AGRICULTURAL.

From the Halifax Recorder.

DRY ROT IN POTATOES.

This is not a new disease, but it is only of late that it has done any considerable injury to the potatoes. It affects different kinds, and it is therefore probable that it is not produced by planting one kind too long, or until it may have failed with age, but there is certainly some reason to suspect that in some instances the seeds of the disease are contained in the seed potatoes.

The very short and cold summer of 1816 was followed by severe weather which froze the plums upon the trees before they had changed their colour, and killed the terminating twigs of the Lombardy poplars and of most of the plum trees in the vicinity of Halifax. These trees were consequently all dead at the heart. Shoots which rose from the roots of the plums grew as freely as ever, but upon planting them they *invariably* produced defective trees, all dead at the heart. Cuttings of apparently sound twigs of the poplar also grew freely, but *all* retained the defect of the trees from which they were taken.—We have now had three successive summers all colder than any season for the last half century except the year 1816. The best seed often fails on clayey soils if planted early in a cold wet spring. The replanted crop rarely has time to ripen. Now it is well known that unripe potatoes put into a bin 4 or 5 feet deep without first allowing the skin to become dry will heat, and throw up so much steam that numbers of the most unripe near the top will rot. As far as my observation has extended the dry rot has been in the greatest quantity in those that have been allowed to heat.—Some years back a vessel from Annapolis arrived in the spring with a cargo of very large, wet and unripe potatoes. Having probably had a long passage, they had become very hot in the hold and small potatoes were formed upon the eyes generally. This cargo was mostly purchased for seed. About two thirds of the sets which were planted the same day they were cut vegetated; the vacant spaces being occupied often after the lapse of a fortnight or more by diminutive shoots from the small potatoes which had grown in the hold of the vessel. But those which were cut several days before they were planted failed altogether.

As this disease has caused considerable loss to many farmers, if any person is acquainted with a method of preventing it, he would confer an obligation upon the public by communicating it. In the absence of better information I would recommend: That seed potatoes be taken from a part of the field which did not miss—That potatoes if prevented from drying by the state of the weather the same day they are taken out of the ground, should be spread on the bottom of the cellar or other suitable place, and not removed to the bin till the earth which adheres to them is dry; and that the bins should not be boarded closely, but formed of narrow bars placed an inch and a half apart to admit the air. By these precautions it is certain that the potatoes will be prevented from heating. Should our cold seasons continue it will certainly be for the advantage of those who are obliged to plant late to use whole potatoes; they are not so easily injured by cold and wet as those which are cut, and they will be in flower at least a week earlier. It is not necessary to place them nearer to each other than twenty inches in the drills, and the extra expense of seed will be overbalanced by the superior quality and quantity of the crop. There are in some parts of this province tracts of good land, (generally flats surrounded by steep hills,) which are liable to have the crops injured by early frosts, even in ordinary seasons. In such situations a crop might generally be secured by preparing the seed potatoes in the same manner that is practised by gardeners for a very early crop. For this purpose they are placed near a stove, (packed in, and covered with hay chaff) about the middle of March. They may be placed upon shelves which should be a foot apart to admit the light, but the layers of potatoes should not exceed five inches in depth. The chaff should be a little damped when the potatoes are stowed in it, but by no means much wetted. By the time that the buds upon the trees begin to swell strong coloured sprouts will be formed, which by careful handling may be preserved unbroken. The potatoes should be placed two feet apart in the drills with the sprouts erect. They will generally ripen about three weeks earlier than those planted in the common way, and almost always prove of a superior quality. TITUS SMITH.

From the Farmer's Library.

SHADE OF TREES.

As trees are placed either naturally or artificially around the borders of fields appropriated to tillage, it is important that the farmer should be apprised of the different effects which the shades of different trees may have on certain plants. The information on this subject is derived from the certificate of Mr. Livingston, of New York.

I planted maize, says he, on the west side of a young wood, consisting of oaks, poplars, a few chesnuts, and a large mulberry somewhat advanced into the field. The shade made by the rising sun extended nearly across the field, and was not entirely off until about ten o'clock. I remarked that as far as the shade of the chesnut reached, the corn was extremely injured; it was yellow and small. The conical shape of the morning shade, from particular trees, might be traced to considerable extent, in the sickly appearance of the plants. The black oaks were likewise injurious, but less so than the chesnuts: the poplars very little so. Near the mulberry tree the corn was covered by its shade for a very long time every morning, and though not so large as that which had more sun, maintained a healthy appearance.

He further remarks, that the shade of the black oak is particularly hurtful to the growth of wheat: that of the locust is, on the contrary, beneficial to grass grounds: and that of the sugar maple does but very little injury to the growth of grain, and more to grass.

From the observations respecting the effects of the shades of the sugar maple, the mulberry, and the locust, which, in the essay on the management of woodland, is described to be very valuable for many mechanical purposes, which require solidity and durability. It will propagate itself too, in the most barren places, where the soil is even so light as to be blown away by the winds. By sheltering such places, and dropping its leaves on them, it caused a sward to grow over them, and grass to grow upon them. It is however, objected by some, that it is not advisable to plant the locust on the borders of fields, on the account of their spreading too much, by scattering their leaves, unless on those which are most barren. This objection, however, it would seem, might be obviated, when the field to be enclosed by the locust, was often to be appropriated to purposes of tillage, especially in the culture of the hoe, by which every superfluous plant may be suppressed.

From the P. E. Island Gazette, Sep. 22.

THE CROPS.

Notwithstanding the effects of the cold spring and the backwardness of the season, the genial weather which, with the exception of two or three wet days, we have enjoyed since the beginning of the present month, has had a decidedly favourable effect in bringing the crops forward. A great deal of grain has been cut down during the last week, and we could not have desired finer or more seasonable weather for securing it. Some very superior samples have been brought to market. We have seldom seen Oats or Barley look better, and in most parts of the Island, we have reason to believe, the crops will be abundant. Several fields of wheat in this neighbourhood have been attacked by the fly, and others have been injured by rust, while in many it is scarcely touched by either. Judging from the samples of wheat we have seen, we consider the quality good, but the crop, upon the whole, will not be abundant. Potatoes, also, from various causes, will be less than an average crop. The quantity planted this season is very considerable.

From the London "Family Receipt Book."

EXPERIMENT IN MANURING LAND.

As a farmer, like a chemist, should lose none of his materials, but even make his washings, runnings, and residuums, turn out to his advantage, I have sent you an account of some experiments I have made in manuring of land, which I beg you will lay before the committee of agriculture, that they may communicate it to others.

I am possessed of a farm of nearly three hundred pounds a year, and have in my yard what you usually see in most farmers' yards, two recesses or pools, as reservoirs of dung and water. These reservoirs of dung and water are continually running over, and of course part of the matter contained in them is carried off by the necessary drains into the highways, ditches, and rivers.

As much of the essential quality of the dung is lost in this manner, (for part of the salts, whether fixed or volatile, will be washed into the pools, and when they run over, will be conveyed into the ditches, &c.) I thought it a part of good husbandry to carry this superabundant water or manure (for so we may justly call it), on my land, which I did by means of a watering cart, not unlike those with which the roads near London are watered in summer-time, to allay the dust.

That the experiment might be more obvious and certain, I first tried it in the beginning of March, on a few acres, in the middle of a large field of wheat, where, in a little time, I found a considerable increase in growth, both of grass and grain; and at hay-time and harvest, both the one and the other were much better crops than what the same lands produced that were not so manured.

As a man, or even a boy, with one of these carts, and one horse, may manure a great deal of land in a day, provided it be near the yard, I would recommend the practice to all farmers; for the expense is nothing but the value of the time of the boy and horse, and the increase by what I have seen will be very great.

This manure may also be laid to great advantage on land, that is fresh sown with barley, oats, or any other grain; but on grass it should be laid in the winter time, when the rains will wash the salts off the blades; or in the spring, when the lands are laid up for hay, as the cattle will not feed on the grass while the dung or salt adheres to the blade of it.

This dung water should likewise be carried on the land, not at a time when it rains, but in dry weather, and at a time when the dung water in the pools is of a deep brown colour, and strongly impregnated with salts. By this means the land may be manured from time to time, and the pools kept almost empty for the reception of fresh matter almost every time it rains, and nothing will be lost.