

free from straw and stones, and pile them into a heap, which must be patted down firmly, and allowed to heat; when well warmed all through it should be shaken out, and again made into a heap, changing the sides into the middle. After two or three "heatings" the dung will become sweet, which may be known by placing a piece of glass on the heap, and if the water that condenses on it is clear, the material will be fit to form into a bed. The bed may be of almost any dimensions, but a rounded form is best, as giving a greater surface from which to gather the mushrooms; say some 2 feet broad by 2 feet thick, rounded off, others 18 inches or 2 feet thick sloping to nothing. It must be put together rather firmly, and should be neither too hot or too dry. In a few days the heap will in all probability heat violently, and when the temperature has fallen to 70° or 75° Fah., will be about the best time to put in the spawn. After the insertion of the spawn, which should be broken into pieces, the size of hen's eggs, and placed in holes about 9 in. apart, the surface of the bed should be patted together with a spade, and then covered with a layer of straw about 6 in. thick. In about ten or twelve days examine the bed, and if you do not see the thin white filaments of the mycelium spreading out from the lumps of spawn, it is certain that the heat is not sufficient, or the spawn is bad. If the former the whole bed had better be pulled to pieces and re-made; if the latter, procure fresh spawn, which should be placed in different holes to the first. But if the spawn has begun to run you may proceed to cover the bed with an inch or an inch and a half of good loam, which should be patted close and gently watered and the covering restored.

This form of bed will do for a cellar, outhouse, cupboard, or the open air, but if the latter it should be covered with straw, at least a foot in thickness. When the mushrooms are gathered a little earth should be placed in the holes whence they are taken. As to the kind of spawn to use, I think the French is undoubtedly the best, as what is generally bought at the seedsmen's is too hard and dry, whereas the French is in thin flakes, cut from heaps of mycelium. Droppings obtained from a mill tract, invariably contain spawn, and have only to be placed in small heaps to produce abundant crops of mushrooms. In the neighborhood of Paris these delicious fungi are grown in caves either underground, or excavated in the side of a hill, and even in the deserted slate and stone quarries, as at Frepillon, Méry-sur-Oise, where at one time no fewer than 21 miles of beds were in full bearing. Of course, in these comparatively warm subterranean caves a bed does not require any covering, but yields abundant crops for two, three, or even four months.

There is in fact, scarcely any kind of waste space where mushrooms might not be grown—in pots and old tubs under the stage of greenhouses, on the shelves in stables; indeed, in any situation where sufficient dung can be placed to heat, or merely enough for the spawn to spread if artificially warmed.

THE BEET AS AN ORNAMENTAL PLANT.

English gardeners now cultivate the beet as an ornamental foliaged plant, and class it with the very best varieties of the Coleus and other highly esteemed foliage plants. A correspondent of the English Journal of Horticulture says:

I am inclined to think that where Coleus will not bed out beet stands first among red leaved plants. As it is becoming fashionable, we may very soon look for great improvements in color; I dare say that three years hence we shall be in possession of varieties with leaves even brighter than the young and central ones of *Dracena purpurea*. On April 24, 1869, I sowed a packet of Royal Osborne beet, and placed the box in which it was sown on the top of a dung heap. It came up freely. When large enough to handle, I pricked the plants into pots, placing about six in a four-inch pot. Early in June I put them in ribbons in the bed; they grew rapidly, and were the admiration of all who saw them. In color (crimson-purple), in form, and in power of resisting both sun and rain, Royal Osborne beet is all that can be wished for. Iresine planted close to it, had to hide its diminished head. You might see your face in the gloss of the leaves. One bed was planted thus:—the center of *Cineraria maritima*, then a double row of beet, a double row of Flower of Spring Pelargonium, and an outer ring of Iresine. Everybody who saw it thought it beautiful.

One great merit beet has, is its durability. Coleus, Iresine, Orach, Perilla, vanish, disappear, but beet holds on till you want your ground for bulbs. When I took my plants up, Oct. 18th, they were as bright as ever. I stored them in sand, and I shall plant them out again in the beginning of April, and expect them to make a beautiful edging to a bed of tulips. They are now sending up a number of beautiful Magenta colored leaves at the crown, and would, I am sure, be beautiful for silver vases on a dinner table, with any one who had stove heat to force them for the purpose. There is, I know, a prejudice against the beet on account of its being edible. A great gardener, not far from this, is very loud in his condemnation of it. He says that if we have to go to the salad bowl for our flower garden, it is time to shut up altogether. I do not agree with him. If a thing is beautiful, it being useful also, is no demerit in my eyes.

CROPPING ORCHARDS.

I noticed recently in your journal communications on the bad policy of cropping orchards with grain. No doubt your correspondents are right so far, as half-way culture is practised. But under good cultivation, no such condition as stunted trees, or mouse-car leaves of a velvety color will be seen. Ever since I came to this neighborhood, I have been a close observer of the different kinds of fruit raised here, which is a very profitable branch of agriculture. Not only has there been marked success in the raising of apples, but also in peaches, quinces, strawberries and grapes. Of the latter over sixty acres are planted out on an area of about four miles fronting on Lake Erie. But to return to the subject of apples, I will try to show that grain-growing in orchards is not all moonshine.

Thirteen years ago a neighbor of mine had about three acres of orchard containing old trees. He planted the remainder of the field, about three acres more, the old as well as the young trees being mostly R. I. Greenings. Every alternate year the orchard has been in Fall wheat, yielding from twenty-five to thirty-five bushels to the acre, the other years it would be put in with, sometimes barley,