

GARDEN AND ORCHARD.

Asparagus.

By Mrs. Anna L. Jack.

It is twenty-five years ago since the first attempt was made here to grow asparagus for commercial purposes. Before that time, if a farmer had a few roots in his garden, the housewife used the feathery foliage in late summer and autumn as a parlor decoration, but the portion used as a vegetable was not appreciated. An ounce of seed of Connover's Colossal, however, purchased from Peter Henderson, revolutionized the ideas of some observing agriculturists, and now the asparagus from this locality has its special place in the Montreal market. From that ounce of seed grew 750 plants.

It was thought necessary at one time that the ground should be trenched in order to grow this vegetable properly, but the method now is to make wide furrows six inches deep, placing the plants three feet apart in the rows, which should be five feet apart. Good two-year-old plants are best, and the furrows are filled in slowly during summer cultivation. The land cannot be too rich, for the asparagus roots need heavy feeding to produce large stalks, and it requires every season a top dressing of well-rotted manure put on after the cutting is finished in summer. There is a good deal of controversy as to the value of a dressing of salt, but, if no other value, it is a help in keeping down weeds, and the plants seem to assimilate it well. The ground must be kept clean, and it is not advisable to cut any sprouts till the plants have been set at least two years, the cutting to cease by the end of June. In autumn the old stalks should be burned on the ground; a forkful of manure placed over each hill at this time will be found of advantage.

There is quite a little skill necessary in cutting asparagus, for the shoots are so close together that there is danger of cutting off the heads. The knife must be drawn obliquely across the stalk to avoid injuring the crowns. Of late years a serious menace has appeared to asparagus culture in the form of a rust that attacks the foliage and causes it to turn brown and wither in midsummer before the plants have completed their root growth. This rust develops worst in rainy seasons, when the weather is suitable for fungous growths. It is successfully treated by good cultivation, by fertilizing, and by shortening the cutting season so as to give the plants a chance to recover their vitality. Spraying with Bordeaux mixture is sometimes resorted to, but the method is troublesome and expensive. It is necessary that the spray be applied by the middle of July. Use four pounds each of copper sulphate and of lime to fifty gallons of water, and spray through a fine nozzle, or the solution will not stick well. The operation must be repeated every two weeks, or after every heavy rain, in order to be effective.

When preparing asparagus for market, there are many cheap and satisfactory bunching machines that help to make the work easy. The shoots are tied in uniform bunches by this method, the material used for the purpose being bass matting, which is soft and has the necessary strength. Two strings are necessary to make a neat, compact bundle; those tied but once making an untidy bunch, loose at one end, and quite inclined to slip out, as well as being uneven in appearance. Of all varieties the Argenteuil is said to be less liable to rust, but Palmetto and Connover's are fine old varieties that respond to good cultivation. Adaptation to soil, which is best to be a sandy loam, and good cultivation with plenty of plant food, will generally ensure success.

As a vegetable, asparagus is exceedingly wholesome when fresh and tender; in the vegetarian days of medicine it was highly esteemed as a purgative and diuretic, and it is considered valuable in dropsy if eaten as a food in quantity, and not simply as a vegetable taken once a day. Its efficacy depends upon a peculiar alkaloid principle called asparagin, and the root, from which a decoction is made, is most valuable. Raw eggs and asparagus as a diet will renew strength lost from the disease mentioned, if properly used, instead of other food. Coming as it does with the first spring growth, this vegetable is a welcome addition to the farmer's table, and a corrective after a winter of root vegetables and heavy food. Its hardiness, ease of culture and durability make it desirable for the garden, and it can be used with advantage until the advent of the first green peas.

Please find enclosed amount for subscription. I have taken the "Farmer's Advocate" for a long time, and would feel lost without it. Your new volume is an honor to any publishing company.
Ontario Co., Ont. ALEX. MCKENZIE.

The Fallawater for Export.

Mr. John Brown, Inspector of the Department of Agriculture, at Glasgow, writes Mr. W. A. MacKinnon, Chief of the Fruit Division, Ottawa:

"With reference to your enquiry re Fallawater apples: This variety is not esteemed generally by the trade here, and is usually bought only by certain customers for a special purpose, viz., for baking. It is used by the better class of bakers where its appearance and size are favorably received, although as an eating apple it is better thought of. It is also a good carrier. Limited quantities of XXX Fallawaters always do well, but it would be a mistake to ship too many of this variety. It is always retailed here by the pound."

POULTRY.

Scratchings.

Keep the newly-hatched chicks dry.

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Clean, fresh drinking water does not cause diarrhoea in poultry; the other kind will.

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Poultry do well when milk is added to the diet.

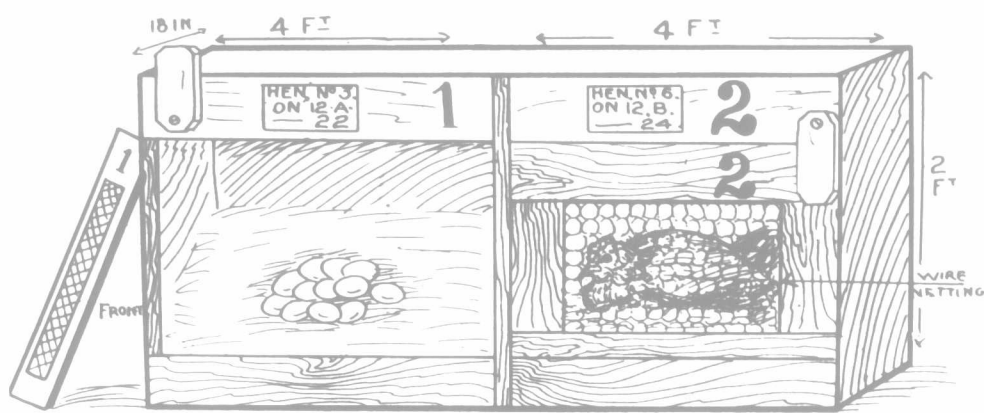
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Let us hear how you break up the cluckers.

Some Poultry Experiments.

Experiments are being conducted at Cornell University as to the importance of supplying grit to the fowls, with a view to determine the amount consumed, the effect upon the eggs, hardness of shell, and in preventing egg-eating.

Another experiment of moment is as to the importance of meat in a ration for egg production, observations being made as to the effects upon the number, size and fertility of eggs, and the vitality of chickens. Another line of experiment is that dealing with poultry-houses, how to keep



Good Nest Box for Sitting.

such dry, and whether roosts should be hooded or not, and whether cloth is preferable to glass for windows. When the poultry stations are established in the West, there will be found an ample number of subjects which experimentation should be called upon to decide in the economical and profitable raising of poultry.

Poultry Pedigrees.

It is always of interest when a new breed is brought to public notice to trace the origin, as by this means the claims of the originators can often be weighed and discounted if necessary. The Orpington has been much talked about recently, and it will be seen from the following how largely color has been followed as a guide. The Black Orpington is said to be the result of the mating of clean-legged Langshan cocks with hens which are the progeny of Minorca cocks and Black Plymouth Rock hens; while the Buff Orpington is got by the mating of Buff Cochins with the female progeny of G. S. Hamburg males and colored Dorking hens.

Coops for Young Chickens.

Nothing can be better for the floor of the coop for the young chick than dry earth, gravel or sand. Many poultry-raisers build their coops for the hen and young chicks with a movable board floor, made several inches large all round than the coop, and raised up an inch or more from the ground, with a narrow cleat. When very wet weather comes, the coop is placed on this board floor, and dry soil thrown over it. As soon as the weather settles and is dry and warm again, the board floor is taken from under the coop, the coop placed on the ground, and the board floor thoroughly cleaned and put away to be dry when needed again.

Others make heaps of sand and gravel, elevated two or three inches above the ground and large enough so that the coop for the hen and young chicks may be

placed on them, leaving a dry spot outside and in front of the coops for the young chicks. This provides against the possible damage from heavy rainstorms. It also insures against dampness as far as it is possible to have a ground floor of a coop of this kind dry and comfortable. It is always dangerous to place the coop on a low spot where the water can drain into and damage its floor. Where high, well-drained spots can be selected, poultry will do remarkably well, even though no other provision is made against the influence of dampness. It is much easier to guard against than to remedy the injurious effects of a flood of rain and continual dampness in and about the coops.—Exchange.

Turkeys a Prey to Insects.

I noticed in the April 21st issue of the "Advocate," page 586, that M. J. E. R. writes about little turkeys dying. Our tenant's wife says she has raised lots of turkeys with great success, and she found her greatest enemy was a little insect that got in the ear while they were sleeping in the sun, and she says her remedy was to take a little bit of cotton batting and put in the ear until the little turkeys were three or four weeks old, and after that time she had no trouble, for they were on the go all the time. V. A. Y. S. Frontenac Co., Ont.

APIARY.

Bee Colonies Weakening.

Will you please answer these questions through your paper:

1. I had some bees packed in an outhouse, and some packed outside. I brought them all out one fine day, about the 6th of April. They were strong and in good condition, but soon after the weather changed, and came flurries of snow and heavy frost. The colonies are getting weaker. Did I bring them out too soon?

2. Should they be covered with a blanket on cold days?

3. What time of the year is the best to put the second story on a hive?

4. How long will one full rack of capped honey (Jones) last a hive at this time of the year?

J. A. P.

Ans.—1. Not if the day was warm enough for them to fly nicely. Without that flight they would dwindle much more rapidly, especially in an outhouse above ground, where changes of temperature are so great.

2. They should have as much protection as you

can conveniently give on cold days.

3. Put on extracting super as soon as the settled warm weather comes and the brood chamber is full of bees. This may be in fruit bloom. Do not put on sections until beginning of white clover.

4. It should last until fruit bloom, but more would be better.

Cheer Up.

While vainly watching from day to day for the sun to shine and for bees to fly from silent hives, it is hard to write of what could and should be done in the apiary were the weather only—different. Dismal reports continue to come by every mail.

W. J. Brown, Prescott Co., Director of O. B.-K. A. for District No. 1, describes the situation in the north thus: I only set out my bees to-day, April 22nd, after having them in the cellar for 164 days. I find the loss heavy. It was the last straw that broke the camel's back. Thirteen days later setting them out than last year. To-day was the first fine day we had—cold, wet, and windy weather prevailing, with some snowfalls. Reports from many beekeepers in this district, and District No. 2, say all dead; others as high as 90% dead. But the prospect for clover is good, as the ground has been covered with snow continually since November first. An exchange remarks that in the Ottawa valley a honey famine is in sight.

The Chilean and Jamaica crops are also said to be small this season, and judging by recent advices from San Francisco the Californian crop will not be as large as last season. So the old proverb, "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good," holds for those who have given their bees extra care in wintering, and succeed in securing a good crop of honey. MORLEY PETTIT.