

GROWING POTATOES—PREVENTING DISEASES.

THE abundant crops of 1895 and '96, with an overstocked market and low prices, had the influence on many growers of becoming indifferent in caring for the crop of 1897, the result of which is a light yield of poor quality.

The heavier soils are not capable of producing the best quality of potatoes at any time.

The lighter and more suitable soils did not give a satisfactory yield and quality in 1897 from the plants being killed by blight long before completing their growth.

The writer invites the indulgence of the reader in giving our experience on the subject briefly.

No attempt will be made in this short paper to describe the diseases of the potatoe, for this is done in a very practical way in the Farmer's Bulletin, No. 23, of the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, by Prof. John Craig.

Rotation.—We practice a three year rotation as nearly as possible on all our land except what is down to pasture and fruit, and depend on medium red clover to keep up the fertility.

It may be said that we go through our rotation backwards, or the opposite way from the common practice.

Most people apply manure to the land before the hoed crop. We top dress in the fall and winter after the corn, potatoes or whatever crop we use, hauling and spreading direct from the stables whenever the ground is frozen enough to bear a team. Our object is to mulch and fertilize all we can to insure a good catch and growth of clover which is sown with the grain crop.

All corn is cut for the silo and all straw used for feed or bedding is cut so there is no clogging of implements in

working the manure in the surface soil with harrow and cultivator where it remains two seasons.

Cultivation is commenced by ploughing the clover sod late in the fall, and harrow, cultivate and gang in the spring, and when ready to plant in May, strike out and plough in wide lands dropping fresh cut seed 15 x 36 inches in every third furrow, six inches deep.

Two good hands will cut with a curved knife and drop the seed as fast as the ground can be ploughed with one team.

Harrow cross-wise and length-wise every few days up to the time the plants are three or four inches above ground.

If the work has been well done up to this time there will be little need of a hoe in the field.

Scuffle on the level, for the more ridging is done the surface will be exposed to be dried out by sun and wind, and the greater amount of soil moisture will be lost.

We scuffle once a week or as soon as the soil is fit to work after every shower up to the time the plants shade the ground, deep at first, finishing at an inch and a half.

If from drenching rain or any cause the soil gets so firm that the tubers are showing above the surface, we use the hillers on the scuffer covering the row enough to keep them from being sun burned as the common phrase goes, but it does not require the sun to make a potato look green, the light from a small cellar window will destroy the quality of the best potatoes. To prevent this we keep the bins covered with a mat or anything that will exclude the light, and the quality will compare favorably with the ideal way of wintering in pits.

(To be continued.)