

MONEY IN RADISHES.



AMONG the various crops grown in the Ohio State University forcing houses the past winter, none have given greater satisfaction, with the possible exception of lettuce, than radishes. This crop is so easily grown, matures so rapidly, and is in such great demand, that for the time and labor expended the returns are most satisfactory. The production of radish seed is itself an immense industry, and a large part of the supply needed for this country comes from France and Germany. The production of good seed is quite laborious, and can only be carried on profitably where labor is cheap. In this country, radishes are largely grown in the South, whence come the main early supplies for the Northern markets. In addition to this, however, immense quantities are raised under glass in the vicinity of our large cities. As raised in the forcing houses of the University, a crop of radishes occupies the bench space little more than three weeks, so during one winter five or six crops can be grown. The seed is sown in flats, which are filled two inches deep with black muck. It is sown in drills one and one-half inches apart. The soil is thoroughly moistened by placing the flats in the water bench. After being watered by this sub-irrigation method, the flats are placed on the ground under the benches until the seed has germinated. In six to nine days they are transplanted to the bench. In midwinter, when there is likely to be much cloudy weather, it is not best to set them closer than six by two inches. This gives twelve to the square foot. When there is plenty of sunshine they may be planted as close as four by one and one-half inches, if all other conditions are favorable. This gives twenty-four to each square foot, or just double the number at the wider distance named above. As a rule, about eighteen is the average number grown on each square foot.

Repeated tests have shown that we gain all the time the radishes are in the flats before transplanting. Whenever seed has been sown in the benches and no transplanting done, it required just as much time for sowing the seed, and the labor of thinning was about equal to that of transplanting. If we can save a week on each crop, this enables us to increase the number of crops by at least one, during the season. Radishes are prepared for market by tying them into bunches containing six each. These bunches are sold at wholesale for 25 to 40 cents a dozen. Allowing a fair margin for waste and imperfect plants, this gives 6 cents per square foot for the bench space of the forcing house. Five crops would give 30 cents a square foot, which is a profitable return for capital invested.

Our success in growing radishes for market is largely due to the practice of sub-irrigation. In fact, we failed to raise them profitably where the plants were