

## ❧ Question Drawer. ❧

### Sawdust as a Fertilizer.

**611.** SIR,—About four miles from me is a large heap of sawdust from four to fifteen years old, made chiefly from soft elm, basswood and hemlock logs. My garden of eight acres is strong clay, but not stubborn. Would it pay me to draw it that distance, and if so, what fruits would it help most? Has it any fertilizing properties?

R. PHIFFEN, *Parkhill.*

Sawdust is of little value as a fertilizer. It contains a little more nitrogen than straw, and less potash and phosphoric acid. This is well shown in the following comparative table from the *Bussey Bulletin*, which shows the per cent. of these elements in sawdust, straw, twigs, etc., in a manner most interesting to the horticulturist:

	Sawdust.	Straw.	Twigs with leaves.	Best autumn leaves
Per cent. of				
Potash,	0.10	0.50 to 1.00	0.88	0.10 to 0.50
Phosph. acid,	0.05	0.20 to 0.30	0.33	0.06 to 0.30
Nitrogen.	1.00	0.33	1.28 to 2.84	0.75

This analysis shows that sawdust has only one per cent. of nitrogen, only one-tenth of one per cent. of potash, and only one-fifth of one per cent. of phosphoric acid.

This old rotten sawdust, however, would have absorbed some additional fertility, and its mechanical action on the stiff land of our correspondent would no doubt make it well worthy of his attention. If worked in, it would render it looser in texture and more easily worked. Possibly the best use would be as a mulch on the surface among his strawberry plants, and around his plum and pear trees. It is excellent for this purpose, keeping the berries clean and the soil moist.

### Marsh Mud.

**612.** SIR,—Are there any benefits to be derived from applying marsh mud to fruit trees, beyond the salt it contains, and if so, what?

E. McWATT, *Truro, N. S.*

The action of the salt is perhaps the least benefit to be derived from the marsh mud. It is rich in humus, which is valuable in several ways: first, in supplying nitrogen, which has accumulated in it from the various plants which have lived and died in it. The texture of heavy soils is made lighter and more porous by it; it retains moisture, and absorbs ammonia. Thus it is evidently of considerable value to certain soils. It is not suitable to wet, boggy soils.

Prof. Shutt has analyzed samples of marsh mud from various parts of the Maritime Provinces, and finds they consist largely of ground-up rock matter, clay and sand, shells and organic debris. They are inferior to swamp muck in