

# Remedying the Sweet Pea Blight

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**W**HETHER plants sweet peas in a ditch and leaves it open, to be filled in as the young shoots develop, runs the risk of losing the entire crop. Last year I was induced by a professional grower to try this method, with the result that nearly half of my valuable collection was lost. I had some beautiful novelties from England and the United States, and with an aching heart I saw many of them die, after having given the greatest promise. This led to an investigation, a remedy and a resolution.

I had planted on April 17th, with a covering of about two inches of good earth, the remainder of the ditch being left open to about three inches. By May 15th, there was a beautiful array of young shoots, and I began to fill in with more earth, in the gentlest manner possible. Then came the heavy rains and soon my young plants were standing "knee deep" in water. My subsoil being heavy clay, the drainage was very poor. The wet spell was prolonged, and the water stood in the trench until the earth became almost of the consistency of mortar. Whenever possible I filled in dry earth to counteract the trouble, but in spite of the greatest care a number of the young shoots were broken off or otherwise damaged, and whenever the sun shone strong the earth baked on top and soured beneath. Consequently, when my plants were about ten inches high they began to turn yellow, and die. Pulling these up, I found in every instance the roots rotted away, and a very bad odor. Nearly one-third of my plants were dead before I discovered a remedy.

The earth was sour. To counteract this, I prepared lime water, by slacking a lump of lime, about the size of my fist, in a pail of water and letting it settle. I then made an irrigating ditch close to the roots of my peas, and every other day for a short time, poured into it a pail of lime water, being careful not to let any of the lime get upon the vines or the earth. Then, refilling with water the pail containing the lime, I left it to saturate for the next time, and about every three days, for a while, repeated the treatment. In about two weeks my peas were looking quite healthy, and the blight had ceased. The trench meanwhile having been filled up, and the danger passed, I was finally rewarded by a beautiful bloom upon the remaining vines; but the intervening spaces made by the "blight,"

spoiled the fine appearance which I had anticipated.

From this and past experiences, I resolved that wherever the subsoil is clay, the following method would be more profitable: Dig out the earth to the depth of the subsoil, about two spades wide. Fill in about six inches of well rotted horse manure, and, according to accompanying diagram, dig this into the subsoil (a) a spade deep. Then lay a drain pipe (b), the kind the builders call "weepers"—or broken stones will do if weepers are not available—over which fill

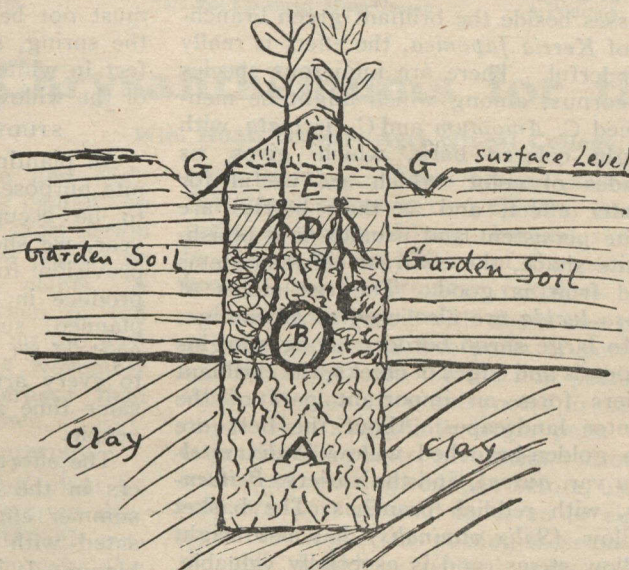


Diagram of Sweet Pea Trench, Described in Accompanying Article

in another six inches of well rotted horse manure (c). Over this place two inches of good clayey loam (d), finely broken up, and then sow the seed in two rows, alternately, three inches apart, thus, . . . . . Fill in the remainder of the trench until a little above the surface level, with good clayey loam (e), with which equal parts of fine bone meal and hard wood ashes have been carefully mixed, say about a pint to the running yard. When plants are on the strings, say twelve or eighteen inches high, fill up the earth about three inches (f), leaving an irrigating ditch at each side (g). This method will insure plenty of moisture, and at the same time establish sufficient drainage to prevent "damping off," otherwise known as the sweet pea blight. Sweet peas require an abundance of water, but good drainage is absolutely imperative to prevent "damping off." After the plants are in bud, through the medium of the irrigating ditch, feed them with liquid manure once or twice a week.

The following preparation is an excellent fertilizer: One part nitrate of potash (salt-petre), two parts of superphosphate, eighteen to twenty per cent.; two parts of sulphate of ammonia, or

two parts of nitrate of soda. Dissolve half an ounce of the mixture in one gallon of water, and apply carefully so as not to allow the liquid to come in direct contact with the foliage.

For aphids and red spider, use a solution of "Sanitine." This is a soft soap made from linseed oil. It is one of the finest insecticides that I have ever used. It not only keeps off insects, but it leaves the vines glossy and healthy. To one teacupful of Sanitine, add eighteen teacupfuls of water and boil until thoroughly dissolved; then of this, when cool, take one teacupful to which add one gallon of water. With this mixture spray your vines twice a week.

Don't forget to apply the grass mulch to keep the soil from drying out. Water frequently and thoroughly in dry weather.

## Growing Sweet Peas

By a Member of St. Catharines Horticultural Society

Last year, I took the advice of Mr. Max Moineau, who contributed articles on sweet pea culture to the January and February, 1908, issues of THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST, and bought those novelties that I could secure. It was the first time that I ever did this. We always bought them by the pint in all colors, but we will never do so again, for the separate colors are so far ahead of the others. I had the grandest flowers that I ever saw. I had white Spencers with four on a stem and great large flowers, but I have found out that sweet peas do not like wet feet, for some were planted in a low spot and they soon turned yellow.

I like striped and flecked peas by themselves and not in a bouquet with others. We plant all our sweet peas in a trench, as Mr. Moineau described; and the striped ones were filled in with chicken manure. They got no other feed all summer, but they were near the back door where we threw our wash water, and I had to make a little drain along the side of them for the water to run away. They had stiff stems, with three or four large flowers on a stem; two on the stem was the exception rather than the rule. The foliage was bright and green until the frost killed them. I think that the wash water had much to do with making them so beautiful. I am going to try it on some more this summer.

Our garden soil is sandy, so we plant everything quite deeply. We drop the peas three inches apart. By planting deeply, they are not so apt to be pulled up out of the ground. I tried Mr. Moineau's plan of tying with the string and like it ever so much better than wire netting. The fault with wire is that you