

Mushrooms out of Doors

John Gall

MUSHROOMS can be grown as successfully out of doors as they can in houses or under the protection of sheets; but it is a crop that the grower must take special pains in preparing for, or failure will be the result. Mushrooms may be grown in meadows by inserting pieces of the spawn in the turf at distances of about six to seven feet apart. The proper way to do this is to cut a hole about one foot deep and one foot wide in the turf, taking care to save the top sod to place down again.

Fill up the hole with fresh horse manure and the short, littery straw which accompanies it in equal quantities. The manure should be exposed to the weather for a fortnight for the purpose of drying, and must be protected from rain. At the end of this period put it up in a good-sized heap to ferment. Open it out in about eight days to let out foul steam, then put up again for eight days, and open afterwards in the same manner in another eight days. The manure then will be ready to place in the holes and the spawn can be inserted in it.

When filling the holes with manure, bear in mind that room must be left for the sod to be placed back at the same level as it was before. Press the manure into the holes as hard as it is possible to do so, and always bear in mind it must be in a fairly dry condition.

Break each cake of spawn with the hands into about a dozen equal parts, burying one piece in the manure in each hole, using also the fragments which may happen to fall from the pieces. Plant deep enough to allow a quarter of an inch of the manure to cover the spawn; then place over the manure half an inch of the soil which came out of the hole, pressing it hard down, and finishing by placing the sod of earth with the grass on back in its place, treading it firmly down. The best time to do this is in the month of July.

OUTDOOR BEDS

For mushroom beds out of doors the manure is prepared in the same manner, but it must be from corn-fed horses. The beds should be placed in some well-sheltered, shady position, as mushrooms are difficult to produce during the summer months on account of the heat then usually prevailing; therefore, have the beds placed where they can be kept shady and cool. They should be built in round-topped ridges two and a half feet wide and the same in height.

In building, tread down as firmly as possible. Insert a thermometer in the bed about eight inches deep as soon as it is completed. The heat will probably

rise to about ninety degrees Fahrenheit in the course of about nine days, after which it will begin to fall. Immediately it falls to seventy-five degrees it will be time to spawn the bed.

The spawn should be prepared in the same way as for the turf, and the pieces inserted ten inches apart all over the surface of the bed. The beds must be protected from rain by covering with straw, mats, or some such material. In the course of a week after the spawn has been inserted it will start to run, meaning that tiny white threads will radiate from it into the manure, and a sort of mildewy mould appear round it. It will now be time to apply a coating of loamy soil to the surface of the bed to the depth of about half an inch when well beaten down hard with the back of the spade. The work is now completed, excepting that the bed must be kept dark and protected from rain by being covered over.

I have found it a good plan to place a thermometer on the surface of the bed under the covering. An effort should be made to keep the temperature as

nearly as possible to about sixty degrees Fahrenheit. If it is found below this figure, more covering must be added; if above this, some must be removed. The beds should be uncovered in about five weeks' time, brushing away any mould or dirt which may have gathered on the surface. If the soil should at any time appear dry, give the bed a watering with tepid water (not cold), and cover up again as before. In about ten days' time mushrooms will make their appearance in good numbers.

HOW TO GATHER THE CROP

When gathering mushrooms, do not cut the stalks, but give each one a gentle twist with the fingers, pulling up with it the whole of its stalk and the small pieces of roots usually attached to it. A good mushroom bed remains in profit from eight to ten weeks. Afterwards it should be taken up and used for greenhouse purposes or applied to the land. If a constant supply of mushrooms be desired a new bed should be made up about every six weeks. Your first bed should be ready for spawning early in July. In purchasing spawn from your seedsman, you should stipulate for it to be at least less than a year old.

Cabbage and Cauliflower Culture

Geo. Baldwin, Toronto, Ont.

CABBAGE and cauliflower are two of the most popular and wholesome vegetables that we have. Both are of the one family. They are not appreciated as they should be, for two reasons: First, because when growing them for ourselves we do not give them sufficient attention, and, second,

because we cannot always get them fresh from the corner grocery or vegetable waggon.

The cabbage is used in three different forms, namely, sliced raw cabbage, the ordinary boiled cabbage, and the salted or sauerkraut, the German nation's fancy dish. The first form, raw cabbage, is



Raspberries with Beans growing in between. A Peterborough garden photographed in June