

one of the earliest of the garden potatoes, of fine quality, and one of the best for forcing for early crops. If the ground was not prepared last fall, it should be made ready as soon as the frost is out, so that it can be plowed six inches deep, and the potatoes planted.

In order to facilitate the crop, some persons set a barrel of seed by the kitchen stove about the end of March, where they remain until sprouts have started half an inch in length. In this case the top of the potatoes must be covered with loam or a cloth to keep out the light. Others lay a bushel or two of seed upon grass ground, in some warm spot, and cover them with horse manure sufficiently deep to keep warm. They will sprout readily in this condition if they are kept moist and warm, and can be got at to plant more easily than from a barrel. Others, still, who only require a few, start them in hot beds.

Planting should take place just as soon as the soil is dry enough to admit the working of it. Plant, if there is a dry surface sufficient to cover with, even if the frost is a foot deep below. Before planting, prepare liberal holes and fill them with a shovelful of horse stable manure. Cover this with a sprinkling of fresh, damp mold, and place the "set" or seed on this, and cover three inches deep. Mr. J. Knight says that if the "sets" are placed with their leading buds upward, a few and very strong early stems will be produced; and if the position be reversed, many weak and later shoots will arise, and not only the earliness but the quality of the produce be depreciated.

By putting the above suggestions in practice, every person may expect a fine dish of nearly ripened potatoes by the Fourth of July with his roasted lamb and green peas, and an abundant supply after the 20th of the same month. How can the farmer add to the comfort and health of his family in a better way?

#### THE CANADA THISTLE.



HIS is probably one of the most troublesome plants with which the farmers have to contend. Owing to its almost universal dissemination and wonderfully prolific character, the quantity of seed annually produced is so immense that no region can reasonably be expected long to escape its presence. The only re-

medy, indeed, which can, under the circumstances, be even partially successful, is to watch its first appearance, and carefully eradicate the roots. Where this is done, the thistle soon disappears, and if not perpetuated by the dissemination of fresh seeds from neighboring or distant plantations, will cease to give annoyance. Where lands have already become foul with this production, the best method is to cut them about the time the seed begins to fly. At this period the large stalks are hollow, and if the tops are removed just before a rain the water will assist the work by filling the tubes and causing rot at the roots. Some prefer cutting while the plants are in full bloom, and after sowing on fine salt, turn in sheep or other animals, whose partiality for that mineral induces them to gnaw down the stumps, into which it has entered, till the injury caused to the roots, produces death, and prevents further trouble.

On the subject of mowing, a writer says: "Let the thistle grow in all its luxuriance till about the time seed begins to scatter with the down. At this time it will be found on examination that the stalk is hollow. Mow the thistles just before a rain, if possible, and the wet, by entering the hollow stalk, descends to the root and effectually destroys it. I have known large fields of thistles almost entirely killed in this way by one cutting. The effect depends on the decomposition which takes place in the root, effected by the admission of moisture through the stalk. The experiment can easily be tried by cutting part of a plat of thistles just before they bloom, and the remainder after the seed has become hard and the stalk hollow."

It is frequently the case that no efforts whatever are made to curtail the spread of this pest when it has once obtained a foothold upon the soil, and it is permitted to spread and mature its myriad seeds with as much indifference to the result as though its influence upon the soil were harmless, rather than the reverse.

When soils are to be laid down to grass, the presence of thistles should be considered as an important drawback upon their fertility, and no effort should be spared to render them at once and thoroughly free from the pollution. Hay, fouled by thistles, is never marketable, and is, indeed, nearly worthless as feed, unless when the animals are compelled to eat it by the impulse of hunger.