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About the Farm

Smut Prevention

We are glad to believe that smut, both in wheat and oats of last year's crop, was a good deal below the average of previous years. But there is still enough risk of taint in samples of seed that to superficial observation look quite clean to make it very desirable that precautionary measures should still be used. By keeping at it for a few years more we may almost succeed in stamping out the taint. We are glad to learn from the wholesalers that there has already been a pretty extensive sale of both bluestone and formalin, and while we are about it we may urge on those who have not already ordered their bluestone to send in their orders at once, as no more will be ordered by the trade this year, and it will be “first come first served.”

For wheat either formalin or bluestone will do; for oats formalin is very much the best. There are always some who see no use in fussing about this point, but when they reach the elevator next fall there may be a decided

Next day lay out to dry, or it may heat. For wheat one souse in the tub before laying out is enough. The gas fumed in the heap is sure death to the smut.

Once seed is dry it may lie a month or even a year and be as good as if sown the day after it has been treated.

Plants from Cuttings

Most of the plants adapted to culture in the window garden are easily grown from cuttings if proper care is taken in the selection of the cutting. A branch of such recent growth that it is soft and juicy is not good material. Neither is a branch so old that it has become hard and woody. Half way between these conditions is a “happy medium” which should be sought for. Bend the branch you think of making a cutting of. If it breaks off sharply, it is too young. If it does not break at all, but bends without showing a rupture of its bark, it is too old. But



An Aristocratic Dairy Herd enjoying a cool retreat

change in their views. To avoid unpleasantness then, it is wiser to take a little pains now, the remedy is so cheap, reliable and easily applied.

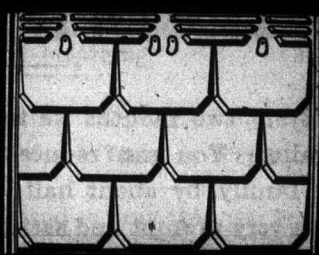
Men with large handling and previous experience hardly need to be told how to apply smut preventives, but for the sake of thousands of new readers who come in every year we give new directions for bluestoning on a small scale. If the wheat is clean looking, and bluestone is only used as a safeguard, then 1 lb. of bluestone to 10 bushels of seed will be enough. Dissolve it in a wooden pail with warm water and reduce with cold water till you have about two pails of solution. A coal oil barrel cut short, or a common tub, may be used to mix in. Two pounds of bluestone and four or five pounds of water in such a tub is the right thing to start with. Now put in a bushel or so of your wheat in an open meshed sack, souse it in the tub a minute so as to wet it thoroughly; then set it on a close board sloping into the tub so as to let the liquid run back into the tub. Then empty the sack on the barn floor to dry. In that way all the seed for a small farm can easily be treated. If the wheat shows smutty make the solution a little stronger.

When the formalin is used it should be what in the trade is called a 40 per cent solution. It is the only sure cure for oat smut. For either wheat or oats 4 1/2 oz. formalin in 10 gallons cold water will do to soak 30 bushels of seed. Soak a few minutes if for oats, then drip as before and lay the seed on the floor in a heap. The gas formed in the heap will kill as well as if the seed had been an hour in the tub.

if it shows a tendency to both break and bend, but does neither, it is safe to use it. In making cuttings from it, however, do not break them by using force, but cut them off with a sharp knife, making the cut an oblique one. As a general thing two or three inches will be about the right length. Cut off the lower leaves close to the stalk, but always leave some at the top.

Geraniums and many other plants can be rooted easily by setting the cuttings in the soil about the old plants, but the safest and surest method for the amateur to follow, for all plants, is that of rooting them in sand. Any shallow vessel will answer as a receptacle for the sand, which should be clear and rather coarse. Have it about two inches deep. Before putting any cuttings in it, wet it well, then insert the cuttings, pinching it firmly about their base. Make it a point to keep it moist, all through. This is important, for if you allow it to dry out your cuttings will be ruined. As evaporation will take place rapidly, because of the porosity of the sand, you will find it necessary to watch it carefully. It may be necessary to apply water twice a day, and perhaps oftener, if the cutting box or tray is kept in a warm place, as it should be to insure speedy and satisfactory results. If in a sunny place, cover the box with glass to retain enough moisture to preserve that humidity of the air which is of great benefit to the cuttings.

As a general thing, most cuttings will form roots in from a week to ten days. Some of the harder wooded ones will require a longer period. You can tell when they have roots, because new



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