

Forcing Vegetables for Market

J. L. Hilborn, Leamington, Ontario

A BRIEF description of our forcing houses may be of interest, as they are constructed differently to any I have seen. The main building is 42 x 100 feet, and has cement walls about two feet high. The boiler room, 16 x 20 feet, is made of the same material.

The roof consists of three even spans, resting upon valleys that are of sufficient height to allow one to walk erect in the paths which are about 15 inches below the top of the beds. There is an additional row of rafters on either side, extending from the outside wall upwards at half pitch to the first valley.

At intervals of 8 or 10 feet on both of these lean-to spans, we have well-constructed doors. These consist of a strong frame, made of three specially cut sash-bars, which are bolted to an angle-iron at both ends and properly braced. The outer sash-bars are grooved at the outside bottom corners, so as to fit tightly upon the rafters beneath. When these doors are closed the roof is as warm as if it were solid. The door frames are designed to carry two rows of 16 x 16-inch heavy glass.

Doors of this kind are very useful in a vegetable forcing house. They not only make easy the operations of taking in soil and fertilizers and of removing plants, but they also are valuable for ventilating later in the season, when ordinary ventilators do not furnish sufficient ventilation for best results.

All rafters in the house are made of cypress. They were well painted before erection. The foot of each is separated from the valley timber by a strip of galvanized iron. This prevents the woods coming together and causing decay at this the most perishable part of a greenhouse.

CROPS GROWN

We undertook to grow lettuce through last winter, and to bring along sufficient cucumber and tomato plants to plant the house in early spring. As we were late in getting started, and as we did not have a sufficient number of lettuce plants to properly fill the house until late in the season, we did not realize much profit on the crop. One must thoroughly understand the business and have favorable conditions to realize profit from growing lettuce in mid-winter.

It was impossible to keep any part of the house warm enough to properly bring along the tomato and cucumber plants in midwinter. Fairly good plants were secured but, when ready for benching, it was too late.

For the spring crop, less than one-third of the house was planted with tomatoes; the balance with cucumbers.

We began to bench the cucumbers early in April and concluded the work as soon as time and material permitted.

TRAINING THE VINES

For a number of years, we trained our cucumber vines to a trellis made of binder twine and supported by stakes. While good results were obtained, yet it was not satisfactory. The trellis had to be constructed each season and much tying of the vines was necessary.

This season, we constructed a trellis that has proved more satisfactory. It is made of wire. From The Page Wire and Fence Co., of Walkerville, Ont., we ordered a quantity of light gauge wire for the horizontal runs and a sufficient number of coiled bobbins to weave these into an eight-inch mesh. This made an excellent trellis. At the end of the season we loosened the supports, rolled up

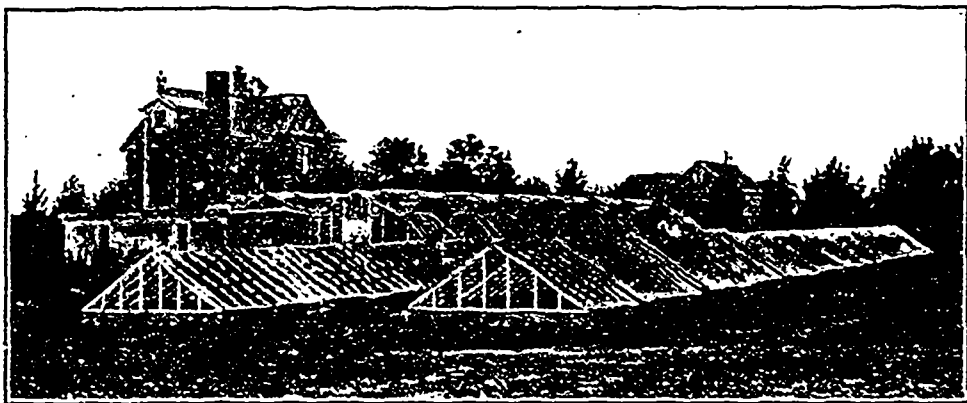
were blooming well and setting fruit. Most of them had been grown in four-inch pots and were considerably pot-bound. This is an advantage, as it tends to hasten fruitfulness.

The plants were set 13 x 17 inches apart and tied to a string or stake. They were trained to single stems.

When the plants had reached a height of about four feet and contained four or five clusters of fruit, they were pinched back. Side branches were clipped off. The leaves also were clipped back to admit more light and a better circulation of air among the plants.

The plants blossomed profusely; almost every blossom set and developed nice, smooth fruit. The majority were of marketable size and sold readily. Had the crop been earlier, probably better prices would have been realized.

The beds for both cucumbers and to-



The Forcing Houses of Mr. J. L. Hilborn, Leamington, Ontario

the wire and stored it for future use. It can be put up quickly when wanted again.

TOMATOES

About the middle of April, the tomato plants were ready to bench. At that time we had large stocky plants, that

matatoes were fertilized with well-rotted manure and bone meal. About the time the harvesting of the fruits began, both crops were mulched with manure. The varieties of tomatoes that have done best are, in order named: Best of All, Frogmore and Lorillard.

Sweet Potato Culture

P. G. Keyes, Ottawa

I HAD long held the opinion that Ottawa was within the sweet potato belt; so, last spring, wishing to put my theory to the test, I consulted numerous catalogs with a view to obtaining the necessary plants. I was unable to find what I wanted offered in any Canadian catalog then in my possession, so was compelled to go to the United States for stock. It seems to me a want of enterprise on the part of our seedsmen that they do not catalog these plants. I placed a small order with a well-known

Boston firm and received the plants about May 20. As last spring was unusually cold and backward in this locality, I put the plants in pots and kept them under glass until all danger of frost had passed, removing them to the garden during the first week in June. Not a plant failed to grow. By the middle of July they had taken entire possession of the ground.

Owing to the drought that prevailed in this part of Canada during the past summer I was obliged to water the plants