Making a Farm Garden

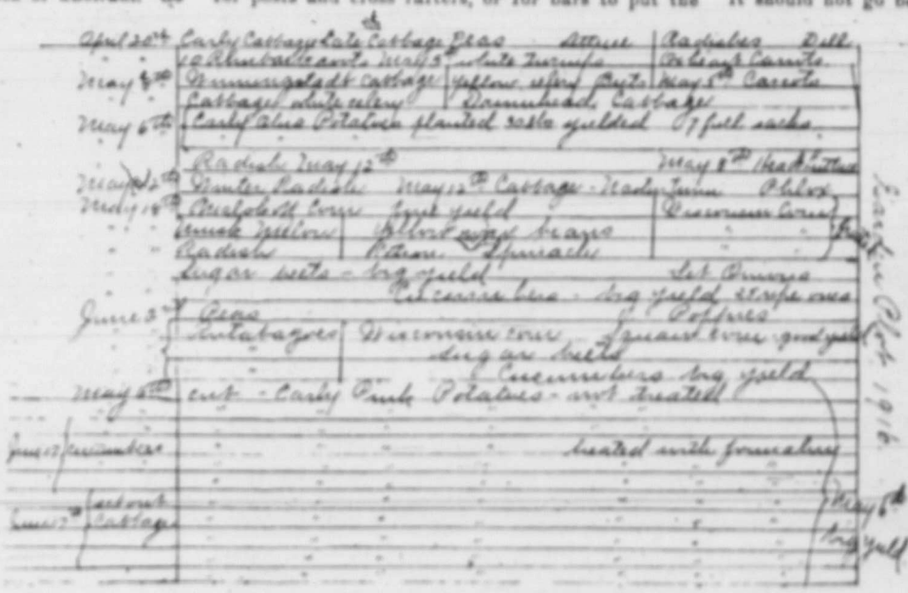
A Garden Plan --Hot-beds---Growing Early Tomatoes

I am sending a copy of the garden plot I thought of making last spring. I found it such a help that I thought some of your readers might want to try the scheme.

Every year before, after my garden was seeded and during the time I waited for seeds to germinate I often forgot in just what row I had put the cabbage, and wasn't even certain until it had its second leaves that it might not be radish or kholrabi. So last spring I ruled a sheet of paper with as many lines as I had rows in the garden and as soon as I planted my seed, I noted it on my paper, together with the date. Thus, when some seed failed to germinate, I knew it is plenty of time to plant something else, while other years I had to wait until everything was in and up before I knew just what had not grown. Tho, when I began my plot, I had only this one object in view, I found the idea had endless possibilities.

This year I will mark the exact name of the seed together with the name of the firm off which I buy it, so that I can compare the relative merits of different kinds of the various vegetables. Further, I intend to mark the date of each first gathering of the vegetables, so I can figure out for the future just how long it takes a certain vegetable to mature in this locality. To illustrate my point: The enclosed plot shows me that my cucumbers planted May 18 yielded 25 ripe ones, besides a lot of large green ones, while those planted June 17 were too late to ripen, altho they yielded an abundance of small pickles. My plot of last year also teaches me that April 20 is too early to sow lettuce and radishes, for neither of these early sowings did very well, both being nipped by early frosts, but the peas planted the same day gave an enormous yield, besides being the earliest that I knew of in this locality. It only takes a few minutes to jot down this memoranda when putting in the garden; but I expect to get invaluable information and enjoyment out of keeping these records to compare from year to year.—Louise Lucas, Milestone, Sask.

It is entirely possible and with very little expense and time to get early vegetables from six to eight weeks earlier by the use of a hot bed. A hot bed is very easily made and operated.



The plan of garden used by Mrs. Lucas. Such a plan gives one a splendid opportunity for finding out many interesting things not possible with the usual hit or miss plan of planting.

MAKING A HOT BED

A most valuable arrangement in the preparation of any garden is a small hot bed, called such because it makes use of artificial heat. The cold frame is very similar, but only utilizes the sun's rays for heat. The hot bed is principally used in the production of early vegetable plants which may be transplanted to a cold frame or directly into the outdoor gardens later in the spring. The season can thus be advanced anywhere from two weeks to two months over crops sown directly in the ground. Tomatoes, cabbages, cauliflower, beets, carrots, celery, lettuce, etc., can thus be planted in the hot bed in order to get an early start. Hot beds can often be utilized for starting flowering plants, as well, which can be transplanted outdoors if the danger of frost is over.

A hot bed 6x10 feet is big enough to produce practically all the early vegetables required in the average home garden. It should be placed in the warmest part of the garden and on well drained ground, where it will be protected from cold winds and where the sunlight has full access to it. It can well be put on the sunny side of a building. A good permanent hotbed that can be used in successive years can be easily and cheaply constructed. The first thing is to dig a pit, which should be the length of the bed and a few inches wider. This should run east and west so that the bed may face the south. The depth will vary with the length of the season during which the hot bed should be used. In most parts of Western Canada pits should be of good depth in order to hold a large bulk of manure, which is necessary to generate the necessary heat. From 15 to 20 inches should be enough. After digging a pit the frame should be put in position, with one-inch boards suitable for the sides, tho if two-inch material were plentiful, it would better answer the purpose. Two by four material does very well for posts and cross rafters, or for bars to put the sashes on. Make the corner posts about four feet long and drive them in the ground about one foot below the bottom of the pit. Other supporting posts may be driven in four foot spaces inside the wall, which should also be nailed to them. The tops of all the posts should be sawed off even with the walls, so as to allow the sash to slide over easily. To use the glass sash most generally in use, the two side walls should be exactly six feet apart. The wall of the north side should be from 12 to 15 ins. above the level of the ground and just a few inches below it, so that a 12 and six inch board or a couple of 10 inch boards will suit that wall. The wall on the south side should be a few inches below the ground line and six to eight inches above. This gives enough slope to the sash and secures the maximum amount of heat from the sun's rays. The end of the frame can be made by sawing boards to suit the proper slope, and cross rafters should be used to slide the glass sash on. These can be made of two by three material and put in the top of the side walls so that they measure exactly three feet from centre to centre. If the bed is 12 feet long and four sashes used three rafters would be needed.

Manure from the horse stable is best, as it gives a moderate steady heat. Cow manure is not suitable at all as it does not ferment sufficiently to develop the required heat. Manure should be fresh and a little strawy and loose and should be mixed thoroughly, the lumps broken up, and if it appears to be too dry, it should be moistened with water. It should be well and uniformly tramped into the hot-bed and when about a foot has been put in it should be watered a little to start it heating. Manure may also be used to bank the frame. On top of the manure about four inches of fine rich garden loam should be added.

The bed should be covered from six to ten days. Ten days allowed to elapse before seed is sown. During this time temperature of the bed should rise sometimes as high as 125 degrees Fahrenheit. It will then fall and when around 90 degrees it is safe to sow seed. This may be done in little drills, or even broadcast, tho the former is the better method. After the seeds have been sown and the surface firmed down in the bed with a board, the bed should be well watered. Cabbages, celery, lettuce, carrots, etc., may be started from eight to ten weeks before one wishes to set them out in the garden.

After the seedlings have come above the surface, the temperature of the hot bed should be watched. It should not go below 38 or 40, nor above 70. It should be covered well during cool weather and if very cold the sash should be covered by straw or heavy cloth of some sort, which can be removed during the day. The bed should be ventilated by pulling the sash apart during fine weather, or by raising them on the side away from the wind. Watering should be done in the mornings and on pleasant days and should be put on plentifully at long periods, rather than a little frequently. If the bed has been well ventilated and the plants gradually hardened, they can be transplanted directly to the garden.

The cold frame can be constructed much the same as the hot bed, only simpler. It requires no manure, of course, and only uses the sun's rays. It is used for hardening off the vegetables before finally planting them in the ground.

GROWING EARLY TOMATOES

Like the banana, the taste for the tomato is an acquired one, but the would-be tomato consumer generally becomes a convert after the second or third attempt and then he or she will want to grow them, which is also very easy. About April 1 the seed should be sown either in a hot bed or in shallow boxes in

Continued on Page 46

Newbers can flour garden vegetables be grown than in many parts of Alberta. In the garden of E. D. Nathan, Elnora, Alta.