

FARM AND GARDEN.

PLUM CULTURE.—In the fruit growing sections of Nova Scotia the cultivation of the plum, in the last ten years, has greatly decreased. There are several agents, obstacles in the way, leading up to this result, the plum weevil, the decay of immature fruit, are serious drawbacks, and the black knot a standing menace. There is yet another agent putting in an appearance—the premature shedding of the leaves. Some varieties are more subject to it than others, possibly soil and situation may have something to do with the malady, over cropping has a tendency to enfeeble the roots which would induce early maturity.

These obstacles in the way of successful culture are capable of being surmounted by individual persistence, but with many persons it is considered mis-spent diligence to do anything more than take what they can get.

Lately the attention of fruit-growers has turned more toward the cultivation of the larger and the lesser fruits; apples and berries apparently offering greater inducement to labor. Viewing the situation critically it is not a matter of surprise that the cultivation of the plum should be a subordinate business. Most of the finer sorts of rich and luscious flavor are out of the market, and are only to be found in the possession of the amateur.

The famous Greengage of Windsor, of boyhood memory, universally admitted to hold the first rank among plums, is now rare. There is no doubt of its existence in a corner of some ancient garden; if the conjecture is right, its rejuvenescence would be a genuine acquisition to the list. Some varieties resist the action of the black knot with greater persistence than others. Bolmer Washington, Reine Claude de Bivaz, and several of the Gages, have held out bravely, contesting the encroachment of the fungi, and yielding only from want of care.

Out of thirty-six of the best dessert and culinary sorts, on ground favorable to the plum, and duly cultivated, the following kinds have not exhibited any indication of the fungi, and are now large healthy trees carrying an average crop of fruit, viz.: A large yellow oval plum, a seedling, commonly known as "Magnum Bonum," this plum is said to have originated at Beau Pre., Annapolis Co., on the grounds of Jacob Chipman, on its own roots a strong upright grower, occasionally marked when grafted on other sorts, ripens in October, and hangs a long time, very good; Coes Golden Drop, Blue Imperative, first-class, very late; Princess Yellow Gage, McLaughlin, tree hardy; German Prune, Orleans, Smith's Orleans, Roe's Autumn Gage, large fine tree, not common, and several seedlings without names.

By the 1st of July the black knot will have the "bulge" on all affected trees. If parties growing the fruit could agree that on a certain day early in the month they would wage a war of extermination on the excrescence, cutting off the diseased twigs, and heading back severely limbs that are much covered, following it up for a few seasons, using shellac varnish to exclude the air from the wounds, the disease would disappear.

This protuberance is now known to be a plant of the fungi group, a special parasite of the plum, it is perennial, and the filaments if not destroyed extend along the branch, prepared to produce knots the following season or when opportunity occurs.

The weaver, or fall web worm genus *Hyphantria*, are now conspicuous by their huge webs on apple and other fruit trees. When first observed they should receive careful attention, otherwise they will cover the branch with an offensive web. These caterpillars are increasing in number every season, and destroy the foliage with great rapidity. II.

NATIVE OR GRADE COWS PROFITABLE FOR DAIRIES.—Unless the calves can be reared and sold at high prices, no dairies of pure bred, high-priced cows can compete in profit with those of native or grade stock.

The first cost of native or grade cows is so much less than the improved pure bred ones, that the difference of interest on the investment is equal to a fair profit on the business, while the produce in milk of the native or grades is almost equal to that from the pure breeds. If the calves can be raised and sold for breeding purposes at high figures, it would, of course, make a difference in favor of the improved stock, but the raising young stock and the dairying business cannot be well combined, and there would be little chance now of selling calves at high prices, as the great boom in improved stock generally is fast dying out, with the exception of the Holsteins, and these will no doubt run their course also.

High-bred fancy stock requires extra care and feed, and are more tender than common stock, and more liable to sickness, owing to having been bred much in and in, and the loss is deeply felt should any of them die.

The booms causing immense prices to be paid of late years for Jerseys, Short-Horns, Herefords, Polled Angus, Galloways, and Holsteins, have not been all lost. They have caused these breeds to be scattered over the country far and near, and the crossing between them and the native stock must have resulted in great benefit to the country.

A good selection of native or grade cows, which can be procured cheaply, is under these circumstances by far the most profitable for a dairy, as when they get unprofitable as milch cows they can be sold without loss to butchers to be fattened up and replaced cheaply with others in proper condition.

Cross-bred cows of the improved breed make excellent dairy stock, but still cost too high for profit, though better than those that have been kept pure.

We formerly tried this on a pretty large scale in our own dairy. We commenced with an imported bull and several cows from Ayrshire, selected by a good judge, to which we added a number of selected native cows, and afterwards both short-horns and Devons; the best milch cow of them all was a pure Ayrshire, the next was a cross between the Ayrshire and Devon, but some of the grades between the Ayrshire and native breeds were nearly as good and did not cost a third of the price.

One great benefit of the grades is that they fatten so much better and quicker than the natives, and are therefore more profitable. The exceptions to this are the Jerseys and perhaps the Holsteins. The former, to increase its size, would have to be crossed with the short-horn or some other good breed to overcome the natural small size and scrawkiness of the Jerseys, which cannot in their pure state be made profitable for the butcher.

One who wishes to commence the dairy business, but without sufficient capital to procure a large herd and put up the necessary buildings, cannot do better than procure some good grades and raise his own stock. By a judicious selection of good milch-cows, and breeding them to a pure-bred bull, he would soon have a most excellent stock, and by weeding out all that prove unprofitable as milkers—as it will not pay to keep an inferior cow—the herd would get better year by year if the calves only from the best milkers be raised.

EGG PRESERVING FOR WINTER USE.—If eggs are to be preserved for winter use, it is now time to begin. Rub the eggs over with lard or oil, so as to close up the pores of the shell to prevent the loss of the internal moisture by evaporation, and pack in bran in air-tight jars. Another method is to dissolve quicklime in water, and add a little cream of tartar. Put in as laid, and see that the water covers the eggs. The French method is to varnish the eggs with varnish of linseed oil and beeswax. All have the same object in view—to close up the pores to prevent evaporation. Here is another which H. P. W. in the *Agricultural Gazette* says is an excellent recipe. Take a large pan and put into it half a peck of fresh quicklime; pour over the lime two gallons of boiling water, let it stand until cold; then stir it up with a wooden spoon and put an egg into the lime, if it bears the egg too strong, put more water (out of the boiler will do); the lime must be only strong enough to bear an egg very slightly. When quite cold put in the eggs; they will keep good twelve months.

At the Massachusetts Experiment Station some trials have been made to determine the value of potash fertilizers for fruits. The results are reported as follows by Prof. Winthrop E. Stone. Potash fertilizers have decidedly improved the desirable qualities of fruits. Wherever the percentage of this element has been raised, the change is accompanied by an increase of sugar and a decrease of acid. This, it is hardly necessary to say, is an important and desirable change—a matter of dollars and cents. Other things being equal, the fruit with the largest per cent. of sugar will bring the highest price. Moreover, less desirable varieties may be brought up to a higher standard, thus giving value to some good quality, as hardness or prolific bearing. The fact that the quality and character of garden and orchard products can be modified by the effect of special fertilizers is of immense importance in its practical as well as scientific bearing.

OATMEAL FOR COWS.—Oatmeal is by far the best milk-producing food within reach of people in most of the States, says the Germantown *Telegraph*. It contains liberal quantities of both albuminoids and fats, making a well balanced food for milch cows, especially where the milk is used as a whole food for children. Corn meal is good but needs bran to offset its excess of fat. Let the breed or the former record of a cow be what it may, she is a poor one indeed which, if liberally and wisely fed, will not show a marked improvement in her milking qualities. There can be little doubt but that the quality of the milk of almost any cow can be improved for use in the family as food by feeding freely of those foods containing a large proportion of muscle-making rather than fat-producing elements. Muscular rather than fat children are healthy and happy.

Butter, says Henry Stewart, is known to be exceedingly absorbent of all kinds of odors. The careless farmers who suffer the butter to become odoriferous of rancid tubs and tobacco smoke, not to mention other sources of foul smells, lose by this neglect. And why should not careful dairymen gain by exposing their butter to the delicate odors of flowers and other sweet scents of Nature. This is done by some of the French dairymen who supply Paris with their choice and expensive products, and who pack bunches of sweet violets, jasmine, and roses in the baskets among the rolls of butter, and thus not only make their wares agreeable to the sight but also pleasant and fragrant to the taste, for the palate is able to distinguish the delicate flavors which these odors possess.

BE KIND TO THE COW.—A kind soft voice and gentle manner is essential to obtaining the best results from cows. Never excite the nerves by a blow or a harsh expression, and the cow will learn to give her milk freely and delight in being handled. A market gardener had a very fine cow that was milked week after week by hired men. He observed that the amount of butter he carried to market weighed about a pound more on each alternate week. He watched the men and tried the cow after they had finished milking, but always found that there was no milk left in the teats. He finally asked the Scotch girl who took care of the milk if she could account for the difference. "Why, yes," she says, "when Jim milks he says to the cow, 'So! my pretty milky, so!' But when Sam milks he hits her on the hip with the edge of the pail and says, 'Histo, you old brute!'"

Ponds are not good for young ducks. Wet grass, dampness, and cold sleeping places will kill young ducks as quickly as such influences will destroy young chicks. Feed the ducks on bulky food. Cooked turnips and potatoes, thickened with oatmeal, make a cheap and good food for them. Give them plenty of water to drink, but not to bathe in, until the down is off and the feathers cover the body. Then you may let them enjoy themselves in the water as much as they desire.