryo chicks. The sitting hen should have access to a dust bath, which will help to keep her free from lice; and if practicable, she should have an opportunity of a run in a grass lot, which will materially conduce to her health.

Night time is the best to set a hen, especially if she is to incubate in a place to which she is unaccustomed. The nest should be prepared beforehand and at least two nest eggs provided; she should then be brought in by lamplight and put down in front where she can see the eggs and be allowed to walk in herself; then shut her in securely. The next morning after her food is prepared she should be let out and allowed to come off herself and to find her way back, but not until she has found her way back twice should the eggs be trusted to her, after which there will hardly ever be a failure. Good sitters seldom leave their nests more than once a day and their period of absence rarely exceeds from a quarter to half an hour; in time of frost even twenty minutes will frequently spoil the eggs unless set in a warm place.

At the end of a week the eggs should be examined by candlelight, when the infertile eggs can be detected and removed. This is accomplished by a piece of cardboard with an oval hole cut in the centre, not sufficiently large to allow the egg to pass through. The cardboard is held to the light and the egg is placed against the oval opening, when the fertile eggs will have a dark shadow in the centre, shading off to more transparency at the edges, except at the large ends where the air vesicle exists, while the sterile eggs will appear clear and translucent. It will be found advantageous to set two hens on the same day; and if on examining both nests at the expiration of a week many sterile eggs are discovered, the whole of the fertile eggs may be placed under one of them and a fresh setting given to the other.

"Cochin."