

## Garden and Orchard.

## Seasonable Hints—December.

BY HORTUS.

Anything left undone last month should be attempted and finished during this.

Strawberry plantations should be protected by covering well over with pine branches or any other convenient evergreen. Any kind of branch is better for the purpose than straw.

Grape vines unprotected should be laid down and covered. Save the wood trimmed off the vines for making into cuttings; also the currant and gooseberry trimmings.

Cions for spring grafting should now be gathered and packed away in sawdust in the cellar. Save the pumice or refuse from cider mills for sowing. There is always a demand for apple stocks at prices sufficiently remunerative.

See that cellars and pits are frost-proof. It would be a great pity if not a sin to allow stuff to freeze for want of a little care after all the trouble of raising it. Young trees will require an occasional looking after to see that the mice are not girdling them. The snow may be firmly tramped around them to prevent this. Apples will need examining in the cellars, particularly early winter sorts. Pick out any decaying for immediate use, and sell the rest. Keeping apples will be worth gold in the spring, and should be carefully looked after. The temperature of the roothouse or cellar where any are stored should be kept down almost to freezing point, and the air pure and sweet.

Lawn mowers, spades, hoes, and all other tools and implements used in the garden should be collected, cleaned and oiled, and hung up so as to be ready when wanted.

The long evenings in winter afford capital opportunities for reading and studying literature printed in reference to the garden and farm. Numerous hand-books by the best authorities on the vine, apple or small fruits, or on growing roses or ornamental plants, are published, and are easily procured at a low price. These should be studied, and the knowledge thereby gained should be put into practice, or will come in useful when wanted.

A great lack of taste is manifest in too many of our country homes. No attempt is made at fixing up around the house. So much land lying waste out-doors, and none to spare to make a lawn. How easy this can be done need not be mentioned. A place is nothing without trees planted around it. There is no excuse for the barren places we too often see, when there are so many fine evergreens growing naturally in the woods that could be easily transplanted to adorn our homes. Our native elm, one of the most graceful and beautiful trees in existence, should always have a place near the house. Would that many of our farmers would plant the elm and the oak, the lovely scarlet maple and the wide-spreading beech around their residences, interspersed with groups of white spruce or cedar. What a beautiful country would our fair Canada become! Then could some future Canadian poet sing like Mrs. Hemans, of

"The stately homes of Canada, how beautiful they stand  
Amid their tall ancestral trees o'er all the pleasant land."

In the greenhouse every one will be busy with propagating and potting. To have plants in bloom early in spring extra heat will have to be given. We agree with the system of first using the smallest pot the rooted cutting will go into, shifting from that to a size larger as soon as the roots touch the sides. In repotting each time keep making the soil richer. A good mixture for potting

in, consists of two parts loam or rotten sods, two parts partially rotted manure, and one part sand. Always have a barrel of liquid manure handy—a little of this added to the water when watering will have a good effect. Keep what plants you have clean, never leave a decaying leaf on them; keep them in order and clean of any litter from stages. An abomination in a greenhouse is plants that have drawn up to the glass, or, what is termed by gardeners as "leggy." Pinch them back and give more room. To have plants free from insects and rust, fumigate often with tobacco smoke.

Being the last month of the year, the following questions occur to us as being pertinent for the farmer or the fruit grower to ask himself, and answer as closely as he can:

How many trees did I plant last spring, and what was the percentage of success, and to what can I attribute the failure of those that did not grow?

Have my trees and small bushes suffered much from insects, and what remedies did I use to prevent them?

Did I give my orchard and garden a liberal top-dressing of any kind of fertilizer last season, and was an improvement noticed in their growth of stock by this action?

Does my land need draining?

Were my trees properly pruned, or will they require pruning this coming spring?

Is my property well shielded from cutting winds, or have I planted any shelter belts for this purpose?

What kind of evergreens do best in my neighborhood, and can they be easily secured to set out afresh?

What varieties of fruits succeeded best with me, and what kinds sold well?

Have I disposed of my produce to the best advantage, or can I do better another year with the experience gained in the past?

Have I in travelling noted any particularly fine fruit, which it would pay me to procure trees of and grow? Have I noticed nice grounds, fine buildings, or convenient methods of doing work, good machinery, &c., and have I studied it up and procured all necessary information, so as to be able to use the same profitably?

Have I improved my system of farming over former years?

Have I noticed any definite result from the use of any particular fertilizer, or in the manner of cultivation of some particular crop?

Are my fences in good repair, or have I now good opportunities of procuring fencing material?

Are my buildings and sheds in good repair? Would not the application of paint or whitewash very much improve my surroundings?

Have I good convenience for watering my stock?

Have I induced any of my neighbors to take the FARMER'S ADVOCATE?

Am I insured?

Onions are best kept in a well ventilated building secure from moisture, by being placed on shelvings or racks twelve inches apart, one over the other, with suitable passage ways between. The onions are placed on these shelves about eight inches thick, and keep as near the freezing point as possible during cold weather, and as cool and dry as possible before that time. They may be kept in a dry, airy cellar, in the same manner. Indeed they may be frozen solid and remain so all winter if kept dark and not allowed to freeze and thaw alternately. They should not, however, be handled until they have thawed out naturally, and without exposure to the light.—[N. Y. Tribune.

It is said that one bushel of beets added to nine bushels of apples makes cider richer, and of superior flavor to that made from apples alone.

## On Seeding an Orchard.

To seed or not to seed, that is the question so long mooted and answered affirmatively by some and negatively by others: i. e., whether it is best to seed the orchard.

Mr. William Saunders, in a paper recently read before the Potomac Fruit-Growers, has, I think, solved the question; and as it is so plainly and handsomely done, I am sure that your readers will thank me for copying his remarks, which, though treating of one kind of fruit, is equally true of all orchards. He says: "As to the treatment of apple orchards, we know that when they are established on light gravelly or sandy soils they require periodical applications of manure, that the ground should also be kept loose by shallow plowing, and afterwards to be surface-stirred with the harrow or cultivator,—all of which is requisite to maintain a proper degree of fertility. We have learned that to sow grass on the surface of the orchard planted in such soils is simply the first step towards the destruction of the trees so far as regards their fruit-bearing capacities. Of course we are now considering ordinary condition and management; for it is quite practical, merely considering it as a question of possibility, to so enrich the surface of even the lightest of soils as to obviate necessity of further surface-culture.

On the other hand we may imagine the case of an orchard placed in a condition of things very much the reverse of the one we have considered. In this the soil is a rich loam, perhaps with a preponderance of clay in its composition, and that the trees are growing vigorously, and for some years have been making a great quantity of wood and but very little fruit.

When a case of this kind occurs we know that in order to produce fruitfulness we must, by some means, weaken the growth, and the most available means is to cover the orchards with grass; this will have a tendency to check the growth of the shoots, and, as a consequence, favor the production of fruit.

This is in accordance with the general law, "that whatever tends to weaken a plant favors the production of flowers and fruit, and whatever tends to the luxuriant growth of leaves and branches is unfavorable to the production of fruit."

Therefore it is that the question as to whether orchards should be kept in grass or cultivated like a corn-field cannot be answered with regard to orchards in general; but when the question is applied to any particular orchard it admits of a definite answer, the condition of the trees (and soil) indicating what the answer will be.

Mr. Saunders speaks "by the book," for he has a pear orchard on his farm, a few miles out of the city, which his foreman seeded down without his knowledge, and which Mr. S. saw at a distance was damaging his trees.

I may be allowed a suggestion or two: if the orchard be in grass, mow the grass and let it remain on the ground. A heavy dressing of manure spread on the grass every two or three years will keep the ground in good tilth.—[G. F. N. in American Farmer.

## Straw Matting for Hot-Bed Sashes.

Employ a frame, consisting of two pieces of two-by-four spruce joist for the sides, of the length required for the mat and of two transverse pieces morticed into them at the ends. Four feet will be found a convenient width for the frame. By resting this frame work upon a pair of wooden horses of convenient height the labor can be easily performed. A mat four feet wide should have at least four strings running across it. Screws are inserted at proper distances in the cross pieces, to which the strings are attached while the mat is being formed. The straw is placed on the strings, so as to have all the butts or lower ends come against the side of the frame, with the tops meeting in the middle, and so thin as to have the mat not more than three-quarters of an inch in thickness when finished. The stitches should not exceed three-fourths of an inch in width. The tying string ought to be wound on a reel, and there should be one of them for each stationary string. Take a little of the straw with the left hand and work the reel with the right first over the straw and then under the stationary string, bringing it back between the two strings, pulling tightly and pressing the straw, so as to have a flat stitch. In this way the work is continued until the mat is finished.