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A Substitute for the Clover Crop.

SIR,—Not from choice, nor because anything we may substitute will fully take the place of clover, but as the clover crop is of late years subject to so many casualties, it is quite necessary, and it is also a mark of good husbandry, when one finds that his clover seeding has failed, to till the ground again as soon as possible after harvest, and sow to something that will grow a good clean crop to plow under, and, by so doing, even if it is not as good for the land as clover would have been, still it is much better than to let such stubble grounds lie bare, or only growing foul and noxious weeds, to the detriment of the land and to the disadvantage of the following crops. I have for a few years past practiced about as recommended in the last FARMER'S ADVOCATE ("Green Crops for Plowing in late"), and if I find the seeding has failed in the stubble lots, or if I have any unoccupied lands after the harvesting of early corn, potatoes, beans or flax, I will, with the plow or cultivator, or gang plow, or the wheel drag, put the land in fair tilth for a seed bed, and sow to some crop for plowing under as green manuring for the land. I find that the tilling required for putting in such a crop, and the crop itself growing there in place of a foul growth, which would naturally have been there instead, keeps the land cleaner and in better tilth, and when plowed under will add considerable fertility to the soil. For this purpose I use buckwheat or oats where I intend to plow them under in the fall, but if intended for the next year's fallow, or planting ground, I use rye, for it will grow in the spring as large as can be plowed under in season for corn on other planting grounds, and growing so much quicker than clovers often gives it quite the advantage over that for such purposes. At this date, Aug. 30, I have buckwheat sowed after the harvesting; the first field a heavy crop well in blossom, and standing two feet high; the next field was sowed to oats, and is now green and nice; the next is to rye after early corn and potatoes, and the fourth lot (25 acres) is sowed to rye to plow under for next year's planting ground. I believe that as with "idle hands," so with idle lands, it is a great source of mischief to let them lie idle, and if so left it is much harder to bring them to good tilth with the following crop than if they had in the meantime instead grown some such sweet clean crop to help enrich the land and keep it in good friable condition.

H. IVES, Batavia, N. Y.

SIR,—I have a fine large crab-apple tree, and for the last three years its apples have been blighted (or scabbed as usually called), and stunted in growth; each year it is getting worse. Otherwise the tree looks well. Any information you can give would greatly oblige, A. B., Port Hope, Ont.

[It is probable that this tree is on a soil not well drained. This should be seen to and remedied. Then loosen the soil well all around the tree so as to give air to the roots and promote healthy growth. The trouble you refer to is an indication of unhealthiness in the tree.]

SIR,—In a former communication on Prickley Comfrey, for last ADVOCATE, you made inches of my feet. I said plants were 30 inches high, and measuring 7 to 9 feet in circumference. I measured a plant or hill of the prickley comfrey since my former letter, measuring 15 feet in circumference. I cut a hill this morning which had 170 stalks in it, and was from a root ½ inch in length, planted late in May. For feeding pigs alone I consider it worthy of a trial. I have hills cut six weeks since which will now measure 10 feet in circumference. A. C., Newburgh, Ont.

Concrete Buildings.

SIR,—Would a concrete wall be suitable for a barn foundation? Would it be durable? How would it do for a cellar wall? Would it do for the walls of a house instead of brick? And in what proportions should the sand, lime and gravel be mixed? W.M., Woodville, Ont.

[Concrete would be suitable for the foundation of a barn, or for a cellar. The walls of a house may be built of concrete instead of brick, and will be found equally durable if properly done. Concrete is also the cheaper material. The method of building concrete walls is so explicitly laid down by a writer in the Montreal Star, that we give it for your guidance:

The cheapest and most durable farm buildings may be constructed of concrete. This is a mixture of cement made of lime and sand mortar, or mortar made of hydraulic or water lime, commonly called cement, and sand, with gravel or broken stone. The stone or gravel, or both, may be fine or coarse, but the coarser it is the better and more solid the work will be. The manner of mixing the material is such that the gravel or stone is merely coated with the cement, and the spaces between the fragments are filled with it so as to form a strong adhesive solid mass. The proportions of the materials used are as follows: one part of lime (dry), two parts of coarse sharp sand, and three to five parts of gravel or stone. If hydraulic cement is used, half the proportion of lime used will be sufficient, as this substance is much stronger than lime.

The lime is slaked and mixed with sand in the usual manner to form a stiff mortar. The stone or gravel is heaped on to a mixing board and thoroughly wetted. A quantity of the mortar is spread out and the wet gravel is thrown on to it, and both are well mixed with shovels, water being added to make the concrete plastic. If hydraulic cement is used, this and the sand are evenly mixed in a dry state, as the mortar sets very rapidly. A small portion of this mixture is wetted and worked up to a thin paste, and the right proportion of gravel, previously well wetted, is added; the whole is thoroughly incorporated and is put into the molds at once.

The walls are built up in molds made of planks or boards, held in place by means of posts or scantlings, put up in a frame on each side of the walls. The doors and window frames are fitted in before the concrete is laid. The walls should be at least 16 or 18 inches thick for a two-story house, up to the first row of beams; the upper part may be 12 or 14 inches. The beams are built into the wall, and the ends should rest upon a strip of plank 2x6 to distribute the weight on the wall. In placing the concrete, stone may be worked in at the corners, and anywhere else to fill up and make the work solid; but stone that is added in this way should be dipped in water before it is used. When no large stone is at hand and gravel or small stone is used, the corners should be bevelled. This is done by nailing six-inch strips in the corners of the frames to close up the angles. As the concrete is put in its place it is well rammed, and if the top is made moist by this procedure, some wet sand and stone may be added and worked in by further ramming. But the ramming should not be so violent as to disturb the position of the frame boards. The frame may be made of the pieces used for the rafters and the boards for roofing, as these are in no way injured by being saturated with lime; on the contrary they are improved and made more durable. When one layer of 18 or 34 inches is made around the building, another is begun at the starting place and carried on as at first; the boards of the frame are raised as may be needed as soon as the concrete within them is hard and solid. Each corner should be made at one operation, so that the work may be solid and without joints. Concrete being dry and porous, inside plastering may be laid upon it without lath. The chimneys are made in the walls as they are built by inserting blocks of the right size and raising them as the work rises.]

SIR,—In a former number of your valuable journal you said there were good fields for emigration in Ontario. I have been thinking of trying my fortune in some part of the unoccupied districts of the Province. What do you think of Muskoka as a farming country? Is it better for tillage, or for stock-raising or dairying? A YOUNG FARMER.

[See our article on Muskoka in this issue.]

Curing Meat.

SIR,—I want to get the very best receipt I can for curing hams. J. W. B.

[“For 100 lbs. of meat take 7 lbs. of good salt, 2½ lbs. of brown sugar (or 1 quart of molasses), 2 oz. of saltpetre, 1 oz. of cayenne pepper, and 2 oz. of cloves. Two ounces of black pepper may also be used, if it is not distasteful to those who are to eat the hams. Pepper is used merely to prevent attacks of flies. Boil all the ingredients in sufficient water to cover the meat when closely packed in the cask. Skim and cool before pouring over the meat. The same ingredients can be used for rubbing the hams, if this mode is preferred to a pickle. For rubbing, however, it is better to add another pound of salt and half a pound of sugar to the above ingredients. This pickle is equally good for hams, shoulders, bacon, corned beef and dried beef. When corning beef, the meat should be well rubbed in salt and packed closely in a cask two days before it is pickled. This extracts the blood, and the meat must be taken out and washed before packing for final pickling.” A writer in an exchange, who has used the above receipt for over 30 years, says he is convinced it has no superior.]

SIR,—You will very much oblige by answering, through your very valuable journal, the following questions:—1. Would it be injurious to young apple trees, plum or peach trees to grow onions among them? 2. Which do you consider the most profitable kinds of onions to grow, and how ought the ground to be prepared for them? 3. At what age ought Baldwin apple trees to bear say one barrel of fruit, with good soil and cultivation? 4. How many onions ought to be raised on an acre of ground, with first-class preparation and cultivation? 5. Can I grow them where turnips were raised this year? By answering the above questions you will greatly oblige,

A CONSTANT READER, Chatham, Ont.

[Apple trees may be expected to commence bearing at about eight years old if standards, earlier if dwarfs. The time they will bear a large quantity of fruit depends on circumstances. We have plums eight years old that have been bearing heavily for two years.

It is not advisable generally to plant or sow any crop between fruit trees, as one crop is enough for the ground at a time. The growing of a crop of onions, however, would not be injurious to young apple trees. The cultivation and manuring for the onion crop would serve the growth of the trees, but the trees would not serve the onion crop. Onions grown from seed are white, dark red or yellow. The white are the finest flavored, the dark red are the largest croppers, the yellow are the best keepers. The soil should be well tilled and enriched with rotted manure, and rolled or otherwise smoothed. The seed is sown in drills 12 inches apart, about one pound of seed to the rood. The spaces between the rows are to be cultivated with the scuffling hoe frequently to prevent the growing of weeds and to keep the soil fresh and friable to attract and retain the moisture, with its accompanying ammonia, from the atmosphere, and to stimulate the growth. Onions are harvested in August. When taken up with the digging-fork they are left on the ground to get thoroughly dried and then put on shelves for keeping, or in barrels, in an apartment dry but not too warm. The produce varies greatly, according to the soil, and favorable season, and other circumstances. Eight hundred bushels have in some instances been grown to the acre, and sometimes not more than one-fourth that quantity.]

SIR,—Would you inform me which is the best kind of grape for latitude 42° longitude 80°; also the best work on grape culture, and price. W.B.N., Angus, Ont.

[In the culture of grapes in the locality spoken of much would depend on the proximity of large bodies of water and the prevalence of spring and early autumn frosts. Of all the very early grapes in the market, Moore's Early is the best. It resembles the Concord very closely, and is two weeks earlier. The Champion is also an early variety, but of poor quality. If the season is long enough to ripen the usual standard sorts, the following would be a good selection:—Concord, Delaware, Burnet, Canada, Rogers' 4, Rogers' 15, Clinton, Martha, and Creveling. Best work is Fuller's Grape Culturist, which will be mailed post-paid from this office for \$1.50.]