

Orchard Grass.

EDS. COUNTRY GENTLEMAN,—I am continually receiving letters from various parts of the United States, asking for information on the subject of orchard grass, and believing that your paper will be the most likely to reach all parties, I will write you a short article on the subject, hoping to satisfy all demands, and (as I said in a former article) to convince all that there is no grass that can compare with it. This year we have experienced the most severe drouth known for many years, and the hay crop even on our moist blue-grass bottoms, has in many instances been an entire failure. Fortunately for me, a large part of my farm is in orchard grass, and I have now two barns filled with hay, and a very long row of stacks outside. Much of our timothy did not head out at all, our clover was hardly worth cutting, and our blue-grass bottoms did but little good until after the late rains, while all of the orchard grass that I saw seemed to be but little affected by the drouth, and all of mine made as much, and in some instances more, than it made the year before. Some small patches I cut four times, and all of it made two good crops. From some of it I took the seed, and then cut two crops of hay.

I have a word to say to hay buyers and consumers. They buy timothy hay that has stood until it is dead ripe, all the seed shatters out in baling, and by the time they come to feed it, it is but little better than good wheat straw, and yet they are afraid to buy other kinds of hay for fear of being cheated. Timothy hay looks nearly as well if allowed to stand a month too long, as if it were cut at the proper time. Now, timothy is right for cutting about the same time that wheat is, and as the wheat must be cut, the timothy generally has to wait until harvest is over, when it is entirely too ripe. Orchard grass is ready to cut by the first of June, and can all be cured before wheat harvest commences, and the second crop will keep until harvest is over. Now, I know orchard grass cut at the right time (and there is right time) is better than timothy cut at the wrong time. There is no time more convenient for cutting hay than the first of June, and no time more inconvenient than the first of July. Hay buyers will do well to remember this and look at the quality of the hay and not at the kind only.

For my part, I prefer orchard grass hay to timothy hay, as it has more blades. Timothy dies out in course of a few years, while an orchard sod (if not pastured too close) will not only never die out, but will continue to get better and better each year for many years. I have ascertained by experiments that orchard grass will root out all other grasses. Even our common blue-grass, and the small blue wire grass, have to give way to it where the land is not pastured but mowed. When land is to be pastured, nothing can excel a good sod of our common blue-grass, but it takes years for a good blue-grass sod to form, even here, where it comes naturally, while orchard grass forms a sod at once. I think, therefore, that orchard grass should have the preference, even as a pasture grass. One acre of orchard grass will afford as much pasture as two or three of clover or timothy. I am confident that orchard grass will make two pounds of hay on the same land that timothy, clover, red-top, or any other that I know, will make one. I might except our kind tall meadow oat grass, which makes an immense amount of hay, but for reasons I have not space to mention, orchard grass is to be preferred to it. Blue-grass on bottom lands will sometimes make nearly as much hay, but on up-lands orchard grass will make four times as much as blue-grass. I believe timothy to be an impoverisher of land, while orchard grass forms such an immense sod that I believe turning a sod of it under is equal to any clover sod. There is one thing all must remember, that orchard grass will make but little hay the first year, but the second year one will have to tear down his barns and build greater ones, or do as I have had to do—fill the barns and stack the remainder out of doors.

W. F. TALLANT,
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Due allowance must be made for the locality from which the above article is written. Our timothy can always be cut before harvest orchard grass has been grown by a few farmers in Canada. Its coarseness has been considerably against it, for it makes a much coarser hay than other grasses, but it possesses many advantages. These dry and scorching summers which make bare fields and

bare barns point to the necessity of growing some kind of feed for stock during these seasons, and the orchard grass appears to be fitted for this purpose. It will grow when no other grass can. We will have a good supply of orchard grass seed in the spring for the benefit of our subscribers. We have sent special orders to England for some of the seed, as several of our leading farmers have requested us to procure some for them, one complaining that he has twice tried to raise it, but the seed failed. If any of you are desirous of procuring really new orchard grass seed, we shall have it here in a few weeks.

Profit of Seventeen Swarms.

J. P. Moore, Binghamton, N. Y., says:—"I commenced the season of 1873 with seventeen stocks of bees, having lost four in the spring and sold one. Ten were in fair condition by May 20; the other seven were much reduced, but by taking brood from strong ones, was able to build up five of the week ones by the time honey commenced to yield. The other two I run for increase and surplus queens, and was able by feeding and using my four hives of empty comb to increase the two or eight full stocks and five half stocks of nuclei. Two of the nuclei died in the winter, and the other three are very weak (I prefer full stocks for winter), and raised ten surplus queens. The fifteen that the boxes were put on were run entirely for box honey, without increase, as we have things so arranged now that when we get a hive filled with brood in time to put on boxes we can have them put all their surplus in boxes, if the queen is prolific, without attempting to swarm, and without the trouble of handling the brood. The product of the fifteen stands thus:—By returns from honey shipped, 1,864 pounds, at an average of about 27 1/2 cents, \$498.32; honey sold at home, 120 pounds, at 17 cents, 19.20; honey reserved for home use, 50 pounds, \$8. Total, \$525.25."—*Buffalo Live Stock Journal.*

The Large English Berkshire in Illinois.

A correspondent of the *Prairie Farmer* writes on this subject as follows:—"The large-boned imported English Berkshire is very popular here; I prefer them to all others for the following reasons:—Their color, which is black, is preferable to white; they seldom, if ever, have the mange; white hogs are very liable to have. They are large and compactly made. Their flesh is fine-grained; a large portion being lean. They have very little offal. They sell for from one-half to one cent a pound more than any other large hog for shipping and packing. They are quiet, easily kept, never squeal. They are the best of mothers, very prolific, seldom, if ever, lay down on their pigs. Their litters are sprightly and even. They are very tenacious of life; very seldom one gets hurt by larger animals. They mature early, and are always fat if reasonably well fed."

Fine and Coarse Hay.

Producers are sometimes puzzled to know why city buyers generally ask for coarse well-matured hay in preference to more tender and in reality more nutritious kinds. The *Live Stock Journal* thus enlightens them: City men feed hay for a different purpose than the farmer. The farmer feeds it for its nutriment and as a principle food, while the city men regard grain as the cheapest food and only give sufficient hay to make bulk in the stomach and for the purpose of health. Coarse, well matured timothy serves the purpose better than the early-cut and fine grasses. They do not desire such hay as will tempt the horses to eat too much of it. Straw would answer the purpose if cut and mixed with the grain about as well. But farmers should be content with their practice of the city customer, for it enables them to sell their poorest hay for the best price, and to retain the best quality for home consumption.

NOTICE.—Be particular, whenever you write to us for a new subscriber or a renewal of your subscription, to write your name and the post office to which the paper is to be sent plainly. We cannot give persons credit for money received when their post office address is unknown.

Wanted.

An assistant to aid in the editing of this journal and the establishment of the Agricultural Emporium. Preference will be given to one that can command capital and has noticed the Emporium charter, and is willing to participate in its control. The paper and Emporium might be carried on separately. There are plenty that require an office, but cannot command any funds, such need not apply.

Commendatory.

We take the following extracts as a specimen of hundreds of the kind that are flowing into our office. We thank all of our subscribers for their good wishes:—

Raglan, Dec. 17, 1874.

DEAR SIR,—Inclosed you will find subscription renewed or the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, deeming it the most valuable paper for the farmers of the Dominion to have in their possession. I trust you may long continue to advocate the interests of the farmers of Canada.

T. OLDFIELD.

Petertown, Dec. 7, 1874.

DEAR SIR,—I must say your paper merits all the encouragement we can give it. I inclose one dollar.

WM. YATES.

Newtonbrook, Dec. 14, 1874.

DEAR SIR,—I am so well satisfied with your paper that I think it is the cheapest and most useful that there is published. I find the information and knowledge I receive are very useful in my farming pursuits.

G. W. IRWIN.

Gloucester, Dec. 4, 1874.

DEAR SIR,—I would say the real value of your paper cannot be calculated by the farming community.

JOHN M. HALPENNY.

Griffith, Nov. 30, 1874.

DEAR SIR,—Although not a practical farmer, I admire your plain talk when advocating farmers' interests, and therefore beg you to continue sending your paper.

GEO. J. MCKAIN.

Wilmot, Dec. 12, 1874.

DEAR SIR,—I must say the ADVOCATE is the best paper I ever had. I think everybody ought to have one of your valuable papers in the house. I believe it is the best agricultural paper ever published in the Dominion.

S. ERB.

Charcoal and the Soil.

Prof. S. W. Johnson, who is regarded as a leading authority in agricultural chemistry in relation to the effects of charcoal on soils, says:—

There is a great proof that charcoal has an excellent effect on light lands deficient in attractiveness for moisture, especially in dry seasons. This is due to its great porosity and absorbent power for vapor and water. On a heavy clay, which is unfavorable to vegetation, because of its compactness and slow penetrability by water, charcoal-powder, like any non-adhesive dust, separates the clay particles, prevents their cohesion where it intervenes, and thus tends to make the soil more open, more friable, promotes drainage and sets in train a long series of changes for the better. Charcoal strewn on the surface of light colored soils, so as to blacken it enables it to become warmed under the sun's rays more rapidly and more highly than would be the case otherwise. This fact may partly account for the good effect reported of it in cold climates.

But as a direct fertilizer, i. e., by virtue of anything it can yield of its own substance to crops, charcoal cannot be regarded of much value. It contains, of course, if it has not been washed by water the ash elements of the wood from which it has been made, and when applied in large quantities, the potash lime, etc., which it carries upon the land may easily produce a striking effect upon poor soil. This kind of effect can not last more than a single season, and on a soil in fairly good condition would commonly make no show. From this consideration, we conclude that charcoal (unless as may often happen, it is mixed with a good deal of wood-ashes) is not of much value as a fertilizer directly. It is a valuable amendment to soils which are dry from their coarse, sandy texture, or are wet from consisting of tenacious clay.