

if stacks were to remain long out to thatch them, as is the practice in the Old Country. One experienced thatcher could do the work at a small cost on a number of farms, and not only would the work be done, but those who had no knowledge of it could be easily learned, and thus be able in the future to do their own work.

THRESHING.

Active preparations are being made to commence threshing. The majority of farmers will be compelled to thresh early in order to make room for their other grain. There is going to be such a bulk of straw that it will be impossible to get any more than a small part of the crop under cover. Threshers are already spoken for weeks ahead, and no doubt, according to the price per bushel charged, they will have a rich harvest.

CORN

Looks well and a fair acreage has been planted. It is further advanced at the time of writing than has been known for years. It is now in the silky state, and will be ripe early in the fall. According to present appearances, there will be a large yield in this part of Ontario. The large fields sown for a green crop have grown rapidly, and will soon be fit to cut.

ROOTS

Are not doing well as a general thing. The fly has been very destructive and has necessitated a second sowing. There has been no labor in the way of weeding done yet, owing to the rush to get in the harvest and the scarcity of hands. In fact, it is difficult to ascertain what a field of turnips is like owing to the height of weeds; however, there is plenty of time yet for root crops to grow, and they may turn out a good crop.

POTATOES

Are rather poor in places and appear to have been struck with some kind of blight. The stalks suddenly wither and die before they are half matured. Their growth has not been as rapid as other vegetation, notwithstanding they were planted in good season. The bugs have not abated any in their ravages, and are as bad as in any previous year. Farmers have not gone extensively into raising potatoes this year, owing to the glut of last season. The weather on the whole, excepting the excessive heat, has been all that could be desired for harvesting.

FRUIT.

Although last year was what is termed the "off" year for fruit, this year, owing to the frosts and the ravages of caterpillars, is not going to be an "on" one. Taking all parts of Canada, the crop will be far below an average; in a great many cases the crop is as short as that of 1877—in fact, a complete failure. The older orchards have not fully revived from the depletion they underwent last year by the ravages of worms. A great number of trees died from the effects, and those that survived by throwing out a second crop of leaves, were not in a good condition to receive another attack this year. It is invariably the case that old trees that were eaten last year had few blossoms on this spring. We conclude from this that any serious injury done to the tree one year will affect its bearing the next. There are a great number of these old non-bearing orchards through the country which should be supplanted by new trees. Even in the most favorable seasons trees that have been planted forty or fifty years will not yield much fruit. A good number of trees were planted last spring, and they look thriving and healthy. They were bought very low, considering the quality of the stock. But it may be safely said that fruit trees will not be so cheap again for a few years. The scarcity of fruit for two seasons will have a tendency to impress upon the minds of our farmers the value and necessity of a plentiful supply of fruit, and it may be expected there will be a large increase in the number of trees planted.

The Best Time to Plant Trees.

It has been said that there is hardly a farmer in the country that cannot double the value of his property by judicious tree and vine planting, and this cannot be said to have been an over-estimate of the additional value of farms when well timbered. Every year furnishes fresh proof that our farms require shade. The clearing has been in most instances too thorough, and even when a portion of the old forest has been left standing, it is often not so disposed as to afford the greatest protection from frost and storms.

And not only should we spare the old forest trees; we need to plant young trees, and also to plant fruit trees. There has been an increase of late years in the platting of forest trees and orchards, but very much more is needed. And more attention is required to everything connected with this most important matter.

For those who would enhance the value of their grounds by planting, a question of much moment is—What is the best season for planting; is it the fall or spring? And it is well beforehand to decide on the time, as well as the locality for planting, and to be prepared in time. For planting both forest and fruit trees fall and spring have each their advocates, as each time has its advantages and disadvantages.

The great objection to fall planting is the liability of the newly planted trees to be disturbed in the ground by being swayed backward and forward by the winds of the winter and early spring. Such disturbance of trees that are newly planted is frequently the cause of great injury; it prevents the rootlets from taking or keeping the required hold of the soil, and in the cavities formed round the trees by their swaying water often lies. The natural consequence is that the trees perish.

If this disturbance of the roots be prevented by due care in planting, and by securing the young trees by staking, this objection to fall planting will be removed, and then there is much in the favor of this season. The ground is generally drier in the fall than we can expect it to be in spring, and it can be better prepared, so as to be in a more suitable condition when planting, and no little depends on the state of the ground, as well as the careful planting. It should never be done while the ground is wet. The earth round the roots is sure to become cloggy, hard-bound and impervious to air and heat, if labored when wet, and the trees are liable to perish. The ground intended for planting—fruit trees especially—should be plowed in the autumn and re-plowed, and, if necessary, subsoiled. A deep soil is necessary for an orchard—say eighteen inches, in any instance not less than twelve. It should be in good tilth and rich, and no raw, rank manure should be applied when planting; such manure in contact with the trees is sure to kill them. It is well to manure the ground well with the previous crop—a root crop is best—and let the preparation for it be such as we have said, deep and thorough. This cultivation will bring the ground into the best possible tilth for the young orchard. It will insure an early catching of the roots, and a healthy, vigorous growth, without which we cannot expect good fruit-bearing trees.

Spring planting is preferred by many. If it can be done just at the proper time, and the ground be dry and in good tilth, the trees may start growing at once. There is no dead season from the time they are planted till they take root, and send out buds and leaves. If we could not conveniently plant in the fall in well prepared ground, we would plant in spring in preference to another year's delay; but in no case would we plant fruit trees in ground not sufficiently prepared.

Vitality of Seeds.

Farmers need not be told that of the seed sown whatever the variety may be, all do not germinate, and of those that do germinate all do not arrive at maturity. If it were otherwise, we might sow more sparingly than we are in the habit of doing. Were every seed perfect, and all planted at the right depth and the proper distance apart, less seed would suffice. Professor W. J. Beal, Michigan Agricultural College, has reported the testing of nearly fifty samples of clover seed, all fair samples. Fifty seeds of each sample were carefully counted and tested in the greenhouse. Of about one-fourth of the samples, ninety per cent. or a little over sprouted. Of some samples the number that sprouted was very low—of one sample forty-four, and of another twenty four per cent. That a number of the seeds fail is unavoidable. Of all those samples most of them, supposed to be the season's crop, in not one instance did all germinate. Some grains may not have matured and ripened perfectly; some might have been improved by thorough growing; but all were supposed to be good samples. This proves the necessity of planting not merely as many seeds as would give a fair even crop if every individual seed were to germinate and grow, without casualty, to maturity, but also in planting to make allowance for failures that are sure to occur. The farmer's own experience as to how much seed is really necessary to produce the best results on his land is the proper guide, a strict rule not being applicable to all farms alike.

Statistics of English Farming.

We have repeatedly had from American writers on agriculture most favorable descriptions of English farming and of the fertility of the soil. The produce of English farms has been the subject of many communications to the agricultural press; and now we have an article from a periodical, the *Shipping List*, of an opposite character. The writer says: "It is apparent that the fertility of the English soil is rapidly decreasing, a fact substantiated by the crop returns of the last ten years, as published in the *Mark Lane Express*." Is it not strange that we have such a difference of opinion on a subject that must be plain to all who would make themselves acquainted with it? Is there nothing definite in agriculture—nothing reliable in the judgments formed by shrewd, practical men on a subject with which they are well conversant?

Little more than ten years ago a well known English agricultural writer, a good authority on everything connected with farming, said: "Fertility has been increased by the operation of new processes, and of new implements, by the importation and manufacture of new manures, by the cultivation of new plants, and by the maintenance of a large stock of improved animals." And such is the testimony almost invariably borne to modern agriculture in Britain. The means of increasing the fertility of the soil have not decreased within ten years. The employment of new processes and new implements has not ceased, the importation and manufacture of new implements have not fallen off. Are we to arrive at the conclusion that these means designed for improvement have had a directly opposite effect, and that high farming with improved stock, new farm implements and the increased application of fertilizers, have caused a rapid decrease of the fertility of the soil? If it be so, then the sooner we return to the old methods, the better.

We cannot believe that a decrease in fertility and in the productive power of the soil have been the consequence of improvement in agriculture. To unfavorable seasons, which we know there have