

From Gleanings.

### **Alsike Clover.**

ITS VALUE AND HOW TO RAISE IT.

**T**HE value of alsike to the bee-keeper makes it worth his while to extend its culture in every way possible. In inducing his farmer neighbors to grow it, he not only benefits himself but also his neighbors as well. Few appreciate its value. Rightly managed it may be made to yield three products—honey, hay, and seed, which, in a little more than a year, are equal in value to the land on which it grows.

With suitable soil, and in competent hands, ten bushels of seed to the acre is a possible yield, which, at the present prices, \$7.50 to \$9.00, will purchase an acre of good farming land almost anywhere. There are, besides, the hay and honey.

When the cultivation of alsike is recommended to farmers, one or more of the following objections are usually offered: 1. It does not germinate well; 2. It does not produce a paying crop of seed; 3. It does not produce as much hay as red clover; 4. The hay is of inferior quality. If fed to milch cows, the butter produced is white.

In the first case, either the seed was poor or the ground was not in proper condition. A sample of seed should be tested before purchasing.

In the second case, a short crop of seed is generally due to a lack of judgment as to the right time for cutting, and to improper handling afterward.

In answer to the third objection, it may be stated that, though the yield of hay may not be as great, the value of the whole product is greater.

Finally, the hay is better than red-clover hay, the stems being less woody, and devoid of the fine hairs which render red clover hay "dusty." In this matter, timothy mixed with alsike is beginning to be rated No. 1, while timothy mixed with red clover, is No. 2. As to its effect upon butter, a few roots, carrots or the like, fed to cows will remedy that. Often failure is the result of making a trial on so small a scale that the crop is neglected; then the grower thinks, of course, it is "no good."

A neighbor, Mr. McCall, has given to the alsike-clover plant the same kind of intelligent and careful study that Mr. Terry has given to the potato, with equally satisfactory financial results. Mr. McCall is too busy "compelling success" to write of his methods for the benefit of others; so, believing that they would be in-

teresting and profitable to many, I interviewed him one evening. The following are the facts brought out.

Mr. McCall raises alsike for the seed, so his methods accord with his aim.

The most suitable soil is a clay loam, with a good proportion of the vegetable matter; but it may be grown on almost any kind of land.

The land, having been deeply plowed and thoroughly pulverized the previous autumn, and sown to wheat, is harrowed in the spring with a fine-toothed harrow—an operation greatly benefitting the growing wheat. The clover seed is then sown at the rate of 8 to 10 pounds to the acre. A lighter seeding is often recommended but Mr. M. believes that better results on the whole are obtained by a more generous seeding.

The sowing should be done as early as possible, so that the seed may catch some of the spring rains. Here, the first of April is about right. It is important that the seeding be even. Bare spaces certainly lessen the crop, while overcrowded ones do not increase it. It is by attention to small details that success is won in this as in any other undertaking. If the seeding is done by hand, mixing the seed thoroughly with several times its bulk of sand may aid in its even distribution.

The seed may be sown with oats, if preferred, provided the ground can be put into proper condition early enough.

Soon after the removal of the wheat from the ground, the young clover-plants should cover it. They often make such growth as to blossom and mature seed the first season. Possibly, by sowing the seed alone, and under the most favorable conditions, a fair crop of seed might be obtained the first season; but the second season is the one depended upon for the main crop, under ordinary circumstances. In the autumn and early spring the field may be lightly pastured, preferably by sheep, but care should be taken to remove the stock before damage is done. By early June the clover-field should be a sheet of vivid green, with no earth visible. Later, the pink and white blossoms appear, borne at the ends of the main stalk and branches. This is the bloom which will furnish the largest and best part of the seed crop. Keep watch of them; for they will soon disappear under a set of somewhat smaller blossoms, which in turn give away to another, the bloom continuing several weeks. During this time the bee does double duty in improving the yield of seed by cross-fertilization and in gathering the nectar with which the florets are abundantly stored. Mr. M. realizing the value of its labors, purchased